GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

First Session of the Tenth Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday 27th, Wednesday 29th & Thursday, 30th November, 2017

(BUDGET PRESENTATION & DEBATE)

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House of Representatives Budget Presentation and Debate 2018
Held at the Grenada Trade Centre
On Monday 27th, Wednesday 29th & Thursday, 30th November, 2017.

Attendance

PRESENT

Honourable Michael Pierre, MP, MBE, JP	- Mr. Speaker (In the Chair)
Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell, PC, MP (St. George North-West)	- Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Energy, National Security, Public Administration, Disaster Management, Home Affairs, Information, Implementation, Economic Development, Planning, Trade and Religious Affairs
Honourable Gregory Bowen, MP (St. George South-East)	- Minister for Communications, Works, Physical Development, Public Utilities, ICT & Community Development
Honourable Elvin Nimrod, MP (Carriacou and Petite Martinique)	- Minister for Legal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Carriacou & Petite Martinique Affairs & Local Government
Honourable Anthony Boatswain, MP (St. Patrick West)	- Minister for Youth and Sports
Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen (St. Mark)	- Minister for Tourism, Civil Aviation and Culture
Honourable Alvin Da Breo, MP (St. John)	- Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries with responsibility for Forestry and Fisheries
Honourable Yolande Bain-Horsford, MP (St. Andrew South-West)	- Minister for Agriculture, Lands, Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
Honourable Oliver Joseph, MP (St. David)	- Minister for Labour and Co-operatives
Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP (St. Andrew South-East)	- Minister for Implementation
Honourable Nickolas Steele, MP (Town of St. George)	- Minister for Health, Social Security & International Business

Attendance

Honourable Delma Thomas, MP (St. Andrew North-West)	-	Minister for Social Development & Housing
Honourable Alexandra Otway-Noel, MP (St. George South)	-	Member
Honourable Tobias Clement, MP (St. George North-East)	-	Member
Honourable Clifton Paul, MP (St. Patrick East)	-	Deputy Speaker

ABSENT

Honourable Roland Bhola, MP (St. Andrew North-East)	-	Member

Prayers
Minutes

The Sitting of the House of Representatives began at 10:02 a.m.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, I bid you good morning. Let us pray.

(House Prayer was said)

Please join with me, as we say the Lord's Prayer.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Pray be seated.

(Sound of Gavel)

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, this House is now in Session.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 3 - Oath of Allegiance or Affirmation of a new Member.
Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Sixth Session of the Ninth Parliament held at the Grenada Trade Centre on Friday, 20th October, 2017, be taken as read.

Question put and agreed to.
Minutes taken as read.

Minutes
Announcements
Papers / Reports

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, again, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the said Minutes of the proceedings of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Sixth Session of the Ninth Parliament held at the Grenada Trade Centre on Friday, 20th October, 2017, be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.
Minutes confirmed.

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

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, I greet you well on this very important day in the Parliament. Today, we would be hearing of Government's plan and its fiscal arrangements for 2018. So, we want you to listen well, so that you can get full messages from the Minister for Finance, when that is done. Thank you.

Clerk Assistant: Item 7 - Presentation of Petitions.
Item 8 - Presentation of Papers & Reports from Select Committees.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following Papers be laid on the Table:

Papers / Reports
Motions

1. Minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance, held at the Ministry of Works Conference Room on Tuesday, 7th November, 2017;
2. Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2018;
3. Government of Grenada Reports:
   i. Budget Framework Paper, 2018;
   ii. Compliance Assessment Report, 2016 – 2017;
   iii. Fiscal Risks Statements;
   iv. Medium Term Debt Management Strategy, 2018 – 2020; and
   v. Fiscal Responsibility Oversight Committee (FROC), 2016 Annual Report.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, these Reports and Papers are laid on the Table.

Clerk Assistant: Item 9 - Unopposed Private Business.
Item 10 - Questions.
Item 11 - Urgent Questions under the Provision of Standing No. 20 (1) Notice of Questions.
Item 12 - Statements by Ministers.
Item 13 - Personal Explanations.
Item 14 - Motions.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion 14 (a) standing in my name, which reads:

Motions

WHEREAS debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Sixth Session of the Ninth Parliament on Friday, 20th October, 2017, was further deferred to a date to be fixed;

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

And, in so doing, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make an amendment to the substantive Resolution, and to request, Mr. Speaker, that the said Address be further deferred to a date to be fixed.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate on the Address deferred to a date to be fixed.

Mr. Speaker: Minister for Finance.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I stand to move the following Motion standing in my name, which reads:

WHEREAS it is necessary to provide for the State of Grenada for the year, 2018 by means of an Appropriation Act;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 2018, be approved.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Minister for Finance.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, as this is a Money Motion, I wish to signal to this Honourable House of Representatives that I have the consent of the Governor-General to proceed.

In doing so, Mr. Speaker, I must report that, for the first time in our history, the following Reports are being submitted to this Honourable House: one, the Progress

Report and Compliance with the Fiscal Rules and Targets, in accordance with Section 12 (1) (c) of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, No. 29 of 2015 as amended; two, the Budget Framework Paper 2018 in accordance with Item 1 (a) of the Schedule of the Public Finance Management Act, No. 17 of 2015; three, the Medium Term Debt Management Strategy, 2018 – 2020 in accordance with Section 5, II 5 (3) of the Public Debt Management Act, No. 28 of 2015, as amended; and fourthly, the Fiscal Risks Statements, in accordance with Section 12 (1) (e) of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, No. 29 of 2015.

Mr. Speaker, a review of our 2017 Macro-Economic Performance, which includes the projections and assumptions for the period, 2018 to 2020 also accompanies this Budget Statement. Mr. Speaker, this is clear and convincing evidence that we are doing things much better. **(Applause)** So, I want to thank the Almighty God for His mercies and blessings and for steering our beloved country along this path of sustainable development.

Mr. Speaker, I am inspired by the Scripture from the book of Jeremiah Chapter 29 and verse 11, taken from the New King James Version, which states, and I quote: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Mr. Speaker, I am excited and optimistic about the future of this beautiful country. Every single Grenadian, who cares, man, boy or girl should also be, too. I am confident in our collective capacities to advance our Nation's progress.

Mr. Speaker, we have demonstrated to the world that the people of this small country are capable of doing great things. Mr. Speaker, as a result of Grenada's leadership roles in CARICOM, the CARICOM Development Bank, the Small States Forum and the role of Science and Technology in the entire Caribbean Region, we have been able to leverage benefits, not only for ourselves, but for the Region, as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, Grenada has benefited from an increase allocation under the World Bank's International Development Assistance (IDA), 18 Replenishment, which is being

frontloaded and fast-tracked. In other words, Mr. Speaker, we are getting more of our total IDA allocation of US$67 m, much sooner than we would have otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, Grenada is also benefitting from increased technical assistance and enhanced reputational accolades, regionally and internationally. Coming out of the Home Grown Programme, Mr. Speaker, Grenada is emerging as a model of good practices in fiscal consolidation and governance, structural reforms and engagement with a wide cross-section of stakeholders in Public Policy Consensus.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, Grenada will be hosting a major Climate Smart Coalition Retreat of high profile donors, next week, chaired jointly by Sir Richard Branson and myself, and with the goal of building resilience in the Caribbean Region. The event will see the participation of regional Prime Ministers and Governments, regional institutions such as CDB, CARICOM and the OECS, as well as other major global Private Sector entities and institutions, like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the IDB, OECD, UNDP, the World Bank and others.

Mr. Speaker, on October 20th, 2017, Her Excellency, Governor-General, delivered the Throne Speech and articulated that the overreaching focus of the Government will be the Economy, Society and the Environment. Consistent, Mr. Speaker, with this strategic focus, this Budget elaborates on the Policies and Programmes that will be pursued in 2018, to expand our Economy, advance our social development and protect our environment.

Mr. Speaker, the theme chosen for the 2018 Budget, and I quote: ***'Safeguarding our Gains and Continuing our Progress.'*** It actually captures the present moment and our current course.

Mr. Speaker, we have come a long way, achieving quite a lot, especially in the past four (4) years, and we ought not to become complacent now. We must and we must safeguard our hard won gains. We must move forward, as a united people, so that progress can be maintained.

Mr. Speaker, with this introduction, I want to turn your attention to the economic developments, globally, regionally and locally, to provide the context for this Budget.

Global and Economic Performance and Prospects

Mr. Speaker, according to the World Economic Outlook Report, released last month, global growth is estimated at 3.6% in 2017 and projected to increase to 3.7% in 2018. Mr. Speaker, for 2017, growth in the economies of our main trading partners, the US and the UK, is estimated at 2.2% and 1.7%, respectively. In 2018, growth is projected to decelerate in the UK to 1.5% and to increase slightly in the US to 2.3%.

Regional and Economic Performance and Prospects

Mr. Speaker, closer to home, in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU), the provisional estimate is that the average growth would be restricted to 1.3% in 2017, largely because of contractions in Anguilla and Dominica, as a result of the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma and Maria, respectively. The average growth in the ECCU is projected to accelerate to 3.9% in 2018, underpinned by Hurricane Rehabilitation activities, as well as sizeable investment projects in Public Infrastructure and in the Tourism Industry.

Domestic Economic Performance and Prospects

Mr. Speaker, Grenada's economy has been on a consistent path of economic expansion since 2013, and is poised to experience its fifth consecutive year of growth in 2017. Growth of 4.5%, conservatively estimated, in real terms, is provisionally estimated for the year and an improvement from the 3.7% growth experienced in 2016. This uptake in economic activity in 2017 is fuelled, Mr. Speaker, by expansion in the Construction Sector and in the Tourism Sector, Private Education and Manufacturing Sectors. Growth in 2018 is conservatively, again, projected to be 3.3%.

Mr. Speaker, the results of the 2017 Labour Force Survey indicate that relative to 2016, the Employed Labour Force expanded and the unemployed Labour Force declined by two thousand, eight hundred and twenty-two (2,822) individuals, resulting in a reduction in unemployment rate, from 28.2% in 2016, to 24% in 2017, **(applause)** a 4% plus decline in one year, Mr. Speaker.

Fiscal Performance

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding payments of over $17.9 m to Public Workers in 2017, which includes a 3% increase in wages, increments and one-off payments and the reduction in Personal Income Tax rate, from 15% to 10% for individuals earning between three thousand and five thousand per month, Grenada's fiscal position continues to be strong. Mr. Speaker, a primary surplus of 4.7% of GDP is provisionally estimated for 2017, the third consecutive year of primary surplus, the first time in the history of this country. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, by the end of 2017, the following results are expected, relative to the 2017 approved Budget: Current Revenues of $678.6 m, compared to a target of $657.2 m; Grants of $95.7 m compared to a target of $151.9 m; Current Expenditure of $590.8 m, compared to a target of $599 m; Capital Expenditure of $117.5 m, compared to a target of $154.3 m; Customs and Excise Division collections are expected to reach $328.7 m, compared to a target of $321.5 m, an over performance, you can say, of $7.2 m. The Inland Revenue Department is estimated to collect $326.7 m, compared to a target of $309.4 m, an over performance of $17.3 m.

Mr. Speaker, I, therefore wish to thank the management and staff of our Revenue Collection Agencies, for their excellent performance for yet another year, and ask them to strive to do even better next year. **(Applause)** Further details on the economic performance can be found in Annex 1 of this Budget Statement.

Public Debt and Debt Restructuring

Mr. Speaker, Public Debt, as a ratio of GDP has progressively declined over the period 2015 to 2017, moving from 86.4%, in 2015 to 79% in 2016, and bearing in mind it was 108% in 2013. It is further estimated, Mr. Speaker, to be reduced to $68.9% at the end of 2017, primarily due to the successful debt restructuring engaged by this Government over that period.

Mr. Speaker, overall, I am pleased to report that, as a result of this successful debt restructuring exercise, Grenada will benefit from stock reductions, totalling $372.3 m, or 12.4% of GDP by the end of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, the tremendous cost savings resulting from this debt restructuring means that funds are now available for investment, more funds, that is, in our Nation's Health, Education, Social Services and other critical services of public importance. **(Applause)**

Update on BAICO & CLICO

Mr. Speaker, the Heads of Government of CARICOM continue to view the BAICO/CLICO matter of recovering Policyholders' interests, as a regional problem, which requires a regional solution. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Grenada pledges to do our utmost in encouraging maximum collection against the US$121.9 m Judgment, secured against the former Directors of BAICO and CL Financial, the Parent Company. More of this would be at the Annex to the back of this Statement.

Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2018

Mr. Speaker, the Budget is anchored on our current country's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2014 – 2018, as well as the Fiscal Responsibility Act. It focuses on the achievements of 2017 and outlines Government's Priority Programmes for 2018.

Budget and Financing Summary

Mr. Speaker, the 2018 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure provide for a total expenditure, including principal repayments and Public Debt of one billion, one hundred and twelve million, thirty-nine thousand, nine hundred and thirty-eight dollars ($1,112,039,938.00), Mr. Speaker, and that is real billion, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** The Budget is summarised, as follows: Recurrent Revenue - $710.4 m; Recurrent Expenditure - $607 m; Current Account Surplus - $103.4 m; Capital Expenditure - $171.3 m; Primary Surplus after Grants - $147.8 m; Overall Surplus after Grants - $80.1 m; Principal Repayments/Amortization - $333.7 m.

The top allocations, by Vote, are as follows:

i. Public Debt - $401.5 m, 36.1% of total expenditure;
ii. The Ministry of Education and Human Resource - $112.1 m, 10.1% of total Expenditure;

iii. The Ministry of Finance and Energy - $84.7 m, 7.6% of total expenditure;
iv. The Ministry of Health, Social Security and International Business - $82.3 m, 7.4% of total expenditure;
v. The Ministry of Communications, Works, Physical Development, Public Utilities, ICT and Community Development - $61.2 m, 5.5% of total Expenditure;
vi. Pensions and Gratuities - $56.4 m, 5.1% of total expenditure;
vii. Police/Security - $50.9 m, 4.6% of total expenditure;
viii. The Ministry of Youth and Sports - $41.8 m, 3.8% of total expenditure;
ix. The Ministry of Social Development and Housing - $39.7 m, 3.6% of total expenditure;
x. The Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Planning - $35.1 m, 3.2% of total expenditure;
xi. The Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation and Culture - $25.7 m, 2.3% of total expenditure;
xii. The Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and the Environment - $24.7 m, 2.2% of total expenditure.

Annex (2), at the back of this Statement, Mr. Speaker, provides for more details on the 2018 Budget allocation.

I now to turn to Safeguarding our Gains

Mr. Speaker, in 2016, we successfully completed our three-year Home Grown Structural Adjustment Programme, with the final Review conducted in March, 2017. The Programme was supported by the IMF and other developmental partners. Mr. Speaker, we are heartened by the many fiscal, structural and institutional reforms that were implemented during the programme, that have yielded tremendous results for our country. Mr. Speaker, our fiscal wounds are being healed. Persistent deficits have been turned into surpluses, and our Public Debt is on a downward trajectory.

Additionally, there is now a Fiscal Overseer, so to speak, to keep the Government's fiscal public finances in check. The new Fiscal Responsibility Oversight

Committee (FROC) was launched in August, this year, and it is the first of its kind in CARICOM. The Committee would help to promote good fiscal governance in our country, and it is supported and backed by an Act of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, we could not have achieved such remarkable results, without the solidarity, the commitment, the sacrifice and ownership of the reforms by all our people, and I mean, all. Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank the Grenadians workers, which, of course, includes the leadership of the Trade Union Movement, both in the Public and Private Sectors, and all the Social Partners, for contributing to the success of our Home Grown Programme. Without them, it could not be done.

Mr. Speaker, now that the programme has ended, the natural question that arises, what now? Mr. Speaker, the answer is extremely clear. We have to secure and build on our progress, so that more developmental dividends can accrue to future generations.

Mr. Speaker, to do so, we will be doing the following:

i. Embedding fiscal discipline;
ii. Managing fiscal risks;
iii. Modernizing our Public Sector Systems to make them fit for purposes of the 21st Century and beyond;
iv. Building our economic resilience;
v. Being strategic and results-oriented in our approach to long-term developmental planning.

Mr. Speaker, I will now address each of them, in turn; embedding fiscal discipline. Mr. Speaker, our central fiscal objective is to manage our public finances in a manner that is consistent with the stipulations of the Fiscal Responsibility Law. Mr. Speaker, there are three (3) ways to generate a fiscal surplus; one is to contain expenditure; another is to increase revenue and the third is to do both at the same time.

With respect to Expenditure, Mr. Speaker, we'll further improve the management of our wage Bill. At the start of the Home Grown Programme, Wages, Salaries and Pensions accounted for seventy cents (70¢) of every dollar collected in revenue. Mr.

Speaker, I am heartened to say, they now account for around 45% of every dollar collected. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, we will also continue to reduce wastage and other problems in the Public Service and streamline capital expenditures that are not financed from Grants. Mr. Speaker, as it relates to revenue we will continue our efforts to enhance revenue administration, as well as compliance enforcements and collections.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognise and thank all the taxpayers of this nation for their individual and collective contributions to the development of our beautiful country **(applause)**, and I am speaking to those who are meeting the fundamental responsibility. I encourage everyone, therefore, to put country above self by meeting your fundamental responsibility to your country.

Managing Fiscal Risks

Mr. Speaker, Pension liabilities pose a significant fiscal challenge to our country. But, we are committed to addressing this issue with fiscal responsibility, while at the same time bringing justice to those Public Officers, who are now retired, as well as those who will be entering into retirement in the near future. Everyone is aware that this Government began the process of resolving the longstanding issue of Pensions to retired Public Officers. It is the first time, Mr. Speaker, that the matter of Pension has received the full attention of Government, as a matter of public policy. The Unions and Associations have been very engaged with the Government, in a collaborative manner, in an effort to have this enormous, but important matter resolved. The Government has established a Pensions Secretariat, with a dedicated staff, to give technical and administrative support to this process.

Mr. Speaker, to date the Government has submitted proposals on the way forward, which the Unions and the Associations are now considering. Government is confident that while a comprehensive final solution is not yet immediately before us, it has, nonetheless, indicated its willingness to possibly make some pre-payments to already retired Public Officers who have difficulty making ends meet and we know about them. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank all involved for their patience and cooperation, as we collaboratively work together to resolve this significant Pension matter. The Nation and the workers affected are depending on us all.

Building Economic Resilience

Mr. Speaker, safeguarding our gains and strengthening our economic resilience go hand-in-hand. We will therefore continue to build fiscal buffers. We will borrow on concessional terms only to keep our debt burden manageable, as well as help to divert resources away from Debt servicing towards projects and programmes that are geared at reducing our economic vulnerabilities while simultaneously creating employment. **(Applause)**

Modernising the Public Sector

Mr. Speaker, our Modern Fiscal Responsibility Law will not be effectively implemented with out-dated Public Sector systems and processes. In this regard, funding from the World Bank is being sought to support the implementation of the recently completed Public Service Management Reform Strategy 2017 to 2019.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018 the Department of Public Administration will continue to implement key elements of the Reform Strategy and will expand its Employee Assistance Programme and operationalize the Human Resource Management Information System.

I now turn to Education and Human Resource Development. Mr. Speaker, we all know that education matters a great deal for our socio economic development. Some of our major accomplishments of 2017 are as follows:

1. **Scholarship and Training -** One hundred and forty-four (144) scholarships were awarded, at an approximate value of $39.5 m, with over one hundred (100) young people pursuing training opportunities locally and abroad. **(Applause)**
2. **Rehabilitation of School Infrastructure** - Mr. Speaker, students at St. Patrick's Anglican Primary, St. Mary's R.C., St. Dominic's R.C. Pre-Primary School returned to fully refurbished schools during this year. **(Applause)** Work has commenced, in like manner, on St. Theresa's R.C. Pre-school in Vincennes and

Holy Cross R.C. in Munich. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, major works have been completed for St. George's Methodist, Constantine Methodist and the relocation of Bishop's College.

3. **Teachers' Incentives -** Mr. Speaker, our Nation's teachers received significant monitory contributions in 2017, including almost a half a million dollars in incentive allowances. Additionally, one hundred and seventy-one (171) teachers were regularised through definitive appointments in 2017 to the tune of millions of dollars. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, in 2018 a number of schools will receive major renovation and rehabilitation works. Designs and drawings are being completed to soon begin work on Bishop's College in Carriacou, SDA Comprehensive Secondary School, Presentation Brothers' College and St. Joseph's Convent in St. George's.

Additionally, we will continue the regularisation process of our Nation's Educators, because there are many more to go. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the CDB Grant Financing of approximately one million dollars ($1 m) will be used to train Principals, Teachers and Ministry staff to help improve the overall outcomes of our Education Sector. In 2018, the Ministry of Education and Human Resource has been allocated $112.1 m, as already stated.

I now turn to Healthcare. Mr. Speaker, our country does not have a lot of assets. But, Mr. Speaker, one that is important is that of the health of our people. That is why Government continues to work tirelessly, to improve service delivery. Mr. Speaker, the journey towards the introduction of the National Health Insurance System continues with technical assistance from the University of the West Indies to ensure that all citizens can have access to essential healthcare regardless of their employment status and ability to pay at the point of service. Everyone's health is important. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the National Health Insurance Secretariat was launched three (3) weeks ago and we are diligently working to establish the framework for the implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI). An

Electronic Medical Records System is also currently being implemented in all Health Facilities, which would provide ready access to patient medical records.

Mr. Speaker, we have our share of non communicable diseases in the Caribbean. And, while the Region is fighting this plague, we must rightfully cater for the effects that these diseases have on our own people, through renal failure and other ailments. To address the problems of dialysis care, the Ministry of Health has engaged in a partnership with SGU to have dialysis delivered at the General Hospital by January 2018. **(Applause)** In addition, Mr. Speaker, this would be complemented with a Public/ Private/Partnership that would have mobile dialysis services offered to our citizens in 2018. **(Applause)** We are also now able to have a registry of diabetic patients, as well as other persons at high risk for NCDs.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of infrastructure, work has commenced on the retrofitting of Princess Alice Hospital. Additional work is also planned for Health Facilities in Carriacou in 2018. The second phase, Mr. Speaker, of construction of the General Hospital is nearing completion and is expected to be commissioned in early 2018. In 2018, also, the Ministry of Health, Social Security and International Business will receive an allocation of $82.3 m.

Housing

Mr. Speaker, access to decent and affordable housing is a fundamental human right, which is why we continue to provide basic shelter and house repair assistance for citizens who are in need. We are vigorously pursuing, Mr. Speaker, our Home Ownership Agenda and lifting the housing standards for our people of our Nation. Mr. Speaker, one hundred and seventeen (117) persons received financing under the Soft Loan Programme in 2017 with a total disbursement amounting to over two million dollars ($2 m).

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, under the National Home Repair and Improvement Programme, more than one thousand, three hundred (1,300) individuals received assistance to improve their housing conditions in 2017, at a cost of over $5.5 m.

Mr. Speaker, the second phase of the Chinese Low Income Housing Programme commences in December 2017 as was indicated and committed to me by the distinguished Chinese Ambassador, just recently. The Contractor has already been chosen for this Housing Project, which will provide homes for six hundred and forty-seven (647) families and is to be constructed in Beausejour in St. George's, Corinth in St. David, Diamond in St. Mark, the Villa in St. Patrick and Dumfries in Carriacou.

Social Protection

Mr. Speaker, our Social Protection Programmes are designed to assist the poorest and most vulnerable in our society. Our flagship social protection programme, SEED, which means, Support for Education Empowerment and Development, has spent $9.3 m, from January to September of this year, with a total SEED payout expected to be, by the end of the year, fourteen million dollars ($14 m).

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the SEED Programme, we have secured Grants to the tune of over three million dollars ($3 m) from different developmental partners, which will fund a number of Social Protection Programmes in 2018. Accordingly, for 2018, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Social Development is allocated $39.7 m.

Mr. Speaker, the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF), is another important component of our overall social protection programme. The BNTF is a Poverty Reduction Programme, funded by CDB and the Government of Grenada; the priority areas are the basic community access and drainage enhancement; Education and Human Resource Development; Water and Sanitation Systems Enhancements and others. A total of twenty-three (23) subprojects were approved and implemented under Cycle 7 and 8 of the BNTF, which ran concurrently. The 9th Cycle would commence in January 2018. Grant funding, in the amount of $2.5 m has been secured to implement BNTF 9. Mr. Speaker, additional details on the BNTF Programme are to be found in Annex 3, at the back of this document.

Youth Development

Mr. Speaker, the Budget Consultation included for the first time, an exclusive engagement with Youths. We have listened to what they have said about the issues

and challenges that they face, including child abuse, deviance and unemployment. Mr. Speaker, I would now turn to address each of them in turn.

Mr. Speaker, it is extremely alarming that in 2017, approximately 60% of all the cases before the Courts are related to Child Sexual Abuse and other abuses, a very significant statement. Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear on this issue of child abuse and rape, in all forms. Mr. Speaker, harassment, whether it is in the workplace or wherever, they are evil scourge that tears at the heart of the social fabric of our society and must be stopped by all and sundry, now. **(Applause)** There can't be any politics in that. No matter what side of the political fence it comes, it is fundamentally something that has to affect all of us.

Mr. Speaker the Ministry of Social Development has stepped up its efforts to deal with these issues. A National Committee for the Prevention of Sexual Abuse was set up, with a mandate to make recommendation to the State and other stakeholders, need everybody on board. Mr. Speaker, in 2018 a Special Victims Unit will be established to further assist victims and their families with counselling and other support services. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, a special Hotline would be installed to offer advice and information and other services, and if we have to expose them publicly, we will do so. Sufficient Budgetary Allocation will be made to implement all the planned activities.

Mr. Speaker, we have also heard the overwhelming cries of our people and we are therefore pushing to enact the necessary Legislative changes for the establishment of a Sex Offenders Registry that all can see. They will be exposed. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear, while the Government is budgeting more to deal with this issue, it can never be enough to deal with this problem. As a people, our collective consciences must be shaken, and we must find the resolve to take back our Communities and protect our children, our young people and our society. **(Applause)**

Youth at Risk

Mr. Speaker, some of our young people are at risk of falling into deviant behaviours, and as such, we have a responsibility to intervene to prevent them from doing so, or try to rehabilitate them when they do. Mr. Speaker, the Government

continues the process of reform of the Juvenile Justice System and improving the Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre. Government has also implemented Legislation that would remove conviction records of juveniles for minor infractions over a period of time, so that their entire future is not affected as a result, **(applause)** and that they can obtain decent livelihoods upon completion of their sentences.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of programmes on stream, which will continue in 2018 designed for rehabilitation of our Youth at Risk. Skills training and employment opportunities are foremost on our minds. Those programmes include the Aspire Programme, Project Reach, the FLY and the M-POWER Programmes.

Youth Empowerment and Employment

Mr. Speaker we all know that unemployment in general and youth unemployment, in particular, is a serious challenge, that our Nation faces and the entire Caribbean also face. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we are fully committed to confronting this challenge head on, as we have been doing, but even more so in 2018, even while we continue to strengthen the new IMANI Programme.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018, Government will work towards ensuring that: (i) all new Public Sector Procurement Contracts will include a Social Clause that encourages Contractors to provide apprenticeships and employment for a quota of young people, as part of their workforce. **(Applause)**

Secondly, the Micro Enterprise Development Fund will be strengthened to allow it to tailor financial products to better suit the needs and repayment capacities of the aspiring entrepreneurs.

Sports

Mr. Speaker, Sports is an important avenue, as we all know for youth empowerment and opportunities. Our athletes, who are excelling, regionally and internationally are a testimony to this. In 2017, we all celebrated the proud moment, with the renaming of the Athletics Stadium to the Kirani James Athletics Stadium during the highly commended Inaugural Grenada Invitational, which saw over two hundred (200) high profile Athletes competing right here, on Grenadian soil, and showcasing

Grenada on ESPN, to the entire world. We expect to see the new one start next year, April.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018, the Ministry will continue its important work, which includes the refurbishment and lighting of facilities at La Sagesse and the National Stadium and other Sporting Facilities throughout the country, including Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

National Security

Mr. Speaker, the Royal Grenada Police Force remains committed to providing a safe and secure environment for citizens and visitors alike. Indeed, we must take pride, Mr. Speaker, in our country, as being one of the safest places on earth to live. **(Applause)** Others will want us to believe otherwise. Mr. Speaker, the RGPF's vigilance and dedication are witnessed each day. I am pleased to inform the Nation that the statistics have shown that reported crime contracted by approximately 5% in 2017, from that of 2016; the third consecutive year of decline. We have problems, but we are moving on.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the RGPF has maintained an outstanding detection rate of 70%, and I could attest to this, when I speak to my colleagues in the Region, where, in some cases, less than 20% detection rate. In 2017, three hundred and nineteen (319) Officers benefitted from training and developmental courses from over eighteen (18) training programmes locally and abroad. Mr. Speaker, approximately one hundred (100) Officers were also promoted and more will be so, in the not too distant future.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018, the RGPF will sustain activities to address problems of crime and disorder, to ensure safer communities and an even more efficient Force. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, a new Border Control System will be implemented and the Machine Readable Passport System will be upgraded to the E-Passport System, which will be accessible to all Grenadians by June, 2018.

Integrity in Public Office

Mr. Speaker, the Integrity Commission continues its important role in promoting accountability, transparency and good governance in this country; not words alone, but by practice. In 2017, the Commission continued its Public Education Outreach Programme, and the receipts of its second round of Declaration, as it deepened its Asset Declaration System. Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that this Representative and Minister, is the only one, so far, that has declared his assets, publicly.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018, the Commission will expand its Education Outreach Programme and its continued receipts of declaration through its Asset Declaration Systems and other initiatives.

Continuing our Progress to Strengthen our Resilience to Environmental Shocks

Mr. Speaker, in all our efforts to advance social and economic development, it would all go to naught, if we do not simultaneously, focus on protecting and preserving our environment. Mr. Speaker, the utter devastation of some of our neighbouring islands by Hurricane Irma and Maria has brought to the fore some daunting realities about Climate Change. Strengthening disaster management, as well, as physical planning and climate adaptation and mitigation must be key priorities, in this regard.

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Mr. Speaker, in 2017, Grenada mobilised resources of more than two hundred and eighty million dollars ($280 m) in grants and concessionary loans to finance new projects in the Public Sector Investment Programme, one hundred and twenty-three million ($123 m) of which were projects that will build our resilience to climate change.

Mr. Speaker, a World Bank Policy Loan of twenty-five million US dollars (US$25 m) is currently being appraised for possible disbursement in June 2018 for projects and overall climate adaptation and mitigation, protection of natural and marine resources and the proper physical planning.

Grenada, Mr. Speaker, has also been called upon to lead the charge, to ensure that our neighbours get the requisite assistance for their rebuilding efforts, and in the

process to forge support for climate changes, generally speaking. As a result, Mr. Speaker, of our collaborated advocacy, at the regional level, the World Bank and other institutions are prepared to modify, on grant financing, to countries hit by hurricanes; thus ensuring that concessional financing goes to those countries that need it, rather than on the basis of GDP per capita income, which does not make sense.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, Grenada has also pioneered a Hurricane Clause, at the IMF level, in the Structural Adjustment Programme, which provides Grenada with a moratorium on its debt repayments for six (6) to twelve (12) months, in the event of a hurricane. The IMF is encouraging, as the Managing Director, Lagarde did in Jamaica just last week, encouraging all countries to take a page from Grenada's book. **(Applause)**

The European Investment Bank, Mr. Speaker, and the Caribbean Development Bank have also set up an emergency Post-Disaster Reconstruction Financing Initiative, to help recover from recent hurricane events. This amount is in addition to the May signing of a US one hundred and twenty million dollars (US$120 m) Climate Action Loan for the entire Caribbean, and this was further announced and complimented with further support, at the recent meeting in Germany that I attended on behalf of the CARICOM Region.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, only last week, with our leadership at the CARICOM level, we concluded a Donor Conference, which most of you would have seen, with pledges from over $1.4b including one billion ($1b) from the Inter-American Development Bank, to assist Caribbean countries in building resilience in areas such as Infrastructure, Housing Construction, Energy and Coastal Development and Agriculture. **(Applause)** I hasten to say, Mr. Speaker, this is a real billion dollar.

Mr. Speaker, this Government envisions an economy that is vibrant and dynamic, where wealth can easily be created and where decent and good paying jobs are generated and sustained. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we remain steadfast in providing a supportive and conducive environment in which businesses can develop and expand, and which the potential of our Productive Sectors can of necessity, be unleashed.

Agriculture

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to make strategic investments in the Agricultural Sector, with the aim of increasing agricultural productivity, expanding employment, enhancing Food and Nutritional Security. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, included on the priority list for the Ministry of Agriculture in 2018 are some of the following: execution of the National Land Bank Project funded by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The aim of this project is to bring a number of idle agricultural lands into production. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we will also strengthen the link between agri-business and the involvement of youth in the Agricultural Sector, with the establishment of a Small Agri-Business Co-operatives across our Tri-Island State. We are also arranging for available lands at the Grand Bras Estate and other Government Estates and lands to be used for our young people, for this important initiative.

Fisheries

Mr. Speaker, with respect to Fisheries in 2018, the Ministry will be upgrading the Fish Markets and related services, to ensure highest compliance, and strengthening the Marine Protected Areas Programme, to enhance the management of critical marine species and habitats.

Marketing and National Importing Board (MNIB)

Mr. Speaker, the Marketing and National Importing Board (MNIB) continues to play a vital role in the Agricultural Sector. In 2017, with grant support from the Caribbean Development Bank and counterpart funding from the Central Government, MNIB was able to renovate its Pack Houses, and today it is the only Pack House in the OECS with a Food Safety Certificate. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, a key metric for the measurement of income within our Farming Community must be seen as the average price per pound that is paid to farmers. In other words, they must become viable. Mr. Speaker, in 2017, the average price per pound was $1.54, as compared to one dollar and thirty-eight cents ($1.38) in 2016 and one dollar and twenty-eight cents ($1.28) in 2012. Over the past five (5) years, farmers'

income, therefore, has increased by almost 20%, on average. **(Applause)** In 2018, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Agriculture was allocated $24.7 m.

Tourism

Mr. Speaker, we all know that Tourism is vital to our economic survival, and, therefore, we have to continuously upgrade our product offerings to maintain a competitive edge. In 2017, key activities of the Ministry of Tourism will focus on the development of various Tourism sites, expansion of community-based Tourism products and services, product enhancements and, of course, the marketing of our beautiful and safe country.

Mr. Speaker, based on the performance, thus far, this year, it is estimated that total stay-over and cruise passenger arrivals will increase by 6.5% and 3%, respectively, in 2017 relative to 2016. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to upgrade our products and facilities and build on the successes of 2017.

Petroleum Development

Mr. Speaker, our hydrocarbon exploration is part of our broader strategic development objectives of economic diversification and structural transformation to create more wealth and jobs for our people. In July 2017, one of the most sophisticated and modern State-of-the-Art Drilling Platforms, in the world, commenced the first petroleum drilling operation in Grenada's waters.

Mr. Speaker, the ongoing exploratory drilling that is being carried out by Global Petroleum Group Limited (GPG) has yielded encouraging results, which are subject to further analysis and evaluation, so we are cautiously optimistic. The Government of Grenada and GPG both eagerly anticipate verification and confirmation of the initial results, which will pave the way for subsequent commercial production.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for me to point out that in our pursuit of hydrocarbon development, modern technologies are being used to allow for the exploration to be done in an environmentally sustainable manner consistent with Grenada's overall sustainable development plans and advocacy. **(Applause)**

Blue Growth

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to push ahead with our Blue Growth agenda. With Grenada's economic *'blue'* space being seventy-five (75) times larger than our land space, the ocean offers tremendous potential to catapult our economic growth and development. Mr. Speaker, the Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development predicts that the ***'Blue Sector'*** can grow twice as fast as other Sectors by 2030. In 2017, Grenada co-chaired the United Nation's first international conference on the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on Oceans. Subsequently, a report was produced by the World Bank, touting Grenada's leadership on sustainable activities in Fisheries, Tourism, Coral Restoration, Turtle Protection, Marine Spatial Planning and other areas. Mr. Speaker, Grenada is therefore poised to attract significant investment in all these areas, which will ultimately lead to hundreds of new quality jobs. **(Applause)** Already, a sum of sixteen million dollars ($16 m) from Grenada's total allocation of sixty-seven million dollars ($67 m) from IDA's 18th Replenishment will be used to advance the development of the Blue Economy.

Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)

Mr. Speaker, ICT is yet another important pathway towards increasing our economic competitiveness, wealth creation and job opportunities for all our people, particularly our young folks. Mr. Speaker, this year, the Government of Grenada partnered with the National Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (NTRC) to host what we call *'Girls in ICT',* with ten (10) Secondary Schools participating in a Robotics Competition. We also sent students from TAMCC and Secondary Schools to participate in an International Robotics Competition.

Mr. Speaker, robotics is the way of the future and we are therefore opening pathways for competitiveness and entrepreneurship of our young people throughout the length and breadth of our country. **(Applause)**

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the provision of Laptops and other ICT equipment, facilitated Fifth Form students, in all Secondary Schools, to successfully sit their CSEC

exams online. **(Applause)** Grenada is one of the few Islands, in the Region, in which all Secondary Schools are equipped with the ICT facilities to sit such exams.

Small Business Development

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to supporting small business development with the aim of creating jobs and increasing incomes of our people. Mr. Speaker, the Market Access and Rural Enterprise Development Programme (MAREP), is a Poverty Reduction Programme with funding support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development, CDB and the Government of Grenada.

Mr. Speaker, in 2017, one hundred and ten (110) rural men and women received training under MAREP, in areas, such as Business Management, Entrepreneurial Skills, Promotion and Branding and Customer Service.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, over one hundred and fifty (150) Enterprises continue to receive business hand-holding support. Furthermore, twenty-one (21) rural men and women involved in Farming and Agro-Processing received income generating support through market linkages, direct sales and negotiation opportunities with purchasers.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that the progress and results of MAREP has led the Government to embark on another six-year programme through financing agreement with the IFAD and CDB. MAREP's programme will end in March 2018 and the new programme called '***the Climate-Smart Agriculture and Rural Enterprise Programme (SAEP), 2018 to 2024***' will immediately be implemented.

Mr. Speaker, the major activities to be undertaken under SAEP includes the rehabilitation and construction of thirty (30) Farm Access Roads, at a cost of $8.1 m, and the installation of Irrigation Systems, at a cost of $5.3 m to be financed by CDB. Government of Grenada's contribution of $5.4 m will be for operating costs and staff salaries. Mr. Speaker, more details on MAREP and SAEP are presented in Annex 4 of this document.

Mr. Speaker, the Small Business Development Fund (SBDF) managed by the Grenada Development Bank, approved seven hundred and fifty (750) loans in 2017, valued at $8.1 m. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, workshops and other Capacity Building

sessions were facilitated, which provided customers with hands-on training, in Record Keeping, Financial Management and Marketing and Sales. Mr. Speaker, SBDF will continue to provide support to small and medium-sized Enterprises. Mr. Speaker, additional details on SBDF are provided in Annex 5 of this document.

Real Estate Development

Mr. Speaker, a major real estate company has provided the following information on the strength of Grenada's Real Estate Market, and I quote: ***"Real Estate activity in 2017 is on track to match the high level set in 2016. Sales through November of 2017 totalled more than one hundred million dollars ($100 m). Sales activity was dominated by Grenadian purchasers, especially young families, making more than 85% of the total transaction values, with average sales of over two hundred and thirteen thousand dollars ($213,000.00), a combination of vacant land and homes. Carriacou attracted the greatest number of non-Grenadians to its shores, with 25% of all foreign purchasers choosing Carriacou."***

Citizenship by Investment Programme

Mr. Speaker, Grenada's Citizenship by Investment Programme (CBI), which commenced in 2014, has exceeded all expectations in 2017, and is now regarded as one of the highest rated CBI Programmes in the world. Let those who have ears to hear, let them hear.

Mr. Speaker, there was a 50% increase in applications received in 2017, yielding receipts of $128.4 m, as of the end of October 2017, $128.4 m. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the IMF lauded our Government for setting up the legal framework to prudently manage the inflows from the CBI Programme, and declared the programme to be Gold standard amongst the other regional programmes for transparency. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, anyone, therefore, who tries to undermine the integrity of the Grenada's CBI Programme, should refer to the commendations of the Regional and International Communities before they attempt to do so. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, Henley and Partners Global Residence and Citizenship Programme Report, published

earlier this month, rated Grenada's Investment Migration Programme, as the first, in the world, for residency requirement, investment requirement and physical visit requirements. For 2018, we have adopted conservative assumptions for receipts from the CBI Programme to the tune of $81.1 m.

Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs

Mr. Speaker, economic activity on our Sister Isle has been robust, boosted by both Private Sector investments, as well as major public infrastructural works. In 2017, infrastructure works included upgrades on five (5) roads on the Island of Carriacou and the Main Road in Petite Martinique. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the Desalination Plant and Solar Photo Voltaic System for Petite Martinique was installed and commissioned.

Mr. Speaker, more homes and businesses in Petite Martinique and Carriacou are now benefitting significantly, from water from the Desalination Plant and connection to the National Water and Sewage Authority Distribution Networks. Mr. Speaker, by the end of 2017, the Carriacou Development Corporation (CDC) would have spent close to eleven million dollars ($11 m) on the development of Tyrrel Bay Marina and Boat Yard Project. For 2017, the average employment figures on that project were twenty-four (24) per week. For 2018, with additional construction, it is anticipated that the CDC will directly employ thirty-five (35) workers and more, indirectly, as the Marina progresses.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018, we look forward to the opening of a Budget Marine, Chandlery workshops for Carpenters and Mechanics, Machine Shops, Bars and Restaurants and other service related activities, more opportunities for the young people of our country. **(Applause)**

More broadly, Mr. Speaker, in 2018, additional roads will be upgraded and road safety will be enhanced along several areas, through the installation of guardrails. Additionally, work will advance on the upgrade of the Lauriston Mini Stadium and Recreational fields.

Mr. Speaker, our Sister Isle of Carriacou is very dependent on sea transport for the movements of goods, as well as persons. In that regard, Mr. Speaker, the existing Port at Hillsborough has and continues to pose a number of challenges for ship-owners

and users. Therefore, Government, through the Ports Authority, sought an alternative for Port Development. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that construction of this port facility is substantially completed and should begin operation early in 2018. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, this project, which is undertaken at an estimated cost of $3.5 m will bring tremendous benefits to the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)** The Port Project, in its construction phase, has, thus far, provided employment for close to twenty (20) persons from the Sister Isles.

Major Public Sector Projects

Mr. Speaker, strong economic and social infrastructure is a necessary pillar to support economic growth and development. In this regard, the Ministry of Works continues to undertake a comprehensive and cross-sectoral work programme.

Achievements in 2017, Mr. Speaker, include, under Roads**, t**he Bellevue Concrete Road, in its first phase, is now completed at a cost of $1.2 m, with twenty (20) workers provided with jobs. Second phase will take it to Mt. Moritz, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

The New Road Networks and Infrastructural Works, Mr. Speaker; works were completed in the following areas: Little Pandy, Beausejour, De Savary Village, the car park, the road leading to the Concord Waterfalls, the farm road in Bull-hill, Clozier. Works are also ongoing, employing about fifty (50) persons, in total, in such areas as La Sagesse, and Dr. Belle and Stony Ghutt in St. John. Those projects, at a cost of approximately twenty-one million dollars ($21 m) have employed over three hundred and twenty persons (320) persons. **(Applause)**

St. Patrick Road Network Upgrade

Mr. Speaker, the procurement process for construction started last month. In 2018, two hundred and fifty (250) persons are expected to be employed on that project. **(Applause)**

Grenada Agricultural Feeder Roads, Phase 3

Mr. Speaker, the Consultant has been mobilised for the design and supervision to commence this project, where some six hundred (600) persons are expected to be employed over the duration of this activity. **(Applause)**

Road Maintenance

The asphalt road maintenance works continued at a cost, to date, of four million dollars ($4 m) and over one hundred and fifty (150) employees. The Road Maintenance Debushing Programme completed its fourth fortnight at a total cost of eight million dollars ($8 m), employing an average of almost four thousand (4,000) persons, fortnightly.

Other Major Projects

The St. Patrick Breakwater Project

Mr. Speaker, works were completed on the first phase of $4.6 m, employing thirty (30) people from that area. The second phase should have begun already, or will soon begin.

The Gouyave Extreme Rainfall Project

Mr. Speaker, documents for procuring the services of a Contractor and tendering for the construction work have been completed, with allocation made for some one hundred (100) workers. **(Applause)**

Bridges

The Hubble Bridge in Gouyave

Mr. Speaker, the rebuilding is completed, with over twenty (20) workers being employed.

The Guayava Bridge in St. Patrick

This project is substantially completed, having employed over forty (40) persons.

The Lance Bridge in Gouyave

Mr. Speaker, work is progressing, with over forty (40) persons employed at one time or the other.

Retrofitting - The Grenville Bus Terminus

Retrofitting is ongoing and is expected to be completed by year end, employing some twenty (20) plus persons.

Mr. Speaker, retrofitting of the Mirabeau Abattoir has been completed and has employed about twenty (20) persons.

Buildings

The Grenada Houses of Parliament

Mr. Speaker, construction is almost completed, at an estimated cost, so far, of twenty-three million dollars ($23 m), and over one hundred (100) workers being employed.

I am happy to report that the final US one million dollars (US$1 m) was received last week from the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) **(applause)** with a further two million US dollars (US$2 m) anticipated from the Government of Mexico for the completion of this historic project, including all the necessary facilities inside. **(Applause)** The President of Mexico confirmed this with me a couple weeks ago.

Government House

Mr. Speaker, Government continues to be actively committed to the building of the Governor General's residence, another important symbol of our democracy. To that end, we have committed one million ($1 m) in the Budget to begin design of that project, with the aim of having boots on the ground in 2018. Already, we have reached for assistance from two (2) friendly Governments, and we anticipate favourable responses.

The Maurice Bishop International Airport

Mr. Speaker, a concessional loan of sixty-six million dollars ($66.0 m) was received from our good friends from the People's Republic of China for this project. **(Applause)** This will include, Mr. Speaker, Airport expansion, addition of another Runway, Mr. Speaker; we only have one, we would have two (2) soon; **(applause)** a bypass road and Passenger Terminals. The Contractor has already been chosen and work will begin early next month, providing hundreds of jobs in this process.

(Applause) Our distinguished Ambassador from China has confirmed this only last week.

Mr. Speaker, the ***Commercial and Intellectual Property Office (CAIPO) Building***; that building was recently refurbished, with ten (10) persons being provided jobs at a cost of seven hundred and sixty thousand dollars ($760,000.00), to accommodate some Government offices.

Mr. Speaker, other major plans for the Ministry in 2018 include:

- Continuation of the Road Improvement and Maintenance Programme.
- Special Projects Programme.
- Regional Disaster Risk Management Programme.
- Construction /Refurbishment of Government Buildings.
- Grenada Rock Fall and Landslip Climate Resilience Project.

Mr. Speaker, these projects of Public Works will yield approximately fifteen hundred (1,500) jobs in the coming year, and I mean real fifteen hundred (1,500) jobs, no makeup jobs, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, the UK-CIF Programme worth seventy-nine million dollars ($79.0 million). That grant was approved during 2017 for two (2) climate resilience and road infrastructural projects, is expected to commence in 2018, providing two hundred (200) jobs.

Mr. Speaker, ***Renewable Energy for Rural Development Phase II Project, over eighty million US dollars (US$80 m)***. Mr. Speaker, based on the success of Phase I, in which twenty–four (24) households and five (5) small Agro-Processors were provided with renewable Energy Systems, valued at US one hundred and seventy thousand dollars (US$170,000.00), the Republic of Korea will fund Phase II of this project, which will provide renewable and energy-efficient systems to households, businesses and communities. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, ***Green Climate Fund (GCF), one million ($1 m)***. Mr. Speaker, in June 2017, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) approved a Grant to assist in building ca-

pacity to access financing from GCF to support Climate Change Adaptation and mitigation.

Now, I now turn, Mr. Speaker, to ***Major Private Sector Projects*** and this is really where the jobs must come. Mr. Speaker, our country continues to enhance its investment readiness and has been attracting significant local and foreign investments, which are helping to boost growth and job creation.

Nevertheless, as a Government, and we are not afraid to, we also must also accept responsibility for the low Doing Business Ranking. It is our fault, we accept that. No one needs to tell us that. Now we have received that ranking over the last few years, and we would take the responsibility, as I said. We are not satisfied, Mr. Speaker. In that regard, we will explore a more focused approach to improve our ease of doing business by appointing a small Unit under the Ministry of Health, Social Security and International Business, comprising personnel from the Private Sector and Public Sector, as well as the Trade Unions and other Organisations whose sole purpose is to deal with all specific activities related to enhancing the Doing Business Climate. Funding will be made available to achieve this important objective.

Having said this, Mr. Speaker, you could have all the business ranking and you have no business, you're still in trouble. Mr. Speaker, having said that, we are heartened by the number of Private Sector projects being implemented in our country, even with this low Business Ranking. In 2017, the Grenada Investment Development Corporation (GIDC) facilitated the approval of thirty-six (36) projects, with estimated investments of seventy-three million dollars ($73.0 m), and the creation of eight hundred (800) new jobs. Some of these projects already have been completed, while several are in their implementation stages.

Summary details of some of these major Private Sector projects in implementation from 2016 and investment projects in that same period for 2017 also are as follows:

The Point at Petite Calivigny Resort - Mr. Speaker, Phase I of this project started in January of 2016, with an estimated cost of one hundred and sixty two million

dollars ($162 m), with twenty-four million dollars ($24 m) already invested. The project currently employs over eighty (80) construction workers and is expected to employ fifty (50) persons on its completion. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, Phase I is expected to be completed by March of 2018.

The KAWANA Bay Project - Mr. Speaker, the redevelopment of Flamboyant Hotel into a five (5) Star Kimpton branded hotel commenced in January this year. This project is estimated to cost one hundred and twenty-five million dollars ($125 m), with thirty-one million dollars ($31 m) invested to date, creating construction employment for approximately sixty (60) persons. Phase I of this project is expected to be completed by August 2018, adding forty-one (41) rooms to Grenada's current room stock. The second phase of this project will commence in January 2018, with fifty-two (52) new rooms and creating employment for two hundred (200) to three hundred (300) construction workers. **(Applause)** Over one hundred and sixty-two (162) permanent jobs are expected to be created on employment, on completion of this project.

The Levera Development in St. Patrick - Mr. Speaker, this Tourism Development Project has invested, to date, more than ten million dollars ($10 m). Construction employment has been created for over thirty (30) persons in St. Patrick and the surrounding areas. **(Applause)**

The Solamente Villa Limited - Mr. Speaker, the estimated cost of this luxury Villa Resort is twenty-seven million dollars ($27 m). Operations recently commenced, under Phase one of this Project, with seventy-five (75) to one hundred (100) Construction Workers employed, and twenty-five (25) permanent employees, once fully operational. **(Applause)**

Reese Investments - Mr. Speaker, this commercial complex of one hundred and fifty (150) hotel rooms with full amenities, entertainment facilities and a business centre, will represent an investment of thirty million dollars (US$30 m), and estimated next year, to employ over one hundred (100) persons. **(Applause)**

Hideaway True Blue Complex - Mr. Speaker, this twenty-one million ($21 m) condominium development will provide forty-two (42) fully furnished units. Construction

has already begun and is scheduled to be ready by July, 2018. This phase provides for at least fifty (50) construction jobs, with about seven (7) to ten (10) full-time jobs in the operational phase and about thirty (30) indirect jobs being generated out of this Enterprise.

Clarkes Court Marina - Mr. Speaker, in 2017, an additional investment of two million dollars ($2 m) was made, bringing the total investment to forty-five million dollars ($45 m). Thirty-five (35) permanent jobs have been created to date. Phase II and Phase III of this major project will see the development of additional accommodation facilities in 2018.

Serenite Estates Incorporated - Mr. Speaker, construction of this fifty-two (52) apartment tourism facility started in 2017, at an estimated cost of nine million dollars ($9 m), of which $1.5 m have been expended, thus far. Construction employment has been created for sixty (60) persons, with twenty-five (25) permanent employees upon completion.

The Silver Sands Resort Development - Mr. Speaker, this major luxury resort project is nearing completion, at an investment cost of sixty-five million dollars ($65 m), of which seventy-five million dollars ($75 m) has already been spent in 2017. It is expected to be opened in March 2018, with about one hundred and eighty (180) fulltime employment, Mr. Speaker, much, to the unhappiness of some, who did not want to see it happen. All sorts of environmental issues were being raised. There are currently two hundred and thirty (230) construction workers and thirty (30) internal staff to Management level. Over the past two and a half years, the project has created employment for over four hundred (400) Grenadians; jobs and more jobs, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Belmont Estate Fine Chocolate Incorporated - Mr. Speaker, that company has added the manufacture of chocolate to its portfolio, with an investment of over one million dollars ($1 m), creating employment for fourteen (14) persons.

Clear Harbour Call Centre - Mr. Speaker, this facility currently employs six hundred and twenty (620) persons, with plans to expand in 2018 by one hundred and twenty (120) employees.

Km2 Solutions - Mr. Speaker, this Call Centre in St. Andrew has added one hundred and sixty (160) employees to its operations in 2017, and later this week, on Wednesday, five hundred (500) employees would be added to the expanded facilities; jobs and more jobs, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

TRI Services Communication Ltd - Mr. Speaker, this small Call Centre operation commenced operation in 2017, employing thirty (30) persons, with plans to expand to one hundred (100) in 2018.

Spice Land Mall Expansion - Mr. Speaker, $6.7 m have been spent on this project, to date, of which five million dollars ($5 m) were spent in 2017. During construction, employment was created for seventy-five (75) persons. Fulltime employment is expected to increase to one hundred and fifty (150).

The Olympic Building Project - Mr. Speaker, one million dollars ($1 m) was spent on this project this year, creating employment for twenty-five (25) persons. Completion is scheduled for early 2018, with fulltime employment for six (6) persons.

Cane Company Limited & Renegade Rum Distillery - Mr. Speaker, to date, this company has invested in excess of four million dollars ($4 m) and has employed forty-seven (47) fulltime employees. Construction on the Distillery would commence in 2018. The proposed investment is estimated at twenty-eight million dollars ($28 m), with expected fulltime employment for approximately seventy (70) persons.

Bayside Plaza - Mr. Speaker, this will be Carriacou's first Shopping Complex, an international-branded Supermarket. **(Applause)** To date, $4.5 m have been invested and Phase I is expected to be completed in 2017. It is estimated that sixteen (16) to twenty (20) persons will gain permanent employment at the supermarket, while others will gain employment in the four (4) commercial spaces. Phase II of the project will start in 2018, with the construction of additional shopping facilities, restaurants and a Movie Theatre.

Mr. Speaker, I thought I had finished, you know, but more to come. There is still more Private Sector projects here.

Carriacou Marina Limited - Mr. Speaker, Carriacou Marina Limited is one of two Marina developments that have transformed the business and employment landscape of our Sister Isle. To date, investments of $2.9 m have been made. The business directly employs seventeen (17) persons and creates indirect employment for a further twenty (20) persons in Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

The Laluna Beach Resort and Villas - The second phase of the upgrade and expansion of this project will start in January 2018, with the construction of thirteen (13) new residences, a Restaurant and an Art Center with three (3) studios for an Artist Residency Programme. The investment is valued at sixty-four million dollars ($64 m). Employment during construction is expected to be over one hundred (100), with forty-five (45) full time employees, when the project becomes operational.

Grenada Schools Incorporated - This is a Charity, Mr. Speaker, dedicated to early learning and ensuring the literacy of all of our children by building and outfitting a Library in each of the fifty-six (56) Primary Schools throughout the length of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique at a cost of fourteen million dollars ($14 m). **(Applause)** By the end of 2017, Mr. Speaker, Grenada Schools Incorporated would have completed twenty (20) new Libraries throughout the country. Grenada Schools Incorporated, Mr. Speaker, has also been instrumental in assisting six (6) local authors to write their own books, using local illustrators, and having recently commissioned another seven (7) titles. **(Applause)** Five (5) persons are employed fulltime at their local offices, supported by three (3) local trustees. The Government is also supporting this important exercise financially.

St. George's University Expansion - Two (2) major projects, Mr. Speaker; a US twenty million dollars (US$20 m) Replacement Dorm, which will add ninety (90) beds on Campus and a US eighteen million (US$18 m) Multi-Use Facility. The expected completion date is August 2018. You're talking, Mr. Speaker, combined almost one hundred million dollars ($100 m) in further development in our country.

Mr. Speaker, other initiatives for 2018 that are aimed at boosting employment, productivity, and investments, include the following:

Strategic Investments in the Productive Sectors - Mr. Speaker, this is extremely important. I repeat, Strategic Investments in the Productive Sectors of Agriculture, Tourism and Manufacturing, at a sum, in the Budget document, of six million dollars ($6 m), and with plans to increase to ten million ($10 m), if the fiscal space is, in fact available, allows us. Government will work with the Tourism Authority, the Ministry of Agriculture, the MNIB and the Manufacturers Association, the Poultry Association, with specific concentration on assisting business, small hoteliers, small farmers, and small manufacturers. A planned action will soon be finalised by Cabinet for implementation in 2018, after consultations with various stakeholders, some of which already were mentioned. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, Government has repeatedly said that all Grenadians shared in the sacrifices of our Home Grown Programme, and all Grenadians, not just a small Sector or one Sector, all Grenadians should share in the benefits. **(Applause)** In that regard, Mr. Speaker, by June 2018, if the fiscal space allows, we will consider a number of measures, aimed at bringing fiscal relief and generating more disposable income in the hands of our people and these include:

1. Reducing the rate of Personal Income Tax in different categories by 5%. **(Applause)**
2. Reducing Corporate Income Tax from 30% to 25%, to encourage businesses to keep investing and keep moving. **(Applause)**
3. Repaving the Grand Anse to St. George road, and other main roads in our country, at the heart of the business and productive activities to help us to keep on moving. **(Applause)**
4. Mr. Speaker, one that is dear to my heart and which I keep telling my friends and the Public Workers and other areas of Government in this country, we need look at the increase to Public Assistance for the elderly, and at its first stage to move from two hundred dollars ($200.00) to three hundred dollars

($300.00) per individual, **(applause)** in an attempt to improve the livelihood and dignity of our senior citizens. All of us must have a heart.

Mr. Speaker, further details on all initiatives and plans for 2018, including Departments not mentioned here in the interest of time, such as Foreign Affairs, Disaster Management, Legal Affairs and Labour, can be found in the Budget Statement.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government and People of this country, I wish to acknowledge an entire staff, particularly the Leadership, the Permanent Secretaries, Deputy Permanent Secretaries, and key staff members of the Ministry of Finance and the wider Public Service, and, indeed, our Social Partners, our International and Regional Development Partners, and all others, who have contributed to the preparation and delivery of this important Budget document.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, with the end of 2017 upon us, and having delivered the 2018 Budget, the fundamental question that must be asked is this, and that must be done in fiscal and economic terms, is Grenada better off today than five (5) years ago, when this Government assumed Office? **(Cheers / Applause)** Mr. Speaker, I have ears to hear. The answer, therefore, is a resounding 'yea, yea, yea'. For that, I once again pay tribute to the people of Grenada for their shared sacrifice and to our Social Partners for their patriotism.

Mr. Speaker, as one song recently keeps saying over and over: "We have a remarkable story to tell, a story of recovery and redemption." Everywhere we look, Mr. Speaker, we have testimonies, from a shutdown Parliament, under the NDC Administration, to a Parliament today, which is open and taking care of the people's business. **(Cheers/Applause)** What is that, Mr. Speaker; what is that, testimony.

Furthermore, our new Parliament building will now, soon, be completed, as a Stately and permanent home for the symbol of our democracy. What is that, Mr. Speaker; testimony. **(Applause)**

From economic decline and despair, the Grenadian economy has grown every year since 2013. The IMF Managing Director noted in her statement in Jamaica, earlier

this month, that Grenada's growth has been consistently impressive over the past three (3) years. What is that, Mr. Speaker; testimony. **(Applause)**

From persistent deficit to primary surplus, Mr. Speaker, what is that, again; testimony. **(Applause)** Grenada's new Fiscal Responsibility Framework is being hailed around the world, as a model for others to follow. Therefore, what is that, again, testimony. **(Applause)** From an all-time high Debt to GDP Ratio of 108%, down to 69%, Mr. Speaker, what is that, again; testimonies. **(Applause)**

From a period, Mr. Speaker, when assets were sold, left, right and centre to pay salaries, which were, sometimes late, Public Servants now have peace of mind that their salaries would be paid on time, including backpay and all other advances. What is that, Mr. Speaker; testimony. **(Applause)**

In addition, since 2014, Public Servants and Pensioners have received increases and payouts totalling one hundred and six million dollars ($106 m), when they never received a cent in the previous four years and a half, the largest payout in the history of this country. What is that, Mr. Speaker; testimony. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, you look left, you look right, you see construction all over the place; in the City, construction; in the country, construction; in Carriacou, construction; Petite Martinique, construction. What is that, sisters and brothers, Mr. Speaker; testimony. **(Applause)**

From the previous Administration, who came to stop the Stadium, this NNP Administration came to save the Stadium. Today, we all feel a sense of pride, with the Kirani James Athletic and Football Stadium. What is that, Mr. Speaker, once again; testimony. **(Applause)** So, as the song goes on to say: "We can testify." Mr. Speaker, the people can verify, so I am here to testify. **(Applause)**

When we assumed Office, Mr. Speaker, unemployment was more than 40%, today, unemployment has fallen to 24%; I testify. **(Applause)** From investor confidence at an all-time low before, investor confidence is now extremely high; I can testify. **(Applause)**For the people in Mt. Gay, who now have a place to call their home, I can testify. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, today, Grenada is now at the forefront of all class of activities. I can testify. Mr. Speaker, some people can talk and talk; all that they can do, talk and talk. But, Mr. Speaker, this Administration will continue to work and work and work. **(Applause)** In contrast, therefore, this Administration has talked less and done so much more, that is why we can testify.

From talk about Grenada's petroleum potential, attempting to investigate and to destroy investors, this Administration has moved to discover the truth about our true potential in petroleum. Test drilling has been completed and the results are now awaited, and, therefore, I can testify. **(Applause)** From Belle Vue to Belle Isle; Tuilleries to Tivoli; Grand Anse to Gouyave; Carrierre to Carriacou; Pomme Rose to Petite Martinique; people have hope, so I can testify. **(Applause)** For the hundreds of students, who have received scholarships for their dreams, we can also testify.

Mr. Speaker, for the farmers, who are selling more produce and getting better prices from the Marketing Board and the hotels also and restaurants, we can also testify. For the Teachers, the Nurses and other Public Servants, who have been regularised, after many years, not knowing their status, under successive Governments, with temporary status, almost looking permanent, the change of regularisation that we have made, I can testify.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, I make the announcement today that we are prepared to include in the December salaries of Public Servants, the additional one-off payment to Public Servants, assuming that the Unions would accept our offer, now, now, now. This will bring, Mr. Speaker, for Christmas, as Santa Clause comes, additional monies to Public Servants, Teachers and all concerned. I await my Brothers and my Sisters, guidance in the Trade Union Movement, and I know they have a lot of guidance to give. They have been giving me a lot; not all I accept, but most of it.

For the Farm Roads completed in Concord and Clozier, Munich and Morne Delice, I can also testify. Mr. Speaker, for the improvements in our Hospital and Health Facilities, including more Doctors, Nurses and better facilities, and more reliable supplies of basic medicines, and with additional Health Insurance, soon to be

implemented, we can all testify. Mr. Speaker, we have travelled so far from the dark days of 2012, and the people are clear that we are not going back there. **(Applause)** We can testify. We could not testify, if we did not unify.

Above all, Grenada's successes could not have been achieved without the power and presence of the Almighty God and His guidance. **(Applause)** Therefore, I exhort all of us to give thanks, and I quote from the Holy Scriptures, as I end, "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His faithful love endures forever. Has the Lord redeemed you? Then speak out, tell others, He has redeemed you from your enemies," Psalms 107:1-2.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, let us give thanks and testify. May God continue to bless this beautiful Nation of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Cheers / Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Minister for Finance, for your detailed Presentation of the 2018 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure Budget Speech. I thank you.

But, let me remind our brothers and sisters in the Gallery, you are not supposed to laugh out, you are not supposed to clap. You are supposed to save all of those until you get out. I forgive you this time, because you were encouraged to testify. ***(Laughter)*** But, remember it is only for this time. Thank you. Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the adjournment of this Honourable House until 9:00 o'clock in the forenoon on Wednesday, November 29th, 2017.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned on Monday, 27th November, 2017 at 12:17 p.m. until Wednesday 29th November, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

Resumption
Attendance

House resumed on Wednesday, 29th November, 2017 at 9:25 a.m.

PRESENT

Honourable Michael Pierre, MP	-	Mr. Speaker (In the Chair)
Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell, PC, MP (St. George North-West)	-	Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Energy, National Security, Public Administration, Disaster Management, Home Affairs, Information, Implementation, Economic Development, Planning, Trade and Religious Affairs
Honourable Gregory Bowen, MP (St. George South-East)	-	Minister for Communications, Works, Physical Development, Public Utilities, ICT & Community Development
Honourable Anthony Boatswain, MP (St. Patrick West)	-	Minister for Youth and Sports
Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen (St. Mark)	-	Minister for Tourism, Civil Aviation and Culture
Honourable Alvin Da Breo, MP (St. John)	-	Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries with responsibility for Forestry and Fisheries
Honourable Yolande Bain-Horsford, MP (St. Andrew South-West)	-	Minister for Agriculture, Lands, Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
Honourable Oliver Joseph, MP (St. David)	-	Minister for Labour and Co-operatives
Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP (St. Andrew South-East)	-	Minister for Implementation

Attendance

Honourable Nickolas Steele, MP (Town of St. George)	- Minister for Health, Social Security & International Business
Honourable Delma Thomas, MP (St. Andrew North-West)	- Minister for Social Development & Housing
Honourable Alexandra Otway-Noel, MP (St. George South)	- Member
Honourable Tobias Clement, MP (St. George North-East)	- Member
Honourable Clifton Paul, MP (St. Patrick East)	- Deputy Speaker

ABSENT

Honourable Elvin Nimrod, MP (Carriacou and Petite Martinique)	- Minister for Legal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Carriacou & Petite Martinique Affairs & Local Government
Honourable Roland Bhola, MP (St. Andrew North-East)	- Member

Prayers
Announcements

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

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, good morning. Let us pray.

(House Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Let us all say together, the Lord's Prayer.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Pray be seated.

(Sound of Gavel)

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, this Honourable House is now in Session. When we adjourned on Monday, the 27th, we adjourned until nine hundred hours, or 9:00 o'clock in the forenoon, and that is, we should have started 9:00 o'clock today. Unfortunately, it is now 9:25, and this was not because the Parliament was not ready, it was because we did not have a quorum. This would affect, seriously, our time spent in the House. So, I wish to advise that the beginning of the Sitting, once scheduled, should be kept.

Today, we are continuing with the Sitting of the 27th and the Budget Debate. So, today, at this Sitting, our focus would be on the debates and presentations by different Parliamentary Representatives. I want to ask us to pay careful attention to Standing Order 40 (1), section 4, which speaks to the length of time that would be given for debates by all Members of the House, with the exception of the Minister for Finance or Prime Minister, (sorry) Standing Order 40, section 2, and I would read it for you; ***"All other Members including Ministers may speak for one (1) hour."*** 40 (2) states: ***"In every case, the Speaker may allow a Member an extended period of time, not***

exceeding fifteen (15) minutes in the discretion of the Speaker." I promise to be generous today, although the lateness of the time I intended to subtract some time from everybody. But, what we have decided is to allow you the allotted time and the discretionary time. So, you would have, not one hour, and ask again, but we would give you the one hour, plus the fifteen (15) minutes, so you now have ninety (90) minutes. What we would do is we would give a toll of the bell at the end of one hour, but that is not to disturb you, that is just to remind you, and the bell would, again, toll at five (5) minutes before the end, to tell you that you should be wrapping up; and the last bell, at the end of ninety (90) minutes should not have you standing. By that time you would be seated, you would have been completed and seated. So, I have given you the discretionary fifteen (15) minutes before you start; so you have no more to ask me for. I don't have any more to give.

So, we want to remind you of that, please, so try to speak within your timeframe; so I would not be able to give anybody any preference, preferential treatment to anybody. I am sometimes accused of giving preferential treatment to certain Members of the House; so there is no preferential treatment today to anybody.

We have fifteen (15) Members to present, because the Prime Minister or Minister for Finance would have to respond, at the end of the presentations. And, so, I am hoping that we can proceed and have as much as three (3) presenters before we adjourn for lunch. So, three (3) presenters, if we started on time, would have brought us by thirteen thirty hundred hours, but now it would mean more like fourteen hundred hours. So, we would have three (3) presenters, and by 2:00 p.m. we would break for lunch; adjourn for lunch.

One other matter, Honourable Members, I, too, want to be comfortable to listen to your debates, and I couldn't do that, if I have to constantly keep lifting my wig to scratch my head. **(Laughter)** I think the age of the wig and the material from which it is made, makes it very uncomfortable in the heat, because even if the temperature is cold for some people, it would be very hot under this. And, in truth, it looks good, but it is not very comfortable, because of its age, and we have no money to buy a new wig now. We have no money to buy a new wig now, and it is very expensive. So, what I would

advise us to do is to not look for the wig, but that the wig would be sent back, because, you see, if the House move into Committee, what is the main insignia is the Mace, the Mace is lowered, and that tells us that the House is in Committee. When the House resumes, the Mace is placed on the upper rack. So, we would focus on the Mace and help me to avoid the discomfort. So, I would ask Mr. James, if he can come this way, so that he can help to take the wig back to the backroom, keep it safely, so that we can concentrate on the people's business without the distraction and discomfort of the wig.

(The Speaker handed the wig to Mr. James)

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. James. So, remember we are not in Committee, the Mace is up; the Mace is up.

(The Clerk consulted with the Speaker)

Mr. Speaker: Oh, my apologies, and my apologies have to do with forgetting my Math. Sixty plus fifteen is seventy-five. So, if you heard ninety, please erase it from your memory, immediately. Sixty, one hour and fifteen minutes is seventy-five minutes. So, the ninety I said was a serious mistake, which I shall never make again. It is seventy-five (75) minutes. And, since I have decided not to subtract from the people, who came in late, you have seventy-five (75) minutes. Honourable Members, we are about to start.

(Honourable Tobias Clement rose)

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative for St. George North-East.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, since you have been so kind to yourself, to remove the wig, at this point-in-time, and it makes you so uncomfortable, I am wondering whether your colleagues in front, Mr. Clerk and his Associate, shouldn't they,

too, also remove the wig? Well, I would advocate for that, too, Mr. Speaker, if they so desire.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, kindly, Honourable Representative for St. George North-East, for your concern for the welfare of the members of staff. They are not my Colleagues in the House; they are the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk. They have complained. I have heard their complaints, and I would so allow them to remove the wig, if it is uncomfortable, as it was with mine, after lunch. Thank you. The House is opened for its presentations. Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew North-West.

Hon. Delma Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to be a witness, this morning, of the many testimonies of this Government in Office, **(applause)** and that is why, Mr. Speaker, we cannot be ungrateful. We must have an attitude of gratitude to God, because without Him none of those testimonies for which we are speaking about would be a reality, and, therefore, I want to give God a high note of praise and thanks, not because we are so religious, but because of Him, we are able to stand here, after a whole year, Mr. Speaker, and particularly, for me, I must say, I am, indeed, thankful to God for four (4) years as a Minister of Government. This is enough, for me, as an individual to give God thanks and praise. When you come from nowhere, a nobody and you become somebody, it is only the goodness of God, and, therefore, I must give a high note of praise and thanks.

Mr. Speaker, I stand to support the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure presented in this Honourable House by our Minister for Finance and the Parliamentary Representative for St. George North-West. Before coming here, Mr. Speaker, I have heard from the people of my beautiful Constituency of St. Andrew North-West, and they, too, are equally impressed with the packages presented, because, they, too, have so many testimonies to tell, Mr. Speaker.

This package, Mr. Speaker, has breathed a fresh hope in the land, and shall bring better opportunities to the ordinary people in places like Mt. Horne, my Village, and Paraclete, Paradise, La Fillette, Dunfermline, Grandlet and La Cabacay, Mirabeau, Sabb, Balthazar, Byelands, Morne Longue, Adelphi, Beauregard and Spring Garden.

The Budget is not just a projection of what we can expect in 2018, nor an outline of a series of excited plans and projects. It pays homage, in essence, to the vision and fortitude of this Government. It pays homage to the people, who have made their sacrifices, and it sets to further build on the foundation led, so that benefits could be given to all Grenadians, all and sundry throughout our Tri-Island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Mr. Speaker, this is a Budget for everyone, and it adequately addresses the needs of the society at this time. This package seeks to further empower the youth, lift up the vulnerable, protect the elderly and encourage businesses and investments. This package is grounded in economic reality, but seasoned by social responsibility. This package, Mr. Speaker, is a testimony to believe. As the Minister for Social Development and Housing, I am particularly pleased with the increased spending for services that would enhance the work of the Departments and the Officers, working in the vineyard against Child Sexual Abuse. This expanded package shows the Government's commitment to, in a small way, help to confront the issues. While we insist that this social scourge is not and will never be a money issue, Mr. Speaker, any additional resources that can be thrown at any additional activities, we, however, acknowledge that any spending in this regard is so very important and critical. We have to tackle this issue on all fronts, and from all angles, and every member of this community, this beautiful Tri-Island State of ours, must play their roles, our Leaders in the home, our churches, our communities, our schools, our Church Leaders, our Politicians and every citizen, who really seriously care about the children of our Nation. Children are a heritage of God, and every one of us present would be answerable unto Him, and, therefore, we must be each other's keeper. Mr. Speaker, I would address this even further in a little while, when I get into my substantive debate.

Not totally divorced from this issue, however, is the fact of the increased allocation for Youth Training, Education and Housing. We believe, Mr. Speaker, that an increased emphasis on those areas would, in the longer term, help us to tackle the social challenges that we are increasingly speaking about. A country where there is growth, where we are seeing unemployment going down and jobs are going up, would be a better framework in the broader fight to take back our Communities.

Mr. Speaker, we have to be serious about taking back our country. This beautiful country belongs to every one of us, and we cannot let it slip away from our hands, and, therefore, we have to work, together, to take back our communities. But, let it be clear, there can be no allocation that buys out hate for love, disrespect for respect. This will have to come from something deeper and someone higher. When the cynical among us listen to the Budget Presentation, they may say that they heard plans and figures. As a mother and as a woman, I view the package through different lens. I see people. The many projects alluded to is not merely a fact of putting down concrete foundations, it is the reality of building communities.

One of my Parliamentary colleagues said, in a promotional video, not so long ago, that the arc of progress is pointing in the right direction. This, indeed, Mr. Speaker, is a profound statement, whether it is the Public Servant, or the farmer, in many communities, or the young people, looking to start a small business, or the parent, pushing for better educational opportunities for their children, our progressive policies are beginning to positively impact more ordinary people. The fact that Grenada has become an economic leader in the Region and maybe in the world, and its successes hailed by independent watchers, gives us all, a sense of deep pride. Indeed, we are privileged to be a part of this Grenadian renaissance. **(Applause)**

But, the most satisfying thing, Mr. Speaker, is to stand and watch ordinary people, whose lives have been transformed, whose dignity is being enhanced by this transformation, and, additionally, Mr. Speaker, to witness the hope of those not so directly affected, to know that help would be on its way for them.

The Minister for Finance and Prime Minister, in a few Budget Debate addresses some time ago, said that in these times of economic revival, our strongest currency is

hope. This package, Mr. Speaker, is a testimony, a true testimony of hope. Also, let me say, as I am making these general comments, to set the foundation for my entire presentation, that the 50% increase in spending for Social Services, payment to the elderly is also so very much pleasing. It speaks to this Government's commitment to that Sector, that Sector that has made the tremendous contribution to the building of this beautiful Tri-Island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. We cannot leave them behind, Mr. Speaker, and so I am happy and I am proud to be part, and I can testify that this Government is doing what God wants it to do.

Mr. Speaker, this package for our elderly is a testimony of care. We have to stand up for and fight for, not just those with a seat at the table, or those with the loudest voices, but for every single citizen across our Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Let us pay homage to the words: 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.'

Mr. Speaker, I want to go into my substantive contribution, which is presenting on behalf of the Ministry, our achievement, the Ministry of Social Development and Housing, our achievements, Mr. Speaker, on what we intend to do in the coming year, 2018.

Mr. Speaker, while, at the Ministry of Social Development, we have achieved quite a lot, there are many more works to be done within every Department. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to start with a Statutory Body that falls under the Ministry, because this is the topical issue, and we have to deal with the issue, as they come, everyone of them is priority, but there is Priority No. 1, 2 and 3. So, I want to start with Child Protection Authority, and I want to commend the Child Protection Authority for the work that they have been doing. However, Mr. Speaker, we appreciate that there is really a lot of work to be done, as it relates to protecting our children. They have done a lot in 2017. We have seen the expansion of the Father Mallagan Home for Boys and the renovation of the existing structure. This project was funded by the Maria Holder Foundation. We have recently, in the month of October, Child Month, launched the Child Abuse Project named ACA, all against child abuse. It is a community based collaborative aim of providing information on all forms of child abuse and how to identify it and how to cope

with additional information on the issue of parenting and dealing with our children. The goal is to reduce child abuse.

Mr. Speaker, there have been many Educational Programmes. In fact, the Authority hired a Public Relations Officer, so that we can be in the media, providing information to better serve our clients, better serve our children, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, the issue of child abuse and child sexual abuse is not an issue that only the Child Protection Authority can deal with. It is not an issue only the Ministry of Social Development can deal with. It is not an issue that only the Police, or the Government can deal with. And, while we have been doing, we have been going to the Schools, in 2017, advocating and speaking to the children, we have even gone on the Blocks, and speaking with the young men and, there is also Parenting Programmes for 'At Risk Parents'. But, Mr. Speaker, as a Nation, we must rise up, we must take our rightful place in society, and we cannot sit in our comfort zone and say it all depends on Government, and we bash Government in social media and in other forms, and saying, well, they are the ones, and yes, I agree, we have a responsibility, but the issue of abuse among our children is an issue that everyone of us must take seriously.

Mr. Speaker, the death of Ariel brought pain to the entire Tri-Island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Not only her family was hurting, Mr. Speaker, but the entire Nation, Mr. Speaker. But, we must also understand, Mr. Speaker, that the issue of child sexual abuse cannot be seen as just a normal issue. So, Mr. Speaker, I will like, if you help me to remove my Ministerial coat for the moment and put on my Christian coat for now, to say that not all issues we see is flesh and blood issues, and it is not coincidence that on that day, that very sad day, when Ariel met her death, or the day after, we had a child, who was at the similar age with her, attempting to commit suicide. It cannot be coincidence. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, in the last couple of weeks, I have been meeting with our Church Leaders, I have met with the Social Partners, and I am saying that, as a Nation, we have to rise up, we have to pray. We cannot sit idly by and just take it and say, well, a young man has committed a crime, and then we forget that Grenada is a Christian Nation, as we say, and we say let us kill the young man, but this family is also suffering, Mr. Speaker. And, you know,

sometimes the Devil gets a chance to use persons who avail themselves to him, and that is why we have to be praying for our families, Mr. Speaker.

I urge our Nation to rise up and take back our Communities. Let us cover our children. Let us see every boy and every girl, as our own children. Let us start, Mr. Speaker, and I am happy that the Religious Community, they are starting to forget sitting at the Pulpit and plan to go out in the Highways and Byways, because that is what we need. We need everyone, to assist us in dealing with that serious issue of Child Sexual Abuse. We cannot be comfortable. None of us can be comfortable that our children are being abused.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard in the media that we have seen an increase in child sexual abuse, and, you know, I am sad, because I am the Minister for Social Development, and I have to look deep and do research and think within myself and say, are you doing what God wants of you, if there is an increase. But, Mr. Speaker, when I laid on my bed that very Sunday, after Ariel's death, I closed my eyes and I looked back; my mother had three (3) of her children by the age of seventeen (17), her first child at the age of fifteen (15). It tells us that child sexual abuse has been there since then.

But, Mr. Speaker, I looked beyond just my home, and I looked within the Community of Mt. Horne, where I live and every individual, and I was alarmed, Mr. Speaker, because every individual at my mother's age, had a child at fifteen or sixteen; that tells us something. So, it says to us that more people are aware now, and more persons are reporting, Mr. Speaker, and we have to encourage that. We have to protect our children. We cannot continue on that path where our children's innocence are being stolen away from them. And, therefore, every one of us, every single one of us, we have a responsibility. Mr. Speaker, and whatever we are going to do, we have to also hold parents accountable. So, we cannot just sit and say Government has their role to play and the Churches have their role to play and Community Leaders. What about the parents? Where are the fathers? We have to ask those questions.

Mr. Speaker, I woke this morning, with tears in my eyes, because when I woke to prepare lunch for my children to go to school, I took my phone and I got a message

from a young lady in St. Andrew, apparently, she couldn't sleep. She has a fourteen year old son, Mr. Speaker, who is roaming the streets. He goes missing for eleven (11) days and twelve (12) days. Mr. Speaker, you know, sometimes… I am part of this system, but sometimes you cannot sit quiet and say, well, I am part of the system, so I am going to hide and pretend. If the system is not addressing the needs of our children, we need to speak about it, whether or not we are in leadership role, and we need to know whatever the issues are and see how best we can deal with the issue. She has spoken to many persons, so I asked her for her number, because she sent me a message on Facebook. I said send me your number, and she told me 'I'm so frustrated', with tears in her eyes. She said 'I have gone to the Police Station, I have called all the different Departments, and even now they are saying to me that he has not committed a crime'. So, are we going to wait for him to commit a crime, to intervene? This is a child 'at risk', Mr. Speaker, and we cannot feel comfortable. It is not business as usual, and therefore, I cannot hide it and pretend and say, well, I am the Minister, so I cannot say it publicly, because I have to be scared of what the media would say, or whoever would say. These issues are issues that we must, must confront head-on. We cannot sit quietly and say it is not our child, so it doesn't mean that we should not care. Every one of us should care. And, I beg us, in the different Departments, the different Government Agencies, the different NGOs, let us work together for our children. These are our children. This is the future of our Nation. If we let them go like that, what would happen to our Nation?

Mr. Speaker, I felt sad this morning, because I have four (4) boys myself, you know, and I put myself in her position. What if it was my son, Mr. Speaker, and I started to give God thanks and praise, because I have four (4) sons and, you know, I do not have that problem. But, her problem is my problem and I have a responsibility and that is why, Mr. Speaker, we have to work together. We have to see how we can deal with that issue in protecting our children, Mr. Speaker. We have to be praying, Mr. Speaker, pray and pray and pray.

I cannot pretend that we can just solve those problems just by setting up a Hotline, that would not deal with the problem, Mr. Speaker, a Hotline alone… even the

Sexual Registry that we're looking at within the Ministry of Legal Affairs cannot solve that problem. This is a deep problem, a real deep problem that the Church, which is the Body of Christ, the Bible speaks of it: "If my people, who are called by my Name..," so they are speaking to us the Body of Christ. We have to humble ourselves and pray and seek the face of God, turn from our wicked ways and only then shall God forgive us of our sins and heal our Land.

Mr. Speaker, I am very emotional about that particular issue, because it affects every one of us. I have seen it in my Community. You know, as the Minister, sometimes I too even have to call the Police, or even have to intervene on different issues to protect our children and, therefore, we will continue to work, as a Government and I know that the Government is committed, the Social Partners are committed, all the Churches, they too are committed. We have been meeting with them. Just last Sunday, the Ministry, we were at the Grenville Pentecostal Light House and later on that day there was St. Andrew Celebration, and we were at the Anglican church in Grenville, and the message in every Church at this time, Mr. Speaker, they are speaking out against child sexual abuse, and they have made it their responsibility to join with the Ministry and with their partners, to ensure that they go to the Highways and Byways. So we will be increasing and stepping up on what we are doing as a Ministry, but, what we are doing would not only include that Special Victim Unit. The Special Victim Unit is an excellent Unit, because it will have trained persons there. We will have trained Police Officers, who are trained in that particular field, we will have Counsellors and Social Workers. So, that Department, which will be with the Royal Grenada Police Force, will play its part. The Ministry of Social Development will continue to assist them with the training, but we still have that responsibility to cover our children, to pray for our children and to rise up, as a Nation, and let's take back our Nation, Mr. Speaker. Let us protect our boys and protect our girls within our Tri-Island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

The Grand Bacolet Juvenile Rehabilitation and Treatment Centre

Mr. Speaker, we are still speaking about protecting our children. Last year, I was, indeed, elated to report to this Honourable House, when the doors of that very

important Centre was opened. Mr. Speaker, this is a great testimony, you know, a testimony to say that we are working to protect our children. We have that responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the Facility is equipped and offers a range of Programmes that will facilitate the treatment and rehabilitation of juveniles. The Centre provides our young people with a number of support services, which include Individual and Group Counselling, Psycho Educational support and Therapeutic Intervention, Vocational Training, Remedial Academic Support, Comprehensive Sexual Education, support to their families to facilitate the reintegration process, Sports and Recreation. Mr. Speaker, this Facility had many achievements in 2017, and I want to commend the staff at the Grand Bacolet Rehabilitation Treatment Centre.

Education Programme, Mr. Speaker, they are offered to meet the individual needs. Residents there, they undertook the CPEA Exam and successfully gained entries into secondary schools, Mr. Speaker this speaks volumes. These are children who were not going to school, and they entered the Juvenile Centre and were able to be very successful at the Exams. They have a Poultry Rearing Programme, assisted by the Caribbean Agro Industries; two (2) residents there were certified by the Bureau of Standards in Poultry. Mr. Speaker, they are feeding themselves. They are producing meat for themselves, and they also have a garden, a special garden, Mr. Speaker, that they grow their own fresh vegetables.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to commend Ms. Rosemarie Charles for the cosmetology assistance she has given to them during the Summer. They also had a Sewing Course offered to residents there. There are many Training Sessions for the residents at the Grand Bacolet Rehabilitation and Treatment Centre.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018, residents registered to do CXC. Mr. Speaker, this is a great testimony for the residents of Bacolet, **(applause)** that these are persons who you saw as no good in the Community, but here you are seeing, in the 2018 CXC Exams, we have residents who are registered to do Maths, English, Social Studies and Principles of Business. We must commend the staff for their hard work and for their dedication. **(Applause)**

More professional development training of staff in trauma, working with at-risk youth; the rollout of the Restorative Justice Programme, more Vocational Training to be offered to residents. The Juvenile Justice Reform Process continues for 2017 supported, mainly, by the USAID, and we must commend our Developmental Partners, USAID/OECS Juvenile Justice Reform Project Phase II with assistance from UNICEF and now the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

2017 saw the focus on Human Resource Development through training for personnel across Ministries in Mental Health Assessment. This training resulted in fourteen (14) Grenadians being qualified, as Trainers in the stated area. There was one ten-week Cycle Aggressive Replacement Training for residents at the Grand Bacolet Juvenile Rehabilitation Treatment Centre. A total of eight (8) male residents graduated from the Programme and indications are that their behavioural changes are visible. We can see change in those young people, Mr. Speaker, and that is why, as a Government, we are happy that we started that Rehabilitation Centre, so that we can assist our young boys and our young girls to be able to be reintegrated into our society and make meaning contributions.

Social Protection, Disaster Preparedness and Training

Mr. Speaker, grant funds for the above projects totalled over three million dollars ($3 m), Mr. Speaker. The Government expresses thanks to all friends, Government and Development Partners and looks forward to their further cooperation.

Awakening Special Potential in the Restoration and Empowerment (ASPIRE)

My Government, through the kind assistance of the Caribbean Development Bank has secured a concessionary loan of US five hundred thousand dollars (US$500,000.00) and a grant amounting of US nine hundred and twenty-four thousand (US$924,000.00) in an effort to enhance the resilience and empowerment of our young people under the Awakening Special Potential in the Restoration and Empowerment Project. The focus of the ASPIRE Project is to support the establishment of an Improved Gender Responsive Juvenile Justice Prevention and Response System to divert juveniles and youth from coming into conflict with the Law, and to help to

rehabilitate young offenders through effective education and psycho social services. The emphasis is on strengthening the provision aimed at preventing diversion, rehabilitation, treatment and reintegration. Mr. Speaker, we continue to move on, as it relates to protecting our children. We continue to move on, in terms of protecting our families and building stronger family structures.

SEED, Mr. Speaker; the Support for Education Empowerment Development this is Government's flagship Programme in Social Safety Net Reform. This Programme has recorded some outstanding achievements in both its implementation and operational processes. Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to inform this Honourable House and the Nation that seven (7) out of the eight (8) Disbursement Link Indicators has been achieved thus far. This project, Mr. Speaker, which was rated unsatisfactory in 2013, Mr. Speaker, you have to take note of this, because these are things you hear from people who are only good to be in Opposition. They speak like they had it all. But, Mr. Speaker, the World Bank reported, in 2013, that it was unsatisfactory. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Review Team, in October, declared that this is a satisfactory programme under the New National Party Government. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, with the completion of the targeted instrument, we are stepping ahead in providing a more transparent and fair programme for needy persons across our Tri-Island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Mr. Speaker, sometimes you listen to the different Radio Programmes and you wonder, because they make it look like Representatives are able to come and bring a list of names and appear on the Programme. This is not possible; this is not possible. You must go through the Proxy Means Testing, in order to get on the programme.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes many people within, even my own Constituency, they realise that I'm Minister for Social Development, so they think that I am able to put their names on, and sometimes they are vexed with me. They say: ***"You are the Minister, why you can't put my name on?"*** But, there are procedures to follow, and whether or not you pass the test, that will decide whether or not you can get the SEED assistance. So, no one, whether you're close to me, or you're not, would not get on the programme, if you are not qualified, Mr. Speaker. And, that is why, Mr. Speaker, that many people

can testify and that is why we are seeing an exodus in persons moving away from the other side, not this side inside here, the other side if there is another side, really, and coming to us, because they realise that we care seriously about our people and not the people of yellow, green and red. We are not a people of yellow, green and red. We are a people for Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, and the truth is my staff, who is on the other side knows that. I do not keep quite on how you should treat people. I make it clear. Yes, I am a politician, but I also learn to remove that hat, when it comes to human care, Mr. Speaker.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, that I came from a family of poverty, so when a man cannot or a woman cannot send their children to school, it aches my heart. I do not care who you support, so I would not intervene to say well, don't give him or her, because this person is NNP or NDC. Who cares about NNP or NDC? When the Election is called, we will campaign differently on what we have done. We don't have to campaign by ensuring that we only getting people who vote for us to get particular programmes.

Mr. Speaker, the truth about it, because there are supporters who believe that everything they should get, whether they qualify or not, we have to educate them. We are in leadership roles, and sometimes, as Leaders, we have to make unpopular decisions, but decisions that are right. Once it is right and you can live with it, you make those decisions, **(applause)** and so we will continue, as a Government to do what it takes.

Mr. Speaker, I am also encouraged to speak of the number of students, who are getting assistance from the SEED Programme, who are in TAMCC, SGU and even NEWLO. Mr. Speaker, we have said in this Honourable House and on different programmes, that only education that will allow us to get away from this vicious cycle of poverty. We cannot continue in going around in circles, and we have to ensure that we provide educational opportunities for our young people, so that they can get away from that cycle, Mr. Speaker, a cycle which I was able to come out of and, therefore, I will be working to ensure that everyone can come out of this cycle of poverty, whatever little way, whatever little means. Mr. Speaker, there is song that says: "If I can touch

somebody's hand to make this world a better place." Just one person's hand, Mr. Speaker, then you know your living will not and can never be in vain.

My Government, Mr. Speaker, is committed to alleviating the severe hardships faced by our vulnerable community. And, so, Mr. Speaker, tremendous efforts have been made to ensure that much more persons benefitted from the Grant. For this year, twelve hundred and forty-three (1,243) persons, or households have been enrolled into the SEED Programme. This represents a total of two thousand, two hundred and thirty six (2,236) direct beneficiaries. In addition, Mr. Speaker, beneficiaries began to receive their grants through their financial institution.

Mr. Speaker, before… you know when the last Thursday of the month and you go to Grenville and St. George Revenue Office, you know, you would be ashamed to call yourself a member of the Government, because these elderly people, Mr. Speaker, are being pushed aside and tossed aside and we, Mr. Speaker, a caring Government, we have started to look with the Ministry of Finance in alleviating that problem.

We have started to work with our beneficiaries to ensure that their monies can go into their account, some sort of dignity, Mr. Speaker. You know, sometimes, not because we are poor, we have pride and we try to, Mr. Speaker, as a Government to ensure that they can walk to the Bank, with their shoulder up high in the air, and we have started, while we do not have the amount of persons we expect to be going to the Financial Institutions are not yet reached, but we are working on it, Mr. Speaker.

Just recently, I had a meeting with the Personnel within the Ministry of Finance and we are looking at a new means, Mr. Speaker, for those persons, especially the elderly citizens who do not have an account in the Institution, whether or not Government can provide that upfront, whether it is $25.00 to open an account in the Credit Union, whether or not we can look into that in 2018 to open an account for them in a Financial Institution whereby they can get their monies and do not have to go in the lines. We are also looking, Mr. Speaker, at maybe there are some families, or some elderly persons, who cannot go to the Banks, that we may have to go to their homes and give them. But, we are talking about money here, Mr. Speaker, so we have to be very cautious and take our time with that particular issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, SEED also has a testimony to tell and the beneficiaries across our Tri-Island State, Mr. Speaker, also have a testimony to tell that this Government is heading in the right direction. **(Applause)** This Government is assisting everyone despite of their political affiliation.

Mr. Speaker, Housing; you know, when you hear about Housing, everybody is talking about Housing. Mr. Speaker, in fact, from year one to almost five years, when I go to my Constituency Office, 80% or more sometimes, the persons coming, they are either looking for a job, or they are looking for some means of Housing Assistance. And, Mr. Speaker, this Government is committed to improving the lives of the people within our Tri-Island State. We are working to improve the housing stock of the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to report that over one hundred (100) families received assistance under the House Repair Programme. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, I think this is a point that we need to make, because, sometimes, when you hear those in the Opposition on the Radio, they talk about housing and housing. Mr. Speaker, we must never forget, and we always have to remind our people, because in the last period, in some areas nobody received. I am from Mt. Horne, not one family, not one single family, in an area like Mt. Horne, where you have over a thousand families, not one family, Mr. Speaker, received one board from the last Administration, so we cannot take them seriously, Mr. Speaker.

But, now, Mr. Speaker, many families can say that we are receiving assistance, not NNP families, you know, Mr. Speaker, families, Grenadian families, families across our Tri-Island State, despite our political affiliation, **(applause)** they can say we are getting our fair share. And, they are not quiet about it, Mr. Speaker, and that is why, when I hear my good friend, who plans to contest against me, I am not sure if it's a competition or a contest. I am not sure what it is going to be, Mr. Speaker. But, when I hear him saying that when he is going all over in the Community, Mr. Speaker, we have to make it clear that St. Andrew North-West runs from Paraclete to, and there are two Constituencies in Paraclete; so, if he says he is going to Paraclete, it's not St. Andrew North, not Paraclete that falls in St. Andrew North-West, the other side, so he is going in St. Andrew North-East. Mr. Speaker, we have to make it clear so he understands

where he has to go. I hear him saying he is all over the Constituency, then it begs the question, where? Where in St. Andrew North-West? Maybe he is talking about another Constituency.

You hear them talk about all the issues of housing and all the issues that confront housing now, but they, at the time they were in Government and not one person got a board. So, we will continue to provide more housing assistance, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to look at plans and programmes to improve the housing stock of our people within our Tri-Island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

And, I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that the contractor for the second phase of the Chinese houses, the contractor was selected, in China, through the bidding process, and a groundbreaking ceremony will be held in December. So, boots are on the ground for six hundred and forty-seven (647) units across Carriacou, so Carriacou is not being left out; we have Dumfries in Carriacou; the Villa, in St. Patrick; Diamond in St. Mark; Corinth in St. David and Beausejour in St. George's, five (5) sites, Mr. Speaker, those units would be constructed. And, while we will see boots on the ground in December **(applause)** and the mobilisation we will see serious work, Mr. Speaker, so that our people can also get work, serious work in January, Mr. Speaker. This is a testimony to tell, a testimony to show that we are moving forward, as it relates to the housing stock. The Housing Authority can boast, Mr. Speaker, that when they got in, the Housing Authority was really a non-entity. In fact, if they had continued on that course, by now, all staff would have had to go home, because nothing was happening in the Housing Authority of Grenada.

However, now, Mr. Speaker, they are moving forward and we must commend the Manager, the Board and every staff member there for moving that Statutory Body forward. We must commend them, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, they now have a Blocks Plant, and they have a lot of business going on. In fact, they have to extend in 2018, to produce more blocks, because, in fact, they cannot produce for the demands and, therefore, they are looking to extend. Mr. Speaker, they have built a number of houses for families. When I talk about housing, I am talking about persons

who received a loan from a Financial Institution and gave the authority. Mr. Speaker, people now are building back hope in the Housing Authority of Grenada and many families are giving them their houses to build and there are many more houses, Mr. Speaker, to be built by the Housing Authority for families across our Tri-Island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Mr. Speaker, we would see also a new Housing Project. The World Bank is working along with us, to put together a Housing Project, to improve the lives of our people, and, therefore, maybe by sometime next year please God, we will have the real details of that new Project, which is now in its preparation stage. So, we will continue to do what it takes, as it relates to providing better housing facilities for our people. Mr. Speaker, I want to move on a little faster, because I do not want to leave out my Constituency.

Social Services

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Social Services, in 2017, they had seven hundred and fifty-six (756) interventions among families and communities, as compared to seven hundred and nine (709) within the same period in 2016. This marked an increase of over 7%. This information suggests increase in persons' access to social services, designed to influence individuals and family behavioural changes.

Mr. Speaker, we have Counselling Sessions within the Ministry, and our Counsellors must be applauded for their hard work, their dedication in working along with different clients and to date, Mr. Speaker, almost two hundred and fifty (250) persons got service from the Counsellors. Thirty (30) inmates completed the Anger Management Group, at Her Majesty's Prison; thirteen (13) families received crisis intervention, as it relate to either loss of homes from fire, murder, vehicle accidents. One Counsellor was certified in SAVRY, which means Structure Assessments for Violent Risk in Youth (SAVRY). Two (2) Counsellors completed training in the prevention of Drug Abuse Programmes. Our Counsellors shared facilities in conducting the first ten-week cycle of Aggression Replacement Training Group at the Bacolet Juvenile Rehabilitation and Treatment Centre. Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with

all families; the Ministry of Social Development work with families to provide support services for families, counselling and all that for families.

Parenting Programme, we have an excellent Parenting Programme within the Ministry. The Department of Gender and Family Life, Mr. Speaker, continues to fight hard against violence in all form, violence against women and children, both men and women. They continue to speak to the different people and have different Sessions across our Tri-Island State, going out into the Highways and the Byways, trying to deal with the whole issue, Mr. Speaker. We have to protect our families; we have to build strong families, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are hosting sixteen days (16) days of activism, it started on the 25th of this month, which was last Saturday, I think and that is the reason why I decided to wear my purple this morning. Purple speaks against violence against our women and we started that activity. We had an address to the Nation, I did an address to the Nation, then we had church service at Grenville Pentecostal Light House and there will be a number of other activities, which you would hear about in the media.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry continues to do what it takes to protect everyone, Mr. Speaker. We continue to work along with families, we continue to encourage fathers to take up their roles, we continue to encourage mothers to take up your rightful place and to be part of the parenting programme so that you can seriously take care of your children. Mr. Speaker, as a Ministry we will continue to do what it takes will continue but as I say and I will say time and time again, we are not able to do those alone.

And, therefore, we will be working along with every stakeholder and everyone who is interested in working along with our Ministry in providing services to assist the people, the children and the women and the girls of our Tri-Island State and our men and our fathers because we have to work in terms of providing educational opportunities and training, Mr. Speaker and counselling for our males.

We cannot sit and only look at the victims, we also must deal with those who commit the crime, they are part of our society and if we shun them away then it means that we are going to continue to see crimes; we are going to continue to see violence.

Our young men, Mr. Speaker, need us, just like how our young ladies need us. No longer can we say, tell our young girls to come inside and we leave our boys idly outside. As parents let us protect our children, let us work along with schools, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, as I speak on schools, you know we are dealing with many social issues within our Tri-Island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique and therefore we must work together. So Ministry of Social Development cannot work for itself but we ought to work with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. Our programmes, we need to look seriously at the programmes and as a Government we must look at the programmes that we have in schools for our children, our boys.

Many of our boys are dropping out of Secondary School, Mr. Speaker, we have to open our eyes and look at that. We cannot sit down idly by and just watch them and say it's not our child because when we have those serious crimes, Mr. Speaker, then we will say, okay, he was a Secondary School dropout and he had issues. Let us deal with the issues now, let us put plans and programmes in place that will cater for the need of all our children. When we send all these children to Secondary School, we must appreciate the fact that not all our children are academically inclined. Some persons would be good at skills and other areas. Let us put, as part of our Curriculum, let us work to ensure that we provide for the needs of those children, so if a girl can sew, let us have, in the School, some means where they can sew, whatever skills they can take part in. And, for our boys, Mr. Speaker, let us put particular programmes in place that can incorporate our young men. We cannot sit and feel comfortable that so many young men are dropping out of Secondary Schools. As a Nation, we cannot feel satisfied about that, or comfortable in our own conscience. Our conscience cannot allow us to be comfortable that too many of our young men are at risk. And, therefore, we have a responsibility to work along with them, to work with all our stakeholders, the Ministry of Education; as a Government, we have a responsibility to do what it takes to assist boys and to assist girls.

Mr. Speaker, maybe I have left out some parts, but, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to leave out my Constituency. But, before I go directly into my Constituency, I really want

to commend the staff of the Ministry of Social Development and Housing for your hard work, your dedication, your commitment to the task; your work is not easy. In fact, as the Minister, Mr. Speaker, sometimes I, too, need sessions, and some of the Counsellors would know; at nights, at sometimes ten/ eleven, I would call one of them. After Ariel's death, I couldn't sleep and I needed counselling myself. So, I know what you are going through on a daily basis, having to counsel and to deal with all those social issues. When you go home, I know what you are going through and, therefore, we must work to provide sessions for you to assist you in that regard. And, I want to commend you for your hard work and for your dedication.

But, Mr. Speaker, I also want to commend the entire staff, because we are an important Ministry. We deal with all the social issues of the whole country. And, I want to commend the staff, because during the session, and, Mr. Speaker, before I go to that part, I said that I believe that all workers have a right to withhold their labour, and, I believe that, as a Government we have to provide, once we can provide more for our workers. And, I can speak specifically for the Ministry of Social Development, our staff, for their hard work, and I know their hard work and I know their dedication. So, I can be their Bargaining Agent to say that they deserve more. But, Mr. Speaker, even at that time, when the workers had their right and they could have stand off the job, I want to commend the staff, from the Heads of Department, right down to the key areas within the Ministry, they came to work on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker, and they provided their task, as nothing was happening. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, this speaks to commitment, and, therefore, I want to commend every one of them. **(Applause)** And, I would be your Bargaining Agent, fighting for more for you, because I know you deserve more.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all our Developmental Partners, USAID and CDB, UNICEF, all our Developmental Partners, who have given us so much support. Mr. Speaker, I want to single out, though, Mr. Speaker, every time, maybe it is difficult to single out members of staff, when you have such a hard working and dedicated staff, you know. But, I want to single out two (2) persons within my Ministry, Ms. Veronica Charles, who have been working really hard to look for additional projects. So, Mr.

Speaker, they are not only sitting in the Ministry and just deal with the resources that we give them. They sit down and they write up projects for themselves and get a lot of funding, millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I am lucky to have them, because they do not only use that funding within the Ministry, but when they are writing projects they always remember that I am the Minister in their Ministry and my community always is part and parcel of what is happening. I do not tell them that I want my community to; I do not say well I am the Minister and I demand that, but they ensure that the different communities with issues within my Constituency do get their fair share of assistance and, therefore, I want to commend her.

Mr. Speaker, there is another officer within the Ministry, and, Mr. Speaker, I do not want my staff to say, well I am singling out people and so, I do not recognise their work, because I recognise the work of all our workers within the Ministry. But, we have our SAO, who is doing an excellent job and she too must be commended.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is also a gentleman within the Ministry and maybe for what it is worth, I will not call his name. But, it is somebody who has taken over the role of not only an employee, but because they knew my father from way back when, they also took over the role of my father and would decide, when I am working too hard and when to call me and say, you need to come out from the field. A worker in the Ministry, you know, Mr. Speaker, would tell me you have to leave now and go home and rest yourself.

Mr. Speaker, this speaks to love, and you do not have to like me politically but it speaks to love and appreciation. And, therefore, I would like to thank the staff, my Permanent Secretary, who has always been there for me and who has always been a very supportive arm, and all the other members, our Counselling Unit and every other Unit within the Ministry, our SEED Department and our SEED Manager, she knows how I feel about her. She is like a mother figure, from a very small child, she knows me as a baby up to adult and every other person within the Ministry. I am proud and I am happy of the hard work and dedication that you have been doing in the Ministry of Social Development and Housing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go to the Constituency of St. Andrew North-West. This is my Constituency, and the people of St. Andrew North-West, Mr. Speaker, they have to much stories to tell, Mr. Speaker, just so many stories to tell, Mr. Speaker, and they have so many testimonies, Mr. Speaker. We, as a Constituency, can give God praise and we can give Him thanks for what he has been doing in St. Andrew North-West. St. Andrew North-West, Mr. Speaker, we are working together, we are uniting our communities. So, it is not a case where you can say it is an NNP thing in St. Andrew North-West. It is a family affair, Mr. Speaker. Whether you voted NDC, or you voted NNP, and you would still vote NDC, we work together to develop the Constituency of St. Andrew North-West, and, therefore, I want to commend the entire Constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I have said time and time again, there are some people within the Constituency I met there for a very long time, they work hard, and they have a particular way of doing things. But, Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue on the same path all the time. And, because I am just more than an ordinary servant, you expect us to do things differently. You expect us to work, not only for the people, who supported NNP. I find there is a mindset in this Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, Mr. Speaker, whoever political Party in power. When NNP is in power you say it is our time now, this person should not get and you pinpoint and you call all kinds of names and you say all kinds of things. Mr. Speaker, we have to move away from that kind of mindset. This kind of Caribbean mindset cannot continue. It is a Caribbean mindset. We cannot continue. When you look at the American Election, after the campaign, they gone back, everybody working together. And, therefore, in St. Andrew North-West, Mr. Speaker, we continue to work together, and that is why we have achieved so much. Every educational facility, or school within the Constituency; St. Mary's R. C., I know we heard a lot about St. Mary's R. C., they have a brand new building, Mr. Speaker, and I know, Mr. Speaker, a brand new school. **(Applause)** And, the former Representative, and I said that here before, predicted that I would be the one to build and open the school, and his prediction was correct.

So, while he was fighting hard to ensure, his colleagues were not listening to him. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, the Principal, staff and students of St. Mary's R. C. School

they, too, have a testimony, Mr. Speaker. They, too, can speak of that brand new facility. And, we are looking, Mr. Speaker, for a Phase II of St. Mary's R. C. School. So, we would be looking for funding, and I would be advocating, on their behalf, to see if we can have a Phase II so that, that building, Mr. Speaker, that is still housed by the Preschool, which was meant for community, it was meant for Community Development. When that building was given, it was supposed to be a Resource Centre for the community and, therefore, we will ensure, we will work with our partners to see if we can get more funding to have that Phase II project for St. Mary's R. C. School.

Mr. Speaker, Paraclete Government School, my Alma Mater, Mr. Speaker, it is rehabilitation, but it is like they have a brand new school. So, Mr. Speaker, you would understand what is happening in St. Andrew North-West as it relates to education. Mostly, not mostly, but all of our schools are properly rehabilitated. I recall when we just came in, the Byelands School had an issue also and the entire roof was changed. Just recently, in Sabb, this year, the Sabb Preschool was infested by bats, and we were able to get approval for the material, under Special Projects, and the Work Brigade of the Constituency provided the labour, and, therefore, there is no more bat infestation there at that school.

So, we continue to work in the education aspect of our schools, preparing the schools. We have provided three (3) Desktop Computers to the Paraclete Government School, and this is aimed at providing IT services for the school and also the Community. So, they will have a Community Project where individuals, who do not have access to Internet can utilise those computers to do their homework and research. We are working together, Mr. Speaker, the schools and the Principals and the Teachers, we are working together to provide a better learning environment for our children. We are working together to enhance the teaching and learning of our children.

Mr. Speaker, apart from the infrastructural rehabilitation and the drain that we got approval for, Paraclete Government School was also under Special Projects; a lot of other things have been done. So, many of our children within the School System they are getting assistance from SEED to ensure that they can pay the bus and all that and go to school.

Mr. Speaker, we have many children, who were unable to pay for CXC subjects this year, and the Government Assistance Programme, through the Prime Minister's Office and the Prime Minister's Office Programme must be commended, **(applause)** because many children, who were unable to write CXC were able to write CXC, because the assistance provided by the Prime Minister's Office paid for the CXC subjects for those many children who needed.

Mr. Speaker, this NNP Government is a Government that cares for the people, all the people, and we understand that education, I would continue to say it like a broken record, education is the only thing that would help us, and, therefore, we'll provide whatever means we can, provide children on an individual basis, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I go out to the communities and assist children and work along with them, Mr. Speaker. We had bag distribution, Mr. Speaker. We had Voucher Assistance, where over four hundred (400) families received assistance through that Voucher Assistance Programme and many other assistance, uniforms and all that, Mr. Speaker, to provide for the educational needs of the students of the Constituency of St. Andrew North-West.

Housing, Mr. Speaker; more than eighty (80) families in 2017 received assistance in house repair, some three thousand (3,000), some two thousand (2,000), up to six thousand (6,000) in most instance. They received assistance for housing, Mr. Speaker. There were one or two families who were fire victims and we assisted them, in a small way, in rebuilding their homes. We will continue, Mr. Speaker, to provide for better housing needs for our people.

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Delma Thomas: Mr. Speaker, how much more time do I have?

Mr. Speaker: I am told that is a warning for fifteen (15) minutes more.

Hon. Delma Thomas: Okay, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we continue to look at improving the standard of living of the people, and that is why Special Projects is no longer what it used to be in the Constituency of St. Andrew North-West. While we believe in doing all the infrastructural work, and we will do those that are needed, we also believe in uplifting families and helping them to have a better standard of life.

And, we have embarked in the Constituency of St. Andrew North-West on a Bathroom and Toilet Programme, Mr. Speaker, and over fifty-two (52) families, in 2017, got assistance in the Bathroom and Toilet Programme. Not everyone got complete bathroom and toilet; the elderly people who are in bed are the ones, but other families, we encouraged them to help yourself and get some of the materials, and we will assist you. And, through the Special Projects, they got approval, Mr. Speaker, and we can boast of this new thing that is happening in St. Andrew North-West.

Mr. Speaker, even under the Special Projects, we have Work Brigades. So, when these families receive housing material, or the material to build bathroom and toilet, we have a Work Brigade, Mr. Speaker, and this Work Brigade is impacting positively on the lives of not only people, who get the assistance, but the people who are involved in the programme. These people have employment opportunities for a whole year, so whereas you give a small contract of fifteen thousand dollars ($15,000.00) within the Constituency and you work for one week or two weeks, the personnel in the Brigade, they are there for the whole year and they receive. We have skilled persons and then we have a lot of young men, Mr. Speaker, who otherwise would be on the block, they are involved, making a meaningful contribution. They have their bank accounts now, and they can boast, Mr. Speaker, they can help themselves. They are making a meaningful contribution and, Mr. Speaker, we are happy for that Brigade. We are happy for the approval by Government of that project where more than thirty (30) persons are employed through the Work Brigade. They are placed in different fields, Mr. Speaker. So, it is not only roads that are being built under Special Projects. We have used Special Projects in a number of ways.

So, we have two (2) Cleaners, Night Cleaners. The hospital was crying out for Night Cleaners. We have two (2) Night Cleaners now at the Mirabeau Hospital, who are

being paid under that Special Projects, they have approval. We have, Mr. Speaker, we have the school, sometimes when you go around they say, you know, we cannot get staff, because of our quota, but we need somebody to be here to assist with that.

Mr. Speaker, Paraclete Government has two (2) persons, who are being paid under the Work Brigade. St. Mary's R. C. also has one (1) person, Mr. Speaker. In Adelphi, we have a gentleman, who is there, who is supposed to be taking care of the Playing Field, keeping the grass low. We have provided even a Gardener under that project at the Princess Alice Hospital. They are providing their own foods now, Mr. Speaker. In my Constituency, we have a special PR team, a young man and a young woman, Mr. Speaker, who took it on their own, and they are producing videos to showcase the work of the Constituency and they, too, I want to commend them for their hard work and dedication of producing those videos to showcase what we are doing in the Constituency of St. Andrew North-West.

So, the Special Projects is doing a tremendous job for the people of St. Andrew North-West. But, Mr. Speaker, not only those Brigades we talk about, with those young men and the projects we talk about. But, we also have a special Home Care Programme. The GRENCASE has a programme that assists families, sometimes just one day or two days a week. But, there are some families; there are some elderly citizens within the Constituency, who need everyday care. They need someone to be cooking for them every day, talking to them, washing their clothes and cleaning their house.

Under Special Projects, we also got approval, Mr. Speaker, for another project, a Home Care Project, Mr. Speaker, where nine (9) persons, nine (9) unemployed women within the community... Many times you hear that you are providing employment opportunity for the young ladies and the young men, what about my age. So, in those nine (9) persons, Mr. Speaker, those persons who have children, they are assisting elderly persons and they are able to make a living for themselves and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I think that's the way to go, as it relates to Special Projects. Yes, you do all the infrastructural work, because the Brigades we have also do roads. And, that saved Government thousands of dollars, because they are getting a flat stipend,

whereas if you have to do a Contract, it will cost Government a lot more. What we do, we do roads together with the Ministry of Works; so we do not undertake a project on our own. Any project that will happen within the Constituency, we inform the Road Officer, who will come on the site with the person in charge of the Brigade and tell them what is expected of them, as it relates to the Ministry of Works standard. And, we are forging ahead, improving our community, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have worked with many families, Mr. Speaker, providing all sorts of assistance; provide stoves and provide financial and other assistance, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, those pictures you would not see it on Facebook, you will not see us giving children a school bag or a voucher, or some other financial assistance on Facebook. And, I am a politician and I understand the public relations aspect of that. But, Mr. Speaker, you would understand where I came from, and as a child how I felt, when my family or relative, the children would say that's my shoes you're wearing, or that's my skirt on me. I knew how I felt at that time. I knew how I felt. We were poor, but we were full of pride. I knew how I felt, Mr. Speaker, when I went to the next door neighbour; my grandmother sent me to beg for something and they talked out loud and the other person heard. Mr. Speaker, when you become self-aware, when you start to turn a particular age, you are self-aware, and you feel bad and it hurt your whole heart, and you say, I never want this for my children.

So, how can I be in leadership position and want that for the people within the Constituency of St. Andrew North-West? I cannot, Mr. Speaker, permit me and understand my point of view. I know my PR people sometimes, when they say Minister, you're doing all these toilets and bathrooms, let us go and take some pictures and put it on Facebook. I say that, to me, is vulgar. It is vulgar, Mr. Speaker. If I am going to assist you to uplift yourself, why do I want the world to know, when I came from there? That's where I came from, very poor beginnings, Mr. Speaker. I am never quiet about that. You know where I came from, very poor, begging a bread, Mr. Speaker. My grandmother used to beg a bread to take care of us. And, therefore, I cannot be comfortable.

It is against my conscience to put those things on anywhere. So, whether or not you want to say you have not seen what I am doing, then the people know what I am doing, Mr. Speaker, that is why nobody can set foot in the Constituency of St. Andrew North-West. **(Applause)** We have it locked. Mr. Speaker, we have it locked down there, nobody. But, even what they are saying; I have heard my opponent, Mr. Speaker, that's my family, my family-in-law, so sometimes I feel very sympathetic for him, because I say he does not know what he is talking about. He is maybe talking about somewhere else, because he is always somewhere else. He is always in the North-East, on Paraclete side. He is not on my side, Mr. Speaker, because who can you talk to?

Mr. Speaker, the electorates make up their mind long time. They are watching their Leaders to see what you are doing for them, within the first three (3) years they make up their mind, three years and a half. You are not coming one year before election and trying to knock at their door and expect to get their smiling face. They will lock out the door in your face, Mr. Speaker, and they tell you get out in their face. In fact, when they went to Paraclete, they said you're wasting your time. They came to Mt. Horne, that's my village where I was raised, the people of Mt. Horne, Paraclete and Paradise raised me, you think they will shut their door on me, especially when I continue to stand up for their right and take somebody, who you have never seen for the last four (4) years? Joke they're making, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

I have listened to the speeches, Mr. Speaker. I have listened to the speeches in their rally, you know, sometimes you have to listen to hear, and I am hearing him talking about some bridge he intends to do inside Satopee. But, Mr. Speaker, I met with the villagers of Santopee. I do not do projects on my own. I do not make decisions for myself within the Constituency. So, he heard that I had met with the villagers there, which was supposed to be strong base for them, who have decided that they have seen the work of the New National Party and the many testimonies that people have to tell **(applause)**, and, therefore, they decided that they will support.

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Delma Thomas: Mr. Speaker, you would have to give me a five (5) more minutes, so I can wrap up my session.

(Laughter/Applause)

Hon. Delma Thomas: I need five (5) more minutes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, that was the warning for the five (5) minutes.

Hon. Delma Thomas: Okay. So, I have five (5) more minutes? Okay, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and we have decided within that village that before the end of the year, we will start that road, where the family has some issues there, through the Brigade, which is going to start on Friday, and we have also committed to the people that after the road, we will start the bridge from Dunfermline to Santopee. So, he heard that news, Mr. Speaker, and he was on 'To The Point', and it was laughable, Mr. Speaker, laughable. This is laughable, saying that he is doing small projects in the community and he said he did a project in Sabb. Mr. Speaker, if you see the project? Two bags of cement he couldn't even get, yet he wants to do a bridge that cost over fifty thousand dollars ($50,000.00) after the Ministry of Works assessed. And, he knows we are going there next to do the project. He was on 'To the Point' telling Brenda that, you know, the thing is so nice for him in the Constituency, when he go to the different communities, and he will be attempting that project. Which project, Mr. Speaker? A project you heard that we will be doing in December, so you're taking in front?

And, I heard him, Mr. Speaker, recently saying that the people of St. Andrew North-West will vote you out. Vote out whom? Who, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, I was placed here by the Almighty God and I am getting full support and commitment from the people of St. Andrew North-West. **(Applause)** We are working together, and there is no one, Mr. Speaker, no one that can intervene, Mr. Speaker, to say that I am going to take you out. They can't take me out. God will take me out on His timing,

because, Mr. Speaker, the truth is, I am getting support from all these people you are seeing in the audience there. They are here in their numbers. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, when I was coming here this morning, we had about four (4) buses on the way, and a whole bus load of people in the road, still calling me, calling me and telling me, 'Minister we are on the road.' So, they are here in their numbers to show their support, Mr. Speaker, and, therefore, when the Election is called, we will be victorious, Mr. Speaker. There is no doubt about that. And, therefore, in wrapping up, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my entire team. My huge team inside here this morning, I want to thank you for the support, for the love, for the appreciation, for the understanding that I am not an ordinary servant. Mr. Speaker, they understand that I am not an ordinary servant, and, therefore, I have to do things different to what they know. And, I will continue, Mr. Speaker, to do more within the Constituency of St. Andrew North-West.

Very soon, we will have a Resource and Fitness Centre in Sabb and many more other projects. We have written to the Cocoa Association and they have given us permission, so that we can lease that building in Mt. Horne, where we will have a State-of-the-Art Child Development Centre. We are doing all in our power, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to work, Mr. Speaker, to improve the lives of the people of St. Andrew North-West.

I want to thank everyone within the Constituency, thank my family and thank my boys and my girl, my husband, everyone, my children, who have been there for me in thick and thin, and I want to applaud them, Mr. Speaker, because you know when you are in public office everybody look not only at you, but also at your children. And, they are able to perform extremely well, Mr. Speaker. My third son was able to pass nine (9) CXC subjects, Mr. Speaker, this year, and my second son graduated with Honours at TAMCC, and will be the next Doctor in Mt. Horne, **(applause)** the first doctor in Mt. Horne, Mr. Speaker, my son will be that, Mr. Speaker. And, so, I want to thank them and thank everyone, thank my management team, the Constituency Branch, my Prayer Warriors, everyone who have been praying for me, some do not even know me, I want to thank them. I want to thank God for continuing to keep me, for taking me from

nowhere and bringing me here; to have four (4) years in this House is enough to be thankful for. It is a testimony in itself, Mr. Speaker. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew North-West, and thank you for staying right within the borders of the time.

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: She did.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South-West.

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my full support to the 2018 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, as presented by our esteemed Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, under the Theme, Mr. Speaker, ***'Safeguarding our Gains and Continuing our Progress.'***

Mr. Speaker, this Theme is quite appropriate, as the progress which we, as a country, have made in the last four (4) years, indeed, needs to be safeguarded, as we continue the progress.

Mr. Speaker, this is a Budget for everyone. Mr. Speaker, I can assure the farmers out there, the fisher folk out there, Mr. Speaker, that they will benefit tremendously from this Budget.

Mr. Speaker, the trust and confidence of the people of St. Andrew South-West affords me the opportunity to address this Honourable House today. And, for that, I am, indeed, grateful and pleased to report on the achievements of my Ministry to the Nation and to hold myself accountable to my dear Constituents, who are sitting graciously in the audience.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister for assigning me the Portfolio of this Ministry. I am mindful that I am here to represent the

hopes and aspirations of farmers and fisher folks across the State who are toiling, on a daily basis, to feed our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I take the stewardship of the Agri-Food Sector, as a serious responsibility, and I am delighted to give account, because these matters are of high importance to the development of this Nation. Mr. Speaker, each segment of my Portfolio is representative of a Ministry. In other words, Mr. Speaker, each one is like a Ministry by itself. And, so, Mr. Speaker, I may have to beg your indulgence here today for a little more time. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the presentation on the environment had to be shifted to my colleague, because of the time constraints.

Mr. Speaker, I would now address matters pertaining to the Agriculture Portfolio. Mr. Speaker, from the onset, I must say that we have both challenges and opportunities. The challenges have to do with the difficulty to find markets and the need to increase farmers' income. This is one of the main challenges, Mr. Speaker. In this Sector, Mr. Speaker, farmers do not have signed contracts, so they produce and hope to find a market. That is one of the areas that we must and we are working towards, Mr. Speaker, to make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, we have dialogued, quite a bit, with MNIB, the hotels, the supermarkets, to see how we can make an impact, in terms of the demand and supply factors and the price. Mr. Speaker, this is a real challenge, and we continue to look for options at the local, regional, and international markets. Mr. Speaker, again, I say, the price must be right and the standards must be acceptable. And, to ensure that we encourage the farmers to improve on their standards, Mr. Speaker, this year of 2017, was declared as the Year of Agri-Business.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, our Ministry hosted the first Agri-Biz Expo 2017, right here, Mr. Speaker. This event, Mr. Speaker, brought together Agro-Processors from all Parishes to showcase the vast array of quality products made in Grenada with local ingredients. And, to understand, Mr. Speaker, what exist out there, because I don't think the Ministry, although we have a Directory, there are lots of more persons doing Agri-Business Development Projects.

Mr. Speaker, value addition was presented in different products such as juices, beverages, jewellery, soaps, candles, seasonings, liquors and so much more, Mr. Speaker. It was an Expo to remember, Mr. Speaker.

On the stage was a depiction of the Royal Horticultural Society, Chelsea Flower Show, as a masterpiece of Grenada's reputation of winning the 2017, its 13th Gold medal, Mr. Speaker. The multi layer design emphasised the rich flora of our Pure Grenada, the Spice of the Caribbean. It brought to the fore, Mr. Speaker, the spices, the foliage, the blooms, the biodiversity of our beautiful Nation. The colours and fragrance were outstanding, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations, Mr. Speaker, is in order for that fantastic team, **(applause)** under the leadership of Ms. Cathy John, Shirma Mitchell, Esther Fleary, June Lander, to name a few, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the Expo, our Ministry awarded many daughters and sons of the soil who gave yeoman service to this industry, even those that have gone before us, Mr. Speaker. We remember their love for Agriculture and the contribution they have made to this beautiful Nation.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the success of the Expo, I am pleased to report to this Honourable House that arrangements are being made to host a Second Edition of the Agri-Expo with a focus on Youth in Agriculture and the link between Agriculture and Tourism. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, in that regard, I am also happy to inform this Honourable House that we have been working with a team from Canada to launch a new Programme: 'Farm Local, Sell Global.' And, already, Mr. Speaker, an Investment Seminar was held with local Entrepreneurs to help them get ready for accessing the Canadian market; that means, Mr. Speaker, having their labels in English and French. And, Mr. Speaker, we see the potential for our spices and herbs, liquors, etcetera, to move out of this Island, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the staff of my Ministry, Mr. Speaker, and the Private Sector. Mr. Bedeau, who went the extra mile, the Manager who operates this facility, Blue Bubbles, community

organisations, the Private Sector, the Farmers, Mr. Speaker, that worked towards the success of the Agri-Business Expo, 2017.

Mr. Speaker, my staff, I want to single out a couple of my staff, who really worked hard, Lorraine St. Louis, who put this thing on her back and made it happen. Also, Mr. Daniel Lewis, who ran with the concept and made sure that it was a success. There are other persons who worked on it, but these were the main persons, who really grappled with the whole thing and made it a success. Mr. Speaker, I salute the Farmers of this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn my attention to traditional crops, Nutmeg and Cocoa. And, I want to spend a little time on Nutmeg and Cocoa, Mr. Speaker, because these are two (2) fundamental crops, and these are crops that have been here, traditional crops that still support the economy of this country. Mr. Speaker, I salute the Nutmeg farmers of the nation and GCNA, which was established since 1947. They commemorated seventy (70) years this year, Mr. Speaker. The Grenada Cocoa Association, established in 1964, is now fifty-three (53) years in existence, Mr. Speaker. These two (2) Associations, together with Minor Spices, which was established in 1971, have a combined asset of over $81.3 m, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot lose track of these Sectors, Mr. Speaker. We have to work with them and build these Sectors, Mr. Speaker. They've been keeping things going. Although things were not working, as it should, it has been fluctuating over the years, but they have kept the Sector going, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the market factors are not the same, as in 1947. The market is changing, and so we must change the way we manage these sub-sectors. In that regard, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the Ministry has worked tirelessly, to amend the ordinances of the Association, and I want to commend the Permanent Secretary. She has done so much work in that regard. I said to her recently, I think she has a legal background, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has been working with the support of the Associations, and with funding from the Compete Caribbean Programme to revise the legislation. Mr. Speaker, the draft new Legislation will present options to share ownership by farmers,

attraction of investors to the Sector, ways to liberalise the Sector, and how to deal with the reality of aging farmers, Mr. Speaker. So, it's comprehensive. The aim is to present this new Legislation to this Honourable House in the first Quarter of 2018, Mr. Speaker. We are ready, Mr. Speaker. It's in the Legal Department at present. It's shaped and we are ready to move with the Legislation in early 2018. Mr. Speaker, we must find ways to invest in a prudent manner in these sub-sectors, because nutmeg and cocoa remain the bedrock of Agriculture in this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, the GCNA, and GCA informed the Ministry that they have agreed to combine the management of these Associations. Mr. Speaker, that is the way to go. It's the same farmers. It's the same farmers that are farming nutmeg, it's the same farmers that farming cocoa. So, why are we apart? Why don't we amalgamate, come together, and make sure we safeguard these two (2) Entities. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, from April 2017, to date, with the merger of the management, the administrative cost was reduced by over five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000.00). Mr. Speaker, I want to state this here that we should have done that a long time ago. **(Applause)** But, we were trying to keep ourselves in one corner, Nutmeg there, Cocoa there, and farmers support... **(*Inaudible comment)*** They're suffering, yes, and they're both are doing the same thing. They are the ones that producing nutmeg and cocoa, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, GCNA, and I don't want to jump the gun, but I just want to tell the farmers that GCNA is now in a better position to make them happy for Christmas. You could interpret it how you want. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, for 2018, we identified strategic areas of cooperation with the Associations and these are: the finalisation of the new legislation; sourcing of grant funds; branding of nutmeg as the National Icon, and registration of the Isle of Spice; granting of concessions to support research and development; accessing new markets in the USA, Cuba etcetera, and achieving quality assurance targets. Mr. Speaker, if we do not have those attributes, we cannot move forward with the Association making headway in the world today.

Mr. Speaker, nutmeg is the King of Spices, and we must ensure that we stay on top of the game. I am pleased to report that during the last financial year, Mr. Speaker,

the GCNA recorded 16.3% growth in production, moving from 1.12 m pounds in 2016 to 1.4 m in 2017. **(Applause)** This needs to be applauded. So, things are taking shape, Mr. Speaker, and 2018/2019, you will see a different landscape where these two (2) Entities are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, other notable achievements of the Nutmeg Industry during the last year, Mr. Speaker, are: an increase of over 100% of containers of nutmegs shipped monthly; major reduction in operational costs of the GCNA; established contacts for selling packaged nutmegs in Aruba, USA and the United Kingdom; successfully maintained the advance prices for nutmeg and mace paid to farmers; has increased regional markets for nutmeg and mace; made a surplus of $1.240 m, and has now come out of their overdraft facility. Mr. Speaker, this is a plus for the Organisation. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, the GCNA Office Complex has now achieved 96% occupancy. So, they're moving on, Mr. Speaker, and we have been supporting them all along, Mr. Speaker, because we understand the critical role. We understand the critical role that that these two (2) Organisations have to play and we support our farmers wholeheartedly.

Mr. Speaker, just to give a little highlight on Cocoa. Mr. Speaker, the chocolate and other products produced by the Diamond Plant has been well accepted and appreciated by both the local and export market. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, and you're going to see more of that, because they're moving into Milk Chocolate, as well, because a lot of… a high percentage of persons loves Milk Chocolate, including me, Mr. Speaker. **(Laughter)** So, I'll push it, Mr. Speaker. I have been well informed, Mr. Speaker, that the gross local sales in 2016, surpassed the target, EC one million dollars (EC$1 m).

Mr. Speaker, I must also indicate that farmers must realise that in times of financial losses and low prices at the world market for cocoa and nutmeg, the Ministry is supporting these Associations and standing with our farmers to ensure that the price they receive will not be impacted negatively. **(Applause)**

Motions

Mr. Speaker, the world market price for cocoa is US nineteen hundred dollars (US$1,900) per ton, but the farmers, Mr. Speaker, are receiving $3.3000 per ton. Mr. Speaker, we stand with the Nutmeg Farmers, even at the times of depressed world market prices. We stand with the Cocoa Farmers to ensure that the prices can be stabilised, and we want the Grenadian public to know that. We want the farmers to understand what has been taking place with the Ministry and the Government. We stand with farmers in good times and in bad times. Mr. Speaker, we care about our farmers.

Mr. Speaker, it is often said that this Government is not supporting Agriculture. I have heard it over and over and over and even on the radio I have been hearing that for the past few days, and people approached me, farmers approached me, when I visited them, that they're saying that we do not support them. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if these statements are based on real facts, or just imagination. But, I am blaming ourselves at the Ministry, Mr. Speaker, because we have not had a good Public Relations Officer or a Unit at that Ministry for a long time.

Mr. Speaker, bearing in mind some of the problems that the GCA is experiencing at this time with the drop in prices for Cocoa on the market, Mr. Speaker, and other problems, Cabinet has appointed a Special Committee to meet with GCA to come up with their strategy, or to strategically address the issues faced by the Industry. Mr. Speaker, a special fund of ten million dollars ($10 m) is also included in the Budget for 2018, to support some of these challenges, and you heard the Prime Minister speak of that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in this regard, I wish to now explain the allocation of Vote 64, in this 2018 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. Mr. Speaker, every year stakeholders express concern about the Budget. The Budget was cut for Agriculture. In 2017, we received $27.4 m. In 2018, the allocation is $24.7 m. So, now the talk is that the budget is reduced by $2.7 m. And, the Opposition has it going, Mr. Speaker, and many of the persons, who don't understand the structure of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that Agriculture is supported not only by the allocation under Vote 64, but several other Votes. Under Vote 19, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Religious Affairs, we have a Youth in Agriculture Programme, that is over six million ($6 m). Under Vote 20 of the Ministry of Finance and Energy, we have BNTF, the Climate Smart Agriculture/MAREP Programme, Mr. Speaker, this is an additional four million ($4 m), again, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, under Vote 26, the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Planning, we have the AGRICOM Project for ten million dollars ($10 m), Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, 70% of the Small Development Loan Programme with GDB is focused on farmers and fishermen. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, and I can go on, I think there is still more, let me go on, because we're moving on, we're moving on, and I can testify to these things, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, under Vote 30, the Ministry of Communication and Works, we have resources allocated for the Feeder Roads Programme, Mr. Speaker, that is another two million ($2 m), again, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I check up all these things, I know my Math isn't good. The Prime Minister might be able to give you a better position, but I came up with over $46.7 m, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker... ***(Inaudible comments)*** yes, and there is additional. I'll give you lower down, when you speak of GRENROP and how things are being transformed in this country, we can add more and more. Even Special Projects, because some of the roads that we're doing, the pieces of roads that we're doing in the Communities lead to Farms, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

So, I want to tell my dear farmers and those who are saying all these things that we have the farmers at heart, and we are supporting the farmers wholeheartedly. And, this Budget, this year, Mr. Speaker, is going to support our farmers even more, especially when we come with the Youth in Agriculture Programme, the young farmers, who want to start moving agriculture in this country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would now report on the role of the various Divisions of Agriculture in accessing new markets and facilitation of training.

Plant Propagation

Mr. Speaker, the Propagation Stations are in need of repairs, we know that. At the beginning of taking up my responsibilities at the Ministry of Agriculture, I visited every Station. This is the first thing a Minister should do. You have got to know your children, you've got to know your structure, you have to know everything. So, I visited all the Stations, and we know that all these Stations have to be repaired. This is something that is happening year after year. We need it.

(Inaudible comments)

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Yes. Oh. I think I am getting a bit excited. Agriculture is an exciting Ministry. Mr. Speaker, and so, we did an assessment of all our Stations, and these are things that would not happen overnight, Mr. Speaker. We have started to repair and rehabilitate Mirabeau. We did some work in Ashenden. We looked at the main things that had to be done now. We looked at Boulogne, the toilet facilities and all the things that had to be done there, Mr. Speaker. So, we have a good analysis. But, things cannot happen overnight, Mr. Speaker. And, because of the limited resources, we were able to do as much as we could during the time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the management of the Stations is under review, as well, and in 2018, we will be able to put new management structures in place, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to report, Mr. Speaker, that in 2017, Plant Propagation Distribution Programme, the Ministry announced that farmers will pay first for plants, and that Policy will remain in effect, Mr. Speaker. This is one way of reducing waste, as some farmers buy the plants, at subsidised rates, and do not even take care of them. They are still sitting under their homes, or in their garages. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, we must keep that standard at the Propagation Unit.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to inform that the Unit played a critical role in the hardening of all the cane plants and breadfruit for CANECO and the MNIB, respectfully. Mr. Speaker, the first line of call for farmers, or the first line of duty, Mr. Speaker, is the

Extension Service. Mr. Speaker, and we know we have had a problem with Extension over the years, but we are working to get that Unit running smoothly. Mr. Speaker, I hereby report that in 2017, over thirteen thousand (13,000) farm visits were made by the Extension Officers, so as to assist farmers in boosting their technical knowhow through training and imparting of technical knowledge and demonstrations.

Mr. Speaker, training for Extension Officers is an ongoing exercise, and in 2017, the key focus areas for training were: Extension Methodology; Marketing Information; Citrus Greening; Good Agricultural Practices; Organic Farming, and Pruning of Tree Crops. A major activity, Mr. Speaker, for the period 2018-2020 is training of Extension Assistants, as part of the Succession Planning Programme, Mr. Speaker, for the Agriculture Sector. We must do that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018, we will commence training in collaboration with TAMCC, and with funding from FAO, while we honour the service of those who are retiring, Mr. Speaker. We are equipping a new cadre of officers to ensure that service will be sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, training for Farmers; six hundred and twenty eight (628) farmers benefitted from training in the areas of Soursop Production, Pesticide Use, Good Agricultural Practices, Vegetable Production, Yam Production, Pests and Disease Management in Crop, Shade House Management and Tree Crop Production, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Farmers' Market will continue to offer a platform of service to our local customers, Mr. Speaker. I wish to thank all who are supporting the Eat Local Campaign. When you buy your produce at the Farmers' Market, Mr. Speaker, you give farmers income year round, and they are able to support and educate their families, Mr. Speaker, and also continue to feed this Nation. Mr. Speaker, so hats off to the farmers, who have come together to set up the Farmers' Market.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to report on the initiatives we provide to farmers; duty Free Concession on 4-Wheel Drive Vehicles. In 2017, Mr. Speaker, twenty-seven (27) farmers were granted concession on vehicles. Over one million dollars ($1 m) were

forgone in revenue to support farmers. Mr. Speaker, waiver of duties and taxes on vital agricultural inputs, as well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I know this is a serious vexing issue, Praedial Larceny. Mr. Speaker, Praedial Larceny is still with us, and farmers are crying out every single day, Mr. Speaker. The record show, Mr. Speaker, that in 2016, there were five hundred and ninety-four (594) reports of Praedial Larceny offences. We see an average of seven hundred and eighty-six (786) in 2017, a dramatic increase. Why? Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with the Royal Grenada Police Force and the Praedial Larceny Task Force to combat this issue. I wish to report that the increase is not necessarily an increase of offences, but we also see it as a result of the increased awareness, Mr. Speaker, awareness activities and confidence to report, because the system has been developed. The system is much, much better now, Mr. Speaker, regarding support for Praedial Larceny.

Mr. Speaker, I am exceedingly pleased to inform that the judicial support received, and that has been a problem, thus far, is the fight against Praedial Larceny has been most commendable, and the good successes reflected by the Praedial Larceny Task Force Team includes the efforts and commitment by the Justice System to give particular attention, and quickly too, Mr. Speaker, to the Praedial Larceny Officers, and maintain firm sentences. So we see a shift, Mr. Speaker. But, there is a lot more work to do and the Division is coming up with new strategies and ways to combat this issue, Mr. Speaker. The thieves are preparing, and we're preparing for them.

Mr. Speaker, a young man said to me, Mr. Speaker, "I want to get into Agriculture. Does Agriculture have a future?" The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker, a resounding yes, because we have a vibrant, Mr. Speaker, vibrant, 4-H Movement on this Island, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are many successful farmers in Grenada today, and they can testify, Mr. Speaker, that came through the 4-H Programme. Don't underestimate this Movement, you know. It is a stepping stone to higher levels of Agriculture. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to support the 4-H Leaders Convention, the 4-H Leaders Activities Celebration Day, Mr. Speaker. In 2017 the participation of

these events were supported by seventy (70) 4-H Leaders and one thousand and seventy-seven (1,077) 4-H members. Mr. Speaker, I attended, and it was, indeed, a resounding success.

Mr. Speaker, Farm Labour Support Programme; this, Mr. Speaker, sometimes, I feel, is a Debushing Programme that we're taking on whenever I hear the words: 'Farm Labour Support Programme,' because, Mr. Speaker, this programme has a lot of problems that we are working to alleviate.

Mr. Speaker, the Farm Labour Support Programme commenced in the Eastern District, and we are making sure that farmers who are in need get the required support. We cannot do it all, Mr. Speaker, but we are trying our best to make sure that the farmers, who are in need get the required support. The Programme started later than expected this year, but the support would be given to especially to nutmeg and soursop farmers.

Mr. Speaker, the Programme started on the 13th of November, a total of nine (9) teams, comprising of sixty-eight (68) workers are involved at present. Mr. Speaker, this programme has had many challenges, again, and so we have started to review the project, and come next year, we would develop a more comprehensive programme, to support our farmers. The funds approved this year, Mr. Speaker, is two hundred and fifteen thousand dollars ($215,000.00).

Mr. Speaker, I would now report on the Pests Management Unit. In 1980, Mr. Speaker, Grenada was in a position to export different types of exotic fruits to the United States of America. But, Mr. Speaker, due to the incidents of pests and diseases, we lost some markets. Mr. Speaker, in 2002, golden apples from Grenada were banned for export to the United States of America, as a result of the Fruit Fly Disease, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am indeed, elated to report that the Ministry has been working with officials from the USDA, to regain that market, Mr. Speaker. And, in October of 2017, a Protocol to resume the export of golden apples to the United States of America was signed. It is agreed that the fruits would be radiated in the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I want to express appreciation to the staff of the Pests Management Unit, in that regard, Mr. Speaker. I must mention, as well, Mr. Speaker, the efficiency of

the issuance of permits. You know, you go for a permit, you have to wait forever; that is not happening again, Mr. Speaker, because we understand the importance of the permits, and how swiftly we should get these permits going. Mr. Speaker, in 2017, this Unit issued one thousand and nineteen (1,019) Plant Input Permits to Companies, revenue to the amount of eighty-three thousand dollars ($83,000.00) was generated from the Phytosanitary Certificates.

Support for Soursop

Mr. Speaker, this Unit also provided excellent support to the Soursop Industry, and twenty-five (25) farmers' fields were treated for pests and diseases. Some of them received repeated treatments, to ensure higher quality production.

Mr. Speaker, this is important, because the record shows that over two million pounds of soursop was exported and revenue of EC ten million dollars (EC$10 m) was generated. **(Applause)** So, Mr. Speaker, we must support our soursop.

Mr. Speaker, at that same time, the Pest Management Unit is working, assiduously, to fight the Citrus Greening Disease, and you know about that, Mr. Speaker. If you didn't hear it in this Honourable House, you would have heard it all over the radio, the talk that was made about the Citrus Greening Disease. Mr. Speaker, this is not only in Grenada. This disease is all over the Caribbean. But, Mr. Speaker, with the little structure that we have put in place here in Grenada, to safeguard some of the trees and to control the disease, it is a deadly disease. Eventually, the trees have to be cut down, over an eight-year period, or nine-year period. But, Mr. Speaker, all now, the Pests Management Unit is working assiduously, to curb the disease and not make it spread further, Mr. Speaker. We also would be getting support from CARDI, Mr. Speaker. When I attended that meeting in Costa Rica, CARDI said they would give us some support, Mr. Speaker.

Division of Livestock and Veterinary Services

Mr. Speaker, in 2017, this Division, together with the Planning Unit of the Grenada Association of Poultry Producers brought to Cabinet a landmark document, the National Poultry Policy, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I must stop to commend the hard work of the Poultry Association, and I want to single out Mr. Joshua Lewis, in particular,

Mr. Speaker, who, I believe sometimes is sleeping with poultry on his mind, because the amount of times he would call me, or try to get in touch with me regarding moving this Industry forward.

Mr. Speaker, 90% of poultry we consume on this Island is imported. Poultry imports are one of the principal contributors to our high food import bill, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is important to highlight that the Policy prescribes strategic interventions for addressing this issue. The Policy was approved by Cabinet in August of 2017, Mr. Speaker, and the Ministry is putting in place to operationalise the Policy and plans to implement various aspects of the Policy in 2018. A Committee, Mr. Speaker, a Monitoring Committee is already in place, and the Terms of Reference is ready to take this Policy forward, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, poultry, in 2018, will benefit from the ten million dollars ($10 m) put aside for different programmes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have to get our small farmers out there involved in starting to develop that part of the Industry, because we cannot depend on the few big Poultry Farms that will be set up here, to really cover the amount, if we want to cut down on the importation of chicken, poultry from overseas, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, we are going places. We are moving on, Mr. Speaker.

The Produce Chemist Laboratory, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Unit is critical for the support of Agro-Processors across the Tri-Island State. I am pleased to highlight the following achievements, Mr. Speaker: three hundred and thirty-nine (339) technical assistances were provided to Agro-Processors in the area of Formulation, Production Development, Sourcing of Equipment and Raw Materials; technical support to Nutmeg Value Addition, Mr. Speaker; Cooperative Genesis Value Added Nutmeg Co-operative Society in the areas of Research, Product Development and production of over five hundred (500) cases of Nutmeg Pericalf, Mr. Speaker, value added products produced under the brand name, Spice Fusion. These products, Mr. Speaker, are all over the place. They are in all the Supermarkets, Mr. Speaker, and I want to urge the public to support by purchasing them. These are local products, some of them are spicy, some of them are delicious and we need to support our local.

Motions

Mr. Speaker, development of the successful commercialisation of Amaz-in Chocolate Liqueur. This was done in collaboration with a local Agro-Processor, Mr. Speaker, who then partnered with Grenada Distillers to launch, produce and market this high quality product, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, three thousand, six hundred (3,600) chemical and microbiological analyses were performed in support of Fish Export, Agro-Processing and Manufacturing. Eighty-eight (88) were persons trained in Agro-Processing Technology. Six thousand, three hundred (6,300) Forensic Analysis were conducted on Controlled Drugs, brought in for analysis by the Royal Grenada Police Force. Seventy-five (75) Agro-Processing sites were visited to assess manufacturing operations and providing technical assistance.

Mr. Speaker, when you speak of Agriculture, you may just think about the land. We don't think about all the other subsectors that have to come together, to make Agriculture a success. This is not a little Ministry. This is a Ministry that every sector of the Ministry is a Ministry in itself, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as recent as 7th November, 2017, there was excitement in various communities, because of the helicopter flying over. I am pleased to inform, Mr. Speaker, (I was excited myself), that the helicopter was carrying out an activity under the Regional Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project. Mr. Speaker, this is funded by the World Bank and the Climate Investment Fund.

Mr. Speaker, this will help us to conduct a topographical survey of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, using Lieder Technology. Lieder Technology, Mr. Speaker, is used to capture a view of the land surface (you wonder why it links with Agriculture), from above, which will then be used to develop topographical maps, depth of coastal waters, vegetation type, land use, cadastral data, as well as to develop a survey map of Grenada, which is so important and valid, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is excellent news. We have delivered, indeed, and we are moving on, Mr. Speaker. Look at the different levels of operation that are taking place in this country. Look at where we were, and where we are going to, Mr. Speaker.

Motions

Mr. Speaker, I wish to highlight the following. The Land Use Division provided technical and equipment support to one hundred (100) farmers in areas of Irrigation, Farm Suitability Assessment, Irrigation System Design and Installation, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** We are working for our farmers, Mr. Speaker. We are not working against our farmers.

We have conducted training in Irrigation Systems Designs, Installation Operations, maintenance for ninety (90) farmers in Grenada and thirty-five (35) farmers in Carriacou, in collaboration with MAREP, Mr. Speaker. I must commend MAREP. MAREP has been working very hard with the Ministry, under the leadership of Mr. Byron Campbell. He has done a great job, in terms of supporting farmers, through training and other projects, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have developed a National Land Policy. We are training our staff in GIZ/GPS, Micro Survey Tools and Climatic Data Analysis. Installation of Rain Water Harvesting Systems, Mr. Speaker, was done at Mirabeau Propagation Station and Mc Donald College, Mr. Speaker. This has been completed, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the implementation of the Moroccan Funded Soil Fertility Mapping Project, Mr. Speaker, has so far been a hugely beneficial initiative for Grenada, Mr. Speaker. The benefits are enormous: supply of fertilizers, training of officers and a complete soil fertility mapping of the entire Island is ongoing, Mr. Speaker. With this map, Mr. Speaker, Policy Makers and Technical Officers will be able to use the information on soil type to support decisions for production.

Mr. Speaker, I receive complaints about the indiscriminate use of fertilisers, from time to time, and consumers expect us, me, to take action, Mr. Speaker, this Government to take action. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that training and field assessment were conducted, and now we are at the stage of taking soil samples. The first batch of samples will be five hundred (500) soil samples for analysis. Mr. Speaker, on completion, farmers will have access to a comprehensive database on soil fertility and fertiliser application to the soil. Mr. Speaker, what more you want than that? When this project is completed, Mr. Speaker, our farmers must be happy, because they understand what exist in their land, what their soil look like. Do I have to put more

fertiliser? My soil is fertile, just grow and what are the type of crops that they have to grow. They would get an analysis of all of that, Mr. Speaker. So, it is full swing we are going with the farmers, Mr. Speaker, in 2018.

Mr. Speaker, Planning and Research. Mr. Speaker, the National Zero Hunger Challenge Initiative continues to assist the needy in a way that is integrated and inter-sectoral. This is an excellent project, Mr. Speaker. This programme is co-delivered by several Ministries including Health, Education, Agriculture, Social Development and also MNIB, Grenada Food and Nutrition Council and the NGO Movement, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen the impact of this programme in schools, and I am pleased to report that a new National School Nutrition Policy and Action Plan was approved, and the School Feeding Programme, in four (4) pilot schools was strengthened, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** The Schools are St. Patrick R.C.; Bonair, St. Mark; Byelands, St. Andrew, St. Michael and St. Patrick Anglican School, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if you go to the Schools now, the School Kitchens were renovated and upgraded with commercial stoves, refrigerators, juicers, blenders and kitchen necessities, with funding from the FAO, Mr. Speaker. We are really grateful to the FAO for supporting this programme. Mr. Speaker, we are moving on. Mr. Speaker, our children are beginning to eat healthy meals, so we expect them to produce, and they will produce, Mr. Speaker. I must say hats-off to that Department, under the leadership of Dr. Dottin.

Mr. Speaker, I will now focus on Lands and Survey, the second Portfolio in the Ministry. Mr. Speaker, this is something in itself. Mr. Speaker, the services provided through this Department are essential services. We have over three thousand (3,000) applicants for lands and we continue to process applicants for water and electricity.

Mr. Speaker, in 2017, we focussed our attention to regularise the land tenure in the communities of Mt. Rush, the Limes, Grand Anse, Mt. Hartman, River Road, Frequenté and Lowthers Lane, St. George, Belle Vue, St. Andrew, Mt. Horne, Telescope, Símon, Lacalome, La Sagesse, Loretto, Black Bay and Power Park, St. John, Diamond and Waltham, St. Mark, Chambeau, St. Patrick and Carriacou, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you would think that Department has about two hundred (200)

people working. I would think that, Mr. Speaker. To really get these things going, you need a solid cadre of people, who understand how to shape this whole land tenure business, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the process is ongoing, and we have contracted two (2) additional Surveyors. Mr. Speaker, that is a joke, in comparison to the work that this Ministry has to do. So, next year, we have to look at a full-fledged Ministry. We have to have a renaissance in that Department, to make it work and to make it work effectively.

Mr. Speaker, we successfully completed surveys on sites forming part of Crown Lands for the construction of low income houses, at Beausejour, St. George; Diamond, St. Mark; the Villa, St. Patrick; Corinth, St. David; Dumfries, Carriacou, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the revenue collected in 2017, is a total sum of thirteen million, three hundred and fifteen thousand, nine hundred and forty-three dollars point four zero ($13,315,943.40). The breakdown is as follows: land settlement, four million, four hundred and seventy-eight thousand dollars and sixty-three cents ($4,478,000.63); lease of Crown Lands, eight million, two hundred and ninety-nine thousand, two hundred and thirteen dollars and ninety-seven cents ($8,299,213.97); survey fees, five hundred and twenty-eight thousand, five hundred and five dollars and sixty-three cents ($528,505.63); sale of maps, ten thousand, one hundred and sixty dollars and sixty-three cents ($10,160.63). Mr. Speaker, people are asking me, what's happening at this Division? This is what happens there. On a daily basis, people are coming, just as how they are coming in to go to the Supermarket. They walk through that Ministry, to get all the support, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I must mention MNIB in my speech. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry is working closely with MNIB, Mr. Speaker. We continue to build strong relationships, as together, we try to change the face of Agriculture in Grenada, and it is not simple. It is something that is going to take time, but we understand and we are looking in that direction, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and especially, we want to make Agriculture a career choice for our young people, because our young people are not thinking about Agriculture, because they have the wrong idea about Agriculture, and unless we start

making them understand what Agriculture is about, they would not get involved, Mr. Speaker, and that is what we are endeavouring to do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, for the Calendar year, 2017, the efforts of MNIB was centred on the implementation of its Food Safety Programme, Mr. Speaker. With support from the Caribbean Development Bank, in the form of a grant, valued at five hundred and thirty-four thousand dollars ($534,000.00) and counterpart funding from the Central Government, Mr. Speaker, the MNIB was able to renovate its Pack House, and today, Mr. Speaker, this Pack House is the only Pack House in the OECS with a Food Safety Certificate. That needs to be applauded. **(Applause)** That is the way we are going. If we don't get these things right, Mr. Speaker, we are not getting anywhere. These are the fundamentals that we have to put in place, to ensure that we balance this economy here in Grenada, and we move that Sector, that Agriculture Sector forward, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are changing the face of the MNIB. We are working together to do that, because people have this thing about the MNIB, and it is not working, so we are trying, Mr. Speaker, to change the face and to make this Entity something that could work for the farmers. So, Mr. Speaker, there are lots of opportunities. The MNIB, Mr. Speaker, has secured an export market of ten (10) containers of Butternut Squash, Mr. Speaker, for the five month period, February to June, 2018. Mr. Speaker, this is the way to go. And, I would like to say more about that Entity, but because of time, Mr. Speaker, I have to move on.

Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight an NGO, GRENROP. Mr. Speaker, permit me to briefly highlight this to show how sustainable jobs are created in this Sector through linking local producers with the Tourism Sector. Mr. Speaker, GRENROP has secured contracts with Sandals, to the amount of eighty thousand dollars ($80,000.00), and that network, Mr. Speaker, is now expanded with a contract, from Silver Sands, to the tune of fifty thousand dollars ($50,000.00). Mr. Speaker, that is how we have to move. **(Applause)** We cannot sit down in our communities and wait on the Ministry of Agriculture to do everything. We have to group ourselves. We have to work together to ensure that we move Agriculture. Agriculture cannot stand on its own. The Ministry

cannot do Agriculture alone. The farmers have to get up and get. The farmers have to work together with the Ministry, with their ideas and their skills and what they want to do and take this serious, because it is a business. It is not like long ago, where everybody eats from each other's backyard; that doesn't exist again, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, so these are real investments, with real impacts, Mr. Speaker, and I want to applaud the efforts made by the Hoteliers for supporting the farmers and, by extension, the National Economy.

Mr. Speaker, I have more good news. Mr. Speaker, very soon, a State-of-the-Art Multi-Purpose Agriculture Complex, complete with Labs and Conference Room facilities and other facilities will be opened in La Sagesse, and this was funded by the People's Republic of China. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, we must applaud the efforts of the People's Republic of China. The Grand Opening, Mr. Speaker, will be the third week of December, 2017. So, a lot of the samples of things that we used to send to America and all over the place, will be done right in that Multi-Purpose Centre, so our farmers would have a better opportunity to take their agriculture much more seriously and get the desired results right here in La Sagesse, Mr. Speaker, because sometimes when these samples go to America, they take forever before they come back. It is just like sending a Medical sample to get something done, and that is what happens, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to invite you to go Westerhall, Mr. Speaker, to see that CANECO Project, or I would like everybody to check that Facebook page. I don't have all the information. Mr. Speaker, this is real investment, real jobs and real results. Mr. Speaker, this Company has so far, invested in the establishment of two (2) nurseries for the propagation of high quality planting materials, one in Westerhall, encompassing thirteen (13) acres, seventeen (17) of which have already been planted. The other nursery is in Hope, Mr. Speaker, where another thirty-seven (37) acres have been cleared and planted. These nurseries, Mr. Speaker, would supply the sugarcane plants to be used to grow the six hundred (600) acres of plants needed to supply the Distillery in the future. This is not a joke. I mean, when Alex came with this idea, Mr. Speaker, I said, Alex, you think that would happen here in Grenada? You think we are going back

to cane? She said, yes, Yolande, it is going to work. This is it today, Mr. Speaker. It is working, and we are seeing the seriousness of it. Thirty million dollars ($30 m) would be spent on this project, Mr. Speaker. A Distillery would be developed here, in Conference, St. Andrew, and all the little farmers would benefit, because I am sure they would start planting cane. I am sure of that. So, all little backyards would have cane, and when we pull all these canes together, you know what is going to happen here in Grenada; excitement. Farmers would be so happy, Mr. Speaker. This is where we are moving, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that one hundred and forty-three (143) acres, sixty-five (65) in River Antoine, fifty-three (53) in Bailles Bacolet and twenty-five (25) in Plaissance Estate have been secured, and another one hundred and eighty-eight (188) is being secured now, Mr. Speaker. Included in those one hundred and eighty-eight (188) acres, Mr. Speaker, thirty (30) acres are earmarked for the establishment of the Distillery and Cane Mill, as I said before, in Conference, St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker, 2018, don't you think that 2018 looks bright for Agriculture, Mr. Speaker and this Government? Mr. Speaker, we are working towards the following: Launch of a Succession Plan and Training Programme with TAMCC funded by FAO; establishment of a new Management Structure for the Agricultural Stations; if you don't do that, we are going to have problems, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018, we are making arrangements to be part of the Minamata Convention Initial Assessment Project. Mr. Speaker, sometimes we use a number of products here in Grenada that has Mercury, and we are not aware of the dangers to our health. I use lipstick and I use nail polish, and sometimes I think, Mr. Speaker, I cannot do without the lipstick, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have to do these assessments here for this mercury, and so, Mr. Speaker, we will be working closely with the Minamata Convention, to examine all these things, Mr. Speaker, look at storage, look at disposal and look at all the things that compose this whole mercury scenario, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the development of the Land Bank for Grenada and launch of the National Land Policy. We have started the process, and we are moving on. So, we are

not looking at Agriculture with one eye. We are looking at Agriculture with both eyes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the development of an Agricultural Risk Insurance System for our farmers, we have to move in that direction. A lot of our farmers don't understand that. But, we have to come up with a strategy, Mr. Speaker, because whenever there is a hurricane here you know what happens. Even though we didn't budget for the money, we have to find the money to support our farmers. Our farmers have to take farming more seriously, much more seriously, Mr. Speaker. And, even though we have to subsidise them for a while to start the process, we have to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, support to the development of the Soursop Value Chain, and working with MNIB to secure new markets. Mr. Speaker, I am eagerly looking forward to new climate smart programmes, Mr. Speaker, because we have to get smart, where Agriculture is concerned.

(Time Bell Rings)

Mr. Speaker, I am just wrapping up. I am at the end of my Ministerial presentation. But, Mr. Speaker, I would definitely ask your indulgence to have another fifteen (15) minutes, just to take on my Constituency piece, Mr. Speaker. I am just asking for five (5) more to wrap up and then my fifteen (15) for the Constituency. You see the magnitude of this Ministry, Mr. Speaker.

(A Member told the Member that she had the extra minutes)

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative, you have fifteen minutes more. Make use of it, wisely.

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: So, I have five and then fifteen?

Mr. Speaker: No. Fifteen (15) minutes more.

(Laughter)

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Oh. Alright, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, you're from Grenville, you know. Mr. Speaker, there is more to say, but time would not permit me, and so I want to echo the sentiments of the Prime Minister, the people can testify.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to express thanks and appreciation to the staff of the Ministry, the hard work that they have been doing, Mr. Speaker. You see the extent of the Ministry. We have some shortfalls. We have to reshape that Ministry, and we know that we have to work on it.

The FAO, Mr. Speaker; CARDI; IICA; the Chinese Agricultural Technical Mission; the Caribbean Development Bank; IFAD; the Marketing and National Importing Board (MNIB); the University of the West Indies; Winfresh; OECS Commission; USDA; the World Bank; UNDP; UNF; CDB; UNCCD; Mr. Speaker; the Ramsar Convention; the Convention in International Trade; SYKES; the Caribbean Regional Fisheries (CRFM); CarBi; the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Mr. Speaker; CAHFSA, Mr. Speaker; CIMT and CCC, Mr. Speaker. These are the people, who have supported the Ministry. Without the support from International Agencies, Mr. Speaker, our Ministry would not have been in the position that it is today. So, I want to thank them, and I want to thank my staff for doing such a great job. I cannot call all their names here today, but they have done, in their own way, such a great job in helping to shape this Ministry, and as a new Minister, giving me the guidance and support they have given throughout the time that I have been here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I now move my attention to my Constituency, and, Mr. Speaker, I know they are waiting. **(Laughter)** I don't know if they got any permission to applaud but, Mr. Speaker, again, in this Honourable House, St. Andrew South-West has fourteen (14) Polling Divisions and St. Andrew South-West has a very wide network of roads, and, Mr. Speaker, housing also continues to be the main priority areas.

Mr. Speaker, from our network of roads, just to give you a synopsis quickly; we were able to do over two thousand, one hundred and sixty (2,160) feet of concrete roads at the cost of two hundred and thirty four thousand dollars ($234,000.00), employing over one hundred and fifteen persons (115), Mr. Speaker.

Over three hundred and forty feet (340 ft) of back wall, consisting of thirty two thousand, two hundred dollars ($32,200.00), Mr. Speaker; eighteen (18) persons were employed. Mr. Speaker, over four hundred and fifty-five feet (455 ft) of box drain were done, employing twenty-two (22) persons, at a cost of sixty five thousand dollars ($65,000.00), Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, more than three hundred and sixty-five feet (365 ft) of slipper drains were constructed, which employed twelve (12) persons, at a cost of twenty six thousand, three hundred and forty-five dollars ($26,345.00), Mr. Speaker. Muddy gaps, Mr. Speaker, muddy gaps were done in a lot of the villages, Mr. Speaker, throughout the Constituency, where it was necessary to enhance the lives of many families, Mr. Speaker. I myself see trouble in the Rainy Season, going up those hills, falling down over and over, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I know the plight of that and so we have, you know, supported those, Mr. Speaker. Most of it was done by self-help, Mr. Speaker. Fifty four thousand, two hundred dollars ($54,200.00) was spent on these projects, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, hand railings were erected to assist senior citizens, disabled persons, persons with disabilities (sorry) and short-sighted persons, to gain access to and from their homes, at a cost of fourteen thousand dollars ($14,000.00), Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I must say I didn't reach the target that the MP for St. Andrew South-West, with bathrooms and toilet, but I made a move in that direction, Mr. Speaker. Eight (8) toilets and bathrooms were done for senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, housing, again, is one of the most demanding areas, Mr. Speaker. You could never really meet the demands in that area, Mr. Speaker. However, we were successful in meeting the needs of all emergencies and the very, very vulnerable cases. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, sixty-nine (69) families received house repair and three (3) new special cases under the House Repair Programme, at a cost of three hundred and forty-eight thousand dollars, nine hundred and forty one ($348,941.00). Three hundred and forty (340) applicants, Mr. Speaker, are in waiting for housing for 2018. So, Minister,

you better get your gears in order to make sure that it gets done. Well, you are going to do it. You are going to channel it through the Minister for Finance. You will channel the information.

Mr. Speaker, education; with our growing economy and the use of modern technology, education is a great concern to us, Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure that our youth are given the opportunity needed, Mr. Speaker, so that they could be well-grounded for the future, and so we have assisted a number of children in that area. Twenty-two (22) students with school fees at TAMCC at the cost of seventeen thousand, eight hundred and twenty dollars ($17,820.00), Mr. Speaker; twenty (20) students attending Secondary School were assisted in paying their CXC Examination fees, which cost three thousand, eight hundred and fifty dollars ($3,850.00). Mr. Speaker, University, thirty-four thousand, eight hundred and ninety-three dollars ($34,893.00) was spent, Mr. Speaker, on thirty-four (34) persons.

Mr. Speaker, NEWLO; tuition was paid for seventeen (17) students at NEWLO, at a cost of four thousand, nine hundred and sixty-five dollars and fifty cents ($4,965.50). Mr. Speaker, over eighty-two thousand dollars ($82,000.00) was spent on renovations; replacing of floorings, partitions, windows, doors and painting and major costing, electrical wiring to replace current and correct electrical problems in schools, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these schools are as follows: Holy Cross, Grenville Secondary, Birchgrove R.C., La Digue Pre-School.

The IMANI**,** Mr. Speaker; we cannot talk about education, Mr. Speaker, and the need to educate our youths and not touch on unemployment for them. I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that two hundred and twenty-six (226) youths are employed in the new IMANI Programme in St. Andrew South-West Constituency.

Mr. Speaker, Training; we have started a number of training with the young people, Mr. Speaker. Twenty-five (25) young men and women are trained in Pastry and Cake Making, while others were trained in Batik, Textile Dyeing and Unique Designs. These young ladies and men will open their own businesses, Mr. Speaker, and will be able to sell to the Tourists, Hotels and other persons. So, we are not waiting on the

Government programmes. We have been very creative in South-West, with the limited resources that have been assigned to us.

Mr. Speaker, the Work Brigade; eleven (11) Brigade Workers are able to assist in the construction of six (6) new homes, repairs to thirty-eight (38) homes **(applause)** and have done steps, railings, walkways and painting of some vulnerable persons' homes throughout the Constituency. Mr. Speaker, they are also involved in Landscaping at Caruth, Carlton Junction and Gladstone Road. If you drive through Gladstone road, Mr. Speaker, the whole place has been transformed. It used to be a place where heavy erosion was taking place. Now, they are planting the right bush at the top to hold the soil up, and since they have undertaken that project, Mr. Speaker, there have not been any soil erosion. So, when you're going through Grenville, look on your right, you are going to see what these young Brigades have been doing, Mr. Speaker. Their lives have been transformed, Mr. Speaker, tremendously, with the work they are doing and the counselling they have been receiving from Pastor Niles, who said from time-to-time, he understands these young men and the challenges that they have, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am proud of this Programme, because it is my pet project, and I am going to monitor that programme, whether I am in politics or not.

Mr. Speaker, the Senior Home Care Programme; thirteen (13) persons are involved in this programme to take care of twenty (20) Shut-ins in the Constituency. This programme began in June of this year, Mr. Speaker, and its objective is to provide a clean, healthy and supportive environment for our senior citizens. This programme has meaning, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a success story, Mr. Speaker. Over sixty thousand, four hundred and eighty dollars ($60,480.00) were spent on this programme.

Medical Assistance, Mr. Speaker, MRIs, CT Scans, eye testing and glasses, dialysis treatment, Mr. Speaker, travel tickets to seek medical attention overseas to the tune of forty-seven thousand dollars, Mr. Speaker. SEED benefits, four hundred (400) households are engaged in that project, Mr. Speaker; School Vouchers, two hundred and twenty-six (226), Mr. Speaker; six hundred and seventy eight (678) students benefited from the School Vouchers this year, Mr. Speaker**.**

Mr. Speaker, ***(Time Bell Rings)*** …well, Mr. Speaker, there is so much more to talk about, but I want to speak about a programme that is going to be launched on the 4th of December. We are moving out all these young, idle guys on the block in Trench Town. Wait till you see that programme unfold and how we are going to transform and change the lives of these young men, who don't have a plan and need help to move on in life, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I haven't spoken about the golden years, but the golden years are going well, Mr. Speaker; the Debushing is doing well; things have shifted a bit; people are understanding that they need to share. It's not them alone and everybody who are not working have to be involved to get something to move on, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, two thousand, three hundred and forty-four (3,444) persons are in the Debushing Programme now for the year, that has happened throughout the year, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to… there is much more to say, but I want to, Mr. Speaker, to thank my constituents. They are the persons, who have put me here, and they are the one that have to evaluate me. **(Applause)** They are the ones that have to tell us here that they are putting me back for another term. They are the ones that have to decide that, **(applause)** and so I am proud and happy to have them here this morning, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful for their support. I am grateful for the things that we are able to do together, Mr. Speaker, and the things that we are continuing to do together, to lift the standard, to lift the self-esteem of the people of St. Andrew South-West, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank them, sincerely. I want to thank my staff, who is here, my Personal Assistant and the team, the whole team that has shaped South-West, over the years, and continue to shape South-West, Mr. Speaker.

And, I want to thank my family, Mr. Speaker; my husband, he is sitting right behind me. You know, he sat higher up today, and I said to him, why are you sitting so high up? **(Laughter)** So, he moved down behind me, so he is sitting right behind me, for the patience and tolerance. My children said to me, Mummy, Whatsapp is there, you know. You know there is something called Whatsapp that you need to communicate with your children overseas? So, they reminded me of that last night. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank them for the support. I want to thank my colleagues and everybody, who

has supported me. I alone can't run that Ministry and the support I have been given from everyone, I want to thank them. I want to thank, again, my Constituents and, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your patience and tolerance. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. Andrew South-West. You see, if I provide you with any additional time, I will be attacked by the other Representatives, so it's to protect you that I try not to show any biases. Honourable Representative for St. Mark. Oh, no, sorry, St. John, St. John.

Hon. Alvin Da Breo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think that my Constituents would appreciate very much the mistake, but I take it in good faith. **(Laughter)** So, Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Motion of the Honourable Minister for Finance, the Rt. Honourable Dr. Keith Mitchell, as he presented the Budget Speech under the Theme: "***Safeguarding our Gains and Continuing our Progress***".

Mr. Speaker, we were asked to testify, so I come to do so in four (4) areas; Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment and most importantly the Constituency of St. John. So, first of all, let me say good morning to you, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and all the visitors here; well, I think it is now good afternoon, a pleasant good afternoon to everybody.

Mr. Speaker, 2017 was quite a dynamic year, and I am very pleased to report on a number of Ministerial matters, but before I do so, I will like to place on record my deep appreciation to the people of St. John, who placed the stewardship of that dear Constituency in my hands. I am, indeed, grateful for their trust and confidence and it is, indeed, a great privilege to represent them in this Honourable House. I also wish to thank, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister for assigning me the Portfolios of Forestry and Fisheries. You see, Mr. Speaker, in many countries, there is talk about the Green Economy and the Blue Economy. I am so privileged for the opportunity to represent both.

The Green Economy, Mr. Speaker, is about the Forest, the Watersheds, the Wet Lands and all the Biodiversity in between. And, the Blue Economy focuses our attention

on the Mangroves, the Sea Grass Beds and the various Marine Species in our Economic Zone. And, Mr. Speaker, our Marine Economic Zone is far greater than our Land-Based Economic Zone. So, in the future, we would be depending heavily on the resources provided in the Marine Economic Zone.

Each year, Mr. Speaker, Grenada celebrates World Wetlands Day, and that is on February the 2nd, and this is a high point for us, because Grenada is committed to its obligations under the RAMSAR Convention and the Forest Policy. We do so, because we want to highlight the importance of Wetlands in supporting Agriculture, especially, Mr. Speaker, since many farming families rely on the fertile soils, or the water to make the soil fertile for plants and animals found in Wetlands, and they provide food security, which improve their livelihoods. And, in some regions of the world more than 50% of Wetlands, Mr. Speaker, have already disappeared. But, Mr. Speaker, here in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, we are taking steps to protecting ours.

Mr. Speaker, over 2.5 billion rural people depend directly on Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Hunting. Wetlands support these livelihood opportunities and the combination of these for their livelihoods, and they support Agriculture by the reliable supplies of good water quality. And, Mr. Speaker, it's said that in the future, the most vital resource would be that of clean water.

Mr. Speaker, the forest is our life support for water quality, for food production and it helps with Climate Change, as Wetlands are important for biodiversity protection, as well, as for Agriculture and Fresh Water Fisheries. And, Mr. Speaker, Fresh Water Fisheries is the way we would have to go into the future, because it's a sustainable way of that valuable resource.

Mr. Speaker, Levera is our RAMSAR site, and we recognise that many communities and families depend on the fish from the ponds, for livelihood; example, they earn a living and from that they would send your children to school and many things, Mr. Speaker. We must, therefore, use our Wetlands resources, wisely and sustainably, so that our children and grandchildren can enjoy them tomorrow.

So, Mr. Speaker, one might wonder why I am highlighting the importance of Levera, as a RAMSAR site. This, Mr. Speaker, is the nesting area for turtles including

the endangered Leatherback and Hocksbile Turtles, and it also serves as an important habitat for wildlife including the migratory species of birds and furthermore it filters pollutants, it stabilises the coast from erosion, it sequester the carbon dioxide at a higher rate than any other plant species, thus, Mr. Speaker, contributing, positively, to Climate Change Mitigation. And, over the past seven (7) years, Mr. Speaker, the turtle conservation and enthusiasm activities at Levera have experienced sustainable growth, Mr. Speaker, to the point that it has become an important part for Grenada's Tourism. But, unfortunately this growth has placed increased challenges on the management activities at Levera.

There is need, Mr. Speaker, for clear delimitation of rules of the different actors and Organisations operating as Conservations and Eco-Tourism Agents. So, Mr. Speaker, as a responsible Government, we approve the Protocol for the management and execution of Conservation Research and the Turtle Watching at Levera site. We will focus on the implementation and enforcement of the same in 2018. We believe, Mr. Speaker, that this will encourage trust among the various actors and protect this valuable Eco-Tourism product. The objective of the Protocol is to provide a framework of Standard Operating Procedures, which is binding for the guidance of all parties, which are involved in the Turtle Research and Conservation.

Mr. Speaker, I would just name a few of the different Organisations that are involved in the Turtle Watching, so you would get an idea how important it is, and how large it is, and we are looking for the cooperation from those groups. To name a few, we have OIBSTPO, Ocean Spirits, the Environment Division, Fisheries Division, the Grenada Tourism Authority, the Grenada Fund for Conservation, the Nature Conservancy and the surrounding areas, and we are asking them to work with the Forestry Department to implement this Protocol. And, through this Protocol, Mr. Speaker, we will see synergies among these stakeholders for the effective and the efficient management of the Wetlands Eco-System.

Mr. Speaker, I was greatly pleased to open the Mt. Gazo Visitors' Centre in March of this year, and this building was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan and with the help of the Ridge to Reef Project, we were able to rehabilitate it. So, Mr. Speaker, I invite

locals and I know that our visitors are going there, because once you stand on the veranda of this building, Mr. Speaker, I know that you are standing and looking at one of the most beautiful sites in the Caribbean. So, we are working with the Ministry of Tourism to market this site. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, people can verify these projects, and you could see it yourself, because, Mr. Speaker, we don't only talk the talk, we walk the talk. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, the Grenada Forest Policy was developed in 2001, and the current mandate for the Forestry and National Park is enshrined in that Policy document. The vision of the Forestry and National Park Department has been Grenada's Leading Natural Management Institution. Its Mission, Mr. Speaker, is to sustainably manage, directly or indirectly, Grenada's forest resources and Cultural Landmarks in order to optimise their contribution, to environmentally sound, social and economic development.

Over the years, this Department pursued a closer collaboration with stakeholders, through community meetings, workshops and other forms, in order to achieve its strategic objectives, and that will enable its fulfilment of the requirements of the Forest Policy. These objectives, Mr. Speaker, include the sustainable managing of Forest Eco-Systems, Cultural Landmarks and other key areas for social and economic development. They promote national public awareness and support Advocacy Programmes that will influence the management and use of the Forest Eco-Systems; also to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders, to effectively manage the Forest Eco-Systems; and finally to develop an efficient and productive Department.

Mr. Speaker, this Department manages National Parks and Protected Areas under the 1990 National Parks and Protection Act. At present, there is one National Park, that is Mt. Hartman, and one Protected Area and that is Perseverance. So, this is the only ones that are gazetted. The Act also calls for a Director of National Parks, the establishment of a Park Advisory Council to the Minister, and the establishment of a National Park Development Fund. The definition, Mr. Speaker, of a Protected Area is an area of land or sea, especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of Biological Diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources and managed through legal or other effective means.

So, Mr. Speaker, in 2010 the Grenada Protected Area System Plan approved twelve (12) National Parks and they were recommended for Establishments. Mr. Speaker, the terminology, 'National Parks' is recognised, worldwide, as the legal mechanism to protect biodiversity and to protect recreation and tourism opportunities based on the natural and cultural environment.

In Grenada's Tourism Literature and Signage, Grand Etang, Levera and Annandale are described as National Parks, but, Mr. Speaker, they are not legally designated, as such, as yet, because they are not gazetted. So, Mr. Speaker, we have done our homework and we have seen that countries are increasing their Eco-Tourism dollar through well-managed National Parks Systems that are listed in Trip Advisor and other Social Media sites. So, through the Forestry Department, we want to encourage the strengthening of the National Park System to support Reforestation Programmes and ensure that the total forest cover of the country contributes towards reducing Global Warming and reducing the Carbon Footprint.

Mr. Speaker, with funding from the Ridge to Reef Project, we will see the following: the establishment of at least five (5) Protected Areas, and this project will take the areas to the legal description and the Ministry will arrange for the gazetting and declaration of these areas by the Governor-General, as required by the Act. The review of the Legislation and Regulations relative to the National and Protective Areas Act, the Fisheries Act and the Forestry Act, as they pertain to Protected Areas for Government's consideration.

Finally, the preparation of a sustainable Financing Plan for the Protected Area System, a project is preparing a sustainable financial plan, Mr. Speaker, that would be provided to Government for consideration and these initiatives are scheduled for completion in 2018. Mr. Speaker, as I speak, the Ministry is making arrangements to issue letters to the members of a Committee appointed by Cabinet to oversight this process. We are looking forward towards the completion of the legal description of the Grand Etang National Park and gazetting of same.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to report that the proposal for the Mt. St. Catherine Forest Reserve was approved by the Government and the same process

would be used to gazette it as a National Park. The aim, Mr. Speaker, is to use the National Park to promote visitations by locals and to create new products for Eco-Tourism travellers or tourists.

Mr. Speaker, I will now turn my attention to Fisheries. It is noteworthy to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that Government continues to invest, significantly, in the Fisheries subsector, because we realise the returns on this investment are substantial and will only continue to increase in the years ahead. So far, this year, Mr. Speaker, the Fisheries Division has had some notable achievements, and these include: the completion of the Victoria Fish Market and Government, in its Supplementary Budget allocated a further three hundred thousand dollars ($300,000.00) for other Fish Markets, particularly for the Grenville Fish Market; the implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector Project and Bill Fish Project. These projects, Mr. Speaker, are funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and coordinated by the FAO (Food and Agricultural Organisation) of the United Nations.

Mr. Speaker, we have completed the evaluation of the CARIFICO Project. This was a five (5) year project and a final evaluation is scheduled for November this year. The project was very successful and negotiation would soon start to follow up on other projects from Japan. And, the Ministry is putting the necessary documents together to facilitate the evaluation and is working closely with JICA, the Chief Advisor, Mr. Honda. And, Mr. Speaker, we have a team, right now, in St. Lucia that is explaining to them the success of the project in Grenada, because through the whole OECS, our project, Mr. Speaker, was the most successful. And, furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the other numerous activities implemented by the Fisheries Division, in collaboration with his partners continue to spur development in the Fisheries subsector.

It is worthy to point out, Mr. Speaker, that to date, fish production and exports in terms of quantity and value, are higher than they were in the same period last year. **(Applause)** At the end of September, 2017, Mr. Speaker, the total fish production has reached four million, four hundred and sixteen thousand, nine hundred and six pounds (£4,416,906), **(applause)** with a value of twenty-four million, seven hundred and seventy-two thousand, two hundred and eight dollars ($24,772,208.00). And, Mr.

Speaker, our exports have also reached eight hundred and eighty thousand, nine hundred and forty-seven pounds (£880,947) with a value of eleven million dollars ($11 m).

Also noted, Mr. Speaker, is that our local consumption has reached the fourteen million pounds (£14 m) mark. **(Applause)** Well, we know that Grenada consumes more fish than anywhere else in the OECS, and maybe the Caribbean, and this tells you how important this Sector is to our Food Security and also for our export.

So, I am exceedingly pleased, Mr. Speaker, to inform this Honourable House that Government is totally committed in investing further in this Sector, because therein lies tremendous opportunities for generating even greater foreign exchange earnings while supporting our local Industries and our Food Security.

Mr. Speaker, I have more to report. On March 29th of this year, we launched an MPA (Marine Protected Area) Work Boat, and this is the largest fibreglass boat on the Island. And, it was built in Palmiste by Mr. Terry Neilson and his team. And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Neilson has promised to expand the boat building facilities and this would create a lot of jobs for the people of St. John and St. Mark. **(Inaudible comments by a Member) (Applause)** My colleague was just reminding me, I can't leave her out, Mr. Speaker. So, that launch, Mr. Speaker, was attended by the Secondary Schools from Happy Hill and J. W. Fletcher, the GTA staff, the Ministry's staff, media officials and other officials from the UNDP, and they even took them out for a boat ride along the West Coast. So, Mr. Speaker, it was a great day when we launched the Victoria Fish Market on April 11, 2017, **(applause)** and I must say, Mr. Speaker, that came with great help from the hardworking MP of St. Mark.

Mr. Speaker, the Vendors were happy, the members of the community, as well, and I must say, this Market is truly supporting economic activities along the West Coast. The new Ice Machine is included, Mr. Speaker, and during the Festive Season, the people from Victoria no longer have to get transportation to come to Gouyave to get ice. They could get some right there in Victoria, and, Mr. Speaker, this is testimony. The people can verify and testify to that.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to use an example to illustrate the growth of the Fishing Industry in 2017. We look at the Small Business Development Fund, that's under the Grenada Development Bank, and they received two hundred and nine (209) applications and they processed applications to a value of two million, four hundred and thirty-one thousand, two hundred and five dollars ($2,431,205.00). But, seventy-six (76) of those applications, Mr. Speaker, are related to Sectors of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. Speaker, I would provide you a breakdown. We have Agro-Processing, there were four (4) applications for forty-nine thousand dollars ($49,000.00); Agriculture had sixteen (16) applications approved for one hundred and fifty thousand dollars ($150,000.00); Poultry had two (2) projects at thirty-one thousand dollars ($31,000.00); Livestock, which was mostly pigs had four (4) projects for forty-five thousand, five hundred ($45,500.00), and Fishing, Mr. Speaker, had fifty (50) approved projects worth seven hundred and fifty-one thousand, one hundred and seventy-two dollars ($751,172.00). So, Mr. Speaker, there is the evidence there. Again, the numbers can be verified, and I testify to that. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I am compelled to report on the work of the Fisheries Division, in collaboration with other Development Partners and Private Sector Organisations in Grenada towards the declaration of the MPA in Grand Anse. This was a milestone achievement for Grenada, Mr. Speaker, because in August, 2016, our projected target, as part of our commitments to the Caribbean Challenge Initiative was only 3% out of the 25% that we pledged. But, Mr. Speaker, with the declaration of the Grand Anse MPA, we are now at 15% of our commitment, a remarkable achievement, Mr. Speaker. So, I am very much encouraged, and I am confident that we will be able to meet that ambitious goal of 25% in 2018.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Fisheries Division, in collaboration with the Gouyave Fisherman Association and GRENCODA and other Civil Society Organisations will implement the Gouyave MPA. The MPA Office, Mr. Speaker, will be established in Gouyave, and funding is already approved. Already the fishermen in Gouyave are saying: '*Our Fish, Our Future - Conservation on Local Hands*', a very good Motto, Mr. Speaker.

In 2018, Mr. Speaker, we will also establish a Marine Interpretation Centre, as well, at the Fishing Capital of Grenada, in Gouyave. So, bright days are ahead, Mr. Speaker, and the launching of that Centre will be, indeed, a testimony for generations to come. And, I want to thank the Mechanic Lodge of Gouyave, because they donated their old building and the land and they donated it to the Gouyave Fishermen's Association, who is working very hard to make this a reality for the people, not only of Gouyave, St. John's but for the rest of the Island and visitors, because it would be a one of a kind Interpretation Centre, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I will now move to the Environmental Division. Mr. Speaker, that's a very important area, because we know that the challenges that we face as Small Island States through Climate Change, we are very vulnerable, and everything we do, we have to make it Climate Resilient and keep that in mind.

So, Mr. Speaker, judicious management of the environment, it has become a thrust globally. And, the Caribbean demonstrated in 2015, that it can unite to the call for action, and they did that at COP 21 in Paris. And, recently, Mr. Speaker, in Bonn, that's in Germany, I would like to congratulate our Prime Minister for the excellent job he did in which he is leading the Small Island States towards the problems, or the vulnerabilities faced by Climate Change.

Also, in this Department, Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the efforts of Senator Simon Stiell and Ambassador Friday, who did an excellent job in putting Grenada at the forefront of the Climate Change Product. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, only recently our neighbours were shaken by a terrible Hurricane Season. As we see, the problems, we see Dominica and other Islands, Barbuda, was wiped out by those record level hurricanes that we had. There is no record of so many powerful hurricanes in our Region so close together. So, Mr. Speaker, this gives us the stark reality that Climate Change is real. Devastation, Mr. Speaker, is all around us. But, thanks be to God we were spared and we hope, Mr. Speaker, that anything that we do, we would keep in mind those dangerous storms that threaten us every Season.

Motions

Mr. Speaker, the Public Officers and the Project staff of the Environment Division, they must be commended for their hard work in the areas of Biodiversity, Public Education and Awareness, Coastal Zone Management, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation and Environmental Protection.

Mr. Speaker, one of the flagship projects is called ICAS (Integrated Climate Change Adaptation Strategy) Project. So, this project, Mr. Speaker, is being supported by the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, and almost twenty million dollars ($20 m) have been allocated to the implementation of this project through GIZ and UNDP. And, some key achievements made by this project, so far, Mr. Speaker, they include the National Adaptation Plan, and that was developed and approved by Cabinet in November, 2017. The National Climate Change Policy has been revised and that also was approved by Cabinet in November, 2017.

The Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP), this format was amended to include a mandatory climate change screening based on the Caribbean Climate Online Risk and Adaptation Tool (CCORAL). So, this, Mr. Speaker, means that all projects to be included in that Public Sector Investment Programme have to be screened for climate risks. And, trainings on the Climate Risks Reassessment Tool, the Caribbean Climate Risks Adaptation Tool and Application for Systematic Risks Analysis are being conducted, Mr. Speaker, for the Public Officers in the various Ministries.

The ICAS supported the improvement of the Health Information System by introducing a National Digital System that enables the Health Authorities to identify disease outbreaks that can be linked to Climate Data. It also supports, Mr. Speaker, profiling of our beaches. They have some modern Beach Profiling Equipment and Training, so this would be making our beach safe, so we will know the quality of the water on our beaches are safe for swimming and also for the fish life.

They also supported, Mr. Speaker, the integration of Climate Smart Agriculture. And, this considers the work plans of different Divisions of the Ministry of Agriculture and continues capacity building of the Extension Officers in their work to support farmers. And, Mr. Speaker, as I said, these are results that we have experienced and they continue to happen.

Mr. Speaker, you would remember that Prince Harry visited Grenada and one of the projects he visited was the Coral Reef Nursery at Grand Anse. And, this Nursery, Mr. Speaker, what it is, is that we are growing coral to replace the ones that have died through coral bleaching and damages through boat anchors and other, whatever not so good things that we do to our reefs, Mr. Speaker. And, this is the outcome of the Ecosystem big approaches to the Climate Change Resilience Project. And, I must also take the opportunity to commend the staff on that Project, for their commitment and dedication and outstanding work, because, Mr. Speaker, it involves being under water for a substantial amount of time.

Mr. Speaker, many officials such as Ambassadors, they are right now including a visit to the Coral Reef Nursery, as part of their field visits. And, time, Mr. Speaker, is of the essence, because I know you are watching the time, Mr. Speaker. **(Laughter)** Yes, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the many initiatives that are part of the Blue Growth Agenda of Grenada. And, through this initiative, Mr. Speaker, Grenada would provide sustainable use of Ecosystems and enhance the benefits derived from sustainably managing our diversity and our Marine Environments.

Mr. Speaker, I would just touch a little bit on Climate Finance. Mr. Speaker, the Environment Division has supported the Ministry of Finance in accessing readiness finance and building capacity to be the National Designated Entity. Well, we heard of that prestigious, well-capitalised Green Climate Change Fund, and, Mr. Speaker, to most it is a 'pie in the sky,' but we are getting ready to chip away and get our fair share of that pie. So, Mr. Speaker, this key step will lay the foundation for future flows of substantial international finance, to address the negative impacts of Climate Change on Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and to support the widespread use of renewable energy on our Island.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that Cabinet has approved the proposal to designate the Environment Division, as a direct Entity to the Green Climate Fund in order to participate in the enhancing of direct access to projects that involve, well, we have other countries involved, Antigua, Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada and the OECS Commission. So, with that designation, the Environmental Agency or Environmental

Division, Mr. Speaker, would be able to directly access those funds, so that we could do so quickly and not go through all that bureaucratic red tape. So, the Direct Access Modality, they will improve access to Climate Finance, and will allow Grenada to institutionalise the piloted Climate Change Adaptation Fund, as the Sustainable Island Resource Fund, as per the OAS model with their Environmental Act.

The Direct Access Modality is designed to increase ownership over projects and improve institutional capacities. The Direct Access, Mr. Speaker, can help our country to move from stand-alone projects to a more transformational pragmatic approach, with more predictable financing, placing climate finance under the accountability and control systems of the country. And, in addition, it requires stringent accreditation requirements and, Mr. Speaker, we are willing to comply.

As far as it relates to Community Resilience Projects, Mr. Speaker, we have communities, towards Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, that are vulnerable to impacts of climate and extreme weather conditions. And, therefore, the implementation of the 2017 Integrated Climate Change Adaptation Strategies, Community Projects will significantly provide support to the rural economy of Grenada through diversification of markets and job creation.

Mr. Speaker, I would just highlight a few, because things happen around us that we don't really know; for instance, the restoration of the Forest in Petite Martinique, where over five (5) acres of degraded landscape have been traced to reduce accelerated erosion and protection of biodiversity; also the facilitation in provided electricity to Isla Rhonde. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, we had a one hundred and forty thousand (140,000) watts Solar System that was set up on that small Island. So, this project has twelve (12) households from Isla Rhonde now with electricity, and they all have received one thousand gallon water tanks. So, the system is also providing them with fresh water, because sometimes, Mr. Speaker, we forget all the Islands in between Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Also, Mr. Speaker, we noticed that we have the bamboo is springing up all over the Island, and it is not an invasive species, but it is invading the forests, Mr. Speaker. But, we could use bamboo, as a valuable Tourism product and also for creating

livelihoods. Mr. Speaker, a six-week intensive Training Course was held in St. Mark, to train mainly women in Bamboo Craft, and they also participated in the EXPO with their crafts, and some of those items were sold to visitors. **(Applause)**

So, Mr. Speaker, once again, I see my colleagues clapping. I am bringing this, as testimony and I am asking the Member in St. Mark to verify and testify. So, Mr. Speaker, I wish to place on record my thanks to the Environmental Division, because they can't do it alone, and there were many Agencies that have helped; so to name a few, we had the World Bank; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the Convention on Biological Diversity; the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; the RAMSAR Convention; the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM); the German Federal Ministry of the Environment; the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre. So, these are all the Agencies that have worked with us over the past year, and will continue to work with us to make our climate more resilient and also to create more projects and more jobs for our people.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will now turn to my Constituency, because I have a lot to say and I don't want my time to run out. Mr. Speaker, this Budget is exactly what the Doctor ordered for us in St. John **(Laughter)** and it was delivered by the other Doctor. So, he has delivered.

Mr. Speaker, the Budget has no new taxes. As a matter of fact, it has tax reductions, so many of our citizens would now have more disposable income in our hands, so that we could spend to better upgrade our lives and also improve the Economy. Mr. Speaker, also it was music to my ear, when I heard of the three hundred dollars ($300.00) that would be given to the poor and vulnerable. Mr. Speaker, I know that was music to my ear and the majority of Grenadians, but at the same time, I know it was very painful to some other ears, as I saw them cross.

Mr. Speaker, and even in the Budget, it speaks of that six to ten million dollars ($6-$10 m) project, which my colleague mentioned, and that is to do with Tourism

ventures, and also for Agriculture. And, as I said, this is not included in the Agriculture Budget, but these are funds that are there to help Entrepreneurs come up with Agricultural products, and also to help farmers with whatever problems that they have.

Mr. Speaker, regarding our healthcare for St. John, I am very happy, again, that the Budget has included the funds for our Polytechnic Hospital, or Health Centre, and this would be starting… I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that before the end of the year, we would see a sod-turning ceremony, and this is no gimmick this time, Mr. Speaker, because we already have the funds. And, also, very important, is the National Health Insurance Scheme. And, Mr. Speaker, many people come to me for assistance to do scans and other medical tests that they need to do, and they just don't have the funds. But, Mr. Speaker, with a Health Insurance, you don't have to make life and death choices anymore; and why I say, life and death choices, because I know that some people, when you don't have the money, you cannot go for the treatment, you cannot travel to get it. But, with such funds, Mr. Speaker, you would be able to get your health tests, your healthcare and your medication. So, this Mr. Speaker, we welcome in our Parish of St. John, and I know the Island, in general.

The Budget also speaks, Mr. Speaker, to some much needed roads on the Western Side. We have some dangerous areas that anytime we go up the Western Side, you see sliding all the time, anytime rain falls, so the Budget would do with addressing those problems. Also, we have the Mabuya Road that we see the Budget has funds, so that we will see work on that start and hopefully completed in 2018. And, to all the people that ply on the Western Side including my two (2) colleagues here, I know this is music to their ears, Mr. Speaker.

We also have a dangerous piece by the Grand Roy Health Centre, and I was told that that would be addressed. I know that the road up to Concord Falls, that has started. The survey is being done right now to widen the road to the Falls, because you have some areas, Mr. Speaker, you know, it's a hair-raising experience for some of the Tourists sitting on the bus, going up to the Concord Falls.

The Budget also includes, Mr. Speaker, the lighting of Playing Fields, and I know that we have, in St. John, we would be getting these Fields lighted: Loretto, Power Park

and we would do some lighting at the Grand Roy Playing Field. **(Inaudible comments)** Clozier, Mr. Speaker, their Field would be lighted and there would be a Solar System with funds from the Australian Government and the hard work of the Clozier Development Community. We also would be lighting up some Tennis Courts. These would be: Mt. Gandby, Clozier, Concord and Loretto. And, some of the achievements we received in 2017, Mr. Speaker, have been through the BNTF Fund, and we are very happy, because the Clozier Water Treatment and Distribution Plant, (that is the second phase), this project was done in collaboration with NAWASA and the scope of work included the construction of the access road to the Storage Tank, security fencing around the storage tank and installation of a new pump. And, this project, Mr. Speaker, saw the connection of twenty-two (22) new homes to pipe borne water in Clozier, which they never had for years. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, we had the Grand Roy Toilet Upgrade. It was one single unit that was dilapidated, but this new facility, I have seen the construction of both male and female toilets, showers, hand wash sinks and storage, and the project targeted the people in the Village, who did not have access to private toilet facilities, and it also includes the fisher folks. And, there is an area there, Mr. Speaker, that has been built where you can sanitarily clean your fish.

Loretto, Mr. Speaker, also got new toilet facilities. So, a new toilet facility was built for the use of both, they got both male and female toilets, and the users are for the people of the village and also the users of the Playing Field.

Mr. Speaker, we had a record amount of activities in St. John. As a matter of fact, I would not go through all the pages, but I would just highlight a few. We have the Gouyave Day Care Centre, well, we recently furnished them with brand new cribs, change tables, feeding chairs, games; we have now indoor mats and outdoor mats, so the kids could recreate, we have a Hot Water Solar System Facility, so you could shower the kids, and many other things that we have put into that Day Care.

Mr. Speaker, I remember when I took Office, they used to put buckets by the cribs to collect water, because there was no roof. But, now they have a two-storey facility with all the amenities. **(Applause)** They even have places for the parents to

come in and have meetings, so they don't have to be pushing out the children aside, when they have meetings. We provided them with chairs and tables and all these facilities, an office for the staff. So, Mr. Speaker, we have a very beautiful facility there now.

We know that we haven't opened it yet, that's the mini Stadium at St. John, and it was in the Manifesto, so it's one of the accomplishments, again, of this Government. We're just waiting for the seats to arrive, and I know that my colleague from the St. George South-East is working towards that, so that we could do a little more expansion on it, so that we could take in some more chairs; so that should happen very soon, Mr. Speaker. And, once that happens, then we would have the handing over and the opening; we will be opening it.

Well, we know the Bull Hill Road was handed over, that's from the border of St. Andrew to Clozier, that was handed over in January of 2017, of this year. And, also we have the Concord Bridge, that's going up to the Falls and the Parking Lot by the Falls, because before, Mr. Speaker, it was difficult for one (1) Coaster Bus to turn up there, much less two (2), so the visitors were not going up there. But, now with the construction of those facilities there, we are accommodating everybody, and I mean everybody could go up there, because the facilities, you don't have to worry about parking up there anymore.

We have the Hubble Bridge, which was constructed and handed over at the end of last year. We also have, Mr. Speaker, the famous Stony Gut Road, but it was called Stony Gut, because all that was there was just some huge boulders and you had to manoeuvre through all these boulders to get to your home. But, now, Mr. Speaker, we have a two lane road going right through Stony Gut. The road through Dr. Bell was also upgraded and rebuilt for two-way traffic.

We have the Lance Bridge that's presently under construction, and that was a project was being talked about since I was a little boy, Mr. Speaker. But, now I am happy to see that it is a reality. We have the bathrooms in the Anglican School in Gouyave, Mr. Speaker. You used to know you were close to the school from a distance away. But, now, Mr. Speaker, you don't even know when you reach the school.

Thanks to funding from BNTF, we have all new facilities there at the Anglican School in Gouyave.

The Basketball Court in Clozier was done, and that was done with materials from the Government and Self-Help by the community. And, it's a model to see, Mr. Speaker, because they say it's some funds spending two hundred thousand dollars ($200,000.00) to build a Basketball Court, but let them visit Clozier to see what a few dollars and the residents can do. **(Applause)**

We also did, by the Market Square in Gouyave, that area there that the river was eroding the Main Road, well, that whole area now, there is a strong Retaining Wall done there. And, I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that we had the handing over of the Cosmetology Department in NEWLO, which we were instrumental in helping funded. And, we are working closely with that school, Mr. Speaker, on a number of other initiatives.

We refurbished the Concord Government School Library. And, also, Mr. Speaker, we did some Bus Shelters in Gouyave, because there were areas that, as matter of fact, we did four (4) within the last year. So, you could safely wait for the bus without being doused by the rain. We know what climate change is doing now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will just turn to a few at the back here that we did. All these are things that were done, but my colleagues are saying that we got a lot. But, Mr. Speaker, that is what you call good representation. So, I will start from what was done in… ***(Time Bell Rings)*** Okay. So, that's my fifteen (15) minutes warning, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would finish before; you see, I have already reduced a lot that I wouldn't talk about.

We completed the road in Cotton Bailey, which is known as the Rock. And, at the junction of Concord to Black Bay, they had serious water problems there, Mr. Speaker, so we have built a new Box Drain to control that water flow there. And, we did some bindings to the road in Brooklyn, near Jason Lashington, and also Cotton Bailey, lower down by Bucky's shop.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know that in the past Administration, when you listened to the Budget Speech, all you were hearing were binding, binding, binding. What you're hearing now, Mr. Speaker, is concrete roads, asphalt roads, concrete drains, box drains and walkways.

Mr. Speaker, we also did some work behind the Black Bay Community Centre. And, we did a Retaining Wall also in Black Bay, lower down, Drone. We did a concrete pavement in Black Bay, that's an area known as Marcelle Hill, and we are working on the road there around Marcelle Hill to bridge the road; right now, it's not motorable, but we are working there now to make it motorable so you could go right across. We did some work by the Anglican Church in Black Bay and work there is continuing.

Mr. Speaker, we did some significant work at Power Park. I will talk about it in a little while, but I know that we did, even going up the road there, we did quite a number of Box Drains and Slipper Drains. We have done the road in an area in Concord that's called Back Street, that's close to the R.C. Church, going up to the top; before it was very difficult. There is a road there without any drains. And, we did another Retaining Wall near Ms. Addice Antoine in Cotton Bailey.

In Grand Roy, Marigot, Palmiste we did the Retaining Wall near by Ms. Judith James, because, Mr. Speaker, we know that a wall fell and killed somebody in the St. Andrew South, so we are taking the initiative on our part, because we don't want any of that happening to us in our area, especially under my watch, Mr. Speaker. So, we did the box drain at the back of the Bakery in Grand Roy. We did another one by Ms. Edwards. We did the walkway also at the back, from the Mount Plaisir Road going up to all the little houses that you see at the top there, and a few drains and walkways we did, quite a few of them going up there by Marsha Charles, Ian Abraham, Ms. Judy Braithwaite and we also did some behind the old Grand Roy Bridge. We did another one; I am calling the names, Mr. Speaker, so some people would know that this is real. So, that's why I call the names of the people; testimony.

We did one here, Turkey, that's the security guard in Grand Roy, Marigot near Ms. Ivy. We did another one in Marigot by Cleavon. We did the ravine pavement in Old Road, the Basin and the Bay, and we're just waiting now for the Rainy Season, so that

we would concrete that area, and that used to be an recreation area for the people of Old Road, but over the years the river have washed it away so we are now rehabilitating it. We have also done quite a few around Palmiste by NEWLO, and going up by the Dig, Mr. Speaker. For Florida, Gouyave Estate, Loretto, we did drains in the back of Cocoa Town in Florida. We did two (2) concrete roads going up Plaisance. We did another box drain by Mr. Preudhomme's shop. Right now, we're redoing the drains, from Shaper School, which is St. John Christian College, go right up by Dread, in that area, because right now that is a very difficult area. The children have to walk in the drains, Mr. Speaker, water splashing on them, but this now is no more. We are doing that area right there. We have done some repairs to the Community Centre in Florida, and we did the drain by Ms. Joseph in Loretto, and also in Cocoa Grove, we did the drains and we did a walkway going up there.

We constructed the drain by Ms Ann Walker or Celestine. We did the road by Cocoa Town Bridge. And, then we did also the road, Mr. Speaker, by the Chicken Farm, by Mr. Anthony's Chicken Farm. And, in Clozier we have a binding on the road for the farmers of Paradise Road. We have bind and grade the road by James Campbell. We put binding on the River Tubing Road that goes to Belvidere, and also the driveway to the pasture. We are doing some work on the bridge that's going out to Gomerlendo, and there is another place, which is called Lower Cacabawee. So, we have done the drain by lower Cacabawee, and also the turning spot at Cacabawee. So, now that we got the drains and the turning spot there.

In Gouyave, Mr. Speaker, we have done the drains right by Ms. Ena's Shop there, that's going up to Fish Friday, and we have some more to do there. We have done the drains by the school, that's by the Anglican School, another dangerous area for the students. We have done the road in Park View, that's by Wayne. We have also started the repair. We have done all the sideways from Lower Depradine Street, and we did all in front the Nutmeg Pool, which was an area where the Tourists had to manoeuvre between the road, so we have put sidewalks all along there and that we will continue that up the Lance in this coming year. We also replaced all Slipper Drains in

front of 'Step in the Light' in Gouyave and by Dominic's Shopping Centre and by St. Peter's R.C Church.

We have done some walkways by the Nutmeg Pool in Gouyave, you see all the areas, the little houses in there, there was no walkway, so now we have a decent walkway, so you don't have to traverse through the mud to come out. And, we are working on some now, because once you get… we have a beautiful Beach on the Lance in Gouyave, but few people know about it, because you can't have access. So, now we are doing some access from the Lance, so that you can safely go to the Beach. And, working with the Fishermen's Association, Mr. Speaker, what we want to do is to zone the Beach, because right now you have boats all over. So, we want to get some order. So, it's an area of recreation, so people could come in and play games, or enjoy the sea or the beach. But, with boats parked up all over, you can't. So, we want to work with the Fishermen's Association, so that we could create some zoning along the Beach there, Mr. Speaker.

We did a concrete walkway by Mr. Ian George's mother in Central, and also quite a bit of road pavements for people, who are disabled, that's in wheelchairs. So, we have a Programme that we will do a driveway to your house, so you could safely come out with your wheelchair.

Mr. Speaker, in Mt. Granby, Mt. Nesbit, Douglaston, we have done a number of drains there. We have done some behind the Anglican Church. We have done one by Marcello, and another one by Ms. Benjamin in Mt. Nesbit.

We have a serious wall that we have started, and the Ministry of Works is working with us to do a design, that's by Jacinta Horton, that's a serious wall that would be coming down over the road, so we're working on that. We have done the walkway in Douglaston, between Bain and Benjamin. We have done lots of binding on the Douglaston Road, especially going up to by where NAWASA has their Water Dam. And, Mr. Speaker, we continue to do a lot more. Let me just move onto a few little things before my bell goes.

Mr. Speaker, we have done quite a lot for housing. We have now two (2) Brigades building houses for the people that can't afford. I know recently that you've

seen a guy with a one foot, he was protesting. But, Mr. Speaker, contrary to what was said, they said that the Government went, and they cut a road and demolished his house. Mr. Speaker, the road was cut in 2013, and his house was demolished in 2017, to make room for a new house for him. And, you have certain agents that used him for political mileage. But, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that we have built a nice house for him and he is presently now moving in. **(Applause)** I will also say for what it's worth, because one of the guys behind it was, Mr. George Vincent, but his cousin Alban Vincent was sent there, under the NDC Administration, to measure a house for him, and, Mr. Speaker, they did not build it. So, when they had the opportunity they didn't do it. So, I will like them to put up, or shut up.

Mr. Speaker, we have… ***(Time Bell Rings)*** Is that my end, or I have five (5) more?

Mr. Speaker: You have five (5) more.

Hon. Alvin Da Breo: Okay. Mr. Speaker, you're going to see, we have some works that would be starting in St. John very soon. They might say, it's an election ploy, but it's not an election ploy, those are in this year's Budget. And, it is the some major road, because we have a concrete road that would be going in Power Park around the bleachers, because right now the main road goes in front the bleachers. So, we're moving it at the back. Also, from the Cemetery in Power Park to Marigot, the road is not motorable, so that would be fixed.

Mr. Speaker, we have transformed Power Park. We now have some beautiful facilities. We have Pavilion. They have places there where if you have a Happy Hour by the Cemetery you could have your drinks and your eats. We have toilet facilities there, and many things, and the Playing Field now has been upgraded for FIFA standards. So, there is a lot happening there and we're looking to opening it up before Christmas. We're doing so with the schedule of the Prime Minister, because he made those funds that were not even in the Budget. I don't know where he got it, but he made them available, so we could do Power Park, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

We have the linking of Greasy Hill and Market Square, that road would be built. We have area called Mannie, by Loretto, where the people have no road access. When the rain is heavy, you cannot leave your house. So, now we are doing a road there and a little bridge so the people could come across.

The Florida road, there was an accident there, recently, where a vehicle turned over. Mr. Speaker, the contract is out on that, and that piece of road would be repaired and the people in Florida would be very happy and relieved to know that. We also, Mr. Speaker, talking about Florida, we are looking for a little piece of land, because they have no Cemetery in Florida, and I have been asking if we could assist, so we're looking at doing that, so they could have a Cemetery and Recreation area in Florida.

In Clozier, Mr. Harmon Hall has allowed the residents to use his land, as a public area. I would be talking to him to see if we could get the land for the Committee, so that we could develop it into something more, put some benches and tables there.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have a little more, but I know the time is running out, so let me take this opportunity to thank all the people in the Ministry, the people from my office in Gouyave that have worked diligently. I know that they get a lot of bad name, because sometimes they have a high standard to meet, Mr. Speaker, and we want to separate the needy from the greedy, so they may not be liked.

Also, my colleagues and my colleague here in the Ministry, we worked good together. We had an excellent year. I know for you, Mr. Speaker, we thank you for the year. I know that very soon, in here, in the next Parliament or two, you would see some new faces. But, I guarantee you, you would have the same NNP Government. Merry Christmas everybody. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representative for St. John. Honourable Members, as I indicated before, we would take our lunch adjournment at this time. We have one (1) hour. So, we should be back here at 2:25. We would be back here at 2:25. Honourable Members, this Honourable House now adjourns until 2:25.

House adjourned for lunch at 1:25 p.m.

House resumed at 2:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Pray be seated. This Honourable House now resumes. Parliamentary Representative for St. Patrick East.

Hon. Clifton Paul: A very special afternoon to you, Mr. Speaker, and also to my fellow Parliamentarians in this most esteemed House of Representatives. Mr. Speaker, when I decided to make the choice to get involved in frontline politics, I had no idea that it would be so exciting and challenging. Yes, Mr. Speaker, challenging, because the first one was to defeat the man standing in my way of victory, the then Prime Minister, Tillman Thomas. Mr. Speaker, that I did, and hence my first historical moment, not Jack killing the Giant, but Pablo sending Tillman into retirement. **(Applause)** I testify to that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that was indeed, a great moment for me and the people living in the Constituency of St. Patrick East. As I proceed, Mr. Speaker, you will be apprised of other historical moments of this Member of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here this afternoon to give my total support to a Budget, presented by a Leader and Minister for Finance, who, in my mind has the entire country, at heart. Mr. Speaker, this Budget, as presented, is one of the better ones that have passed through this House, in many decades. When one presents a Budget, Mr. Speaker, it has to be one, which gives the populace the hope that there are better days coming, not only for them, but also for their children and children's children.

Mr. Speaker, when a Budget is presented, the impact is felt throughout the country. However, with that in mind, one must look closely to see how the different Sectors listed in the Budget affect the Constituency, which they represent. When I look at the Money Motion before this Honourable House, I am able to see the hope, which it gives to my Constituency and, by extension, the State of Grenada.

Mr. Speaker, my Constituents have benefitted from the National Housing Programme. As a matter of fact, over one hundred and ten (110) different persons, with a value of over four hundred and fifty thousand dollars ($450,000.00), Mr. Speaker, have benefited; a great achievement. I must, however, state that not all would have

gotten what they wanted, but there are many, who got what they needed. And, let me hasten to add, that with the new Budget taking effect, many more would be given the chance to improve their living quarters very soon.

Mr. Speaker, when I listened to the detractors of which there are quite a few, I hear them making quite a lot of noise, but they are not doing anything, nor have they done anything while they were in office. Mr. Speaker, my Government has given hope to the young people of this Nation. I can testify to that, Mr. Speaker, because close to one hundred and fifty (150) young people in my Constituency have been given the opportunity, not only to contribute to the economic situation in their homes, but to be trained, while they work in a field, which may become their career. Mr. Speaker, if this is not the actions of a Government looking out for the needs of the young people, tell me what is.

SEED (Support for Education, Empowerment and Development), has been spending millions of dollars, taking care of the needs of the many people of our Nation's citizens, Mr. Speaker. In my Constituency, Mr. Speaker, the Programme has touched the lives of over two hundred and eighty (280) individuals, and that, Mr. Speaker, has sought to make their lives much better. It is gratifying now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to hear that funds have been already secured to continue the progress of the Programme in 2018.

Mr. Speaker, my Government has made a huge impact in my Constituency, in the area of the Needy Assistance Programme, where we have assisted over twenty (20) persons to the tune of ten thousand dollars ($10,000.00), assisting children of needy families to pay transportation to attend schools. We have spent close to nine thousand dollars ($9,000.00), Mr. Speaker, and the list can go and on, because my Government has seen it fit to assist persons in whichever way, in an effort to make their lives comfortable.

Mr. Speaker, while we are not able to provide permanent jobs for all, we were able to ensure that some of our people got temporary jobs, which would help make a difference for them and their families. In April of this year, one hundred and eighty-five

thousand, seven hundred dollars ($185,700.00) was spent in the Debushing Programme, providing employment for four hundred and forty-six (446) persons.

In August, a total of three hundred and seventy-one thousand, four hundred dollars ($371,400.00) was spent on making the Constituency beautiful by debushing for our visiting friends around the Carnival, and this, Mr. Speaker, also brought relief to eight hundred and ninety-two (892) persons, a testimony, Mr. Speaker, of a Government that cares about the citizens of this country. **(Applause)**

For the past year, Mr. Speaker, we also provided some temporary employment for the constituents through the Special Project Funds. A number of drains, roads, school gates, footpaths, pavements, slipper drains, curb walls, work on the Levera Beach, all these, Mr. Speaker, done in the Constituency of St. Patrick East, to the tune of three hundred and thirty-six thousand, eight hundred and sixty-six dollars and fifty-nine cents ($336,866.59), creating employment for hundreds in the Constituency of St. Patrick East, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, before I make some more salient points, let me apprise you of another historical occasion that I would be known for, when history is written. Mr. Speaker, I would be the first Parliamentarian in the St. Patrick East Constituency not to be defeated. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is something that I can testify to.

As we leave the past and gaze into the future, we see many things, some we can do, others we can't. At this time, I will list for you, Mr. Speaker, some of the projects, which will be attempted in the coming year; for example, the Chambeau Project, which would seek to improve the livelihood of the many farmers in the vicinity. This Project, Mr. Speaker, will be funded by the Japanese Government in the area. We would see a better Irrigation System in the area; Green House Farming would be instituted in the local, for the first time, thus causing farmers to earn more from Agriculture. Aqua-Culture would bring more to the farmers, as they are introduced to a new or different lifestyle, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the people in my Constituency will be the benefactors of a new Levera Centre, which would include a storeroom, a shelter, bathroom and toilet facilities and areas for vending. This, Mr. Speaker, is what one can refer to, as development.

(Applause) For many years, it has been promised and finally it would be done in 2018. Not only would the youths or the sportsmen and women, who use the Playing Field, but the spectators would have bathroom and toilet facilities at the Plains Playing Field, a showing of a Government at work, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** It was built many years ago, and now it has some refurbishing to be done.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we would see massive work being done on the River Sallee Community Centre, a blessing for the villagers, who have been calling for that to happen for some time now. The village of Mt. Rose is due to see the construction of a Resource Centre, in addition to a new Playing Field; and, Mr. Speaker, as I say Playing Field, I must stop here and say, congratulations to the Grenada Seventh Day Adventist Comprehensive School, on winning the 2017 Junior Secondary School Football Competition for the first time in their history, **(applause)** an achievement well-deserving of the highest praise. Mr. Speaker, let me make it known that the lands for this project that I have just spoken about, have already been identified.

Closer to home, Mr. Speaker, is a project that has to be done. It is the lighting of the Rose Hill Playing Field. Mr. Speaker, with the accomplishments of the Charles' Sisters in Football and their cousin in Athletics, it is imperative that this is done, so we can continue to witness more youngsters taking advantage of the facility and emulating what the Charles family continues to do.

Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me, if I did not take the time to mention two (2) of the better projects St. Patrick East has ever seen. Mr. Speaker, this is now the final historical moments to be mentioned. Mr. Speaker, under my tenure, as Parliamentary Representative for the Constituency, we have seen work done on the St. Patrick Anglican School like never before. **(Applause)** Today, when we look at the school, it makes many of us want to go back to school again, Mr. Speaker. **(Laughter)** This, Mr. Speaker, makes me testify that my Government believes in Education, and with the New National Party in Office, the future of our children is not only in safe hands, but with people, who cares about the future, something to testify about. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, it was the custom for us in St. Patrick, to board the buses and travel to many parts on the Island before being taken to the world famous Grand Anse Beach.

Mr. Speaker, today, that is no more. We do not have to wait for a bus trip to go to the Beach. We now walk to the best Beach in Grenada, which is located in St. Patrick East. This, Mr. Speaker, is something to testify about. Mr. Speaker, that is history, a new Beach created in the North, Mr. Speaker. The Beach was created, as a result of a caring Government. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Government saw the need for the protection of private, not public property, from the ravages of the sea, and by doing so, created the now world famous Crown City Beach. Mr. Speaker, I speak of none other than the Sauteurs Breakwater Project. ***(Laughter/Applause)*** Mr. Speaker, when the project was started, the same detractors I spoke of earlier about called it a Mud Jetty, saying that we of the New National Party was building a Mud Jetty. Today, Mr. Speaker, I hear advertisement on the Radio, the National Democratic Congress wanting to have fundraising on the Mud Jetty. What a laugh, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I begin to wrap up, I want to do it in a unique manner, taking some lyrics from the Manhattans and modifying it. "This has got to be the saddest day of my life. I called you here today for a bit of bad news. I won't be able to see you anymore, because of my obligations and the ties I have. We have been meeting here every day." And, since this is our last day together, I want to say to you and your staff, Mr. Speaker, how much you have made this a pleasant journey for me. I want to thank, also, my fellow Parliamentarians for the time well spent together. I am going to miss you. I can't lie, and yes, it is going to hurt. However, when I walk away, I won't be looking back. I want to remember this House just like this; peaceful and doing the Nation's business. Mr. Speaker, I leave you with a heavy heart, but I know the one replacing me would be just as good, or maybe even better.

Mr. Speaker, to you and all my friends in here, it is time for me to say, goodbye. Goodbye, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you very much. But, before I take my seat, Mr. Speaker, just let me say that I want to thank the supporters, who have arrived from the St. Patrick East Constituency, to give me that kind of support. I want to thank them very much. **(Applause)** And, I want to let the people in my Constituency, who have supported me, I want to let them know that the love that we share will never die. We would continue to be there for each other. And, I also want to thank all those, who

prayed for me, while I was away on medical attention in Cuba. Your prayers were heard by the Almighty God, and I thank you for your prayers, and here I am standing today, because of the Almighty God and your prayers. I thank you very much. **(Applause)**

And, let me, at this time, take the opportunity to wish everyone of you here, my supporters in the Constituency of St. Patrick East, my fellow Parliamentarians, you, Mr. Speaker, and your staff and the entire population of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a bright and prosperous 2018. May God bless every one of you. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. Patrick East. I almost asked what were you talking about, when you said goodbye. But, anyhow we would talk about that another day. We would talk about that another day. Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South-East.

Hon. Emmalin Pierre: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson; sorry, Mr. Speaker. I think I am a couple days ahead of myself. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to give my fullest support to the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2018, and to say how impressed I am with the content of this Budget Document, and particularly to the Presentation by the Minister for Finance, when he delivered the 2018 Budget to this House.

Mr. Speaker, I can speak this afternoon, on behalf of my Constituency, to say that we are extremely happy with this Budget package that has been presented for the people of this country, and, of course, we see so many ways in which our Constituency is going to benefit, as we have been benefitting over the past couple years.

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, as I address this House, I want to begin by giving God thanks for so many things, Mr. Speaker, but, particularly, how God has really shown himself up in so many different ways over this past year, as it relates to the Constituency of St. Andrew South-East and what we have been able to accomplish over the past year.

Motions

Mr. Speaker, as I say this, I want to use the opportunity now to extend my appreciation to the people of St. Andrew South-East for their support, for their love that they have demonstrated over the past year, and, particularly, Mr. Speaker, to say the relationship that we have built over the past couple years in this Constituency is one that causes me today to feel, not as a Parliamentary Representative per se, but as family, working together to achieve a common goal, a common purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I want to use this opportunity in the spirit of thanksgiving, to also extend special thanks to the staff of the Constituency Office, all of the Coordinators, all of the volunteers, all of the people, who make it happen every day. Sometimes we can forget the people, who are actually the driving force behind us, because, Mr. Speaker, all that we have achieved, I have to say to this House today, it has not been my sole effort, but the success has been because of the many people, who have been working hard together to make this happen, and I want to register, in this Honourable House today my gratitude and my appreciation.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, I want to also use this opportunity to express my own personal gratitude to my family, my husband, particularly, and children, who have been a major source of strength and support over this past year.

Mr. Speaker, 2017 has been a very successful year for St. Andrew South-East, and as I said before what we have achieved is because we have worked together, and I want to commend all of those, who have been part of this process.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make this very important point, that when I accepted the responsibility to be a candidate in the 2013 General Elections, I did so, understanding what I was going to get into. I did so, understanding, one, that I was accepting a responsibility to represent people; that I was accepting a responsibility to work hard on behalf of people; and accepting a responsibility in which I had a responsibility to pull people together to achieve something at the end of the day.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I went into this, understanding that without God it would not be possible, and without God being at the centre of what we are doing, it would not be possible. And, so, Mr. Speaker, I want to add a special note of thanks to that team

that continues daily, to pray for what we do, to pray for the Constituency and to cover myself and my family. Mr. Speaker, I do not take some things for granted.

And, so, I have to report to us, here today, Mr. Speaker, that when the year begins, as a Constituency, we have a particular approach that we take to the work ahead for the year, and it is very simple. We go to every village in the Constituency, we pull the people of the village together, we sit with them to identify what the priorities are, and to confirm them, because we would have started that process towards the end of the previous year. So, Mr. Speaker, we are in, currently, the month of November and already many of the Polling Divisions, we have already met to identify the priorities for 2018. And, who determines the priority, Mr. Speaker? When you represent people, you don't make decisions for people, you engage people, you guide their discussions, you guide decisions, but you don't determine what is best for them. So, Mr. Speaker, in every Polling Division in this Constituency that I represent, I can say to you, the initiatives that we implement come from the people of those Villages. So, I can give an example of one Constituency, about three/four weeks ago, when we met and they said, one, two, three in that order of priority are our priorities for 2018, we are going to work together to make it happen.

Mr. Speaker that is done in every Polling Division in the Constituency. So, when the year begins, we meet again, to confirm those Priorities, and after confirming those priorities, people understand that we are in this together, we are now going to implement.

So, Mr. Speaker, I fully understand that I am standing here this afternoon not because I won the right to be a Minister of Government, but I won the right to be a Parliamentary Representative for the people of St. Andrew South-East, and I want to begin by updating this House, as to what we have been doing in that Constituency over the past year.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also make a very important point that part of the responsibility is understanding that people must be first. People have to be the centre of the work that you are going to be engaged in during the year, and people have to be a part of, and that is what I love about the people of that Constituency. They are

actively a part of the work and the programme that is taking place. So, when they see a drain being done, a road being done, an activity being done, a Community Centre being built, I know they take ownership, because they know that the concept and the idea came from them and it's for them and that is what is so exciting about this job that I do.

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I want to report on a couple areas that I would try to put or summarise what we've been doing under and the first area, Mr. Speaker, is engaging people. However we look at it, however we define it, to be a Parliamentary Representative, one area of priority has to be engaging people. One area of priority has to be people's inclusiveness in what is happening, and I m not speaking, Mr. Speaker, about inclusiveness, or engagement that takes place when an Election is about to happen. I am talking about engagement and inclusiveness throughout the period, Mr. Speaker. So, whether you are in Opposition, whether you are in Government, people are supposed to be engaged. So, you can't disappear this Christmas, because there is no Election and then you appear this Christmas, because there is an Election. It doesn't work that way, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we have to be careful when we accept the responsibility to represent people, or to be part of a process that leads to representing people, we have to be careful that we know exactly what we're getting into, because, then, at the end of the day, what would happen, you would end up start singing some very sorry songs, begging peoples forgiveness.

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to engaging people, that is one of the hallmarks of our Constituency, our regular engagement in village meetings, our regular house-to-house programmes, which is so important to inform the work that we are going to do. So, I listened, Mr. Speaker, this morning many of the presentations and it is so very clear that when you listen to the different things that are happening around the Island, you can see the involvement of people in processes.

One MP this morning made reference to a Basketball Court that was being built by the people. Mr. Speaker, people's engagement is so very important. So, wherever they are, in the Hospital, they're sick and shut in, wherever they are, they have a voice and they have a contribution, and they have to be engaged, and, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the areas that we give priority; whether it be the students in the school, it's

amazing when you visit a school, the kind of things that come from the mouths of children, not just as encouragement, but ideas for development. And, so, Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility to engage people at all levels and that's one of our focus areas and has been over the past couple years.

Mr. Speaker in the area of Community Development, I want to make the point of the importance of engaging Organisations and Sectors. We have developed an excellent relationship with all of the Institutions within our Constituency; be it the schools, be it the churches, be it community organisations, whatever they are, in every village, Mr. Speaker, and I'll tell you why this is so important. It promotes and supports the work that you have to do in those very villages, but in addition to that, these very persons now offer support for what it is that you have the same vision about, what it is that you want to do, collectively, for the development of the Constituency, and I have to say here Mr. Speaker, that I want to commend and express appreciation to all of the Institutions and Organisation Arms within the Constituency that have been working so well with us over the past year in achieving some of our objectives. The collaboration with Community Groups and so on, Mr. Speaker, of course, is essential and important.

I want to make reference, Mr. Speaker, and report now on two Community Centres that we have been able to construct in the Constituency. And, I say so not feeling bad that we've been able to complete, in the same year, two (2) Community Centres, because those are the very first two (2) in the entire Constituency. Mr. Speaker, some people don't like to hear it, but the facts are what they are. We started a Community Centre in 2007, the very first one that is in Mamma Cannes, 85% complete. In 2008, the Elections came and the work stopped, thereafter, the day after the Elections, and it did not continue until 2013, when we returned into office to see that facility to completion.

Mr. Speaker, right now, the people of the Southern part of the Constituency, Mama Cannes, Grand Bacolet, Felix Park and so on can say that they now have a facility that they can: (a) Provide for the use of institutions, churches and so on, already using the Facility, but also for Community Development Initiative. Mr. Speaker, thank God for this Administration and how it is committed to completing things.

Telescope Community Centre

Mr. Speaker, as far back as 2004, I have been hearing the cry of the people of the Constituency, or the Polling Division, the Community of Telescope of the need for a Community Centre. The average person in that Community, Mr. Speaker, will have to go to Grenville, catch a bus, or take a bus from Telescope to Grenville, or walk from Telescope to Grenville, then take a bus from Grenville to Grand Bras, to access any kind of medical attention, or take a bus to Grenville to go to Paradise, or walk from Grenville to Paradise, however you want to conclude it.

Mr. Speaker, I feel very strongly that the people of Telescope must have a Facility in which, at least, twice, per week, they can access medical care. Mr. Speaker, I am extremely happy to report, that as a result of the construction of a Community Centre in Telescope, we have designated a room in that Facility, thanks to BNTF, where we can provide that service to people, that more people would be able to access healthcare, voluntarily, rather than wait until they are very sick and then they have to pay the bus to go seek medical attention. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, every person within the Community of Telescope welcomes this news, as it relates to this Facility.

But, Mr. Speaker as it relates to those two (2) Facilities, I want to make the point that we have seen so many cases where Facilities like those have been abused over the years, and sometimes we try to do the right thing to empower people and to give them responsibilities and to say: “Here is the key to this Facility, manage it, do as well as you can.” And, it’s sometimes unfortunate, when you empower people to do certain things, how it can end up. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Ministry of Works for the new direction, as it relates to Community Centres and Facilities. They have reviewed their guidelines. They have reviewed procedures and so on, as it relates to Facilities like those, and they have commanded that in putting management teams in place, that you be very careful with the selection of persons, so that those Facilities would be well managed, and the purpose for which they are intended is achieved.

Mr. Speaker, in both cases we are very cognisant of that fact, and, as a matter of fact, I want to use the opportunity to first commend the management team in Mamma Cannes for the work that they have been doing, thus far, in that regard. I have

expressed to them clearly, my views on what Community Centres, in many cases, are being used for and what I think this one should never be used for, and thus far, Mr. Speaker, I believe they are on the right track.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make mention of programmes, because having a Facility is one thing, but ensuring that that Facility can be used to the maximum benefits of constituents is another story, and so, Mr. Speaker, we've already started to engage, in so many different ways, to find programmes and opportunities that would benefit people within the communities in question. And, so, Mr. Speaker, happy am I to say that in the case of Mamma Cannes, registration has already started for the first Computer Programme that is going to take place at that Facility, and also to say that in addition to that, that Facility houses our Elderly Day Care Programme where the Senior Citizens are brought to that Facility, and they are engaged there for the day, as part of our Senior Citizens Programme.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we already have collected a number of books, barrels of books that we intend to use for the setting up of a Library at that Facility. They are just, basically waiting on erecting the shelves and so on. Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that maximum benefits are derived from those facilities.

And, the same thing with Telescope, Mr. Speaker, apart from the health aspect of it, I've always said this, if you look through St. Andrew, very limited are the spaces for bringing people together in any official activity or function. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what is the intention for Bain's Hall. I see a lot of renovation taking place there, but maybe Bain's Hall probably has been one of the only facilities outside of a school, for example, that you can rent to have a Training Session, a Workshop, or some kind of course that you can run in a Public Facility within the Constituency. Mr. Speaker, now, we have those two Facilities that can facilitate that particular objective. So, we are going to make full use of it, because, of course, we want to make sure we bring as much development opportunities to our people, as possible.

Mr. Speaker, in the same light, as Community Centres is the issue of public bathroom and toilets. Mr. Speaker, in some communities, Government would have invested quite an amount of resources, as it relates to development of those facilities.

And, again, sometimes you think you're doing the right thing, to appoint a person or persons, to manage and to take care of, and sometimes it's unfortunate what it turns out to be. Again, we have to learn from the past. We have to learn from what has been going on for umpteen years, and to be able to sometimes make very tough decisions, as to what is in the best interest. So, we have actually learnt from the model, when the Public Toilet was renovated on Wharfs Lane in Grenville, where employment was created for two (2) people, and that Facility has been maintained, even through festive seasons, and people can feel comfortable to pay one dollar ($1.00), to go to use the Facility.

So, whether you are a visitor to Grenville, whether you are a resident of Grenville, wherever you come from, you can actually go there, comfortably, and use that Facility. So, we've adopted that model, because it has been working, and we have decided to work along with the Ministry of Health, as it relates to two (2) other Facilities, in the first instance, that is Sendall Street and Telescope.

Mr. Speaker, but I have to make the point, as it relates to Telescope, that in 2008, again, we would have completed the renovation of that particular Facility for the residents of Telescope, who would want to make use of that Facility. We would have already hired an individual for managing the Facility and the Community was indeed, very happy, Mr. Speaker. But, of course, like many other things, I have to say to you, that this did not go as well as it was planned. So, after the General Elections went in 2008, what happened? The young lady was sent home, the Facility was opened, and in a very short time, what would have happened is that that Facility was no longer available for the use of persons, because of the condition of that Facility.

And, that remained that way for four and half years, and it went on, Mr. Speaker, and I met with the people of the Community, and they said to me, look, don't blame us totally for this. This could have been done, yes, by some of us, it could have been done by people who came, not from our area, to use the beach, and would have used the facility, and from some people who just wanted to vandalise, as well. But, they said Mr. Speaker, "Minister, give us another chance, could you please renovate that Facility and let us, again, hire somebody to manage the Facility and, we are going to commit that we

are going to care for this, as we would have committed before." Mr. Speaker, we've done just that. We have reopened the Facility, created employment for two (2) persons on a shift system and, Mr. Speaker, it has been working extremely well, thus far.

But, what is the long term plan, Mr. Speaker? The long term plan is that some of these Public Facilities will be for visitors to the area, somebody who comes to Telescope Beach and wants to use the Facility, somebody who is probably getting off from the Bus Terminus, or going to shop in Grenville and wants to use the Sendall Street Facility. The long term intention, as we've started to do, Mr. Speaker, is to provide the opportunity for these residents to have their private facilities, and so we have already started to assist some persons in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, while I am on private facilities, let me also say that we've had a number of senior citizens that we have been assisting in that regard, to ensure that we can support them, as many other Representatives would have indicated this morning, with facilities that they can access privately, at home.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also make reference to roads and, of course, I won't have the time to go through a list of those, but just to say, Mr. Speaker, I am very confident that when you look at what we've been able to do, in roads, in the Constituency, you get a response from people, who are genuine that we have seen so much happen, we understand that ours is going to come, you have not reached to us, yet, but when we look at all that has been done, so far, we believe that ours is very close. Mr. Speaker, that's people who are genuine and they understand that, wow, we can't believe you've done all that in one year.

But, of course, Mr. Speaker, the few that might not be very genuine might be the few who would probably highlight what was not done yet. But, I believe, if you go through any part of Grenada, in 2017, at this point, and you compare what was done, as relates to roads in the last Administration, there is absolutely no comparison, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** And, I am not just talking my Constituency; I dare challenge anywhere in Grenada in 2017, anytime.

So, roads, Mr. Speaker, is something that this Government has been doing and continues to do. But, I say to people in Telescope, alone, the amount of roads that you

have there, of course, it's a work in progress and, Mr. Speaker, if I count the number of contracts we have done in the last four and a half years, Mr. Speaker, I probably would get a bit uncomfortable with the figures. Mr. Speaker, we continue to work, and we continue to do well in that area, but I say we continue to have a lot more to do, and I want to commend the Ministry of Works for the support that they've been providing, not just to our Constituency, but all Constituencies, to make sure that we upgrade and rehabilitate roads within the Constituency.

Mr. Speaker, under Community Development, I want to make mention of Tourism. And, one might wonder why Tourism, and Tourism, because I strongly believe, Mr. Speaker, that the time has come for us to make a major investment, as it relates to Tourism within the rural communities. You've heard, Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Tourism continues to speak about Rural Tourism; the Prime Minister has hinted it. But, I believe, Mr. Speaker, again my perspective of development is that it has to start with the people. It has to come from the people. The interest has to be generated from the people. And, that is why, Mr. Speaker, as a Constituency we have sat down within Communities and discussed Tourism from a constituency perspective, from a village perspective.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the area of Crochu, if you drive down the Crochu road, leading to Cabier Beach, some people… and I say all the time take a ride up, take a drive and see what it's like. Some people have no clue where I am talking about, beautiful beach, Cabier Beach. Mr. Speaker, so much potential; there is more than one Guest House on that road to Cabier Beach. Sometimes you visit and you wonder where these people are from. They are not from the Constituency, they leave Lance-Aux-Epines and they leave Fort Jeudy and they leave Westerhall Point and they drive up to Cabier Beach, because it's quite, it's safe and, Mr. Speaker, peaceful and the water and the sand beautiful.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to sound as if I am the Public Relations Officer for Tourism here, but, Mr. Speaker, I believe that in the rural communities, we have the potential, we have the resource, and we have to continue to encourage communities to get more involved in selling and marketing and developing our Tourism product. So, we

continue, Mr. Speaker, to work with the Community Group in Café, as it relates to the development of that Facility. But, I'll tell you what is the biggest challenge, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to that beautify beach that lies behind Crochu. The greatest challenge, Mr. Speaker, is the road that leads from the Crochu main road to the beach. But, I am happy to say, Mr. Speaker, that although the length of the road can be scary, in terms of what it would take to concrete that road, we have made significant strides in that regard.

As a matter of fact, I remember when we started our initiative to develop that road, we started just before the Adventist Church in Crochu. For those of you who have gone recently, you would see how far we would have gotten, and you would see that even when we are not paving, or even when we are not putting concrete, we have been binding and making sure that, at least, the road is accessible to the beach and for the Guest Houses that are there.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that in addition to the work we've done this year already, on this road, we would have had, very recently, three (3) persons from that community, bidding, for some additional work that is going to start there very soon and, Mr. Speaker, again, the Ministry of Works needs to be commended for the support that they have been giving in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I want to use this opportunity as we still speak Tourism, as we still speak opportunity through Tourism for our people, to speak to Mt. Carmel Waterfall. Again, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that we utilise all the possible resources that we can. So, in the case of Cabier Beach, not only are we concentrating on the road, but Mr. Speaker, we have a team that is there, weekly, maintaining and cleaning and ensuring that the beach is in a condition that somebody would not be deterred, when they get there, because of the condition. And, of course, that has increased the number of persons who leave St. George's, for example, to come for a picnic on a holiday, or the number of locals, people from the community who use the beach, as well as persons, who go there, because, of course, Mr. Speaker, they've been used to doing so.

Mr. Speaker, Mt. Carmel Waterfall, many, many years ago, is a project that has been identified, as a major Tourism site for St. Andrew. Mr. Speaker, that has been

abandoned for many, many years. As a matter of fact, at one point, the concern of violence would have deterred a number of the Cruise Ship Agents from bringing our visitors to that site. There have been some very unfortunate incidences that would have taken place there. But, the question is, do we throw our hands up in the air and say well, because this has happened, we can't continue? Mr. Speaker, as a result of that, serious steps were taken, as it relates to transforming, again and developing again that Facility.

So, currently we have Security Services there, so when a visitor gets to the Junction, Mt. Carmel Junction, you have Security in uniform there, as well as Tour Guides, who would take the visitor from the Mt. Carmel Junction, down to the Waterfall. But, very interestingly, Mr. Speaker, many people got there, the Security was there, the Tour Guides were there, but unfortunately they will not continue. Why; because of the condition of the road to the Waterfall. So, Mr. Speaker, again, in an effort to creatively create employment opportunities, we would have engaged a team of persons, who are responsible for maintaining the trail towards the Waterfall and developing the site itself that would enhance and create that environment where people will want to visit.

So, Mr. Speaker, we got as far as having a couple visit the Falls, and said, look we want to go and come back to get married here and, Mr. Speaker, they did, and that's the potential, as it relates to Rural Tourism. So, a white couple came to the site, very impressed, and decided that they wanted to come back to get married at the Waterfall. Mr. Speaker, they did. But, guess what happened? After the Marriage Ceremony, the Bride had to go to the bush to change her clothes, to get back into her regular clothes, Mr. Speaker, and so, of course, the engagement of community persons, who see the potential of that opportunity there, have decided, let us work together, Mr. Speaker. Let us make sure that we can construct the little facilities, the bathroom, the changing room, benches, picnic areas, so that people, not just local, visitors can come and enjoy. And, Mr. Speaker, they get very excited, so then they say let us have a trail that is called the 'Oil Down Trail'; so you see the breadfruit tree, the banana tree, you see everything that leads to the cooking of the Oil Down. Mr. Speaker, I am extremely excited about the potential, as it relates to Rural Tourism, and, Mr. Speaker, we continue to do as much

as we can in that regard. I want to commend the team, Mr. Speaker that's working at that site. It took me, maybe about five minutes, from the road to the Fall, or less and that is because it was such an easy walkthrough to the Falls.

Mr. Speaker, moving from Mt. Carmel, we head to Marquis, and I am still speaking possibilities, as it relates to Tourism, but not just possibilities, as to what can happen in the future. Possibilities of how we are using these opportunities even now to create employment. So, you talk about the Mt. Carmel Waterfall and, yes, we have engaged persons there, working there fulltime. You talk about Cabier Beach, yes, we have persons there who are engaged there fulltime. But, you come to Marquis, and you have again, I don't want to give the story of what happened after 2008, because by now it has become a recurring decimal, as it relates to almost every project that was started 2007 to 2008, so no need to repeat, because you understand what I am trying to say, I'm sure.

So, Mr. Speaker, we came back and we decided we are going to upgrade and we are going to look at a new System, and we've decided, as a means of creating, again, opportunities and employment opportunity, as well, for the people of the community, as well as neighbouring communities, we are going to encourage our people who are into the Craft Industry to continue to do even more. So, you buy the craft from them, the intention is not profit making, you place it at the Centre; so for example, anybody travelling can come there and purchase the craft at the Centre, even when there is no Cruise Ship, Mr. Speaker, because normally when there is the Cruise Ship, the Vendors come and they sell, themselves. So, you purchase from the Vendors, and this was the original concept of Craft. But, Mr. Speaker, we've expanded that concept, because our focus is development. Our focus is long term development and thinking ahead, thinking forward.

So, we've looked other products, Coconut Oil. So Mammy Lane in Marquis, for example, very Senior Citizen, maybe eighty/eighty something, I am sure. Now, that lady still produces quality Coconut oil. But, guess what? She has to leave Marquis, travel to the market in Grenville, spends the whole day in Grenville, trying to sell the Coconut Oil. Mr. Speaker, the purpose and the concept of the Marquis Craft Centre, or what we coin

'Grenada Shop' is that locals would have an opportunity to place there anything of standard that is created locally, especially products such as cooking, eating, whatever products or oil, sugar cake, candies or straw hats, straw bags. If you go there, Mr. Speaker, and I wish to invite you to go there, not just to view, but to purchase; if you go there, you would notice the products are mainly from the people of the community. And, of course, we have also catered for the person who would want De La Grenade products, or want the Baron products, things produced locally, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, moving there, and probably before I move from there, if you stand in front of the Marquis Craft Centre and you look across to your left, you would notice a little Island. Now, in our community debates, there has always been the discussion, as to who owns the island, if it is private, if it is public. And, someone said in one meeting, well, it really does not matter, the important thing is how can that Island benefit us, as a community. So, as we continue to expand the concept of promoting Tourism within the Constituency of creating opportunities through opportunities, Mr. Speaker, this is the community, it came from them, not from me; let us use the Island; the boats are here, so let us take a ride from the Craft Centre to the Island, but who are we catering for, not just locals but the visitors who come may just want to pay five dollars US (US$5.00) to go to the Island and come back. Mr. Speaker, it is all about, and our focus is about how do we use opportunities to create opportunities, and I am extremely excited about that.

But, not just the Island, Mr. Speaker. Marquis has such a rich history, inclusive of a Fort that many people are not aware of. So, Mr. Speaker, the project continues to expand and we are extremely excited about incorporating within the project, the focus on Tourism from Crochu to Telescope, and, of course, time might not permit for me to give you all of the stops. But, inclusive, I want to make mention of the Soubise seafront. And, one might ask, '*what is the potential there*?' Mr. Speaker, all of us are aware that we would have moved over fifty (50) persons from the seafront, which was a major risk, major, major risk for the people who lived there. I wondered how they sleep at nights, quite honestly.

But, Mr. Speaker, the same people, through dialogue and discussions, their concern is how now can we use this to our advantage? Now, sometimes as people think positively and people look at ways of development, rather than support their positive thinking, rather than encourage their forward thinking, Mr. Speaker, sometimes we have a way of thinking backwards and encouraging others to think the same.

Mr. Speaker, would you believe that some persons would have gone to these residents and say, look, we understand Government has already sold these lands to a private company that is going to come and set up business here. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate, but it is what exists. Few people who try to discourage or go contrary to everything that is positive. Mr. Speaker, if you have noticed, we have cleared piece of land to the seafront there, and if you notice what has been happening, people are beginning to see this as a potentially popular green space where visitors and locals can sit and relax, can stop, take a view. People are now saying, wow, we never realised that this view was so beautiful. Why, because there were houses along the seashore that was blocking that view and now the people can benefit. So, now, we are moving the concept to a Food Festival, where the people of the Community, Mr. Speaker, are now able to benefit from that little green space that is being created. But, in the same light, let me just give you a hint, as to what is to come, as it relates to this. Now, we are supporting and working with the NGO. Consultation has started with the fishermen, engagement has started with the fishermen and, as we look to 2018, as it relates to that said project, Mr. Speaker, all of the designs have already been completed for a Fisherman's village that is going to be on the sea, on the water, in that Community.

Mr. Speaker, again, the concept of engaging people in using the opportunities that they have, so is not just talk, talk, talk, but, Mr. Speaker, how do you get people involved in positive conversations that will lead to their development. That is the kind of conversations, Mr. Speaker, I am interested in having, not conversations about people and people and people, conversations that are positive, that is about how people can be engaged in developing people. That is the kind of conversations that I want to be engaged in. So, that's the Soubise seafront, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to move quickly from Community Development; there are a number of other initiatives there, but I want to speak a bit about employment and training. And, I want to speak specifically, in the first instance, of a project that we have launched that is called the 'Third Chance Project.' And, the name 'Third Chance' came simply from the backdrop that we have always been speaking about a second chance.

Mr. Speaker, generally, when you speak about giving persons a chance, you hear about the second chance. And, we believe that there are some young people who may have been given a second chance, maybe a third and they still deserve another chance. And, that is why, Mr. Speaker, we have actually introduced that project targeting, particularly, marginalised young men; young men who sometimes we look to and believe there is no hope, and you look to them and say look, well, that's it. But, Mr. Speaker, I have to say this afternoon that I have seen so many cases, so many instances where young people have proven others wrong, as it relates to what they are capable of, as it relates to what they can do if they receive support.

So, I would give an example, Mr. Speaker, of a component of that project, which has to do with projects in themselves. So, a group of young men from Telescope invited me to a meeting, which was in a little dark place that they refer to as the Nyabinghi Tabernacle, and I went there that night, and, Mr. Speaker, I have to say to you, I am talking about a group of young guys, who are determined to prove many people wrong, and I am talking about people who believe that they would make nothing, they would turn out and amount to be nothing in life. Mr. Speaker, their passion is music, and after a very healthy, long discussion, Mr. Speaker, the conclusion was, we never saw it that way, that, yes, we can do music and we can keep it totally positive, we can keep it totally clean. Mr. Speaker, they said to me, we believe that we can make it international, and guess what, Mr. Speaker, I believe too. And, whatever support that is necessary to help that I can provide, I am going to provide.

So, Mr. Speaker, this group of young men said, look, we have a Producer, who normally supports us, but that person is now in Germany, I believe, he is, and we have to wait until he comes back to continue our recording. And, Mr. Speaker, they created their own little Studio. So, I went in there and they have the egg boxes and so on, I

would imagine this is to keep sound inside. I am not so much into the production thing, but it is obvious that they have become very creative, because they have a passion, they know what they want and all they need is support. So, Mr. Speaker, they said, if only we can get a Laptop, and person 'X', who lives so and so place can accommodate us in his home, a member of the group, and we can do some of our recording until Mr. 'X' comes back, that would be a major boost. Well, Mr. Speaker, I went so quickly. For a month, I did not have a Laptop myself, but I made sure that I found them a Laptop, because I got so excited, when I listened to how excited they were.

Mr. Speaker, we can't afford to give up on any young person. We cannot afford to cause any young person to feel that they cannot make it, and that is why this project, Mr. Speaker, I am so excited and passionate about it, because it is really about giving as many chances as possible to persons who are determined to make it. And, so, Mr. Speaker, these young persons are engaged, Personal Development training, they are engaged in different sessions. Particularly what I am most excited about as it relates to the Personal Development Training, is how we have been able to engage people who have had similar past that probably even been in places that they have never been.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I sat and I looked at them and their eyes were glued to a young man, who came and said to them look, this is my story. I went to a Fair in my community, had a knife in my pocket, because I intended to cut cochineal to wash my hair, and it just so happened that I got into a confrontation with another person and guess what happened? I never thought about it, but I ended up in Prison, because somebody died that day.

Mr. Speaker, I looked at how their eyes were glued to that young man, as he shared his experience. I looked at their eyes, Mr. Speaker, when the young man who said I was just a young man, who just left school and my Uncle convinced me to meet him 'X' place, and to stick him up, spray him with mace and take the bag of money that I was going to deposit for 'X' business place and run. And, I was held by the Police, my Uncle said he knows nothing about that, and I was charged fifteen thousand dollars ($15,000.00) by the court for causing harm. Now, Mr. Speaker, I looked at them, their eyes were glued. And, after those sessions, Mr. Speaker, when you listened to them, it

causes you to be convinced that a 'Third Chance' must be given; and, even if you had to give a fourth chance, that you should. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of hope for our young people.

So, we went around the Constituency, village by village, and identified a number of these young guys, very excited and enthusiastic, and we continue to work on them, engaging them in sporting activity. And, while I am here I am going to speak a bit about sports. But, just to say, Mr. Speaker, what we just did in Marquis to renovate the Basketball Court and to start a competition, as it relates to basketball. Mr. Speaker, the average person in Marquis would tell you what they have seen with the young guys, who would have sat on the side of the road and probably were not engaged, Mr. Speaker, only through Sports, only through Sports. And, again, I am reiterating the opportunities that we provide; we just have to do what we have to do as a Government and as constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to small business, again, recognising the need to be creative, to create opportunities, and that is really a key point that you might find me stressing a lot, because I have realised you can't depend on Central Government, to create all the opportunities for jobs that you need in your constituency. So, I am putting my head with the heads of all the people in my constituency, (that's a lot of heads), and we are looking for as many opportunities as possible.

Skills training, Mr. Speaker, critical, as well, especially, Mr. Speaker, and the MP for St. Andrew North-West made mention of that category of people, there, that age group of people that is over thirty-five (35), under fifty (50) who still have a lot to offer, who are still looking for some opportunities employment wise, and how can you channel those persons to the thinking that we can create it.

So, Mr. Speaker, just one example I would quickly give, and now I am beginning to worry that starting with your constituency might be a wrong move. But, Mr. Speaker, starting with a group of women from Hope and Post Royal, and we contracted a Trainer who started training these people in the area of Sewing. I am not going to mention computers, because of course, we are all familiar with that area. And, Mr. Speaker, within two weeks, I visited for other purposes, and when I saw what these young

women, who probably couldn't thread a needle properly, were able to do, I mean, I felt so hopeful about what is possible.

But, interestingly, shortly after, Mr. Speaker, I went on Facebook and one of the participants of the class actually posted one of the items that they created out of that class, and within very short time, somebody was asking about selling price and then she quoted a price of one hundred dollars ($100.00). Mr. Speaker, I don't think I need to go into details about potential, and I don't know where that line came from, but using opportunities to create opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, Sports in the constituency, I want to make mention of that, because I have seen, Mr. Speaker, how people's lives can be transformed, people's attitude can be transformed, because of their involvement in Sports. And, so, we have been extremely supportive, competitions that we sponsored, competitions that we have created, as well as support for persons in Sports, particularly, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure most Constituencies has that. The majority of people who get selected onto National Teams, regional teams, what have you; we have a young lady from Telescope, who is playing with the West Indies team; we have young guys who are playing on Junior Teams for the West Indies Cricket Team, Mr. Speaker, Football, what have you. Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have to continue supporting these people, not just at the National, but at the constituency level, because I am sure we understand why, and so we have been offering tremendous support in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, Social Programmes, I believe we have gotten our fair share, even if we have not been able to meet all the needs, but again, I am extremely hopeful, looking at what we have been able to achieve, not giving the recount of every single initiative. But, Mr. Speaker, just to quickly mention our Home Care Programme for the Senior Citizens, we have over thirty (30) persons where we go to their homes, providing services on a daily basis. Mr. Speaker, our Day Care Programme for senior citizens is another one. Mr. Speaker, we believe that senior citizens must be treated with dignity, and our programmes reflect that.

Mr. Speaker, connection of water, pipe borne water. We have been able to support a number of families, not just water, electricity, because we understand children

who have to study and prepare for exams and so on, what it can be like. And, some people say, well, other people did it, yes, other people did it, but they are not doing it now. And, that is why, Mr. Speaker, we need to move to support.

But, I want to make mention of an area, Mr. Speaker, that we had a lot of challenges with, initially. But, it is amazing how people are coming forward now, supporting the project, but actually requesting support in that area, which is Solar Lights. Mr. Speaker, we have been able to support, and I know another MP that actually has that same project. It is amazing, Mr. Speaker, when a person actually tries it, how they say to you, wow, I never thought that this was possible, because some people are finding it very difficult to conceptualise, how do you put some little panel on top the roof, and the sun hits it and then my whole house lights up in the night. Not everybody could conceptualise that and believe that it would work continuously. But, again, Mr. Speaker, that is an area we are encouraging, because many people come for connection with electricity, and then I ask them, "*How do you plan to pay for it monthly*?" And, then they start thinking. Mr. Speaker, it is an area we would continue. We have assisted a number of families, thus far, and we are going to continue to assist families without electricity to empower them in that regard.

The SEED Programme, Mr. Speaker, hundreds of families in the constituency are engaged in that programme, and, of course, they can say it best how it helps them at the end of the day. Mr. Speaker, it is a tremendous assistance for families within the constituency.

Housing, Mr. Speaker, is another area. Hundreds of families have been benefitting through this programme. This year alone, I am sure we would have supported over one hundred (100) persons. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, this project is so very critical and important. Our challenge though, Mr. Speaker, is the number of applicants that we have and we continue. We continue every year to assist, as many as possible. We are not resting in that regard and the numbers are going down, as a result of that.

Mr. Speaker, the other area that I want to make mention of is the indoor bathroom and toilet. But, particularly, I want to stress on how important that is for the

physically challenged. Mr. Speaker, we have had so many cases of people, who fell trying to access an outdoor bathroom and so on. So, I would have mentioned it in the context of the senior citizen, but I wanted to make mention of physically challenged persons, particularly in this regard.

Assistance to persons, as it relates to payments of fees for Exams and now I am into Education; exams, scholarships, what have you, through the Ministry of Education, but also through Constituency support. Mr. Speaker, I am heartened at the number of young people who are coming forward themselves requesting support, not with their parents, not parents asking for them, but the young people are coming; could you help me to go to NEWLO, could you help me to go back to school? And, to me, there is a greater understanding, Mr. Speaker, of the value of education and why young people need to pursue education.

Mr. Speaker, our Constituency Annual Literacy Competition. The schools look forward to this, and it is something I always encourage, nationally, the days of the Arts Festival. And, I have seen recently, one of the Ministries, I believe is Culture, we have seen some move in that regard, from maybe the 80s, when this was done. We would have been doing this in the constituency over the last four (4) years, and I have to say, Mr. Speaker, the impact we have been seeing in that regard. So, Mr. Speaker, the support for schools has been tremendous in every regard. At the constituency level, as it relates to refurbishments, as it relates to furniture, what have you, we have given, as much support, as we could have, in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move quickly, in the interest of time, to address a couple areas, which I am going to summarise, because I believe, thanks to the media, we do have a lot of information that we can access on a daily basis. And, I want to start with that of Religious Affairs, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, this Government has been the single Government to create a Ministry of Religious Affairs, where it encourages the Church Community to come together, people of different denominations to work together, not only for national development and national interest, but also for the development and the interest of people at the religious level.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious to see that there has been a major development, as it relates to the willingness of Churches, Denominations to come together to work together. So, in the last month, for example, I remember one meeting when it was said, we remember the days and one Pastor actually said it, I am so sorry, I regret that I took that line many years ago where we spend half of a Sermon beating up on another Denomination, or beating up on another Pastor. Mr. Speaker, people have come to the realisation that as Church, if we have to defeat the enemy, we have to work together, and I am extremely impressed with the conversations and the responses in that regard.

As a matter of fact, the recent discussion, as it relates to national events, like National Thanksgiving Day, persons are beginning to realise that we can't have a National Day of Thanksgiving, when we pray and this Denomination is on the Beach, this Denomination is in the Church, this Domination is having some other activity, but there is the need for us to unite and do some things together. Of course, we recognise and we appreciate that there are certain Doctrines that are different, that different Denominations find it difficult to work on specific issues, and that is understood.

So, for example, the AEC says we have absolutely no problem working with the Conference of Churches. There are some doctrinal issues that we are uncomfortable about. But, of course, national issues, let us come together. Issues where there isn't conflict of doctrine, let us work together, and, Mr. Speaker, I am extremely encouraged by that. And, how are we going to continue to use the Ministry to implement projects? We have started this over the years, where we work together with Churches to implement projects at the Community Level that would be of benefit to the Community, but most importantly taking a proactive approach to the issues that confront our communities, as opposed to that of a reactive approach, Mr. Speaker. So, you do the proactive, of course, there would be need for the reactive, but the concentration being on the proactive approach.

Mr. Speaker, Legislative Reform; that has been on the agenda of discussion with the Religious Leaders, what recommendations do you have to make to Government? So, we have seen some recommendations already made, that Ministry of Legal Affairs

is currently looking into. We have seen recommendations made to Government that has been adopted by Cabinet, because, of course, Mr. Speaker, we recall sometime ago I made the point that there are some persons who are extremely concerned, as to what Government is recognising as 'Church'. Government is also concerned, because people are coming for concession, for example, because there is an entitlement for concession on vehicle. So, if my Church comprises myself, my husband, my three (3) children, my Aunt and my Cousin, am I entitled to concession from Government? And, if ten (10) people decided they are going to start a Church like mine, with my husband, my sons, my Mother-in-Law, my Father-in-Law, and maybe an Aunt and a Cousin, then could Government sustain the recognition of all of these Organisations, because they are, indeed, registered as businesses. Mr. Speaker, there has to be, and the Churches have also recognised, as a Body, that there is need to be cognizant of that.

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Emmalin Pierre: Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, I want to also say that the Churches and Church Leaders, because we are looking broadly, Mr. Speaker, have also made it very clear, very clear and this is also extremely encouraging, that they want to work more with Government, as it relates to addressing National issues. Mr. Speaker, this is extremely encouraging, and the Ministry would, of course, continue to facilitate, continue to support, in the New Year, to expand on the work that is currently taking place.

Mr. Speaker, Government efficiency; I have always said this, if you save more you are able to do more and it is a simple theory that applies to Government, as well. Mr. Speaker, when you look at what is happening in Government in many cases compared to the Private Sector, you ask yourself what is different? And if you ask me, simply I would put it, the attitude of some people and the approaches of some people. So, I would give a simple example, Mr. Speaker. The Ministry of Youth has to send a letter to the Youth Centre in Grand Anse; the Prime Minister's Office has to send a letter to SGU. Mr. Speaker, you have another Ministry, let's say Ministry of Agriculture, has to

send a letter to; or Social Services to Housing Authority in the Rounds-About there; three different Ministries each having one letter to send to Grand Anse. But, this is what happens, Mr. Speaker, each Ministry will send a vehicle at a different point in the day, and most times each vehicle would have two (2) people, the Driver and the person going to hand deliver the letter. And, these three (3) vehicles leave the Ministerial Complex to deliver a letter, goes back to the Ministerial Complex. Of course, we know the culture that exist, so could you buy that there for me, when you are going, could you drop that there, could you pick up that there? Mr. Speaker, the amount of monies we are wasting, as a Government, it is unfair, I believe to the Taxpayers. It is unfair to us, as Leaders and, Mr. Speaker, some people might not always like it, but sometimes you have to do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to water, when it comes to electricity, the buildings that are owned by Government, where all the lights are on in every classroom in a school, all night, Mr. Speaker, it has to be unacceptable, and there has to be another way of doing it, there has to be a way of saving more. The standpipes, Mr. Speaker; I mean I would not even go into talking about this, because it can be such a painful story to talk about what happens.

Mr. Speaker, the Vehicle Tracking System, which was supposed to be meant to reduce costs, of course the persons who are tracking needs tracking themselves; unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we are probably wasting more than we are supposed to be saving.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have appointed this Special Committee, because we feel, as a Government that we have to do what has to be done. So, we save more, so we can do more. So, Mr. Speaker, a number of initiatives would have started, which included, for example, phones that were procured that were supposed to be in use that we were paying for that was not in use, Mr. Speaker, all of those were recovered, all of those were returned, and the savings realised on a monthly basis for those.

Mr. Speaker, loans to farmers, Mr. Speaker, persons who, yes they are willing to pay, but they are not prepared to go where they have to pay to pay. Mr. Speaker, so

many different areas where wastage is taking place, all because we need to be more creative, we need to put better systems in place, so that Government can save more.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Committee that has been working, wastage particularly, as I said, Mr. Speaker, those areas, for example, the vehicles, transportation, particularly, Mr. Speaker, water, telephone. In one case, Mr. Speaker, we have been able to recover over ninety-something thousand dollars for a particular service that we were paying for, Mr. Speaker, and due to carelessness in so many different ways, or may I say don't-care-ness in so many different ways. I guess it is not my money, so since it is not my money I am not particularly interested in ensuring that I get value for money. But, Government has taken an approach, appoint a National Committee, get people working to ensure that we properly manage the resources of Government.

Mr. Speaker, National Health Insurance (NHI), we've said over and over that this is a priority for this Government, and it is very simple to see why it is a priority for Government. So, we have moved ahead and we have done what we had to do, and what we are doing, what we have to do in that regard, because we want a situation, Mr. Speaker, and what is important is what is it that we are working towards? We want to ensure, in the first instance, Mr. Speaker, every citizen of Grenada can access the services that are available, locally, without having to pay upfront for those services. So, if you have to get Diagnostic Services, so the services offered at Spice Isle Imaging, average, it might be one thousand five hundred dollars ($1,500.00). So, the single mother in St. Andrew, in Mt Horne, in Telescope, wherever, Byelands, wherever, that person who was wondering how they're going to be sending their daughter to school tomorrow, now has to wonder how I am taking that child to Spice Isle Imaging to get a test done that cost one thousand, five hundred dollars ($1,500.00). As a Government, we feel that health is such a priority that, that should not be something, that somebody should be wondering about. So, what have we really been doing?

Mr. Speaker, we've conducted a number of visits to various Islands where those services have been offered. We've met with Service Providers, we've met with Private Providers, we've met with National Health Insurance Programme Personnel, and we

have looked at the good, the bad, the ugly, what worked, what did not work, what would be a challenge for us, what would not be a challenge for us. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Senator Chester Humphrey and his team; the Advisory Committee that Government was so impressed with the work that was done, initially, that they've continued to engage that team in an advisory capacity.

Mr. Speaker, but we've moved beyond that, because in engaging stakeholders, stakeholders are saying wow, we would have done a good job here with the final report of the Advisory Committee. We're at a good point where we know what the problem is, but now we need to move to another level where we can technically identify the solution to the problem. So, of course, Mr. Speaker, we've invited tender from different persons, different institutions, as it relates to technical support for this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, to make a very long story short, we had four (4) Companies bidding and the Committee's advice, as well as the Ministry's advice, we would have been able to move forward, as most of us would know by now, with the University of the West Indies, the Health Economic Division. Why? Because we believe that was the best way to go. As we move along, Mr. Speaker, there would be roles for all of those Organisations.

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Emmalin Pierre: Mr. Speaker, for example, Morneau Shepell, it's a Canadian Company, would have submitted a bid, but we felt that they were more capable to do the Actuary study that we now have, as a result of engaging them through the NIS to do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have gone even further, to put monies where our mouths are, and, so far we have relieved over two hundred (200), just about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars ($250,000.00) for the setting up of and establishing of the Secretariat at the NIS building. And, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that the lead, as it relates to UWI, Professor Karl Theodore, who is also Grenadian, and I am quite sure he has a special interest in this initiative. And, so, as of the second of December, the team

from UWI would be based on the ground actually getting into the more technical work that is involved in that regard. So, we have identified a basket of services, a basket of services, meaning, things that you will be able to access through National Health Insurance, and the work has started, in terms of refining and narrowing that down to make sure that our people would be better off, Mr. Speaker, far better off, because of National Health Insurance.

Mr. Speaker, the team has been working extremely hard, Mr. Stan Phillip, the Liaison Officer, working together with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, working together with Mr. Dorsett Cromwell, the focal point person at the NIS. Mr. Speaker, the team effort has been extremely good, as it relates to where we are now and how we are moving forward, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to wrap up on the subject of Youth Development, and I believe I probably have one (1) minute and the intention was not to detail Youth Development, but preamble that the Parliamentary Representative for St. Patrick West would deliberate on details at tomorrow's presentation.

But, just to close with that point, Mr. Speaker, on Youth Development, that this Government, Mr. Speaker, I am very clear, has demonstrated, undoubtedly, that its interest in youth development has absolutely no connection to that of politics and partisan politics and votes in an Election, but it has to do, Mr. Speaker, primarily with the real development of young people. And, Mr. Speaker, this is evident, not in 2017, because we're anticipating an Election. But, you travel all the way back to the genesis of this Administration, and I am talking even back as 2004, and before, Mr. Speaker, you would see the progression, in terms of the investment that this Government has been making to our young people.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes I feel that this is a subject that there isn't a lot of need to debate, because the evidence, it is so clear, that the development approach that this Government has taken, if you look anywhere, internationally, at the standards for youth development, and you look in the Region and you try to find a Government, Mr. Speaker, that has been walking the walk, aiming to get to that point, Mr. Speaker, this Government will be included in the very limited list, as it relates to this. Mr. Speaker, we

have been on track in that regard. And, it has not been on track in one year, it has not been on track in a couple months, it has been clear, the consistency, Mr. Speaker, of this Government, as it relates to Youth Development.

Mr. Speaker, in times when there is no Election, that this Administration would commit over thirty million dollars ($30 m), towards Youth Development, is an indication that there is a passion within this Government, Mr. Speaker, there is an interest in this Government that is genuine, as it relates to young people. So, if we say we are keeping you, we are keeping you. Mr. Speaker, that has been the experience of the NNP Administration, as it relates to young people. **(Applause)**

Then, Mr. Speaker, more importantly is the diversification of the programme, as it relates to youth. And, that is why I said, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the Youth Development Index, if you look at the spread of areas of particular development for young people, you would see that as young people would say, this Government have it.

What we are continuing to do, Mr. Speaker, is to continue to build on what we have started. So, Mr. Speaker, if you look at what has happened, we would have started from one point. Mr. Speaker, you look at the investment and the development of young people in Small Business Development. You look at marginalized young people, and in the context of youth, that refers to the guys on the block, that refers to the young guy, who don't want to come in a classroom. Mr. Speaker, look at the change and the diversification of programmes to target that particular group.

Mr. Speaker, you look at the diversification, as it relates to the academic person, who believes that I want to go to SGU, I want to do a degree, I probably want to go to this place and do a Masters, and then you link to that, the young person who probably is not that academically inclined. And, the question is, has this Government catered for them? Oh, yes. Mr. Speaker, and that is why within, for example, the IMANI programme what was introduced there was to cater for all levels and interest of young people. So, why do you think, Mr. Speaker, we're able to graduate over nine hundred (900) persons with CVQ Qualification or Certification? **(Applause)** It is because of the understanding; the more we do that is the less time I have. Mr. Speaker, it is because of the understanding, Mr. Speaker, that some of these people may not be able to attain

qualification at that level, at this time. But, we need to support them where they are and to journey them to achieve their maximum potential.

Mr. Speaker, it is so clear, that this Government is committed to young people, and this Government continues to invest even when, Mr. Speaker, others feel that we're investing too much. I have never heard of this anywhere in the world. And, I have been to many places, as it relates to Youth Development. And, everywhere you go, Government, Opposition, everybody is singing the same language, we need to do more. But, I have heard right in this House, on a previous occasion, that Government put too much for the Youth Programme. They should have put that money somewhere else.

Mr. Speaker, I can live with, maybe the Government should have put more in this Programme and some more in Youth, because we understand that every dollar that this Government spends on Youth Development is a dollar well spent; a dollar spent in the interest of development of not just Grenada today, but Grenada in the future and Grenada, as far as we can think about.

Mr. Speaker, what we have to continue to do as a people is to continue to work together to get it right. And, getting it right means encouraging young people to make the best of every opportunity, encouraging young people to see the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, but getting it right also mean that all us must do all that we can to give them the best possible opportunity. Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't allow you to stop me. I want to thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very kindly, Honourable Representative for St. Andrew South-East. Thank you for recognising the signal. Honourable Representative for St. David.

Hon Oliver Joseph: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my full support to the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, as presented by the Minister for Finance.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start out my contribution using the Theme of this year's Budget which is: **"*Safeguarding our Gains and Continuing our Progress*."** It is important, Mr. Speaker, that I go into the gains that we have made, because it seems

that some people are not living in the same country that we are living in. So, I will explain the gains, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when we came into Office, in 2013, the then Administration was selling out assets to pay salaries. It's the worse situation you could be in, to sell out your assets just to pay salaries, because you closed down the Parliament for six (6) months, and therefore could not go to Parliament to get approval to borrow, so you had to sell assets. And, we came in on the 19th of February, and the entire Public Service was very nervous whether they will get pay, and obviously that would be a natural reaction, and, Mr. Speaker, on the 26th of February we paid salaries. **(Applause)** So, we were taking the country from a situation, and every month thereafter, you know, paying it on time, but there were certain things we had to do.

Mr. Speaker, I will use some very simple analysis for you, so that the listening public could understand what happened. So, the Government was running a monthly deficit of eighteen million dollars ($18 m). What that means? You are spending eighteen million dollars ($18 m) more than you're collecting. That is what it meant. So, you were collecting say, thirty-two million dollars ($32 m) monthly, but your expenditure was fifty million ($50 m). So, you have eighteen million ($18 m) deficit, so you have to keep going into overdraft and borrowing to meet that, but, that is an unsustainable situation. If was a private business, you had to close down. But, Government could borrow and continue running.

We also met a situation, Mr. Speaker, where 70% or seventy cents (70 ¢) on every dollar collected went towards paying salaries, wages and pension, seventy cents (70 ¢). So, it means that you only had thirty cents (30 ¢) left to take care of everything else; roads, housing, the Hospital, everything. That is a situation that no country could make progress with, in such a situation.

We also met a situation where the Debt to GDP Ratio was 108%. What that means is that your debt is higher than your GDP; that all the goods and services produced in the Island; you had more debt, 108%, Mr. Speaker. So, having met that situation, we had to take remedial action, because you cannot run a country that way,

with eighteen million ($18 m) and selling assets to pay salaries and everything like that, and Debt to GDP Ratio high.

So, if you are sick, and you go to the Doctor, there are certain indicators the Doctor will look at. He will take your Blood Pressure, your Temperature and so on, in order to come to a conclusion of what it is that you need to correct the situation. When you are dealing with a country, it is similar, you set macro-economic targets, Mr. Speaker, because you have to correct the situation. So, the first target is set. We said that we will have to reduce this deficit, because you cannot continue, as I told you, it was eighteen million ($18 m), you can't continue to run so. And, therefore, we decided in order to correct that situation of the deficit you need to raise revenue. Mr. Speaker, if you're spending more than you're earning, you have to cut your expenditure and increase your revenue, or do both. And, what we did was to increase our revenue and cut the expenditure in order to bring down the deficit. That is what we sought out to do, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

And, so, Mr. Speaker, I will show what we achieved in the three (3) years. So, we set out to do a Structural Adjustment Programme, and set targets and asked the IMF for their support. We did not go into an IMF Programme. We developed a Home Grown Structural Adjustment Programme. Why we needed the IMF then, if it's a Home Grown Programme? Very simple. We needed the support of the IMF, in order to draw resources from the International Financial Institutions. That is why we had to get their support and their blessings. The extended Credit Facility, which is the programme that we went to the IMF with, was only $21.7 m, but that was not about getting the $21.7 m, it was about getting resources from the World Bank, the European Union, the Caribbean Development Bank.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall, at the end of the first year of the programme, Grenada received one hundred and eight million EC dollars (EC$108 m) in support, because of this programme that we went into and we set all the targets. We said the first thing, that we needed to bring down the Debt to GDP Ratio, so, we will go into a Debt Restructuring. So, we entered a Debt Restructuring in order to get the debt down.

Then we said, we have to move the seventy cents (70 cents) on every dollar that's going to Wages, Salaries and Pension, this 70% must come down to 50%.

Mr. Speaker, after the three-year programme, at the end of this year, you know what this figure is now, currently? From seventy cents (70 ¢) to forty-five cents (45 ¢) on every dollar, 45% of all revenue collected now goes to Wages, Salaries and Pensions. We set a target of fifty (50,) we surpassed the target. So, these are the gains that we are talking about. We surpassed the target. The Debt to GDP ratio, which was 108%, Mr. Speaker, it is now 68.9%, and going down, going down.

The ECCB set a target of 60% of Debt to GDB Ratio for countries, and by next year, we will achieve that, Mr. Speaker; next year, and we will be the first in the ECC Union to achieve that 60%, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Unpaid claims in the Treasury, that is, you supply goods and services to Government, private people and you expect to get pay. Government did not have the money to pay, so it kept on piling up. So, when we came, we met the unpaid Claims, as one hundred and ten million ($110 m). The former Minister for Finance challenged the figure and said it was eighty something million. So, I had to explain that it came up to that figure, because eighty-seven million dollars ($87 m) in the Treasury, was on the System. But, we asked all Ministries that were holding outstanding claims to send it into the Treasury, all Ministries, because it was not in the system yet. And, when they sent in all the outstanding Claims, and we added it up, it came up to one hundred and ten million dollars ($110 m). That was money owed to the Private Sector. So, you're stifling Private Sector growth, because if Government taking goods from you for the Hospital and the Prisons and other Institutions, and you are not paying, the farmers cannot expand. So, we said, we will bring down the unpaid Claim to zero (0), and within sixty (60) days of the Private Sector supplying goods to Government, they would be paid. So, we got it down to zero, and now within sixty (60) days we are paying the Private Sector. That is the type of gains I am talking about. That is the gains we are talking about in running the country. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, we said that we had a Primary Surplus, and this year the Primary Surplus is 4.9% of GDP. I need to explain that, because I have heard some statements

that shocked me. Some people are saying, well, if the Government has a surplus, why they don't pay us the money. Mr. Speaker, I am talking about, a Primary Surplus simply means that on the Recurrent Side, because you know the Budget has two (2) sides, the Capital Side and the Recurrent Side; Recurrent Side, that's every month, expenses you have to incur, so it's called Recurrent, every month it's recurring. So, if you projected for example, this year that you're going to collect six hundred and fifty-seven million dollars ($657 m) and you collect six hundred and seventy-eight dollars($678), because that's what you budgeted, and the actual was six seventy-eight ($678), so you have, say, a twenty million dollar ($20 m) haircut. On the Capital Side, where you're depending on Grants, and other revenues to carry out Capital Projects, you need the money to spend on the Capital Side. And, it is the Capital Side that will give you the growth in the Economy, Mr. Speaker, so that is where you need to spend the money, you know, on the Recurrent Side doesn't give you the growth in the economy, you know, you have to spend on the Capital side. And, so the more money we could get on the Recurrent Side, it's better to spend on the Capital Side. But, they are interpreting that, as if you have money. Government is not in the business of making profit, you know, Mr. Speaker. Government doesn't have a business to make profit.

So, when we say we have a Primary Balance, and I hear some members from the Trade Union saying, well you have enough money you could pay us. Why you don't pay us we fifteen million ($15 m). So, when we pay that fifteen, how are we getting money to do roads and other capital projects? Where we're going to get the money from? That's gross misunderstanding of this. It is because of the good performance and sound management of the economy, we could see a surplus. That is what is happening. **(Applause)**

And, that is why, Mr. Speaker, I'll read a quote from the IMF, in their report at the end, and it is taken from the IMF report, at the Sixth Review. You could Google it, it's on the website. Look on the Sixth Review and the Report. It says, and I quote: ***"The Government and people of Grenada should be commended for the achievement during the Home Grown Structural Adjustment Programme, particularly, with respect to debt reduction, growth, and the strengthened Fiscal Policy Framework.***

This success is due, in no small part, to the strong country ownership and high degree of consultation and collaboration with stakeholders, in particular, the Committee of Social Partners and the Home Grown Monitoring Committee. The gains of this strong **performance must be commended under the Structural Adjustment Programme."**

And, that is why I said, Mr. Speaker, I have to start out by going into the gains, because the Theme says: "Safeguarding our Gains"; so we have to understand what we're talking about. The gains are there, the IMF has published it, the World Bank has commended Grenada, and they have recommended it as a model for Small Island Developing States and what we're able to achieve.

When we said that we were going to reduce the Wage Bill, the amount of money spent on wages and salaries to 50%, I recall the members, even of Trade Union representatives say we could never do that without sending home people. They said the only how we could get the Wage Bill down is to send home workers, because neighbouring countries were sending home workers to reduce their Wage Bill. And, we said, we would not send home a single worker, and we will get it down to 50%. We got it down to 45% without sending home a single worker, Mr. Speaker; that is the gains we are talking about. **(Applause)** That is the gains, and they cannot dispute it, because it's there, the figures are there. We did not send home a single worker, and it's gone down to 45%. So, all what I am saying could be checked.

The facts I am giving, and I am giving the facts, and I know the facts, they cannot challenge the facts, Mr. Speaker, because I recalled in 2012, they made a statement you know. They said, well seventy cents (70 ¢) on every dollar collected went to Wages and Salaries, so they don't have any money to do no other work. They said that. Look back on the 2012 Statements, and when we came in, we realised that was true, that was true, seventy cents (70 ¢) on every dollar collected, in fact, did go to Wages and Salaries. But, you can't run no country like that, because with the thirty cents (30 ¢) left, how you could do everything else? So, these are the gains.

The unemployment figure, from 40% to the latest figure of 24%, that is the gains we are talking about, Mr. Speaker, and that is the gains that we need to preserve.

These are the gains in three-years Structural Adjustment Programme, you know, three (3) years. I remember the Opposition Party saying, the time is too short, the measures are too harsh, this should be a ten-year programme, not a three-year programme. We did it in three (3) years. We did it in three (3) years, and achieved all of the targets that were set. So, these things are simple. They are the used standard measurement all over the world.

The Macro-Economic standards are the same thing, they measure everybody's GDP. I remember when we were talking about Per Capita Income and Grenada and most of the Caribbean Islands, they were upgraded to middle income on a simple formula, you know. It's GDP per capita, simply means that they take the GDP for the year and they divide it by your population, you know, that's all, you know, and they do that for every country. So, if it turns out that Grenada's GDP Per Capita is thirty thousand dollars ($30,000.00), well, you fall in middle income, so be it.

I recalled a conversation with the European Union Commissioner for Development. I said, "well, we have high unemployment, we have poverty levels that are very high, and yet you're upgrading us, and we would not be able to get concessionary loans and grants." He said, "well, my friend, we took everybody's GDP, divide it by the population, and that's where you fall." He said, "I cannot go to the European Parliament and ask them for money for countries with such high per capita GDP, when some of our European Union members are worst off," and so, that is what they stuck to, as simple as that. So, they used these measurements. So, these measurements that we are talking about there, I think that's standard, internationally, and they measure every country, and that is how they determine the performance of countries. And, that is why I am so proud today, Mr. Speaker, to have served in a Government that has transformed the Economy. **(Applause)**

I heard my good friend, Pablo, said he wanted history to record him, as being the first undefeated Candidate in St. Patrick East. ***(Laughter)*** Well, Pablo real smart. If you run once and you win, well you're undefeated. Yes. But, the statement is correct. I want the history to record that I was part of a Structural Adjustment Programme that

corrected the economy in Grenada. **(Applause)** That is what I want history to show, that we corrected it in three (3) years.

And, so I am very proud, Mr. Speaker, of the record of this Government, and it shows the leadership and the unity of this Government, because you must have a united team to achieve that, you know. **(Applause)** Everyone had to be on board, everyone working together; and then the Committee of Social Partners, get in, buy-in from all the stakeholders that have led to the success. And, you see the IMF has mentioned it in their Report. They said, in no small way, that helped in the success, because, usually, Mr. Speaker, when you're carrying out reforms, as a Government, you don't get Trade Union to join you, you know, and the Private Sector, you don't get them to come on board, because they say, you are the Government, you are going through a Structural Adjustment Programme, you have gone to the IMF, we don't want to be any part of that. But, they came on Board, because they understood the situation as it was at the time, and the need to work together for Grenada – they are not working for NNP – to change Grenada, to put Grenada on a sound footing, and that is what caused it to be so successful. And, so what all this means, Mr. Speaker? So, you hear some statements that, "well, you get a nice report from the IMF, but how does that benefit the common man?" So, let me explain how it benefits, Mr. Speaker.

If you get a reduction in your debt, and you have less debt to pay, then you have more money to carry out house repairs, roads and other things, because you have less debt. If you go to the bank and take a loan for the vehicle and you are paying two thousand dollars ($2,000.00) a month, and you are finished paying, you have more disposable income, you have more money. So, as you have more money, because you have less debt to pay, and as your revenue collection increases, then you can do more work; so that is how the ordinary man would benefit; to give four (4) fortnights cost eight million dollars ($8 m). If you have this high debt to pay, and you were not collecting the revenue, you couldn't give four (4) fortnights, you would have to give two, as the previous Government, two (2) fortnights for the most. But, we are able to give four (4) fortnights, so that four thousand (4,000) people could benefit, because of the performance of the revenue and the reduction in debt. So, to say, well, you are not

seeing how the ordinary man benefitted, the increase in the House Repair Programme, increase in the Small Business loans, that the Government put to help Small Businesses; that's how small people are benefitting from it. Without that where would you get the money? Because remember, Mr. Speaker, the Budget is $1.1 b, so that is what you call your Budget constraint, so you are constrained. So, anything you could allocate has to be between that, because you cannot go above that; you set your Budget constraint, and in this case this year's Budget, $1.1 b, and you have to allocate.

Now, some people would say, why not give some more money to Youth Development or Agriculture; they like to say Agriculture. Since I was a little boy growing up I heard complaints about Agriculture, that hasn't changed. So, they say, why don't you give more to Agriculture? The question then becomes, where do you take it from? Because you have to take it from somewhere, because you would have a limit, you know; you have a ceiling; as I said you are constrained by the amount. So, to give one area more, you would have to take it somewhere else. And, in allocating it, you have to determine the optimal allocation and where you are going to place your resources. And, we are saying we need to protect the vulnerable, even the Structural Adjustment Programme, we continue to protect the less fortunate. We are going to put the money there. If we say we are spending thirty million dollars ($30 m) on Youth Development and Training, we are going to put the money there, that's a good area to waste money on, you know, educating people. If they consider it as wasting money, well, let us train the young people, let us educate them, and we have decided, that is the priority of this Government, because when you train and you develop people, and you help them to grow, they become independent, and they can contribute to society. And, I am happy to see the emphasis placed on Skills Training because that is the area we need to go in. We have to place more emphasis on equipping our people with the necessary skills. And, we have the National Training Agency (NTA), that is equipped to award NVQ and CVQ, CARICOM Vocational Qualification, where our people graduate and have these Certificates that they can work throughout CARICOM, because it shows the level of skills, and that is the sort of thing we need to invest, and investment in our people is a priority of this Government, and that is why the money will go there.

So, Mr. Speaker, this year's Budget, in its allocation, in my view, has done what I consider to be the optimal allocation in the various areas, in order to get the results that you want. There are incentives for Agriculture and Manufacturing and Small Business; that is what is going to lead to the growth in the Economy, because we want to see the Economy grow, because, as the Economy grows, more jobs would be created, we will get more revenue, and, therefore, the Economy would be on a sound footing.

So, we have stabilised the Economy over the last four and a half years, and it was not easy. We had to take some bold decisions, you know, we had to take decisions. But, when we take decisions and we think about the country and how the country could benefit, in the long run, people would see what we are doing. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am very confident that the Budget, as presented this year, will bring the required benefit and stimulate growth in the Economy for the next year, as we present it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn now to the Ministry of Economic Development. As you know, over the last four and a half years, I was the Minister there, and I was relieved of the post and was given the Ministry of Labour and Co-operatives. But, for eight (8) months in this year, I had the Ministry, so I would talk about the performance of the Ministry.

Now, the Ministry of Economic Development has the Economic and Technical Corporation Division, which is responsible for the Public Sector Investment Programme and attracting funds into Grenada. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight some of the very good achievements and successes for 2017. In Resource Mobilisation, in 2017, Grenada mobilised resources of more than two hundred and eighty million EC dollars (EC$280 m), Mr. Speaker, in grants and concessionary loans to finance new projects in the Public Sector Investment Programme, a remarkable performance, Mr. Speaker, by the Ministry.

Climate and Natural Disaster Financing - of the two hundred and eighty million dollars ($280 m) mobilised, which I just mentioned, one hundred and twenty-three million dollars ($123 m) were for building resilience to Climate Change and natural

disasters and reducing the adverse influx of climate change through increased investment in renewable energy to reduce our Carbon Footprint.

Green Climate Fund - in June, 2017, the Green Climate Fund approved a grant of EC$1 m to assist in building the capacity of the National Designated Authority to access financing from the GCF. Also, there were regional and international GCF Projects that Grenada is part of. They include the Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund, the Sustainable Energy Facility for the Eastern Caribbean, which are implemented by the European Investment Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, respectfully.

During 2017, Grenada also submitted to the Green Climate Resilient Water Sector Project, in the amount of forty-eight million US dollars (US$48 m) in grants to the GCF for financing. The purpose of this project is to build resilience to Climate Change in the Water Sector in Grenada. The project is currently under review for appraisal by the GCF Secretariat and is targeted for submission to the GCF Board in early 2018. Mr. Speaker, this project will help improve the Water supply and the sewerage system in Grenada, at a cost of forty-eight million dollars ($48 m), and that is grant funding that we are seeking from the GCF.

In August, the Chief Executive Officer at the Secretariat invited a delegation from Grenada to visit the GCF Headquarters in South Korea, for a structured dialogue. The targeted institution for capacity development to directly access GCF resources, are the Grenada Development Bank and the Ministry of Finance. GCF also indicated that a pipeline of over two hundred and fifty million US dollars (US$250 m) can be developed for Grenada for Climate Change adaptation and mitigation investments. To this effect, a visit by the GCF to Grenada is planned for late 2017, or early 2018, to move the Direct Access Agenda forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, the funds are there. It is pledged, it's available and Grenada is working to access these grant resources, because if we can access these grant resources, there would be no need for us to go into loans. And, if we do not take further loans, it means a reduction in our Debt Stock and a reduction in the Debt to GDP Ratio;

and that is why we are aggressively pursuing all these grant resources that are available.

The United Kingdom/Caribbean Infrastructure Fund - Mr. Speaker, you would recall the British Prime Minister visited Grenada, and when he came to the Caribbean, he made a pledge to assist the Caribbean to develop their infrastructure. Well, I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that project appraisal grants were approved during 2017 for two (2) projects, which would be financed under the UK/C Facility. These are the Grenada Water Supply Expansion and Sewerage Disposal Improvement Project at thirty-five million EC dollars (EC$35 m) and the Grenada Western Corridor Upgrade Project for forty-four million EC dollars (EC$44 m). The projects are expected to commence in 2018, and will contribute to building resilience to climate change in the Water Sector, sewerage disposal and road infrastructure.

Climate Smart Agriculture and Rural Enterprise Programme - in response to the progress made by Market Access and Rural Enterprise Project (MAREP), which we spoke about and was mentioned in the Budget, which ends in early 2018 (so this phase of MAREP comes to an end), and because of the positive impact of the project on rural communities, both IFAD and CDB have approved new financing for rural development in the amount of twenty-five million dollars ($25 m) to address the issue of building climate resilience. The purpose of the project is to improve livelihoods in rural agricultural communities throughout Climate Smart Agriculture.

Renewable Energy for Rural Development, Phase 2 Project - the Republic of Korea, eighty million US dollars (US$80 m); based on the success of Phase 1, where twenty-four (24) households and five (5) small Agro-Processors were provided with Off-Grid and Grid-Type Renewable Energy Systems, valued at one hundred and seventy thousand US dollars (US$170,000.00), the Republic of Korea agreed to provide an additional eighty million US dollars (US$80 m) towards Phase 2 of the project; more grant monies, Mr. Speaker, for projects in Grenada.

The objective of this Phase is to contribute to improving the livelihood and quality of life for vulnerable persons, households and enterprise in Rural Communities through

the use of renewable and energy efficient systems, which was the same objective for Phase 1.

Development Financing, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important to highlight these financings, because you hear about pledges from the Green Climate Fund, how much billions and other pledges, and we are saying, well, we need to aggressively get these monies, and that is why I am stating these facts here. Under the Development Financing, the World Bank, new development financing through concessionary loans, in the amount of two hundred and thirty million EC dollars (EC$230 m) were secured from the World Bank for the following projects: under IDA 17, loan effectiveness was secured for the OECS Regional Tourism Competitiveness Project, EC$16.2 m and the OECS Rural Agricultural Competitiveness Project of $10.8 m was secured.

An amount of $5.4 m was also approved for the OECS Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme. These projects will contribute to the increased competitiveness of the Agriculture and Tourism Sectors, and to increase access by small and medium sized Private Sector businesses to development financing. You know the problem with financing in Grenada; the banks are very liquid, they are complaining that they are not getting big borrowers, so they have a lot of cash just sitting in the banks. But, for a small businessperson, if you approach the bank, you would not get the loan. They are very liquid, have a lot of cash, but still they are not lending to the small businesses. That is why the Government has to put money into a Small Business Fund to lend. So, we have to develop some mechanism to help small businesses access this amount of cash. The banks are boasting of high liquidity, and, of course, banks do not make money by just holding it there. You need to borrow money, because it is through interest that they would get. So, we are ensuring that we get financing to help small businesses.

Under the recently approved World Bank IDA 18 allocation, an amount of EC$181 m was approved for Grenada; 50% of this amount will be for a policy based loan and the balance will be for an investment project. Applications for these resources are being finalised.

Motions

Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) - one of our main financiers is the Caribbean Development Bank, and they say it is for development purposes. In 2017, the CDB approved the following Capital and technical assistance projects for Grenada, amounting to over EC$12 m in grants and $1.5 m in concessionary loans in the areas of: Inclusive Social Development and Sustainable Growth; Agriculture; Energy; Citizen Security and Education; Awakening Special Potential by Investing in Restoration Empowerment (ASPIRE Youth Project), $3.8 m; BNTF 9 Programme, $6.8 m; Strengthening Food Safety Management System, MNIB, two hundred and ninety-seven thousand ($297,000.00); Environmental and Social Assessment of Grenada's Geothermal Energy Development, Test Drilling Phase, nine hundred and sixteen thousand dollars ($916,000.00); Institutional Strengthening of the Energy Sector in Grenada, six hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars ($625,000.00); Assessment for the Enhancement of T.A. Marryshow Community College, $1.35 m; these are coming from the Caribbean Development Bank. Also, funds were made available from the CARICOM Development Fund and we are in Phase 2 and projects are already being submitted.

Citizens' Engagement; the launch of Caribbean Goods Forum Phase 2 - twenty-four (24) of the forty-four (44) reform areas, which represents 55% were completed by Grenada. This was the second highest among the participating countries. Phase 2 was also launched in April, 2017. During this phase, a more focused and rapid result approach will be taken to the targeted reforms; a total of six (6) reforms were targeted in this Phase.

Budget Labelling for Climate Expenditure - the Department of Economic and Technical Corporation collaborated with GIZ in providing advanced CCORAL training to Senior Project Officers of Ministries and Departments to build capacity. A number of training is taking place in various areas, to help boost our capacity.

Priorities for 2018 from the Ministry of Economic Development - Grant Blended Resources Mobilisation, with particular focus on Climate Finance, Mitigation and Adaptation, through the GCF Direct Access Modality, Environmental Financing through the GEF; the Adaptation Fund for Disaster Risk Management will be given top priority.

The inclusion of Public/Private/Partnership into the National Capital Investment Programme will also be given priority. PSIP Project Implementation and IMANI facilitated by full operationalisation of the Projects Operations Committee and the Priority and Planning Consultative Committee and Enhanced Supervision of major PSIP projects, by Project Officers, will be enhanced.

Mr. Speaker, this Department of Economic and Technical Corporation play a critical role in the PSIP and in Grenada's development. They are charged with the task of submitting projects to international institutions for support, and, therefore, has a critical role to play.

I now turn my attention, Mr. Speaker, to the Division of Trade, and I would highlight some of the achievements of 2017. Earlier this year, the Ministry completed a new National Export Strategy for the period 2017 to 2021, which was developed with assistance from local stakeholders, with funding from the Commonwealth Secretariat. The official document was handed over on July 27th, 2017. I earlier said that we were developing a National Export Strategy, and now I am reporting that on July 27th, this Export Strategy was handed over.

Export Promotion…

Sergeant-at-Arms: Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Hon. Oliver Joseph: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry participated in two (2) major Trade Shows, the OECS Trade Show in St. Lucia and World Expo in Estonia. It is hoped that Grenada will benefit from participation in these Shows.

The Services Sector - Mr. Deputy Speaker, given the importance of the Services Sector to GDP, the Ministry, in 2017 conducted a number of activities to develop and promote the Services Sector. The activities held were a Services Week in October; a Services Expo in June; training in services, Go Global for Firms interested in exporting their services, and a Certification Programme for Management Consultants commenced. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is an area that is not well understood, because it

is new Economics, Trade in Services, and Trade in Services contributes a higher percentage of our Trade than Trade in Goods.

The St. George's University alone contributes to 20% of the GDP and that is calculated under Education Services. The Report on the Export Promotion Report identified a number of other services that Grenada should get involved in, like Yachting Service, Yacht repairs. We need to train our people and equip them with the necessary skills to take up jobs in the Yachting Sector, because that is where the new jobs would come, and that is where high paying jobs would come. And, therefore, we need to equip our people, and we need to export more of our skills in the services; Accounting, Architectural Skills, Management Consulting Skills, these are the things I am talking about, when we refer to services, Mr. Speaker.

We had a Report conducted by UN ECLAC on non-Tourism Services Sector, because most times we talk about services, we look at the Tourism Sector, and say that is what services contribute to the Economy, but the Report identified a number of services areas that we can benefit from.

So, priorities for 2018, from the Division of Trade - the implementation of the National Export Strategy; in 2018, we hope to put a Committee in place to implement the Export Strategy. Trade Negotiations continue, at the CARICOM level and the WTO, the World Trade Organization Ministerial Meeting will be held in Argentina, in December, and we will be represented there at this meeting by our Ambassador, Dr. Patrick Antoine, where Trade issues will be discussed. In 2018, the Services Sector will be given priority and also Export Promotion and we will continue to have 'The Made in Grenada Expo'.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I always repeat this in the House. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we talk and we complain about all these things being imported, and people come to me, as the Minister for Trade, and say, well, you need to ban these things from coming into the country. Well, under the Trade Agreement that we signed up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot ban it. So, I say to the consumers, you must not demand it, if you stop eating it, they won't bring it in, you know. Businesses would bring in things to sell and make profits, so, when you stop eating it and us local stuff, then we will see a

reduction in it. But, as long as you continue to demand it, it will be supplied. It is demand and supply on the market. So, don't come to me and say, let Government ban these things, you have a role to play. We have all these local fruits and vegetables that we need to use, but we continue to import all these things. So, I again, make an appeal to our consumers, that they should consider buying local before buying the imported stuff.

I now turn my attention to the Ministry of Labour. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the mandate of the Ministry of Labour requires that we ensure sound labour relations, enhancing Occupational Health and Safety Awareness and compliance in the workplace. Here in Grenada, we are a democratic society and we subscribe to ILO Conventions. The Labour Advisory Board was constituted, in accordance with the ILO Convention, No. 144 and Section 17 (1) of the Grenada Labour Code of 1999. The purpose of the Board is to advise Government on all labour matters including the reviewing of Labour legislation. The Board is comprised of three (3) members of the Grenada Employers Federation, three (3) from the Grenada Trade Union Council and three (3) from Government. The Draft Occupational Safety and Health Policy is currently being studied by the Ministry, to ensure all aspects of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention 155 are included. This will be followed by consultation, at all levels, before finalising the Policy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Farm Labour Programme. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we put out advertisements for interested persons for the Canada Farm Labour Programme. You know, we got over one thousand applications of people wanting to go and work on the Farms. But, you have a lot of repeat workers, so most of the people you see going, because the farmer requested them; so there were not too many new persons going. This year, there was a total of seventy-seven (77) persons participated, which was an increase of nine (9), because last year sixty-eight (68) went, but there was a very important meeting in Barbados, where we were represented by the Labour Commissioner that looked at the Seasonal Programme. CARICOM countries came and Canada was represented at this meeting. The meeting was held between the 19th and

24th and as I said, a number of issues were looked at, but I want to report on one outcome in the meeting that would be of interest.

In the case of Grenada, we had sought to get additional workers, not only on the Farm, because, over the years, we have just stuck to supplying labour on the Farm. We have said, let us look at other areas, the hotels and other areas that would need additional workers. So, that matter was raised, and the Canadian side decided to see what they can do about that matter. But, of importance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the highlight of the meeting was an increase in the minimum wage for farm workers, from Canadian four dollars and seventy-five cents per hour to Canadian five dollars and forty-five cents per hour. While they might say that's a very small increase, but it has not increased for a long time. And, so the increase was welcomed. We were hoping that we would get more, of course, you know, but there are other things that come with it. When you go work on the Farm, you are provided with accommodation and meals and transport and everything like that, so we have to take it in its total context, because the Canadians, themselves, have their own minimum wage, you know, and they pay the minimum wage. And, if you negotiate something above the minimum wage, it is nothing you can really do as a Government, if the minimum wage is adhered to. And, so we would continue to look for opportunities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We would continue to look for other opportunities for our people in the Construction Sector, as I said, in the Hotel Sector, and other areas. We continue to follow the Decent Work Agenda, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the issue of Social Dialogue and the future of work is now being priority by the ILO. Just last week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I went to Greece, at the invitation of the International Labour Organization, to make a presentation in this International Conference on Social Dialogue. They were very impressed with the Social Committee that we have here, the Committee of Social Partners, and Grenada was the only CARICOM member country that was invited to this International Conference. **(Applause)** And, when I made the presentation on the Committee of Social Partners and the dialogue that we have, together with the Government, on how we worked through the Structural Adjustment Programme and other issues, the ILO Representative

said they would like to publish Grenada's model on their website, and in their publication, because they were so impressed that we could get the Trade Unions, the Chamber of Commerce, Employers' Federation, the Churches, all to sit together around the table. One Minister said to me, in their country they're talking about structural reform far less an IMF Programme, no Unions will come to the table with them. The Government is on their own, so they were very impressed with the fact that we were able to get everyone to come together, Mr. Speaker, and work together.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I now turn to the Cooperative Department. Mr. Speaker, Cooperatives play a pivotal role in Grenada's economy by providing meaningful employment to our citizens resulting in increased economic activities and reduction in poverty in our society. To date, the Producer Service Start Cooperative employs over ninety (90) persons and has assets in excess of six million dollars ($6 m). The Department of Cooperatives also educate and train potential and existing Cooperatives for the improvement and modernisation of the Cooperative Sector. It also resolves complaints and disputes in accordance with the Cooperative Laws and principles. At present, there are eighteen (18) functioning Cooperatives, each at varying levels of compliance.

Mr. Speaker, during the year 2017, the Department's main focus was on executing a number of Training Sessions based on needs assessment that was done. To date, eleven (11) Cooperative Societies were educated and trained in Financial Records Keeping, Customer Service and Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Directors.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that we have a difficulty in getting Cooperatives to stay together, because they start out very good, well-intent, finances made available and somewhere along the line there is some level of mistrust that come up, and so while we'll like to see the Sector grow the Cooperate Department have to continuously train and have meetings with the existing Cooperatives, because that is one way they can access financing. When they access financing and they create their own jobs they do not have to depend on Government to provide employment, or any other Private Sector employee. And, therefore, the Department spends a lot of time going and visiting Co-

operatives and trying to get more started, because there are funds available if people can come together and form these Cooperatives. And, so I want to encourage my colleagues, in their various Constituencies, if they can bring groups together, the Cooperative Department will be willing to send officers to explain to them the rules and how they operate, the financing and so on, and we can see much more Cooperatives being established.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Department recognises that in order for Cooperatives to be able to contribute to sustainable national development, they must be able to function at a level where they are fully compliant with the Cooperative Society Act and Regulation and be a viable business. The Department is committed to working along with all the Cooperatives and young people in particular. Mr. Speaker, we want to particularly pay attention to the young people, because youth unemployment is very high, and forming Cooperatives and starting your own business is one way of helping deal with this high unemployment that we are facing. While it is down to 24%, this is still a high figure, Mr. Speaker, and we need to get it further down, as we move along.

Mr. Speaker, I wish now to turn to my Constituency. Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, St. David is the largest Constituency in the country. We now have eight thousand (8,000) registered voters and twelve (12) Polling Divisions. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, when resources are allocated, St. David, obviously, should get the biggest share of the pie, because it is the biggest Constituency. You have St. George with five (5) Constituencies and St. Andrew four (4), you know you could win St. George's and St. Andrew and win the Election, because that is nine seats, you know. Nine seats, five (5) in St. George, four (4) in St. Andrew, nine (9) seats in two (2) Parishes. So, you have small Constituencies. Take a Constituency like Town, that is two (2) PDs in St. David. We have PDs in St. David with a thousand and something people to vote, you know. They had to close down two (2) PDs in Town, because one had thirty-five (35) people registered and one had twenty-eight (28), so they have to close it down, and St. David growing and growing instead. And, so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when, as I said the resources area allocated, St. David should get more, followed by St. John, in that order, because that is the second largest.

But, let me report on what has happened in St. David. Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot being said about St. David and its needs. It's the only Constituency without a Town; that makes it very unique. I am not saying anything wrong with that, but we have had our fair share, I would say, but there is a lot more to be done. But, I will outline, Mr. Speaker, some of the major accomplishments in St. David. And, what I am going to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to publish all of that in a booklet, because it has some people that are saying they are not seeing what is done. Well, if you are not seeing it, we will take the photographs and put it in a book and publish it before the Election and give it out in the Constituency. Let them see. **(Applause)**

For example, Mt. Agnes Water Treatment Plant was completed at a cost of $1.2 m; well you won't see that, if you don't go in Mt. Agnes. **(Applause)** La Sagesse Road, Mr. Speaker, not the one that we are doing now, you know. On top the hill there is a place; well, the people are from Pandy, so we call this one Pandy, was moved too, and then when the people that were living there, there so much confusion, you know it was referred to as Baghdad. It was called Baghdad, and people left. Now, we put down the nice road network and Sewer System at the cost of five million dollars ($5 m), a World Bank Project, the people started coming back. Everybody started coming back; nice facilities, at a cost of five million dollars ($5 m), Mr. Speaker. They can go and see it.

In fact, what the team in St. David… they are here; the team from St. David is here, Mr. Speaker, the hard working team. They say, well, we must organise a tour of St. David and show them all these things that have been done, so they would stop complaining that nothing is being done.

Vincennes Pre-School, they can go there and see it, eight hundred thousand dollars ($800,000.00) being spent to rebuild it; St. Dominic's Pre-school was opened on March 16th, it was guttered by fire in 2011. They have a State-of-the-Art Pre-school in St. Dominic's, brand new, opened in March, that we built. We have the Morne Delice Water Treatment Plant, completed at a cost of five million dollars ($5 m); Mt. Gazo Visitors' Centre that was mentioned by the Minister responsible for Forestry.

The Mt. Gazo to Morne Delice concrete roads, CCC; Laura concrete road, Laura; La Pastora road, Mr. Speaker. We will have to take out the pictures of the road, too,

you know, because they're walking on the road and driving on it, and new concrete road, but they are saying nothing has been done. So, we will take out the pictures of the concrete roads and put it in the book too.

Upgrading of the Playing Field and toilet facilities. You know, Mr. Speaker, could you believe in the former Administration, we had a very nice Representative in St. David, Mr. Lett, that everybody respected and said he was a nice man. But, when they say, well, Mr. Lett, but you're not doing anything for us, he say well, the Government not giving me no money, so I can't do anything. They say, but Mr. Lett you were in Opposition in 2003 to 2008, so you said you couldn't do nothing, because you are in Opposition, you're in Government now and you still don't have money to do anything. They asked for a toilet facility in Marlmount for the five years he was there, in my first year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Playing Field was upgraded and the toilet facilities were placed there, in the first year. **(Applause)** So, they can go to Marlmount Playing Field, Laura Playing Field, Volay Pasture, Berrotte Pasture and look at La Sagesse pasture that we upgraded the seat. They can go there and see these things. They are there. The toilet facilities are there. None of these pastures I mentioned here had anything like that, you know, Mr. Speaker, none of them. So, let them go there and look at it.

In the schools; I said to the Minister for Education, former Minister Boatswain, under Special Projects, I have to use the Special Projects to help the schools, because there is no money in the Budget. So, when they approached me, Corinth School, we built the stage, built a retaining wall for St. David R.C. School. We constructed a kitchen, just recently for Pomme Rose. We put up a gate in Vincennes School, under Special Project, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because when the schools approached me, as the Parliamentary Representative seeking assistance, I said, well, you need good, learning facilities, and if the Ministry of Education does not have the money, we must get it done, because it's our children going to school there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for me, the biggest achievement is not these roads we are talking about and the school or anything; it is the number of students in St. David, who got scholarships; that, to me, is the biggest achievement, you know. **(Applause)**

I will give you one example, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This young lady from La Tante, her father is a Fisherman, so she will go to the Bay, as we say, the Beach with her father. She did well in school and she went to TAMCC, and she came for assistance, because she wanted to be a Marine Biologist, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and she got assistance from this Government to be a Marine Biologist. **(Applause)** Without the help of this Government, her dream could not come through. Bright girl; her father a Fisherman, couldn't pay for her to go to SGU, but we came in. And, there are several examples and several young people that can testify to the fact that they got assistance to go to SGU. The amount of needy forms I signed; The amount of forms I signed for students to get help to go to SGU and TAMCC. But, I am proud, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are students from St. David, who are on Scholarship in Cuba and China. Young people, young bright people whose parents cannot afford to send them to University, this Government is giving them the opportunity to go and educate themselves and uplift their standard. That is the kind of Government we are talking about, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, I am pleased with the level of assistance that we give. There are lots more that have to be done.

In the area of housing; well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know that and all the Members here around the table know that. When I go to my Constituency Office on a Thursday, about 90% of the people who come to me will be about housing, because Hurricane Ivan is thirteen (13) years past. Their little board house that they built during that time start deteriorating, they need to repair it, and they have children living there and they're getting wet. We have had allocation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the last four and a half years where about four hundred and ten (410) persons benefitted from housing, but we still have a next list with about the same amount, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have a list about the same amount that is waiting. We do not have the resources, because we have limited resources to help everyone. But, I ask for understanding in this matter. We try to help the most needy, the vulnerable ones first. So, some people who did not get help, they are angry, but as I said, we do not have the resources to help everybody.

When we started our Toilet Programme we said we would start out with the disabled. First one, we built for a blind man; second one for a man without leg, third, and so we say disabled people first. But, a lot of people come and say, well, I need a bathroom and toilet, I hear you're building bathroom and toilet, could you build one for me? I say, well, listen when we finished the disabled, or if we get more money, we will assist you, but at the moment we are dealing with the disabled first.

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Oliver Joseph: And, so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our aim, in St. David, is to lift the standard of living and the quality of life of our people and I have always said and the entire team says that, I always say, education is what would lift you out of poverty, education. What else could talk you out of poverty? Even if you win the Lotto and you uneducated, you're losing all the money; **(laughter)** so a million dollar in Lotto still isn't going to help you. You have to be educated. You heard the Minister for Social Development talk about that, where she is today, because of her education. That is what is going to help you and that is why we are placing so much emphasis on education. All these Special Projects here, the list is too long, because what I did, they give me for the whole four and a half years, so it's about ten (10) pages. As I said, we're going to put it in the book, all the box drains and thing, but every place from La Tante, Pomme Rose, Westerhall, Petite Bacaye, Apres Toute, Requin, Belle Isle, Corinth, all about throughout the constituency have benefitted from assistance under the Special Project; when you have water going to the Box Drains; we did Retaining walls all over St. David, because what we do is to spread it out, because St. David is so big, from Mardigras right up to Lambert Bridge, you know; fifty-two (52) villages, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, we try to spread it out, so that, at least every Community, every PD could get something and achieve.

So, while we have been doing a lot of work, as I said, it still has a lot of complaints and every MP will tell you that. I suppose now that is the nature of the business. But, this Government, I must say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government has

allocated resources in a manner that will ensure development of the people and that is the right way to put your resources, to lift the standard of living of our people**. (Applause)** So, you have more people go onto University, people living in better houses, with bathroom and toilet. Let us all work together and stay focused on the less fortunate and the vulnerable to lift them out, so that when we're allocating money and you hear how much money is going to one Sector, we have to take everyone into consideration.

And, so, I am very happy that the people of St. David have voted me in and given me the opportunity to represent them. As you know, Mr Speaker, I came in at the last moment, in the last Election, but I was welcomed. They made me feel so welcome, and up to today, these people are still there behind me, pushing me and seeing me as someone who cares about people, because that is the important thing, you know. People want to see if you care about people, Mr. Speaker. When you are in politics, if you have no love and don't care for people, don't go into politics, you know, because people will discover that early.

I remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, saying to the Political Leader, I said, well, every week over forty something people coming still, every week. He said, you're lucky, once you see that, the people have confidence in you; if they turn their back on you, they're not coming. I said, you know, I didn't see it so, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I thought, well, they're just coming and coming. He say, no, they're coming, because they think you will help solve their problem, and that is a good sign.

And, the next thing, I did not realise in politics, Mr. Speaker, is that when you're in power, it's harder to win your Seat. I never know that, you know, from outside. I thought… when you're in Opposition, it's harder, because you don't have anything to give people. But, when you're in, it's more difficult, because you have to give everybody and you don't have it, so it's more pressure on you. But, the people of St. David have really supported me, have stood by me and I want to thank my entire team; you see they came down in their numbers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to support me, because I told I'll be speaking at 4:00. Well, first of all, I said 5:00, and then they changed it to 4:00, and they passed around a message on their WhatsApp chat and say, 4:00 o'clock, we have

to be here. They were here at five to four, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of them in their numbers were here to support me. So, I want to thank them very much.

I want to also thank the staff of the Ministry where I work and the Trade Unions, Employers Federation, the Social Partners, everyone for their support. And, I must mention, there is a Committee that we have called the Jubilee Committee with the Conference of Churches and the Evangelicals, that we meet once a month and they have been very supportive and offering me advice. And, they said, we will like you to continue, because you are doing a good job. As they said, we would like you to continue, because you are doing a good job. Not very often people say Politicians are doing a good job, you know. They say all kinds of things about you expect that you're doing a good job. Of the thousand (1,000) people I helped, Mr. Speaker, I am sure ten (10) didn't tell me thanks, you know. And, some people tell me don't expect no thanks and they give me the story of the Lepers, nine (9) got well, only one came back to say thanks.

So, the Lord has been good to me. I think the way I came into politics it must be the work of the Lord, because I never had politics on my mind to say I am coming in politics. And, the Lord has me here for a purpose, because you have to discover what is your purpose in life. I never thought my purpose was in politics. But, here I am today, trying to make the best use of it and just asking all the people in the Constituency to continue to encourage me, continue their support for me, because I think, together, I cannot do it by myself, together we can build a better St. David; together we can build a better Grenada. And, I think this Government, the New National Party Government, at this time, is the only Party, in Grenada, that can take the country forward and I firmly believe that, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

And, so, as I close, I doubt we will have a Session before Christmas, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I want to use the opportunity to extend warm greetings, happy Christmas, health to all. We, in the Constituency, will continue with our usual Christmas tree lighting and hampers and we have a fundraiser on Friday, so I want to use this opportunity...

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Oliver Joseph: Just to finish the invitation, Mr. Speaker, and I'll sit down. So, I want to use this occasion to invite everyone to our fund-raiser on Friday the 1st at the Constituency Office starting at 12:00 noon with, I have to make sure I have the right words, Barbecue Luncheon, with Barbecue Luncheon and going on. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a special invitation is extended to you to stop. I know you and the Speaker would stop by, but the funds will go towards buying Christmas Hampers.

So, I want to wish everyone, all the best and to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to wish you all the best and thank everyone for your support; all my colleagues that I have been working together with in Cabinet have been a very good team. We have good unity going on in the Cabinet of Ministers. I am very pleased to be part of a team that is so united, because I recognise the importance of unity in going forward, and so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you very much for this opportunity. **(Applause)**

Mr. Deputy President: Thank you very much, Honourable Member for St. David. And, I want to say thank you once again for extending that invitation to me and I am sure the Speaker, himself, will be there also; so once, again, thanks for the invitation.

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

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative for St. George North-East.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too rise to give my support of the Estimates 2018 Budget year. But, Mr. Speaker, I am standing here and I am thinking that it might be a very difficult and tall order to follow St. David. But, it seems like in the whole scheme of things after St. David, in terms of size, is St. George's North East.

But, Mr. Speaker, as the 2018 Budget unfolds and I purpose to look at the Budget and to deal with it and to give my testimony, which, Mr. Speaker, over the past

few years have been piling up and piling up. But, Mr. Speaker, as I present here this afternoon I can't help but turn to the Word. It says the Word shall set you free. And, in the book of Psalms, it is written, Psalm Chapter 8 verses 1 & 2 ***"Oh Lord our Lord how excellent is Thy name in all the earth, who has set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babe's and suckling thou hast ordained strength, because of thine enemies thou might have stilled the enemies and the avenger."***

But, Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. George North-West presented this Budget to us under the Theme: ***"Safeguarding our Gains and Continuing Our Progress."*** It's a mighty big book, Mr. Speaker, and I looked over the past few days and I wonder now how could I digest such a big book with all these figures, and I was reminded, again, of another piece of Scripture, Mr. Speaker, and if you will allow me, and I turn to the book of Ezekiel, Ezekiel Chapter 2, he says: " ***And, he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee:***" And, he went on to say, down at the bottom, it says: **"*When I look behold a hand was sent unto me and lo a role of book and he spread it before me and it is written within and without and there was written lamentations and mourning and woe. Moreover he said unto me, son of man eat thou the role of books."***

Mr. Speaker, I stand here, because I go back to 2013 in Grenada, 2012 and 2013, we were handed something, Mr. Speaker, that was almost in Grenada lamentations and mourning and woe. But, the writer went on to say: **"so I opened my mouth and he caused me to eat the roles,"** that is the Book, and he said: "***Son of man cause thy belly to eat and fill thy bowels that I give thee. Then I ate and it was honey. It was in my mouth as the sweetness of honey.***" Mr. Speaker, what a transformation today. What a transformation in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the Presenter said that we can testify. Mr. Speaker, I do not have to testify. The people of Grenada Carriacou and Petite Martinique can testify of such transformation that has taken place. The people of St. George North-East can testify of the transformation of what transformation that has taken place. But, Mr. Speaker, I know when we started the debate this morning, I wanted to make the Presentation so it would be worthwhile to us. And, I say, as we stand here in this House and as we

deliberate for our people and as we set forth, let us make a change that is meaningful to our people, so that our people can say, at this time, in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, it is the best of times, in terms of Government. When you look at the team of the New National Party and you look at it in its entirety, Mr. Speaker, we are a united team, working together for the benefit and for the good of our country, and this is what I feel, Mr. Speaker, and so this is what I can testify of.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Andrew North-East, this morning, made a plea as to how we were doing business and how it affected her and what is going on in Grenada. And, I sat and I am thinking, how we can affect change, so that we can bring real change to our communities and to our people. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe there are some things that must change in Grenada, and we ought to change how we do business. For instance, Mr. Speaker, maybe I would say now, who have ears to hear, let them hear. How do we do business in Grenada? You know, we talk about child abuse in all different forms. How do we work in Grenada? Mr. Speaker, and I have seen it all the time.

Most workplaces, including Government, we go from 8:00 to 4:00; can we change that to better serve our people and our community? And, if I say we should change that, then I have to talk to the Unions to change it from 8:00 to 4:00, or 9:00 to 5:00. But, Mr. Speaker, I noticed something, and we ought to start protecting our children. And, why did I say that? Now, take for instance, we go to work from 8:00 to 4:00. In our preparations, we might start preparing, 7:00 o'clock, sometimes we leave the house. But, in leaving the house, we have mother, father, child/children, school starts at 8:30, parents will leave the house at 7:00 o'clock and leave the children at home, because the school starts after. How do we do it in this country? Then, we have to ask the second question again, school gets off at 2:30, parents are still at work, but the children are at home.

Mr. Speaker, you know what bothers me? In my deliberation in St. George's North-East, and I do my house-to-house, during the day, during the morning, during the evening and I spoke to this before, Mr. Speaker. While I am doing that, and I knock on the door, some little child might come and answer the door, nine (9) years, ten (10)

years, eleven (11) years. And, when school is off you ask *"Who is at home?", "Nobody, but myself"*; *"Where is your mother?" "She is at work"; "Where is your father?", "He is at work".*

Mr. Speaker, shouldn't it be illegal in our country for parents to leave their children at home and go to work? But, can we just lay this on the parent alone? You know, Mr. Speaker, I was fortunate to be educated in the United States to some extent, and I used to wonder at 5:30/6:00 o'clock/6:30 in the morning, you see the little children on the side of the road, Winter, and they're well cloak up and they are ready to go to school, because the Law states that the parents have to send the child to school before he or she leaves home. In Grenada, it is almost the other way around. Mr. Speaker, after school finishes at 2:30, they jump on the bus, they go home, and then there isn't nobody home to take care of an eleven (11) or twelve (12) year old child.

Mr. Speaker, I would make a proposal, let us take our Community Centres, in our different communities, and put our young people to work, so that we can develop an 'After School Programme' to take care of our kids. I think it will work and it will go a long way, because I know in a lot of our communities, we have Community Centres, and most of the time what we might have, a fundraiser, a dance, a party. Why can't we put them to work for these things, to let our communities again help to raise our children? Mr. Speaker, we have to do differently in our community.

Mr. Speaker, as I approach it, and I want to give the testimonies, so that we can change Grenada. At one time in our country, Mr. Speaker, we had the Filament Lamps. Then, we went from Filament to Energy Saving. Then, we are going from Energy Saving to LEDs. Mr. Speaker, I can testify, in 2013, I made an effort, in my home, to change all my lightings to LEDs. You know, I too, I have to conserve, and I am trying to bring down my electricity bill for years, and it is three hundred (300), four hundred (400) four hundred and something per month.

Mr. Speaker, I dug deep, and I spent maybe about three (3) or four hundred dollars ($400.00) to change all the bulbs, but within the space of a month or two it paid for itself, because for the first time, my electricity bill moved from four-something, to two-something, now to one-something. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time, not only for me, not

only for our citizen, but also for our Government to change all the lighting facility in every Government building. And, I heard the Member for St. Andrew South-East said that the lights are left on. Mr. Speaker, what about the technology, where when nobody is in the room the light goes off for itself? We have to employ technology to work for us.

Mr. Speaker, I believe, like some of our European partners, make it mandatory that we move away from Filament and Energy Savings to LED in this country. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the time has come when now we should use all our roof space, especially in the South of the country, the Airport right up to Grand Anse, to put in solar panels.

I remember some years ago, the Member here for St. George South mentioned that the Airport had an electricity bill of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars ($250,000.00) to three hundred thousand dollars ($300,000.00) per month, and we have some of the greatest space in Grand Anse. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time to make a change in that regard, so that we can testify that we have moved Grenada now into… and it will help our environment, too, because this is what we are talking about. And, if we have to continue to save, so that we can find monies to spend elsewhere to build our economy, then so be it.

But, Mr. Speaker, I spoke to where we were, and the Member for St. David so eloquently spoke to that. And, Mr. Speaker, it was almost frightening that when we came into Government, and the conditions… because I asked the question here in Parliament, Mr. Speaker, maybe the only time, because I know that a lot of our Government assets were sold left, right and centre, to pay salaries. And, then when some people doubted it, I said well let me come to Parliament and ask the question, what it is, was sold. The Member for St. George North-West said to me, if I did not ask the question, he would have known the depth of what was sold in this country. But, I will bring the paper again, Mr. Speaker. You, too, have a record of it, I know so. But, we will have to share it with all of Grenada, so that we can testify that we are not in the business again of selling assets to pay salaries, but we are using good economic practices to pay salaries. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, talking about transformation, I see a number of my constituents are here. I say God be praised, in that, Mr. Speaker, they came too, because I know they have a testimony to give. I cannot adequately give the testimony. But, if I start, Mr. Speaker, from 1910 to Park Estate… Mr. Speaker, and as I say from 1910, I heard mentioned before that the Western Corridor will be done. But, Mr. Speaker, you know I always talk about the Middle Corridor, from Grenville to De Caul, that is passing through 1910. I said if that road is bad, then the whole of St. Andrew cannot come to Town. So, my colleagues from St. Andrew, they have to make sure that the road from Grenville to De Caul is well kept and maintained also.

So, if I start, Mr. Speaker, and we talk about testimony, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, let the people of Vendome testify first, because when we start in Vendome, we can talk about roads, we can talk about the schools, we can talk about Social Services, we can talk about the Court, and these are things that they will be proud of. When you ask them the question, what did this Government do for you, they can point to all of these. If you ask, on the contrary, what did the former Government did for you, in Vendome, then you can testify that they did nothing.

Mr. Speaker, we can go on to New Hampshire, and we can testify in New Hampshire, Annandale and Constantine, that the New National Party moved again to fix the road. You know, anytime you speak to New Hampshire and Constantine, you always have to talk about the 'S' Corner. Usually, you go down, you get to the Junction and you turn back, because you do not want to traverse that 'S' Corner. But, we moved, over the last few years, to fix that road, and today it is almost like a Highway, a shortcut from Beausejour, from my brother's neighbouring Constituency to mine, and you could easily get to Grenville too, or to St. Andrew.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but we moved to put MAREP to work. Mr. Speaker, you know, when I look at it, and the word is out that all these projects were submitted under a former Administration and it is now done under the New National Party, we say Government is a continuity, but not only that, Mr. Speaker. We find there was a time in our country, when resources were available but it could not be accessed, because the Government was shut down. But, because of the New National Party, we put structures

in place, as a Government, so that we can access the resources that are available, and that is what we have always been, so this is what I can testify about.

Mr. Speaker, I am only testifying now, maybe, for this last year and for the last five (5) years, but I could go back a long way and talk about how we transformed this country. But, in St. George's North-East, Mr. Speaker, we transformed, from Polling Division to Polling Division, and there is not a village in St. George North-East that is not touched today, Mr. Speaker, and that is the testimony that we have today, and the work continues, Mr. Speaker.

Shortly, we are going to move to Annandale, and there is that road that was broken in Annandale for years that we are going to move to do that big Box Culvert, so that we do not have any accidents again, because my heart went out to the Doctor who lives up there, where she almost lost her life. And, I say if there is one thing I have to do in Annandale, let us fix that road; so, Mr. Speaker, that will be done. **(Applause)**

But, Mr. Speaker, you would not believe, still existing in St. George's North-East, in 2013, there were people without running water, people without running water. Mr. Speaker, we moved to get running water to Mayan, just behind Constantine. Mr. Speaker, we are moving now to get water to the villagers in Horeb, and that would be done shortly. Mr. Speaker, we are moving to bring restroom facilities to our brothers and sisters to Horeb, Mr. Speaker, and now they can testify that their standard of living has risen under the New National Party.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes I get a little bit emotional here, like my Sister, because during these years, what I have done, Mr. Speaker, is that I have gained brothers and sisters and family in all the little villages. So, when I speak to that, I can speak of how moved and how touched they were, because their lives are being transformed every day. And, as the Member for St. David says: "*The only how you can transform people's lives"*, Mr. Speaker, *"is when they testify of the love that you show them and the care that you show them,*" *a*nd this is what we have been doing, over the past years.

Mr. Speaker, I dare not speak of development and leave out anybody, so I will come down through my Constituency, and, Mr. Speaker, we move into Boca. When I consider Boca, Mr. Speaker, there were some places in Boca that was difficult to

traverse, and now, Mr. Speaker, people in Boca can testify that there are roads now where there were never roads before. There are drains where there were never drains before. People got help in housing, people got help with scholarships, and these people will testify and testify shortly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased, and as I said, I was given this book to digest, and as I digested it, I noticed, mentioned in the Presentation is the continuation of the connecting road between Beaulieu, Belle Vue and Mt. Moritz. Mr. Speaker, this year gone, we spent $1.2 m on that piece of road, and the second phase will continue. And, I continue to ask my brother for the support necessary, so that piece of work will be done, so that again, we can continue to join our constituency together so that our people's lives would be made easier. Mr. Speaker, it is not just a connecting road, you know, it is also a Farm Road. There are many people with farms in that community, and already I have started to see movements, because now people can use their vehicles to go up to certain parts to do their farming. So, again, when we do that, the property value will go up, farming will grow up, everything will go up; that is the testimony that they have to give. And, today, again, I was amazed when some people said that it was not this Government. But, it was this Government under the Indian Government that came in and granted us these facilities, and we will talk to that, other people will talk to that and other people will thank the Government of India. And, I know my sister, when she was the Minister for Foreign Affairs, will testify of what was done for us in St. George North-East and St. George North-West.

Mr. Speaker, a place that is very special to me is La Mode. And, as we touched La Mode, Mr. Speaker, we went into La Mode and the people in La Mode always talk about how difficult sometimes La Mode is. One gentleman said to me: "*You know, the only Polling Division that my father ever lost was La Mode, so you have to work hard in La Mode."* And, we went and we consulted with the people of La Mode. They talked about the Playing Field. They talked about the Community Centre. They talked about the bridge and many other pieces of roads and drains and Housing and Education. And, Mr. Speaker, we were able to address many of these issues. And, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, today we have addressed the La Mode Playing Field, and I believe the

Contractor is in the final stages of putting the top soil on the La Mode Playing Field. This year, that was done, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** Moreover, Mr. Speaker, we will move this year and next year to do the roads and drains leading up to the Playing Field Facility; so that was done, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is a bridge that connects La Mode, Radix, Mt. Parnassus. So, you could pass through Melrose and over to Radix. But, you could not have done it in vehicle. Maybe in the 60s or 70s, you could have driven through, but, that that bridge was broken down many decades ago. And, Mr. Speaker, I went and I asked the Ministry of Works to come and consider the bridge, and I said to the Engineer, all that I need for that bridge just give me the drawing. I asked about how much it would cost. They told me a bridge like that would cost the Government one hundred and fifty thousand dollars ($150,000.00).

Mr. Speaker, today that bridge is done. It was done in July and August of this year, and Government did not have to spend a cent to build that bridge. **(Applause)** That is the power of the community of our people, brothers and sisters, and it is only when they see that Government is making an effort, that they, too, will come on board to help to build our Communities. And, Mr. Speaker, again, I am going to engage the Government, so that we can continue and complete that road, from La Mode to Radix. Mr. Speaker, when that is completed, you can come from St. Andrew, come down through Boca, pass through Melrose, through Mt. Parnassus, St. Paul's, without coming down to Tempe and going up that hill. And, the people of La Mode will testify that for the first time, in a long time, they have seen movement in their community, Mr. Speaker, and this is what this Government brought to bear.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am not any stranger to Beaulieu, and I would not mention all the infrastructure that was done there, because I hear some people say all the infrastructure is a concrete Government, drains and roads and bridges. But, Mr. Speaker, it tells a story. If the infrastructure of our country is in good order, then our country will also be in good order, because for us to have any form and continuous development in our country, our infrastructure must be taken care of, and this is what this Government did. **(Applause)** And, this is what they are scared of, you know,

because, as the Member for St. George North-West said, we must testify, but we have a lot of testimonies to give. And, not only print it in a book, Member for St. David, but let it fly high that while you were there, you are proud of the service that this Government gave, in terms of the development of our people.

Mr. Speaker, I say it and I am going to say it, again, with a certain level of resignation, in that, we moved this year and engaged the Public/Private Sector to do the restroom facility in Tempe Playing Field. And, the only thing that is left to be done on that Playing Field now, in terms of completion, is the connection with the Electricity and the Water. But, Mr. Speaker, that facility lingered there from since 2003, fourteen (14) years after, it was there. They talked about it, yet they did nothing about it. But, I am happy to say this Government, along with the Private Sector, engaged and today that facility is a reality and it would be opened shortly. So, this too, the people of Tempe can testify.

Mr. Speaker, and it comes close to me, because I am looking at it, and let me give you a story. In Tempe, the Playing Field is there, one of the best Playing Fields in Grenada, and hopefully, it would be lighted soon. But, not only that, Mr. Speaker, St. Mary's R. C. uses that Playing Field, the two (2) Homes use that Playing Field, Alpha uses that Playing Field, First Choice uses that Playing Field, Grenada Junior Academy uses that Playing Field, Westmorland uses that Playing Field. We have about (7) facilities using that Playing Field. And, in my walk about, right under the Tempe Playing Field, I went into a home there, and the man said to me, *"Mr. Clement, you must move to fix that Restroom Facility".* He said one day about 2:00 o'clock, he and his wife and a friend were sitting on the Porch, and two little girls marched up his step and said: "Good afternoon, Sir, can you show me where the restroom is?" And, he said, inside there, and they went into his house, they used it and they marched right back out. If we have children, Mr. Speaker, and we have to take care of them, shouldn't we provide the necessary facilities for them? And, very soon, Mr. Speaker, the schools and the people who use that Playing Field facility will be able to testify that for the first time, restroom facility has come to Tempe. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, in Tempe, there is a place called Hills Have Eyes. For years, Hills Have Eyes is almost a place like little Lance Aux Epines, right? And, up there we have residents living, but the condition of the road, Mr. Speaker. And, for over the last five (5) years, I have been trying to get the Hills Have Eyes road to be completed. It was done sometime in 2012/2013, but just a sidewalk piece that was done. So, when you drove on the Hills Have Eyes road, you were one up, one down, and you leaned on the side, as if almost you want to tilt over. But, Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, we moved to complete Hills Have Eyes road, and this year, Mr. Speaker, we have completed the main part of Hills Have Eyes and will continue with the loop in Hills Have Eyes. But, Mr. Speaker, the sad thing about it, how could you ask for representation, when you never give representation to right where you live? And, so, today, the people of Hills Have Eyes can testify and say that under this Government, they got their road once and for all, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** I am not throwing no corn, so that is what it is.

Mr. Speaker, I move to Mt. Parnassus, and in Mt. Parnassus, I say to us, Mt. Parnassus Main Road, from La Borie to Alpha School, down to the River Bend is the best it has been in a long time. And, Mr. Speaker, shortly, very soon, you will see that drain, the Mt. Parnassus Main Road drain will be started and continue again under the New National Party. And, for the first time, we went up into the Coconut and into all the little byroads in Mt. Parnassus, and we fixed the drains, we fixed the bridges, we fixed the culverts, so that, at least, people can see some movements in Mt. Parnassus. And, maybe now, as I move through I can talk about Mardigras. And, I asked about Mardigras; Mardigras, Good Hope, St. Pauls, *"What was done for you under the New National Party?"* And they can point out that we moved to widen the Mardigras Road; we moved into the almost completion of the Artiste Road; we did Canboulay; we did some in Good Hope, Mr. Speaker, and we are continuing with drains and bridges and building the infrastructure that was never there before. So, today, today, Mr. Speaker, the people of Mardigras can testify and say, that is a Government that works for them and is working for all the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, but that is just us in a small snapshot, and you would see a lot more to come, Mr. Speaker, because today I am confident that with our Fiscal Responsibility Act and Committee and the way that we are behaving ourselves with the country's financing that we will continue to grow this country.

I remember a couple years ago, Mr. Speaker, you would remember me saying in the Budget Debate that the people do not mind sacrificing, but when they sacrifice, when we sacrifice, they must be able to see tangible benefits for the sacrifice that they have made. And, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say today that under the leadership of the Member for St. George North-West, Minister for Finance, the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique can say that they have seen some movement in the Economy of our country. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, it is no easy feat to take a country with an eighteen million dollar ($18 m) deficit and bring it back from that dungeon. Mr. Speaker, it is not an easy feat, when you spend seventy cents (70 ¢) on every dollar to now down to forty-five cents (45¢) on every dollar. Mr. Speaker, this, in itself, maybe today we can testify and say Grenada now has become a model for other countries in the OECS and the world to follow. **(Applause)** And, how did we do it, Mr. Speaker? Again, we can testify that we consulted with everybody. We consulted with the churches, with the Trade Unions, with our people, and say let us come together for the good of our country, and let us, for this time, move our country forward. And, if there is one time, brothers and sisters, that we ought to be proud of our Government and our people that served in our Government, is this time. You may ask me why I say that. Mr. Speaker, can I call my… I shouldn't do that, because I might just offend the Member for St. George North-West. I am not so much of a Veteran, but I have been around a long time, I participated in this Government since 1995. I campaigned in 1990 to 1995, and we went through some difficult times, and we went through some more difficult times, and there were times when we did not know where it was coming from. But, to serve again in this Administration for this time, Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to see the transformation that has taken place in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, so now as I support this Presentation, as I said, we ate it up. It was lamentation, it was bitterness, it was woe, but afterwards it tasted like honey. This is what Ezekiel wrote in the book of Ezekiel 2 and 3. And, today, just like Ezekiel testified, we can testify and say that the Lord has been good to us. So, this is why in continuing my testimony throughout the length and breadth of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, I say, to God be the glory, great things He has done.

So, Mr. Speaker, protecting, safeguarding the gains that we have made. Mr. Speaker, just a minute ago, I sent a picture to the Minister for Works, and I dare not speak or leave this Parliament here today, if I did not say that we should protect the gains that we have made. And, usually you look around Grenada and you move around Grenada, and sometimes you wonder what is taking place in our country. We build roads, we build bridges, we build schools, we build every infrastructure there is to think about. And, I have always asked the question, Mr. Speaker, you're driving along the road, you are under the influence, not you, Mr. Speaker, but I am just saying, you knock out the guardrails, and then it is left like that. Don't we have to protect our infrastructure too?

But, Mr. Speaker, I started with the picture that I sent to the Member for St. George North-West, and I took a picture on the road, Mr. Speaker, and it worries me how we treat our roads in Grenada. Mr. Speaker, the picture that I took, it was a picture of a flatbed truck carrying cement from the Port and it broke at the top of Dusty Highway. Mr. Speaker, that flatbed truck had twenty-seven (27) slings of cement on it, twenty-seven (27) slings of cement. Now, Mr. Speaker, we leave the Port, the truck is not weighed, flatbed truck is an eighteen-wheeler, the foundation of our road, was it built to withstand such weight? I don't think so. Mr. Speaker, the trucks leave Gravel and Concrete, full to capacity, shaken, running over and they leave, and they come down on our roads. Were our roads built to take that capacity? Are these trucks weighed?

Mr. Speaker, let's take, for instance, there is a piece of road in my community, Mt. Rush, coming down from the Quarry, it passes in front of the Housing Scheme that the Chinese just built, and we had repaired that road for the World Cup. And, a chain was placed across it, so that we can stop the trucks from coming down that road. The

chain was busted out, so now the heavy trucks don't come down Mt. Rush Hill, they come down Mt. Rush Road, in front of the Chinese houses. Mr. Speaker, that is probably the worst piece of road in St. George North-East, if not in Grenada, because of the weight of the trucks, because all the trucks that leave up there pass on that piece of road. But, that piece of road, Mr. Speaker, was not built for that capacity.

One thing I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, let us look to protect the gains that we have made. It is one thing to tell our people that we are all responsible for the buildings and for the roads, and for the drains, but, if we do not implement Laws that are there to protect it, then who will protect it. We have to, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if we ought to protect the gains that we make, we have to let our people know that the gains that we have realised we cannot just let it go like that. Now, in his Presentation, the Minister for Finance said that if the fiscal space allows we might see a relief.

But, Mr. Speaker, I remember a promise was made in 2008, before the Election that as soon as we come in, we will take off the National Reconstruction Levy. I think that used to bring into the Government coffers about ten million dollars ($10 m) per year. And, probably as soon as they come in, it was taken off; and maybe a year after they wished they had that National Reconstruction Levy. But, I say, I know my friend and colleague from St. George North-West is well calculated, and if the fiscal space allows it, we would do so. But we have to continue to sacrifice, each and every one of us, so that we can testify to our children and grandchildren that we make this country a better place for everybody, regardless of who you are.

So, Mr. Speaker, I promised I wouldn't be long and I know, I am not long, but before I close here today, I must go back to my constituency, and to testify to them that I appreciate the love and the care that they have shown me. And, when I came in, Mr. Speaker, I purposed that what I should do, I should do the right thing by my constituents and by St. George North-East. And, I say that if I have to beg for a little more for St. George North-East that is what I will do. And, I hope and I believe that they too have testified that I have changed lives in St. George North-East.

To my family in St. George North-East, to my family in Carriacou, to my family in Petite Martinique, I say that you have raised me, you have looked at me, and I hope that I make Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique proud. And, you know, Mr. Speaker, I say nobody encompasses Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, as I can, because I was born in Petite Martinique, I was raised in Carriacou, and I am loved in Grenada more than anything else, and that is what it is, Mr. Speaker. And, to my family, Mr. Speaker, sometime they wonder how I do it, and time management is something sometimes I believe twenty-four (24) hours is not enough for us in the day. And, I believe all MPs are like that and the tremendous support that we get from our families and friends, we could have never done it without that support. I mean I would be taken aback if I stand here today and say without the family structure in place that I would stand here today. I would not stand here today, Mr. Speaker, if I did not have my colleagues around me, because from time to time I would call and they would give me their support, never mind how big or how small it is.

And, Mr. Speaker, I shall not call any names here today, but today I have some people around me that are very special to me, and if they are not there, then my work in St. George North-East would not get done, any kind of work that I am engaged in, and I am eternally grateful for that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to you and to your family in Parliament, brothers and sisters for the time that we have spent here, and in terms of our presentation and for your continuous guidance, and I find that, Mr. Speaker, you are somebody that is very approachable. It reminded me that someone said to me that when you are in politics you have to be accessible, approachable and accountable, and I know you are always accessible, you are always approachable, accountability, well, we would have to talk about that. So, Mr. Speaker, you have been a graceful Speaker. And, I remember you took off the wig at the beginning, and I thought the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk would follow suit. But, I hope, in the future, we can have a more modern Parliament, and maybe we will make the change, because we have made some changes here.

When I just got into Parliament here, I remember they were still using cassette tape in 2013, but we have a new system now, Mr. Speaker. And, then I guess in the

new House, which we are going to be a part of again. Did I say that? The new House, which we are going to be a part of again, we would have new technology that we will be better able to serve our people. **(Applause)**

So, Mr. Speaker, as we endeavour to bring benefits to our people, let us live in such a way that our testimony would fly high in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and at the end of the day what we will say? We will say, together, to God be the glory, great things He has done. I thank you and God bless you all. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. George North-East. Thank you for your good wishes. Do we have additional presenters today? No. Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the adjournment of this Honourable House until 9:00 o'clock in the forenoon tomorrow, Thursday, God's willing 30th November, 2017.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Please remember 9:00 o'clock in the forenoon. This Honourable House now stands adjourned until 9:00 o'clock.

House adjourned on Wednesday, 29th November, 2017 at 6:06 p.m.

Resumption
Attendance

House resumed on Thursday 30th November, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

PRESENT

Honourable Michael Pierre, MP, MBE, JP	- Mr. Speaker (In the Chair)
Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell, PC, MP (St. George North-West)	- Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Energy, National Security, Public Administration, Disaster Management, Home Affairs, Information, Implementation, Economic Development, Planning, Trade and Religious Affairs
Honourable Gregory Bowen, MP (St. George South-East)	- Minister for Communications, Works, Physical Development, Public Utilities, ICT & Community Development
Honourable Elvin Nimrod, MP (Carriacou and Petite Martinique)	- Minister for Legal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Carriacou & Petite Martinique Affairs & Local Government
Honourable Anthony Boatswain, MP (St. Patrick West)	- Minister for Youth and Sports
Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen (St. Mark)	- Minister for Tourism, Civil Aviation and Culture
Honourable Alvin Da Breo, MP (St. John)	- Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries with responsibility for Forestry and Fisheries
Honourable Yolande Bain-Horsford, MP (St. Andrew South-West)	- Minister for Agriculture, Lands, Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
Honourable Oliver Joseph, MP (St. David)	- Minister for Labour and Co-operatives
Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP (St. Andrew South-East)	- Minister for Implementation

Attendance

Honourable Nickolas Steele, MP (Town of St. George)	-	Minister for Health, Social Security & International Business
Honourable Delma Thomas, MP (St. Andrew North-West)	-	Minister for Social Development & Housing
Honourable Alexandra Otway-Noel, MP (St. George South)	-	Member
Honourable Tobias Clement, MP (St. George North-East)	-	Member
Honourable Clifton Paul, MP (St. Patrick East)	-	Deputy Speaker

ABSENT

Honourable Roland Bhola, MP (St. Andrew North-East)	-	Member

Prayers
Announcements
Motions

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

Mr. Speaker: Let us pray.

(House Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Let us say, together, the Lord's Prayer.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

(Sound of Gavel)

Mr. Speaker: Pray be seated. This Honourable House is now in Session. We continue today, the debates on the Budget. We can proceed. Honourable Representative for St. Patrick West. Honourable Representative, I have been advised that you would need, because of the circumstances of having more than one Ministry, you would need some time to speak on both Ministries. From your estimation, about how much do you need?

Hon. Anthony Boatswain: About fifteen/twenty minutes.

Mr. Speaker: Twenty (20) minutes would be given to you to speak on the additional Ministry.

Hon. Anthony Boatswain: Much obliged, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my unqualified support to the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, as presented in this House, by the Honourable Minister for Finance and Member for St. George North-West on Monday, 27th December, 2017.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to take this opportunity to commend the Honourable Minister for Finance and his staff in the Ministry of Finance for a well-prepared and well-delivered Budget Statement.

Mr. Speaker, the question has been asked and different answers can be given. What type of Budget did the Honourable Minister for Finance present? Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, and wishing to be very simple, I will say that this was, indeed, a sound, practical, realistic and responsible Budget, Mr. Speaker, **(applause)** a Budget that places the long-term sustainable development of our country over short-term political considerations.

Mr. Speaker, it is quite evident that, as a Government, we are not prepared to sacrifice the future of our country on the altar of political expediency. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, this is why this Budget is reflective of the existing situation, notwithstanding the fact that General Elections could be imminent, we cannot respond to such, when the development of our country is at stake, Mr. Speaker.

This Budget has been defined or dubbed, in some quarters, as the 'Mother of all Budgets'. And, Mr. Speaker, maybe justifiably so, because, as I have seen the Budget as indeed given birth to hope and optimism and not a statistical abortion, as some have predicted. This is a Budget, Mr. Speaker, that resonates well with the vast majority of our people. And, even some of our most ardent critics have admitted and are now admitting that this is, indeed, a very good Budget. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the Theme, this Budget demands that we continue safeguarding our gains, while continuing our progress, by combining fiscal responsibility with bold adventurism in a manner typical only of this New National Party Administration.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Mr. Speaker, I have been assigned the Portfolio of Minister for Youth and Sports, as of September of this year. And, therefore, any achievement of that Ministry, over the years, I cannot take credit. But, I must, Mr. Speaker, recognise the sterling contribution of my predecessors in that Ministry, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew South-East and then

Honourable Member for St. Andrew North-East, who both occupied the position of the Minster for Youth and Sports for several years.

Mr. Speaker, the future of our country belongs to our young people and, therefore, unless, we prepare them now to take on the responsibility of governing the affairs of this country we would be seen as abdicating our responsibility and will not be forgiven by future Generations. The seeds that we plant today, Mr. Speaker, will determine the quality of fruits that we reap and we harvest tomorrow. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, spending monies on our young people cannot be considered, as monies wasted, as been said in some quarters, but monies well invested. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, all of the major initiatives being undertaken by the Ministry of Youth and Sports are geared towards preparing our young people to take on the mantle of leadership, Mr. Speaker, when some of us would have exited the scene and maybe not too long from now.

Mr. Speaker, it is said that to whom much is given, much is expected. As the Ministry that is entrusted with the Portfolio for Youth Development and Sports, we are, indeed expected to deliver in an effective and efficient manner. Mr. Speaker, I can say, without any doubt, that in the Ministry of Youth and Sports, we have indeed, delivered in 2017, and we will continue to deliver in 2018. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, for the fiscal year, 2017 the Ministry was given the budgetary allocation of $34.2 m. For 2018, the allocation was increased to $41.8 m, or almost a 22% increase.

Mr. Speaker, I can say, with some degree of confidence, that the Ministry of Youth and Sports is indeed poised to take off with tremendous opportunities. The Ministry has therefore highlighted seven (7) strategic Priority Areas that will help focus its resources, as well as drive the work for the period 2018 and beyond. One such area of focus, Mr. Speaker, is ensuring that the Grenadian youths are trained and certified while creating the opportunities for them to acquire the tools necessary for meaningful participation in Nation building.

Motions

Mr. Speaker, in 2017, the Ministry focused on three (3) strategic outcomes: Empowering our Young People; Health and Excellence through Sports and Internal Services and Processes.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at 'Empowering of our Young People.' As I said, this is critical, because unless we empower them, they will not have the tools that would be required for Nation building. Mr. Speaker, the primary source, the main method of empowering of our young people is through the programme, which we call the New IMANI Programme. This Programme, Mr. Speaker, has engaged three thousand, seven hundred and thirty-five (3,735) young people since its inception a few years ago. And, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the trainees, who are part of this Programme, we can see that they come from a very wide spectrum of the Grenadian population. Many of them, Mr. Speaker, can be classified, as school dropouts. 90% of the trainees in the programme, Mr. Speaker, did not go beyond the Secondary School Education. But, some, Mr. Speaker, do have Bachelor's Degree, therefore, you can see the widespread of the people who are involved in this very important Programme.

Mr. Speaker, the Programme has engaged 62% of these young people with training opportunities within the Public Sector, while 38% were assigned to the Private Sector. Mr. Speaker, it is important to note, and this is very, very, very important, that of the three thousand, seven hundred and thirty-five (3,735) young people, who have been engaged in the Programme, two thousand, eight hundred and sixty-two (2,862), or 76.6% have since received CVQ Certification, Mr. Speaker, or in the process of receiving CVQ Certification. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, this is a very important achievement, because it means that once you are equipped with a CVQ certification, you are now qualified to access job opportunities in any country within CARICOM.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, of the total engaged in the Programme, two hundred and sixty (260) have received fulltime employment, while fifty-four (54) of them, Mr. Speaker, have received fulltime scholarships, or training opportunities. Mr. Speaker, we can see from these statistics that this Programme is, indeed, a very, very important one, equipping our young people with the tools of the trade to make their contribution to Nation building.

Mr. Speaker, from 2013 to now, this Government has spent in excess of one hundred and twenty-nine million dollars ($129 m) in Youth Development, in all aspects, at a per capita spending of thirty-four thousand dollars ($34,000.00) per training, in total, Mr. Speaker, which is about the National per capita average.

As a Social Development Poverty Alleviation Programme, Mr. Speaker, the IMANI Programme can be considered to be very effective, as it gives vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and school dropouts a second chance. And, we know, Mr. Speaker, the importance of getting a second chance, because I have taught in a school where the Principal got a second chance. He came to that school, working as a Painter, and was given the opportunity to attend classes, and ultimately he became the Principal of that same school, because he was given a second chance. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I do believe that once we can give our young people that second chance, that second opportunity to make an impression, a positive impression, Mr. Speaker, our world would be a better one. The Programme has also introduced trainees to the world of work, and has provided useful experience, from which opportunities for employment has emerged.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the positive outcomes from the IMANI Programme, the Ministry of Youth also achieved the following objectives in 2017: the implementation of the HOPE Pilot Project, where over four hundred (400) trainees are beneficiaries of that Programme. We have also seen, Mr. Speaker, the implementation of the Youth Enterprise Initiative, and under this Initiative, Mr. Speaker, eighty (80) trainees received training in Small Business Management. Thirty (30) small businesses, Mr. Speaker, were registered, that is to say those who exited the Programme were able to establish their own small business and nineteen (19) small business loans were approved. Again, Mr. Speaker, opportunities for our young people to create their own economic space.

Also, Mr. Speaker, we have seen, over the past year, the provision of development training to four hundred and fifty (450) youth and Youth Leaders through the National Youth Liaison Desk and implementation of the Fostering of Level-headed Youth, or what you call the FLY Project in Carriacou and Petite Martinique, St. Mark, St.

George South, where sixty-five (65) young people, Mr. Speaker, participated in the project.

In going forward, Mr. Speaker, 2018 and beyond, the Priority Areas earmarked for Youth Development include the continuation of the New IMANI Programme and the HOPE Pilot. It is our intention to continue the programme, Mr. Speaker, beyond what currently exist; implementation of 'M-POWER', which is a Training Programme, particularly, Mr. Speaker, for young men at risk, those we see on the Block, Dropouts, those who might be inclined to get involved in anti-social behaviour, Mr. Speaker. The intention is to get them back on the right track, by exposing them to opportunities for training and to develop their skills, and to create their own economic space, Mr. Speaker, so they can become worthwhile and productive citizens of this country.

Mr. Speaker, also for 2018, we intend to see a continuation and implementation of a number of Youth Rehabilitation Projects; continuation of Project Reach. Again, a project designed to assist our young people, who might be exposed to deviant behaviour; and this Project is funded by the CDB, and it is specifically, Mr. Speaker, for those, who have been incarcerated, and need to get back into society. This is a very, very important programme, Mr. Speaker, because we know that once these young people are out there without any form of training or rehabilitation, they become a risk to society, and none of us would be secure unless, Mr. Speaker, we know that something is happening, positively, to these young people, so they would not become a threat to society.

There would also be, Mr. Speaker, in 2018, the continuation of the FLY Project, as more communities would be involved in the programme. And, then we would see the implementation of Project ACE (Actively Committed and Empowered). Again, a project funded by the Caribbean Development Bank, which would provide training for twenty-five (25) 'At Risk Youth', between the ages of twenty-one (21) and thirty (30) in the community of Mt. Horne, in particular.

There will also be, Mr. Speaker, the continuation of the Grenada Youth Enterprise Initiative and special emphasis will be placed on implementation of a Young Farmers Cooperative in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of

Youth. Also, Mr. Speaker, the passing of National Youth Legislation. I do not believe that the Youth Policy is already enshrined in Law, but that is something we have to look at. And, then, Mr. Speaker, we would also look at the continuation of training opportunities for young Leaders and Youth oriented Organisations facilitated through the Youth Liaison Desk.

Mr. Speaker, in essence, we are saying that, we are not giving up on our young people. We do understand the important contribution that our young people can make and are making to National Development. And, if we do believe, Mr. Speaker, that the future, indeed, belongs to them, then we have no choice, but to invest in these young people, so, at least, they can become the Leaders and Movers, Mr. Speaker, of tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the Division of Sports within the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Mr. Speaker, 2017 was indeed, a very good year for Sports in Grenada, as our Sportsmen and women excelled, not only locally, but regionally, in various fields, Mr. Speaker. But, first permit me to extend congratulations to the winners of the Republic Bank Right Start Secondary School Football Competition. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, I looked at all three (3) games, and the finals between Mc Donald College and SAASS was a classical one. It was excitement from the beginning to the end, but ultimately Mc Donald College prevailed. I don't want to sound bias here, but Mc Donald College was the ultimate winner in the Boys Under-19 Competition, while SAASS retained the Championship in the Girls Division, and I was pleasantly surprised that Grenada Seventh Day Comprehensive, which was called the Mt. Rose Seventh Day, or whatever name you called the School, but they emerged the winner in the Under-15 Boys. **(Applause)** You know, and this is important, because really, it's a school you would not associate with winning a Football Competition. But, it tells you, Mr. Speaker, that something is happening in the Rural Sector. **(Applause)** Look at the schools that emerged winners, Mt. Rose, Mc Donald College, SAASS. It tells you something, Mr. Speaker, about development of Sports in our rural communities and the need to further develop the Sporting Infrastructure and the Club Structure, Mr. Speaker, in those areas,

because they are making their mark, not wishing to underestimate the performances of the schools in what you call the St. George area.

Mr. Speaker, still with Football, Grenada, for the third time, emerged winner of the WIFA Men's Tournament that was held here in Grenada, Mr. Speaker. Three (3) times winner of the Windward Islands Football Association Men's Tournament, and we want to commend our footballers for winning that, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** Their counterpart, the Women's Tournament was held in St. Vincent, and, again, Grenada, our young women, emerged winner of that Competition, as well, for the first time. **(Applause)**

The 2018 CONCACAF qualifying game that was held, I think, it was in Trinidad & Tobago, our young women were barely edged out, Mr. Speaker, from qualifying for the CONCACAF Champion, based on gold average, testimony to the Right Start Competition, the Secondary School, because that is the nursery, Mr. Speaker, for our young girls and boys, to develop their Sporting talents, so we were edged out. But, I believe next time around, Grenada will qualify for that championship.

Mr. Speaker, in Athletics, 2017 was a spectacular year for Athletics, as Grenada hosted the inaugural Grenada Invitational, Mr. Speaker. And, this was an event, as we all know where more than one hundred (100) of the top Athletes in the world came to Grenada, little Grenada and showcased their talents, including, as we know, Lashawn Merritt, Veronica Campbell-Brown, many of the other Stars that graced the global arena of Athletics. They were here, in Grenada, Mr. Speaker, as part of the first Invitational. Several of the Athletes who took part, that is to show the quality, Mr. Speaker, several of them went on to the IAF Championship in England, where six (6), eventually, were Medallists.

But, what was significant for us, Mr. Speaker, from an economic point-of-view, was that the event was broadcast live, globally, on ESPN. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, we were able to benefit from that global exposure. And, even the Grenada Tourism Authority, Mr. Speaker, reported that, as a result, I am not saying it is 100% correlated, but, as a result of that event, visitor arrivals in 2017, for that particular month, was 20% more than for the previous month, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** So, Sports/Tourism, Mr.

Speaker, will be a big thing for Grenada and can be a big thing, once we have the appropriate infrastructure and organisational capabilities in place.

Mr. Speaker, only last week, the 2018 Invitational was launched, and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it will be a bigger and better Event than in 2017, because, Mr. Speaker, some of the top performers, including Justin Gathlin, has already booked and confirmed that he would be in Grenada for the 2018 Invitational, and we know that he edged out Usain Bolt in the World Championship, so he would be here. In addition, Mr. Speaker, for the first time, Cuba will be sending a contingent of Athletes to participate in the 2018 Invitational, and, therefore, we can look forward to bigger and better things, come April, 2018, when the second Invitational will be staged.

Mr. Speaker, in Track and Field, again, OECS Championship 2017 hosted here, Grenada was second, and I am hoping that next time we could return to our rightful position of first. And, we have seen, in Athletics, Mr. Speaker, our own Anderson Peters performing exceptionally well, again, and I have no doubt that not too long from now, he will achieve his ultimate goal.

In Netball, Mr. Speaker, for the first time, Grenada participated in the International Netball Federation World Cup Youth Tournament that was held in Botswana. But, unfortunately our girls got a beating, but the exposure was good for them, good exposure, Mr. Speaker, and next time around, I have no doubt, they would do much better. But, Mr. Speaker, on the Regional scene, no-one can beat our girls, because they emerged winners of the ECCB/OECS Netball Tournament, which was hosted here.

In Cricket, Mr. Speaker, Grenada was host to the game between the Windward Island Volcanoes and the Leeward Island Hurricanes. Three (3) Grenadians, Mr. Speaker, were selected for the West Indies Under-19 One-Day International Tour of South Africa and Zimbabwe. And, Mr. Speaker, big news for Carriacou, Emmanuel Stewart has been selected to captain the West Indies Under-19 Team **(applause)** in the ICC Youth World Championship, scheduled for New Zealand; little Carriacou, Emmanuel Stewart, Captain of the West Indies Under-19 Team. And, we see André

Fletcher continuing to make his mark in Pakistan Super League, and, again, Mr. Speaker, he is out to achieve great things.

In Swimming, Mr. Speaker, this year, Grenada won the Championship for the third consecutive time, our young swimmers. Three (3) times in a row, Grenada has won that championship, and, overall, **(applause)** sixteen (16) times; sixteen (16) victories, OECS Swimming. Notwithstanding the limited, or what I would say, inadequate conditions in which they have to practise, a twenty-five meter Pool, as opposed to the standard, fifty (50) meter, which we do not have. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, with such good performance, I believe they can make a reasonable request to have an Olympic size Swimming Pool here in Grenada. And, Mr. Speaker, we will not forget and we cannot forget the exploits of Damian Daniel in Body Building, dominating every Tournament that he has participated in, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** So, again, we want to commend Damian Daniel for his excellent performance in the area of Body Building.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of achievements of the Division of Sports in 2017, is the completion of the rehabilitation of the Cuthbert Peter's Park and the Fond Recreation Ground, that was one of the achievements. We have also seen, Mr. Speaker, improved maintenance work at Progress Park; Queen's Park Ground Two; Morne Rouge and La Sagesse Grounds. We have seen, in 2017, the introduction of Coaching Programmes in a number of our schools and communities, the successful planning and hosting and participation in Regional and International Games like the Grenada Invitational, which I mentioned before, Whitsuntide Invitational, OECS Track and Field Championship and many other programmes that were undertaken in 2017.

Mr. Speaker, for 2018, a Work Programme of the Division of Sports will include refurbishment and lighting of La Sagesse and the Grenada National Stadium; and on this one, Mr. Speaker, just let me say a few words; the lighting of the Stadium. The funding is already available, contract signed, it is all a matter now of doing the installation of the lights. But, this, Mr. Speaker, will be a precondition, a prerequisite for any Night Games to take place at the Stadium, and Grenada has put in a bid to host Games in the Women's World Cup Tournament, scheduled for 2018, here in the

Caribbean, and to host any of those Games, Mr. Speaker, we have to have a lighted Stadium, and that is why, Mr. Speaker, we will be moving, speedily, to ensure that the National Stadium will be lighted, **(applause)** so, at least, we can host the Games in that Tournament. So, Mr. Speaker, 2018 is shaping up to be a big year, a very big year for Sports in Grenada, with the 2018 Invitational and the possibility of hosting Games in the Women's Tournament. So, Mr. Speaker, 2018 is shaping up to be a big year, a very big year for Sports in Grenada, with the 2018 Invitational and the possibility of hosting Games in the Women's Tournament that would be taking place later on in the year.

We will continue with the pitch management and maintenance of the major Cricket Facilities, like the Fond, Roy St. John, Queen's Park, Plains, Victoria, La Sagesse and Cuthbert Peter's Park. We would continue with the Sports Development Programmes that we have initiated in our various schools and communities, and, Mr. Speaker, we would establish an Operating Manual for policies and procedures for the Division of Sports. Again, Mr. Speaker, this is critical, because we have seen certain developments, certain activities that may not be compatible with the objectives of the Ministry of Sports, and, therefore, we want to ensure that we have a Manual that will detail exactly how we see Sporting Activities going on. For example, our collaboration with the Ministry of Education, with regards to some of the Sporting activities, like the Right Start Competition. There must be some element of collaboration that will ensure that whatever takes place is consistent with our Policies and Programmes. And, also, Mr. Speaker, we look at expanding the Elite Athlete Programme, as well as, as I said before, reviewing our National Sports Policy.

Mr. Speaker, this concludes my presentation from the Ministry of Youth and Sports. How much more time do I have, Mr. Speaker, about an hour more?

Mr. Speaker: About that.

Hon. Anthony Boatswain: About that, great. Mr. Speaker, I have also been entrusted with the responsibility of presenting the report for the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development. But, before I do that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to

turn to my Constituency. And, Mr. Speaker, first of all I will like to say thanks to my constituents of St. Patrick West for giving me the opportunity to serve them in the Parliament of this country for yet another term and to be their Representative for almost fourteen (14) years, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to working with them so, at least, we can continue the significant development agenda, continue with the major plans and programmes that we do have that can transform the economic and social landscape not only of the Constituency of St. Patrick West, but the Parish of St. Patrick, as a whole, Mr. Speaker, because when it comes to development, it is difficult to distinguish St. Patrick East from St. Patrick West. We look at the Parish of St. Patrick, Mr. Speaker. We have been designated one of the poorest Parishes in Grenada, but I am quite confident that five (5) years from now we will be almost at the top, and I would like to pull my dear sister along with us, we're moving together, Mr. Speaker as part of the Western Corridor.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the challenges that we have faced and continue to face, I can say, without any doubt, that we have delivered much in the Constituency of St. Patrick West over the past year, Mr. Speaker. And, I will like to thank, in advance, our Prime Minister and Minister for Finance for making the resources available. Without such resources, Mr. Speaker, we could not do much in the Constituency, so I want to express thanks, Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Minister for Finance.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start with the whole issue of Human Resource, Education, because as I've said before Mr. Speaker, there is a positive link between education, our human resource and national development, and unless we put money into education, development of our human resource, Mr. Speaker, our national development could be restricted. And, in this regard, Mr. Speaker, I wish to state that for us in St. Patrick West for 2017, over one hundred and nine thousand dollars ($109,000.00) was spent in assisting our students to obtain an education. That included, Mr. Speaker, the payment of fees for CXC examinations; **(applause)**assistance for them to attend SGU, Mr. Speaker, Online Education, Mr. Speaker, those who cannot afford to pay the three/four thousand dollars; that was paid for them, Mr. Speaker, by Government. And, Transportation Allowance/Assistance; many of our students who attend SGU, TAMCC

without the assistance given to them to pay for their transportation, Mr. Speaker, they would not be able to attend, and, therefore, high commendation must be given to this Government for assisting our students to obtain an education.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, a number of students in the Constituency received full time scholarships to undertake higher education not only in the Region or locally, but externally. And, I want to make this point, Mr. Speaker, I want to make this point, because we know that the majority of our young people, who receive those scholarships could not or cannot afford to pay for their education. And, in my village alone, Marli/La Mode, Mr. Speaker, in that village alone, there are four (4) young ladies, who have been awarded scholarships to pursue studies in the field of Medicine. So, it means that in five (5) years' time, Mr. Speaker, in this tiny village, you will have four, plus one, five Medical Doctors, Mr. Speaker, in a village that doesn't have more than two hundred (200) people, **(applause)** something that is unheard of; that so many of our young people are being given the opportunity to become qualified in areas like Medicine, Engineering and other fields of specialisation, thanks, Mr. Speaker, to this New National Party Government and its concern for the poor and vulnerable people, Mr. Speaker, in our society. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, under the Necessitous Fund, forty-four thousand dollars ($44,000.00), Mr. Speaker, was spent assisting over forty (40) persons who could not afford. Some of them cannot afford to buy some of the basic things in life; Government has come to their assistance.

Under the Special Project Fund, Mr. Speaker and I must, again, commend the Minister for Finance for establishing the Special Project Fund, because it has proven to be a very effective means of delivering services, Mr. Speaker, to our people, particularly in the rural areas, **(applause)** a very effective mechanism, Mr. Speaker. Because this is a Fund that reaches out to the ordinary people, the poor people; give them a job, give them the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, that otherwise they would not have obtained. And, in my Constituency alone, Mr. Speaker, over four hundred and six thousand dollars ($406,000.00) was spent under Special Projects to undertake a number of small initiatives. **(Applause)** Time will not allow me to elaborate on all of the initiatives

undertaken under the Special Project Fund, Mr. Speaker. But, I can do say that job opportunities were created, the lives of our people have improved, the quality of life, access to homes, Mr. Speaker, foot paths, retaining walls, Mr. Speaker, all of these contribute in one way or the other to improving the quality of life of our people, Mr. Speaker, and we cannot underestimate the significance of this Fund and the contribution that it has made to the Constituency of St. Patrick West.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, the Ministry of Works, and, again, I must commend the Minister for his support; a number of roads were built, constructed in the Constituency. Again, I will not elaborate, but in excess of seven hundred thousand dollars ($700,000.00) Mr. Speaker, on roads, access roads. Some of the roads, Mr. Speaker, were not motorable for more than eighty (80) years.

There is one road, in particular, I want to make mention of, Mr. Speaker, we used to call it the Tulumba Road, for eighty five (85) years no traffic on that road, now Tulumba Road is almost a highway, and we have renamed that road, Mr. Speaker, in honour of Grenada's first and only international, or I won't say international, someone who never played Netball on a professional level. The first person to do so, Mr. Speaker, from St. Patrick, first Professional Netball Player, Lottysha Cato, and that road was renamed in her honour, Mr. Speaker. Again, it tells you of our concern for the development of the infrastructure in that Constituency. Mr. Speaker, much more to come, much more.

The people of Darvey, Mr. Speaker, they have been calling for lockers to safeguard and protect their equipment. They have received their lockers, Mr. Speaker, and washrooms, thanks to this New National Party Administration and the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF). So, now they do not have to worry about their engines and equipment being stolen, because they do have their lockers and we will move, Mr. Speaker, into a second phase to ensure that eventually cold storage facilities will be installed, so, at least they can store their fish, as well, Mr. Speaker.

We have seen the fencing of the Chantimelle Playing Field. The Mt. Rich Playing Field, Mr. Speaker, is now under the programme of upgrading, Mr. Speaker. The people of Chantimelle, for years, they have been clamouring for a Bus Shelter. Thanks

to this Administration, they do have a Bus Shelter in the main Junction, Mr. Speaker. It is something that we have to be thankful for. **(Applause)** They have struggled for it and now they got it, and I want to thank the Legal Department, the former Attorney General, because he was very instrumental in going through the legal processes, because there was stiff opposition to that Bus Shed being constructed. **(Applause)** The Attorney General spent some time, Mr. Speaker, with us and we were able to get the Bus Shed, so I cannot forget his contribution in that regard, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I spoke about the IMANI Programme, as a whole, but in the Constituency of St. Patrick West, we have one hundred and eighty seven (187) persons, who are presently enrolled under the Programme, Mr. Speaker. Twenty (20) persons, so far have received permanent employment. Again, Mr. Speaker, as I said the Programme is establishing the framework. It is creating the platform from which young people can move on and up, that is why we have to give our full support to a programme like the new IMANI Programme, Mr. Speaker. And, five (5) persons have also received fulltime scholarship under the Programme, and one hundred and twenty-two (122) out of the one hundred and eight-seven (187) have received their CVQs, the significance, Mr. Speaker, of that programme.

Mr. Speaker, under the SEED Programme, and my colleague Minister who is responsible for SEED is always taunting me that I am getting too much, I am getting too much SEED. But, Mr. Speaker, the more seed you plant the more fruits you might get, so the more seed I get, the more fruits I will eat. So, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, give us more SEED. We are doing well, I must, indeed say. I do not want to give the figures, because other Constituencies might become a bit envious. But, again, we are doing well, because I have a SEED Officer, who is hard working, very dynamic and she is primarily responsible for all of the SEED that we got, so far, and I want to give her some special commendation for what we have achieved under the SEED Programme, Mr. Speaker.

Uniform Assistance as we have said before, Mr. Speaker, while we support the free Schoolbook Programme and we will continue with that programme that's under another Ministry, but we also believe that to fully equip a child for school, that child will

need not only the books, but you must give them clothing, Mr. Speaker, you must give them Transport Allowance, Mr. Speaker. And that is why I am saying, that our programme to assist our children is a far more comprehensive programme, Mr. Speaker, than what was being given by the other Government. Because while they focused only on the books and books not only for children who could afford the books, Mr. Speaker, they neglected to give those who cannot afford a meal in the morning, those who cannot afford a shoe, they did not give them that assistance. This Government, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the books is giving Transport Allowance, Uniform Allowance and all other allowances, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the poor and vulnerable students **(applause)** in our country can afford an education, Mr. Speaker, and that is the big difference.

The Debushing Programme, Mr. Speaker, which we know is a seasonal programme, but one that is significant for us in the rural communities, because our people depend on the debushing for a source of income, in addition to being an environmentally friendly activity. And, here, Mr. Speaker, for this year over one million, three hundred and eighty thousand dollars ($1,380,000) Mr. Speaker, have been expended under the Debushing Programme, or will be for this year, and over two thousand, two hundred and nineteen (2,219), Mr. Speaker, of our people will receive some form of short term employment.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is important, because this is money that will be circulated in the rural economy, and once money is circulated in the rural economy, Mr. Speaker, you know that you have a sustainable economy, because when poor people get money they cannot afford to save it, you know, they spend everything and it's more money in circulation through the multiplier effect. So, the more we can spend, Mr. Speaker, in the rural economy, the greater will be the level of circulation to the multiplier impact in our rural economy, so more for the rural economy, Mr. Speaker, and not less.

Mr. Speaker, in the Housing Programme, one hundred and five (105) persons, Mr. Speaker, was approved for Housing Assistance. However, Mr. Speaker, seventy-five (75), only seventy-five received and we have thirty (30) on the waiting list, and they are on the waiting list not because the Government does not have the resources, it is

because the suppliers cannot provide enough material, Mr. Speaker, there is always a shortage, and that is creating a backlog. So, those who have not received materials, we want them to understand that it is not the fault of the Government, but the limitation of the suppliers in bringing in enough material, so, at least, there could be speedy disbursement. And, Mr. Speaker, we are hoping that this could be addressed in the not too distant future, because it is creating some form of discomfort to those who are waiting for these materials.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, my colleague from St. Patrick East spoke about that major project, that major project in the North, and again I do not want to separate St. Patrick East and West, because, geographically, it is located in the East, but, demographically, it serves the whole of St. Patrick, **(applause)** and, therefore, I will not make any distinction, as to whether it's East or West.

That project, Mr. Speaker, a project that was condemned, a project that the NDC Government said was too big for St. Patrick is now making the greatest impact, Mr. Speaker, and not only St. Patrick, but in Grenada, as a whole. The initial intent, Mr. Speaker, was to create a breakwater to provide effective protection against coastal erosion at Lower Sauteurs.

To date, Mr. Speaker, this Government has spent in excess of four million dollars ($4 m) to construct one thousand, five hundred (1,500) feet of the breakwater. But, in order to provide even more effective protection to the coastal area and to give a calmer environment to the fisher folk, it has been agreed that the breakwater will extend for another one hundred and seventy (170) feet; that will cost in excess of $1.8 m, Mr. Speaker. So, we are talking about $6.4 m to construct that breakwater. And, again, Mr. Speaker, let me commend the Minister for Finance, because I recall, when he visited the area and he saw the extent of the erosion that was taking place and the threat to existing buildings and property, he came back and said we have to find the money to do that project, Mr. Speaker, and he was able to use his magic wand and come up with the money to do the breakwater. So, for those who say that the breakwater is being financed from some external sources, they are dead wrong. The financing is 100% local financing, Mr. Speaker, **(applause)** 100% local financing; a great sacrifice, but a

needed sacrifice, Mr. Speaker, because we do understand the consequences that would have flowed, as a result of not having that project.

But, not only has the breakwater provided that effective level of protection, but it has created, Mr. Speaker, what we now called 'The Wonder of the North'; a beautiful beach, **(applause)** one of the most beautiful and most used recreational area. They call it the Breakwater Beach, or whatever name they call it. And, you know what? I listened to an advertisement, recently, you know; these guys, they condemned the breakwater, they said it's a mud jetty, they say it was too big for St. Patrick and you know they are the first to organise fund raising activity on the breakwater? **(Applause)** Can you imagine that? The same guys, who condemned the project, they are the first to organise major fund raising, all of a sudden. You see lack of vision? Lack of vision, Mr. Speaker, is something that those guys... They don't have vision. They have the vision now to see that it exist, but they did not have the vision to contemplate the creation of what they now want to enjoy. And, Mr. Speaker, I cannot leave out the Minister for Works, because without his expertise, without his guidance, Mr. Speaker, his technical guidance, the project would not have come on stream. **(Applause)**

So, both the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Works, Mr. Speaker, I must, indeed say, must be given maximum praise for that project that now exists. But, Mr. Speaker, as we have said before, this is only the first phase. What we have created there is phase one. The ultimate objective, Mr. Speaker, is to create a world class Yacht Marina in Sauteurs that will create hundreds of jobs for the people, Mr. Speaker, that will transform the northern part of Grenada, commercially, economically, Mr. Speaker, and otherwise.

That project, again, and we must know that, the EXIM Bank of China had agreed to provide the financing for the project, one hundred and fifty million dollars ($150 m). They were so convinced of the viability of the project that they allowed one of their local Companies to even start to go ahead and do work to create that Marina, Mr. Speaker, without the project being formally approved; that was the level of confidence that the Government of China and the EXIM Bank showed. But, when the NDC Government came in, in 2008, they abandoned the project and over two million dollars ($2 m) that

was spent, Mr. Speaker, just went down the drain; lack of vision, Mr. Speaker. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.' But, Mr. Speaker, as long as this NNP Government is in Office, the people will not perish, because we have a Leader and we have a team with the vision to understand what is necessary for the development of our country, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to be said, but, finally, I want to make mention of another major initiative, another major initiative that would be coming to St. Patrick, again, not East or West, but St. Patrick. Mr. Speaker, we have said over and over, and I have mentioned it here, the unemployment level among our young people is still unacceptable, although we know that it has dropped and overall the unemployment level has dropped to 24%. But, still, among our young people, it is too high, and, therefore, this Government has been looking at creative ways of reducing the level of unemployment, especially among our young people in the Rural Communities. And, I want to make mention here, Mr. Speaker, of one project that will be coming on stream, very soon, to create the much needed employment opportunities for the people of St. Patrick and maybe for Grenada, as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, recently, this Government, again, under the leadership of our Prime Minister has taken a very bold decision, because this offer that I am talking about was made to the previous NDC Administration, and in their lack of vision, they did not accept it, they did not follow through on it, and we wonder why unemployment was so high during the period of the NDC Administration.

This Government has taken the bold decision to purchase a three-story Furniture Factory building, owned by the Mc Leish Family and mortgaged to the Grenada Development Bank. And, it has been agreed, Mr. Speaker, that this Furniture Factory that is located in the Mt. Rich/Snell Hall area will be transformed into a National Centre for Skills Training of our young people, Mr. Speaker, a National Centre. But, even more, it will be used as a National Centre for the production and repair of all furniture required in our schools throughout Grenada, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** And, we know that the demand for the school furniture is a million dollar plus business. Therefore, we are looking at a Productive Enterprise and not one that will be dependent on

Government subsistence, Mr. Speaker. It would be self-sustaining. And, we are soon to begin the Training Programme, where over sixty (60) young people will be trained in anticipation of some of them getting employment in that facility once it begins early next year. **(Applause)**

This is a Government with vision, Mr. Speaker, a Government that is concerned about the welfare of our people, the poor and vulnerable and the unemployed. The potential spinoff, Mr. Speaker, is great, because we are talking about furniture making for schools, we are talking about logging, we are talking about transportation, we are talking about actual production, we are talking about marketing, so many activities, so many spinoffs, Mr. Speaker, from an activity like that. I anticipate hundreds of jobs, but I do not want to be selfish, the Centre will not be only for St. Patrick, it will be a National Training Centre, so any one from any part of Grenada wishing to be trained in the modern art of furniture making will be able to come to that Centre, right there in Mt. Rich and be trained, Mr. Speaker. That is what I call a Government of vision, a Government that understands the need to create meaningful opportunities for our young people.

So, when we combine that, Mr. Speaker, with all of the employment opportunities that the Prime Minister and Finance for Finance announced in his Budget Statement, when we put all of that together, Mr. Speaker, in a year or two from now I can see unemployment in Grenada falling below the 20% mark, **(applause)** far below the 20% mark, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, and those who are talking about giving them a chance and they have no plan, they have no vision… We're not, Mr. Speaker, we are not concerned about chance, we are concerned about actual activity, Mr. Speaker, doing things, getting work done, so at least our people could receive much benefits.

Mr. Speaker, time is running out and I have been also given the responsibility to present on behalf of the Ministry of Education, and I do not want to do them any injustice, because that's the Ministry I was in charge of for the past four and a half years. But, Mr. Speaker, in anticipation of the limited time it was agreed that I would speak on the Ministry, proper, and my colleague Representative from St. George South, will look at some of the performance of the Statutory Bodies, which fall under the ambit

of the Ministry of Education. So, she will look at the report on the T. A. Marryshow Community College, National Accreditation Board and the National Training Agency, and I will just focus, Mr. Speaker, on the Central Ministries.

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to highlight some of the Ministries most significant achievements for 2017, and these include, Mr. Speaker, Schools' Infrastructure, Teacher Training, Scholarships Award, Incentives to our Teachers, the Education Management Information Systems that is being implemented, or ICT Infusion and Institutional Strengthening of the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Speaker, as was said before, there is a very strong positive correlation between Human Resource Development and National Development. That, Mr. Speaker, is well-established, well-known. And, therefore, if we are to ensure National Development, we must, Mr. Speaker, invest in our Human Resource; that is critical. There is no two-way about it, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, investing in our Human Resource also requires that we provide the enabling environment, the physical environment in which our teachers must teach and our students must learn, because if the environment is not conducive, Mr. Speaker, we know that there would not be any effective teaching and learning process taking place, Mr. Speaker, and that is why this Government is placing a lot of emphasis on the improvement of the physical infrastructure of our schools, to make the environment a friendlier one and a more conducive one, Mr. Speaker.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that with much need assistance from participating Agencies, such as the BNTF, OPEC Fund, OFID and the Caribbean Development Bank, we were able to deliver on our promise, as it relates to providing a more enabling environment for teaching and learning. For example, Mr. Speaker, students at St. Patrick's Anglican Primary School, St. Mary's R.C., St. Dominic's R.C. Primary, Paraclete Government and Mt. Moritz Anglican have all now returned to fully refurbished school environment, Mr. Speaker, and that is something that is important, **(applause)** as I said we cannot ignore that. Work, Mr. Speaker, has also commenced on the refurbishment of the St. Theresa's R.C. Pre School in

Vincennes and the building of a brand new facility for the Holy Cross R.C. School at Munich.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, works have been completed at the St. George's Methodist and the Constantine Methodist Schools. Mr. Speaker, relocation facilities were completed for Bishop's College in Carriacou and work on the upgrading of that school is expected to commence early next year. To date, Mr. Speaker, in addition to those major works, over five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000.00) have been expended on routine maintenance of our Educational Facilities. And, here I must make mention again, Mr. Speaker, to the contribution being made by the respective Parliamentary Representatives out of their Special Projects Funds, because not all of this come from the Central Government fund, but from the Constituency funds, where they had to use those funds to assist, in terms of strategic interventions, where necessary, to ensure that the environment is conducive.

I know that some MPs have used their Special Projects funds to buy stoves, refrigerators and do repairs to schools, because at times, you cannot wait on the Central Government's bureaucracy to provide those facilities, and they must be commended, Mr. Speaker, for their contribution.

Mr. Speaker, over the four-year period that we have been in Office, in excess of thirty-five million dollars ($35 m) have been spent on schools' rehabilitation, Mr. Speaker, a major achievement that we cannot ignore.

Professional Development of our Teachers, Mr. Speaker, is also critical, because to deliver an effective Teaching Programme, you must have qualified teachers. And, I am pleased to state, Mr. Speaker, that in 2017, a total of twenty-five (25) Teachers were selected and are now pursuing a two-year Training Programme in Early Childhood Education at the T.A. Marryshow Community College. These teachers, Mr. Speaker, will receive their salaries for the duration of their Study Leave, and in most instances, their replacement in their respective schools is also being facilitated.

Within the past four (4) years, Mr. Speaker, provisions were made for a total of one hundred and forty-three (143) teachers to pursue fulltime studies at the Teacher Education Department of the T.A. Marryshow Community College. This training, Mr.

Speaker, included sixty-seven (67) in Primary Education, fifty-eight (58) in Secondary Education and twenty-five (25) in Early Childhood Education. The total expenditure for the past four (4) years, by way of salaries for teachers, whilst on full-time training, through this medium, was approximately seven million dollars ($7 m) Mr. Speaker. In addition, a significant number of teachers are now given time release to pursue further studies at St. George's University.

Scholarship Award, Mr. Speaker; in 2007, a total of two hundred and seven (207) scholarships, full-time scholarships, Mr. Speaker, have been awarded to our students at an approximate cost of over forty-eight million dollars, Mr. Speaker; a lot of money for the scholarship, the most being awarded for any year, so far, in our history of awarded scholarships, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the Awarding Agencies and those who supported, St. George's University, Mr. Speaker, had almost ninety-seven (97), supporting those awards. The Government of China contributed twenty-seven (27); Cuba, twelve (12), then we had five (5) Island scholarships; and then we have what we call the economic cost that this Government must bear for some of our students at UWI. And, the economic cost, Mr. Speaker, will translate to about 80% of the tuition fee, which is a lot of money for us, but we have to do it, Mr. Speaker, and that is a contribution that we cannot ignore; the economic cost of bursary for our students at those institutions, Mr. Speaker.

When we make a comparison between what was granted between 2008, 2012, 2013 to now, between 2008 to 2012, Mr. Speaker, we had six hundred and ninety (690) scholarships awarded, at an approximate cost of seventy-three million dollars ($73 m) compared to nine hundred and thirty (930), Mr. Speaker, at an approximate cost of one hundred and eighty-five million dollars ($185 m) between 2013 and 2017, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** You can see what we are doing, in terms of providing scholarships, Mr. Speaker, and opportunities...

(Time Bell rings)

Hon. Anthony Boatswain: I just need about five/ten more minutes and I could wrap up.

Mr. Speaker: You have fifteen (15) minutes.

Hon. Anthony Boatswain: Mr. Speaker, teacher incentives, again, you cannot ignore what teachers received in addition to their regular salary, which is called Incentive Allowances to teachers. And, in 2007, Mr. Speaker, a total of four hundred and seventy thousand dollars ($470,000.00), Mr. Speaker, was paid out in the form of Incentive Allowances to our teachers, in allowances alone, Mr. Speaker.

Regularisation; Mr. Speaker, this Government inherited an Education System where over six hundred (600) of our Teachers were classified as temporary for various reasons. Many of these teachers, Mr. Speaker, were faced with challenges including the anxiety due to lack of tenure and the ability to access funds for investment, and many of them could not access educational opportunities, or opportunities to further their education, Mr. Speaker, because they were branded as 'Temporary,' they could not go to the bank.

To date, Mr. Speaker, this Administration has regularised the status of over two hundred and seventy-five (275) teachers, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** They have received what is called 'Definitive Appointments in the System.' And, yet, Mr. Speaker, we have more to come, more to come. Very soon, another eighty-five (85) will be regularised in addition to nine (9) Physical Education Teachers, Mr. Speaker. This is a Government that cares about our teachers. The previous Government, they were there; some of them were temporary in the system for over fifteen (15) years and they did nothing, Mr. Speaker, nothing to regularise them. This Government has seen it fit to regularise those teachers' status and will continue to regularise until, ultimately, when they get employment in the Service, it will be through Definitive Appointments. So, we won't have to go through this temporary system anymore, Mr. Speaker. That is the ultimate policy, in terms of moving forward where there will be given Definitive Appointments and not this temporary thing and then waiting to be regularised.

Mr. Speaker, Education Information Management System. Mr. Speaker, when we took over the Ministry of Education, if you wanted to get information on a teacher, or a student, that would take you almost a day or a week, because you had to go through files, maybe some files were old as ten (10), fifteen (15) years, dusty, communication between the Ministry and the schools, very poor, and we thought it fit, Mr. Speaker, to modernise the system of communication and information flow within the Ministry. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, with the assistance of UNESCO, this Government piloted, in 2015, what we call an Education Management Information System where, Mr. Speaker, information, instead of being in a written format on paper, is now being stored in a digital format. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, the records of our teachers and students, when this Pilot Project is complete and when the entire project is complete, will be accessible through the digital format. So, a student entering a school today, you would be able to track that child's performance up to the date that a child exits the Tertiary Institution, at the touch of a button, Mr. Speaker.

Similarly, for the teachers, their performance and their attendance record, everything, Mr. Speaker, will be in a digital format. So, we understand the level of efficiency, the higher level of efficiency that will be gained through the use of this new platform for information storage and retrieval in the Ministry of Education, Mr. Speaker. To date, Mr. Speaker, most of the records for the teachers are on that platform, and we are now partnering with nine (9) schools, the records for students. So, ultimately, Mr. Speaker, all of the records for students and teachers will be in their digital format and therefore, accessing and retrieving communication will be much simpler and more efficient, Mr. Speaker.

Another aspect of the Work Programme of the Ministry that was initiated in 2017 and which will continue is that of Institutional Strengthening, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in this regard, CARICAD, in collaboration with the Department of Public Administration and the Ministry of Education carried out a functional review of twenty-two (22) key positions within four (4) of the Ministry's Department during 2017. Revised job descriptions and recommendations have since been received and implementation of those, Mr. Speaker, has begun.

Additionally, three (3) key Curriculum Officers' posts were filled this year, namely, one for Science, Modern Language and Physical Education. A Creative Arts Officer, a Speech Therapist and an additional Counsellor were also added to the Ministry's staff in 2017. Mr. Speaker, we need to boost up, we had to fill those positions, because if they are not, it means that we will not be delivering in an effective and efficient manner what we ought to deliver to our students, ultimately, at our schools.

Mr. Speaker, in moving forward, the Ministry has been provided with a budget… To carry on its Work Programme for 2018, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has been provided with a budget of one hundred and fifteen million, three hundred and eleven thousand, nine hundred and five dollars ($115,311,905.00), in 2018, as compared to the 2017 allocation of one hundred and four million, twenty-three thousand, three hundred and thirty-four ($104,023,334.00), a 1.1% increase. In essence, there was a slight increase, Mr. Speaker, but nevertheless, sometimes it is not so much the quantity that is involved but the quality of work. And, if we are moving into the area of ICT, the digital age, Mr. Speaker, it means that efficiency gains could be realised through that medium rather than through additional manpower, Mr. Speaker, although we cannot easily substitute one for the other. But, with ICT Infusion, we do expect higher levels of efficiency and output, and not really reflected in higher expenditure levels, Mr. Speaker.

The main priority for the Ministry in 2018, Mr. Speaker, is improving Literacy and Numeracy. Mr. Speaker, this is a burning issue, not only in Grenada, but this is a regional problem that our students are not doing very well in these two (2) critical subjects. And, the results of the recent Examinations, whether it was Cape, CSEC, CPEA, all revealed a level of deficiency, Mr. Speaker, in these two (2) critical areas, and this must be addressed, because these are the two (2) key pillars on which the Education System rest. And, unless these pillars are strengthened, Mr. Speaker, we will not have a very sound Educational System, and that will translate, Mr. Speaker, into a not very sound Economic System, Mr. Speaker. So, emphasis must be given to improving, and there are a number of initiatives, Mr. Speaker, listed here to ensure that we improve Literacy and Numeracy.

Another area, Mr. Speaker, is the Human Resource Development, again, exposing more of our young people to educational opportunities through scholarships, through training initiatives, Mr. Speaker; that is the key recommendation in moving forward. It means that in 2018, we will see more scholarships, based on the initiatives that would be undertaken by the Scholarship Desk, we will see more scholarships being made available for our students, our people, so at least they could improve themselves, get higher education and even improve their skill sets. Because in moving forward, it is not just focusing on pure academics, Mr. Speaker, but we have to focus on Technical and Vocational Education, as well, although the two (2) cannot be separated, because without a good foundation in Math, you cannot be a good Draftsman, or anything. So, we must ensure that. It is a single track with two (2) major components on it, Mr. Speaker, Academics, Technical and Vocational; a single track, but two (2) components; very critical in moving forward, and the continuation of our programme of improving the infrastructure of our schools.

Mr. Speaker, in this regard, I wish to make note of the Grenada Education Enhancement Project, which was funded by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). And, as much was said about this programme before in this House and in other places, the intention is to rebuild a number of Secondary Schools and upgrade existing ones.

Bishop's College, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the design works are already advanced and we should see the actual construction begin sometime next year. The Grenada Seventh Day Adventist Comprehensive School, again, that should be ready to start anytime from now, because I know the design is complete, as well. The relocation of the St. Andrew's Anglican Primary School, well, I do not want to say relocation, Mr. Speaker, because the consultancy, I am not aware of the report of the Consultant, in terms of the feasibility of building the school on the existing site or relocating. But, that is something, Mr. Speaker, that ought to be done, because we know that the school is in a dilapidated condition. I know that it is not conducive for learning, it is not conducive for teaching **(time bell rings)** and, therefore, something ought to be done, either, in terms of relocation or in terms of building on the existing site.

And, we must not forget, Mr. Speaker, the St. Mark's Secondary School, yes, they have a very good Administrative Building **(Applause)**, but when you look at the actual classroom, Mr. Speaker, it is in bad shape. And, in moving forward we have to take on board building some new classroom blocks for the St. Mark's Secondary School and the Samaritan Secondary School seem to have a perennial problem. **(Applause)** This, Mr. Speaker, must be addressed, in moving forward, in addition to the number of other schools that we have down. So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, my colleague, when she comes this afternoon she will present on the Statutory Bodies, because, as you would have seen, time would not have allowed me to look at TAMCC, the National Training Agency and the Accreditation Board.

In wrapping up, Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity, once again, to express my thanks and gratitude. As I said, Mr. Speaker, in everything we do, we have to put God first and I want to thank Him for His continued blessings. To my constituents of St. Patrick West, some of them who are here today, I want to say thank you very much for your support. I look forward to a continuation of that support that you have given to me over the past years. To our Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, my Cabinet colleagues, I want to say thank you very much for your support. To the Permanent Secretary and staff of the Ministry of Education, I want to say thank you for the four and a half years I was your Minister for Education. I said before, and I want to repeat here, that the support I got from that Minister was unsurpassed and it will long remain with me as one of the better Ministries I have worked with in terms of the relationship between myself and the staff.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Youth and Sports, I want to thank you very much for welcoming me, and I am looking forward to that same cordial working relationship that I enjoyed at the Ministry of Education. To all the members of staff in my Constituency, the SEED Officer, the Housing Officer, the Debushing Officer, the IMANI Officer, everyone. My Personal Assistant, I want to say thank you very much for the support you have given to me.

To my friends, relatives, family members, thanks for your support. To you, Mr. Speaker, and your staff, I want to thank you for the efficient way in which you conduct

the affairs of the House. I really enjoy the combination of the seriousness and injection of humour sometimes. I think it makes for relief of some of the little boredom that could be there sometimes. I think you are doing a good job, Mr. Speaker, and I really want to thank you for that. And, to men of good will, wherever you may exist, I say thanks for sharing that universal consciousness that makes us one, regardless of race, colour, religion or social status. We all belong to the community of man. Thank you very much and have a good day. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. Patrick West. Honourable Representative for the Town of St. George.

Hon. Nickolas Steele: Mr. Speaker, good morning, and I rise to give full and unequivocal support to the Budget as presented. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to take this opportunity speak about health, healthcare, Ministry of Health, as well as my Constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I will speak firstly of health. Mr. Speaker, health is not just about hospital and facilities. It is also about the individual. We all have our part to play in ensuring that our children, family members, friends and those in our care, in general, are looked after. We also have a responsibility to ourselves and our families to take care of ourselves, by engaging in healthy lifestyles, watching what we eat, how much alcohol we consume and getting the right exercise. These are all part and parcel of healthcare in Grenada.

Mr. Speaker, the health situation in Grenada continues to be dynamic, as the Ministry of Health continues to implement activities aimed at achieving strategic goals and objectives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and quality of care offered to our citizens of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

The Sector continues to face many challenges, Mr. Speaker, including increased requests for services linked to non-communicable diseases for which cancer continues to be the leading cause of death in Grenada. The Ministry of Health is unique, unique in the fact that it is a never-ending struggle of prevention, cure and care that will,

ultimately, fail, yes, fail, as we are all mortal beings and as such, at some point, we will be called to the 'Great Beyond' and no man or manmade system can prevent this.

This, however, must not be used as an excuse for shortfalls, but as motivation to always do better, to care and to ensure that care is offered to all and that the best care possible, that it is not just about the budget or the facilities and the equipment, but most importantly, the people involved in the deliverance of healthcare.

You see, Mr. Speaker, I have always believed that, give me good doctors and nurses intense in a field and we can do more than, with the best facilities, if we do not have good people running our facilities. Notwithstanding the many challenges and issues, which impact the delivery of care, the Ministry has been steadfast in the optimisation of available human and financial resources to deliver healthcare to citizens across six (6) key areas, which are as follows:

1. Health Infrastructure Development;
2. Health financing;
3. Health Service delivery;
4. Leadership and governance;
5. Medical products and technology; and
6. Health information systems.

In this regard, the Ministry acknowledges that although there have been some notable achievements during the period, services must be continuously improved to meet the needs of the citizens. We must always take into consideration the fact that we are mortal beings, one, and two, the needs and threats to our population are constantly, Mr. Speaker, constantly, changing. The following highlights the areas of achievement of the Ministry of Health, Social Security and International Business.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry was allocated a very large budget this year for which we are most grateful. The areas that we have focused on, as I have mentioned: health infrastructure. In keeping with the stated objectives to modernise health infrastructure, the Ministry in 2017, committed resources from both local funds and Donor Agencies to improving health infrastructure in Grenada. Investments in this regard, were made through the following initiatives, health care facilities across the Sector. One, the

General Hospital; second phase of General Hospital infrastructure, work continues on the second phase of the General Hospital with grant funds from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. A total cost of the project is EC thirteen million dollars (EC$13 m). The second phase is expected to house A & E, Hospital Administration, Diagnostics, Pharmacy and Outpatient Services. The work is ongoing and the facility is expected to be commissioned in the first quarter of 2018.

Additional work, Mr. Speaker, on the General Hospital and other infrastructural work completed during the period included as follows: Chemotherapy Mixing Chamber was commissioned and is now operational, effective October 19th, 2017. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, Central Air conditioned Unit, work has commenced on the AC unit, for the first phase, to improve the facilities at the Operating Theatre and ICU, expected to be completed by December, 2017. Mr. Speaker, Oncology Unit was relocated; Laundry services upgraded and Government has committed to repair and refurbish the Hospital Laundry Services. Children's ward, Mr. Speaker, six (6) to fifteen (15) years, work is in progress, and the cost of repairs estimated to be one hundred and seventeen thousand EC dollars (EC$117,000.00). Other healthcare facilities, Mr. Speaker, Princess Royal, retrofit of Doctors' Quarters, contract signed and work commenced November, 2017, estimated cost ninety-seven thousand EC dollars (EC$97,000.00). Additional work on this facility is expected to commence in 2018, under the SMART Health Care Project through DIFID. Richmond Hill institution and Mt. Gay Hospital, two hundred and forty-five thousand dollars ($245,000.00), specifically windows, Chiller Unit, remedial works and equipment invested in critical upgrades to enhance the quality of care afforded to the patients there. Princess Alice Hospital, Mr. Speaker, structural upgrades under the SMART Health Care facilities, Phase II, retrofitting of the enhanced Climate Change resilience, and to minimise the impact of the facility on the environment by reducing the use of water and electricity. Refurbishment of Health Centres and Medical Stations; Government is estimated to invest approximately four hundred thousand ($400,000.00), to enhance the infrastructure and prepare facilities for the networking with respect to the NTRC Project and Electronic Medical Records. Mr. Speaker, Gouyave Health Centre; following the signature of the Grant Agreement between the Government of Grenada

and the European Union in January of 2017, the tender for Award of Contract was published on October 2017, and the Ministry anticipates completion of the tender process by December, 2017, in collaboration with the Ministry of Works, and to award that contract for the commencement of construction by March, 2018. The Gouyave Health Centre is expected to be a key component to the delivery of Primary Healthcare Services to the residents of St. John, St. Mark and St. Patrick, and to support the implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI).

Mr. Speaker, Health Financing; key priorities have been identified under the 2017 Budget for Health Financing including Health Insurance, Billing and Admission and Cost Recovery. The Government, Mr. Speaker, continues to demonstrate commitment to the implementation of the National Health Insurance and its intention to provide universal protection for citizens against what I would determine, as catastrophic expenditure that may result, when accessing healthcare and to enhance the quality of health services offered to our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, the National Health Insurance seeks to ensure that we adhere to the primary principle of the Ministry of Health in Grenada, and that is, that healthcare in Grenada must be accessible and affordable to all and it has not been in the past. In the past, there are instances, many instances where access is based on those who can afford and where those who cannot afford, access is sometimes delayed, and health care, like justice, in most cases, when delayed is denied.

Mr. Speaker, the NHI Secretariat located at the National Insurance Commercial Complex was launched on October 31st. The Secretariat, in collaboration with the University of the West Indies and other developmental partners, including UNDP and Pan American Health Organization (WHO) will conduct the requisite analysis to develop the framework for the implementation of National Health Insurance (NHI) in Grenada.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard some say that National Health Insurance (NHI) is a political ploy, that we should take more time. I say to this, that this is nonsense, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if not now for National Health Insurance, when? How long should our people wait? Those who voice concerns, Mr. Speaker, I truly believe, only voice concerns, because they know it is good, they know the benefits, and they know

that they would have preferred it happen under a different Administration, Mr. Speaker. But, this is the Administration that has put the pieces together, that has made the commitment and stuck to that commitment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Donor Financing; the work of the Ministry of Health has been supported with the assistance of various partners, including most recently the Maria Holder Memorial Trust, Pan American Health Organization (WHO), PANCAP, and, collectively, these initiatives serve to strengthen the Health System and support the National Health Insurance (NHI) implementation.

Mr. Speaker, Hospital and Health Service Fund Donations to the Health Sector; the Government of Grenada, the Ministry of Health received medical and non-medical supplies estimated in excess of one million EC dollars (EC$1 m). These donations, which came from Grenadians, locally and in the Diaspora, included some sixty-four thousand dollars ($64,000.00) of immunoglobulin for the treatment of Guillain-Barre; from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Brazil, wheelchairs, and other medical supplies from CHORES, USA, and a project valued at one hundred and sixty-one thousand dollars ($161,000.00) for twelve (12) autoclaves and related supplies from the Government of Japan, under Japan's Non-Project Grant Aid for provisions.

Mr. Speaker, these autoclaves would soon be installed in Health Facilities, and this donation of autoclaves will be distributed throughout the Communities and Health and Hospital Services, and are expected to significantly enhance the quality of services to our patients by enhancing Infection Control Programmes, Mr. Speaker. Autoclaves are expected on Island December 7th, 2017 and installation and training to commence shortly, thereafter. This donation is significant, Mr. Speaker, as it aids in our ability to mitigate the negative effects of antimicrobial resistance, which is a matter of growing international concern, and is aimed at reducing the use of antibiotics, which increases our risk to what is referred to as Superbugs, or the increasing resistance to antibiotics.

Mr. Speaker, St. George's University; St. George's University's annual contributions amount to approximately seven hundred and twenty thousand dollars ($720,000.00). The annual donation continues to be a key mechanism to support the procurement and upgrade of critical infrastructure and equipment to sustain and

enhance the delivery of healthcare services through the Fund. Examples for the upcoming year, a new Ultrasound Scanner was purchased, which would be allowing the hospital services to provide enhanced diagnostic services. Mr. Speaker, this will increase the speed at which diagnosis is made, it will reduce the costs to individuals, because this service was never before offered through the Public System. And, Mr. Speaker, it will reduce the number of bed nights, the time an individual stays in hospital to be diagnosed. So, we are working with SGU for the procurement of further equipment, in particular, CT scanners and for the upgrading of our operating theatre and Intensive Care Unit.

Mr. Speaker, SGU is also occupying a portion of Phase II, the new building for their continued and enhanced teaching facilities. We are also working with them, Mr. Speaker, to look at increasing the number of facilities that they integrate with, directly. We are looking with them, in final discussions for us to collectively, or mutually build a new facility in the South of Grenada that would be opened to the Grenadian public, at the front door, and would have SGU Doctors, Professors and students there doing their internship. This, Mr. Speaker, was previously, something that was not done in Grenada, and only done whenever possible, at the supervision of the General Hospital. So, we are working together now with SGU where they get enhanced teaching facilities, and we get enhanced health care facilities to our public, at large.

Mr. Speaker, Procurement of Ambulances; through the assistance from SGU and GRENLEC and the Maria Holder Memorial Trust, the Government of Grenada through the Ministry of Health is in the process of procurement four (4) new ambulances, Mr. Speaker. Two (2) have already arrived and two (2) should be arriving within the next couple of weeks. These ambulances are expected to be deployed to bolster our emergency response within the communities and our Hospital Services. It also signals our intention to collaborate with key stakeholders and citizens and to establish sustainable emergency ambulatory care service in Grenada.

Planning for this service is ongoing and is expected to be implemented during the first quarter of 2017. Mr. Speaker, what this means is that there would be a Central Facility. When someone calls for an ambulance there is one number nationwide to call

for an ambulance. It's one central location where the call is received and at that location there is an awareness of where every single ambulance is on the Island, and how to direct an ambulance to a specific person in any area of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, Mr. Speaker.

The Ministry of Health was successful in receiving assistance from the Maria Holder Memorial Trust to procure equipment for the Paediatric Ward, as well, Mr. Speaker, and other vital equipment such as a portable ultrasound machine. This project is expected to materialize in early 2018.

Mr. Speaker, Pan American Health Biannual Work Programme; in 2016 and 2017, through technical assistance received under Pan American Health Organization Biannual Work Programme, some EC two hundred and seventy thousand dollars (EC$270,000.00) was invested in the local Health Sector to build Human Resource Capacity and support the delivery of services related to the management of communicable and non-communicable diseases, Maternal and Child Healthcare, Climate Change and Health and Health Systems, as well as development in Disaster Management and Preparedness and Disease Surveillance.

Mr. Speaker, through this Fund, the Ministry of Health undertook several activities, including, but not limited to, Mr. Speaker, Research. Grant funds received under this fund were used to assess programme delivery in 2017, including research projects to support HIV/AIDS and rabies control.

In this regard, the knowledge, attitude and practice surveys for HIV/AIDS were conducted in Carriacou and similar surveys were conducted to assess the Rabies Programme in Grenada. It is expected that the result of these surveys will be used to affect targeted interventions to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of these programmes, and to improve the services to our clients, the public at large.

Mr. Speaker, Capacity Building and Training; the Ministry, in 2017, continues to support the implementation of a comprehensive Oncology Care Programme. On the completion of the retrofit work and upgrade of the Chemotherapy Chamber, at the General Hospital, the Ministry requested the assistance of PAHO and, with the funding provided through the same BWP Fund, facilitated the training and the attachment of two

(2) Pharmacists at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Barbados in the preparation for Chemotherapy drugs for Cancer patients.

This investment, Mr. Speaker, in the professional development of our staff, approximately twenty thousand EC dollars (EC$20,000.00) is expected to enhance the service delivery of patients to minimise the risk to the Pharmacists through the utilisation of new and improved techniques for the handling of Chemotherapy drugs, Mr. Speaker. It also represents our commitment in optimising the quality of care for cancer patients, while supporting initiatives for the prevention and early detection to reduce mortality and mobility of cancer in the population.

Mr. Speaker, Healthcare Programme and support and support for inter-sectoral collaboration. Funding received from PAHO was also utilised to support many other training initiatives in the Health Sector. These included the building of capacity to meet country obligations with respect to international health regulations and anti-microbial resistance.

Mr. Speaker, this simply increases our capacity, as we would have seen most recently, a recent example, a practical example would have been with ZIKA, our ability to determine the number of cases, the first case, and to report, and not just to report to the Ministry and to the public, but to report, regionally and internationally, on the occurrences and number of cases. This is specifically an example of where this capacity strengthening is needed.

Mr. Speaker, it also was used for the expanded programme for immunisation, including Vaccination Week for the Americas and the Vector Control Programme for mosquito eradication. Through the same BWP Fund, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry received assistance to support capacity building in the delivery of neonatal services and STI prevention and awareness.

The Health Promotion Division received additional funding to continue targeted interventions in selected communities, to address a thorny issue, but most definite needed issue, in terms of needed to be addressed, of child sexual abuse. This programme which begun in 2016, aims at empowering children to say no, and to educate communities. It also denotes the importance of developing sustainable

programmes to provide care and address issues, which affect the most vulnerable sectors of our population. Prevention of abuse mitigates the need to find resources to provide immediate and mental services, which become necessary and sometimes long term to address the consequences of abuse.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health, through this Fund, has partnered with the Royal Grenada Police Force to commemorate the Fourth UN Global Road Safety week, as well, which was from May 8th to 18th. Through this initiative, the Fund provided support in public awareness, bumper stickers were considered, and support was also provided to the Ministry for education of HIV and STI training for teachers and students in Grenada.

Mr. Speaker, funding has also been secured, through PAHO, to support activities to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and the Sixteen (16) days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, which is November 25 to December 10th. Mr. Speaker, these initiatives represents the commitment of the Ministry of Health, Social Security and International Business to support inter-sectoral collaboration in the services of our citizens and to the principles of Health in all Policies.

Mr. Speaker, the collective investment in these programmes was approximately one hundred and fifty thousand dollars EC dollars (EC$150,000.00), mainly from the European Development Fund. Budget support to the Grenada Health Sector of Grenada secured funding of $3.8 m Euros for support to the Health Sector, through grants from the European Union or the 11th EDF. Since the signing of the Finance Agreement in 2017, the tender for the Gouyave Medical Centre went out, which is a sixteen thousand (16,000) square foot facility. This tender was published on September 14th. The closing date for submissions of this tender was December 8th and the plan start date for construction, as we said, is March 1st.

The Ministry continues to collaborate with the European Union office in Grenada to plan and implement the package of complimentary support activities incorporated into the financing agreement. So, it is not just bricks and mortar, but this finance package comes with other enhancement and other commitment on our side with respect to

Primary Health Care. It is aimed at enhancing those Primary Health Care Services in Grenada, and to ensure that there is oversight on all activities by the key stakeholders. Complimentary support activities are expected to be completed under this Funding Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, Non-communicable Disease, Survey and Health Promotion Campaigns; an assessment of risk factors for Chronic Diseases has been conducted. Development of the legislative framework for National Health Insurance and the institutionalisation of a monitoring and evaluation system for the Health Sector; the strengthening of Health Management Information Systems; as well as Terms of Reference for the procurement of complimentary services are currently being developed and are expected to be tendered in the first quarter of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, SMART Healthcare Facilities; the Eastern Caribbean Project Phase II from the United Kingdom, Department of International Development, or DIFID, in conjunction with PAHO, as the Executing Agency, this project is funded by the Government of the United Kingdom and implemented by PAHO. The primary objective of the project, Mr. Speaker, is to enhance the resilience of health facilities, with respect to climate change, and in so doing incorporate into the design and operation of health facilities, mechanisms to reduce their impact on the environment.

Under this Programme, up to five (5) healthcare facilities are expected to be retrofitted to withstand the impacts and hazards such as hurricanes and earthquakes. The retrofit work will also be an upgrade of internal works and fixtures including LED lights, low water volume fixtures, and the installation of inverter type air-conditions where air-conditions exist. It is also expected that these initiatives and technologies, when implemented in these facilities, will serve to pilot or guide further investment into the Healthcare Centre.

Mr. Speaker, retrofit work at the Princess Alice Hospital commenced on May 22nd, 2017, and is expected to be completed by June, 2018. The preliminary designs for the retrofit works at Hillsborough Health Centre in Carriacou and Princess Alice Hospital and Medical Centre Stores, commenced in March of 2017, and are scheduled to be completed by November, 2017. Commencement of the design work for the retrofit

of the Richmond Home is contingent on the approval of the preliminary designs for the Central Medical Stores, which is expected by the end of this month.

Signed contract for the retrofitting of Princess Alice Hospital between Pan American Health Organization (WHO) and F.A. Jeremiah and Associates; work commenced on July 17th, and the estimated value of the retrofit work is eight hundred thousand US dollars (US$800,000.00), approximately two million EC dollars (EC$2 m) and the estimated duration is seven (7) months.

Contingency and Conservation Training in 2017; twenty-four (24) persons were trained in the Preparation of Contingency and Conservation Plans for Health Facilities. Contracts have also been issued, effective March 28th, 2017, to two (2) local companies for the completion of the inspection and preliminary design phase of retrofit work to Princess Royal Hospital and, as mentioned, Hillsborough Health Centre, Mr. Speaker, as well as Mt. Gay. The total value of these contracts is two hundred and twenty-six thousand US dollars (US$226,000.00). Mr. Speaker, to date, a total of EC three million dollars (EC$3 m) has been spent on the SMART Hospital Project, based on contracts issued and work done by the local design teams and contractors for the design and retrofit at beneficiary Health Facilities.

Mr. Speaker, the Global Fund; Grenada has received one hundred and twenty-five EC dollars (EC$125,000.00) of the five hundred thousand ($500,000.00) US dollars, the Global Fund Grant gave to the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States through a Strategic Response Project and implementation activities related to HIV and TB elimination in the OECS Region. The project is being implemented in collaboration with the OECS Commission. And, to date the project has provided training to build capacity among key stakeholders in addressing issues related to HIV management and treatment and detection and rapid testing. The overall goal, Mr. Speaker, of this project is to achieve 90/90/90 status, which is 90% of all people living with HIV will know their status; 90% of all people diagnosed with HIV infection will receive sustained anti-retroviral therapy and 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have a viral suppression.

Mr. Speaker, Health Services Delivery; the Ministry is the primary provider of Health Services in the Tri-Island State, and thrives to optimise the available resources to offer the best quality of Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Care to our clients. Through collaboration, again, with Pan American Health Organization (PHO) and other partners, the Ministry continues to assess aspects of the Health System and strengthen local capacity to deliver a range of healthcare services.

For the period 2017, the Ministry's primary objective, with respect to Health Services delivery was to: (i) increase access to care; (ii) enhance Customer Service and (iii) expand services to clients. Achievements, with respect to these initiatives are, as follows, Mr. Speaker: Primary Healthcare Services at community level; Maternal and Child Healthcare Services are most requested, and the Ministry continues to strengthen these services, with initiatives such as Breastfeeding Sensitisation and the establishment of Perinatal Information Services, as well as Care for Child Development.

Mr. Speaker, Psycho-Social Assessment tools have been used to sustain immunisation coverage in excess of 95%. Grenada has and continues to receive regional accolades from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), with respect to our immunisation. **(Applause)** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we need to give recognition to the frontline team that is involved in that Immunisation Programme.

Mr. Speaker, in September of 2017, a review of the Neonatal Services in Grenada, to assess the processes and procedures for the care of high risk neonatals, as part of an assessment of twenty-nine (29) nurses and doctors, selected from the Hospital and Committee Services received in-service training in the care of high risk neonates, and to recognise the associated factors, socio-economic and individual health, which increase the risk for complications during pregnancy. A Task Force has been established to create an action plan for the implementation of the recommendations coming from that assessment.

Mr. Speaker, Men's Health Services, the Ministry continues its outreach to men, to encourage this segment of our population to seek early intervention, or preventative Healthcare Services. In this regard, the Community Health Nursing Division conducted several Outreach Programmes in the Public and Private Sectors for men. These

included and in particular, screening for Prostate Cancer, Hypertension, Diabetes and HIV/AIDS. There continues to be a measured growth in the number of men accessing care through the Community Health Services, and the Ministry encourages all males, both young and old to be proactive in accessing Healthcare Services.

Proprietary Activities for Men's Health Policy, Mr. Speaker; a Policy to address issues related to the provisions for men's health is planned for 2018. In this regard, the Ministry completed an Epidemiological Profile for men in Grenada and literature review to inform the development of the Policy Document. The Epidemiological Profile indicated high incidents of alcoholism, threat of suicide and HIV amongst segments of the population, and, generally, a low rate of screening among the population, Mr. Speaker, high being compared to what we consider as the perceived risk, not high, in terms of higher than other regional or international levels, Mr. Speaker. Notwithstanding this, Mr. Speaker, there has been some improvement in Prostate Cancer screening, but still needs to be more. Prevention and early detection of diseases in the male population must continue to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, Adolescent Healthcare Services; through the Community Nursing Services, the Health Promotion Department Outreach to Adolescents was conducted through Health Education sessions and seminars at schools and Health Centres. Students were engaged in discussions on issues related to STIs, updating of immunisation and vision screening. The Ministry continued implementation of the School Health Programme, with visits to schools at the beginning of the Academic Year, September 2017.

The Primary Healthcare District teams are expected to visit sixty (60) schools in 2017, which is twenty (20) more than the forty (40) schools in 2016. A total of nineteen (19) schools were visited in 2015. It is expected that in 2018, all schools on the Island will be visited and students assessed to ascertain their health status, with respect to aural health, anaemia, obesity and nutrition. **(Applause)**

Statistics for 2017 indicate that dental health continues to be a problem among our students; 30 – 50% for anaemia and obesity, 30%, and poor nutrition, 10%. These results provide the necessary data, Mr. Speaker, to guide targeted intervention for

adolescent healthcare in the community and the implementation of the Adolescent Health Policy.

As at September, 2017, a total of forty thousand, five hundred (40,500) Clinic visits were recorded by Community Health Services throughout Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. This suggests a continued reliance by a large segment of the population for Public Sector Healthcare Services. Clinic visits for 2016 totalled fifty-four thousand, one hundred and seventeen (54,117).

Additionally, up to September, 2017, there were a total of six hundred (600) home visits, compared to nine hundred and eighty (980) in 2016 for the entire year. Chronic Non-communicable Diseases remain the primary reason for citizens accessing Healthcare in the Public Healthcare System; two thousand, five hundred and seventy-six (2,576) visits, to date, compared to three thousand, eight hundred and thirty-three (3,833) for 2016.

Mr. Speaker, various Specialists Clinics were offered to Health Centres and Community Hospitals including Anti and Postnatal, Child Health, Immunisation, Family Planning, Health Education and Counselling, Wound Management, Pediatrics, Sickle Cell, Dermatology, Mental Health screening, Vision and Anaemia, and Oncology. Ear, Nose and Throat, or ENT services have also been introduced to the Public, and, to date, approximately two thousand (2,000) clients have requested these services. A total of ninety-eight (98) Specialists referrals have been recorded for the period.

Immunisation Expanded Programme on Immunisation, Sustaining Coverage and Expansion of Services; this Programme is on track to achieve in excess of 95% immunisation coverage against nine (9) Childhood Preventable Diseases. Mr. Speaker, technical assistance grant from PAHO, approximately twelve thousand EC dollars is used to support the Expanded Programme on Immunisation for introduction of Hepatitis B, Birth Dose Vaccination and the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of Vaccination Week for the Americas.

Mr. Speaker, the target is 100% immunisation for all babies born...

Parliamentary Orderly: Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Hon. Nickolas Steele: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the current immunisation rate for new Hep-B Birth Dose is 98%, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Specialists Clinics, in particular, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry continued the Specialists Outreach Clinics introduced in the various subsidiary Hospitals and Health Centres in 2017, including OBGYN, Paediatrics, Maxillofacial, Nephrology and Ophthalmology and General Surgery. Through various Specialist Clinics, Advanced Care Services were offered to the public, through the General Hospital, in 2017. These included, Mr. Speaker, CHORES, in particular.

In October, a seven-member CHORES Team visited Grenada, and provided Specialists Services in Cardiology, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy. The team evaluated seventy-four (74) Cardiac patients and provided Speech Therapy for eighty-eight (88) patients, Physiotherapy for seventy (70) patients and Occupational Therapy for a further sixty (64) patients. The total value of the services offered during this period was one hundred and fifty-four thousand US dollars (US$154,000.00), all given free by CHORES, Mr. Speaker. The Ministry notes that this visit cannot be conducted without the assistance of the key partners, including the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development and the Grenada Heart Foundation, the St. George's University and the various local citizens.

Mr. Speaker, Live Healthy Me; following an Agreement between the Government of Grenada and Live Healthy Me, I think, in April of 2017, the Ministry of Health implemented the Live Healthy Me Project, a Pilot Programme to support Women's Health at the General Hospital and Carriacou and Petite Martinique. This Project was designed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to enhance service through organisational development and training, so as to improve the quality of Obstetrics and Gynaecology services offered to women in Grenada and to ultimately implement a standard for patient-centred care. Through the Working Together Training Programme, two hundred and fifty-eight (258) Healthcare Professionals were trained in Customer Service Standards, Organisational Structure; Processes and Procedures were also reviewed and documented to eliminate uncertainty in Reporting Structures, and to standardise practice by the stakeholders in the delivery of patient care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a series of surveys was also administered, to assess the public perception of the services offered at the OBGYN Ward at the General Hospital, in particular. The results of the survey are expected to provide relevant data and behaviours, expectations and practice and establish a baseline for co-ordinated interventions to improve patient care, as we move forward.

We also, through the same programme, conducted visual inspection with Acetic Acid, or VIA screening. Through the same Live Healthy Me Programme, in January to August 2017, VIA was reintroduced to Grenada, as a screening technique for the identification of pre-cancerous legions of the cervix. Twenty (20) Health Professionals, Nurses and Doctors, Mr. Deputy Speaker, received training in VIA Screening Techniques and are expected to be certified, as VIA Technicians. During the same period, five hundred (500) women were screened, thirty-eight (38) were identified and received treatment in the form of Cryotherapy and surgical leap procedures, decreasing their risk of developing cervical cancer. An additional eight (8) women were diagnosed with gynaecological malignancies and received surgical treatment by the visiting Gynaecological Oncologist.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, cervical cancer is a leading cause of mortality and mobility in Grenada, and the enhanced capacity for early detection and prevention is expected to revolutionise women's healthcare and contribute to the decreased incidences of cervical cancer in Grenada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, also I intend to push forward, and would like to mention here, in this House, for the immunisation, or vaccination with respect to HPV. The team at the Ministry of Health is extremely supportive on this initiative, and with the combination of the screening and vaccination, it is possible, Mr. Deputy Speaker, within a three to five year period, to literally eliminate the occurrence of cervical cancer in Grenada. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, Capacity Building and Continuing Education; Health Professionals were engaged over the period, May 22nd to 26th, in a series of training sessions, accumulating two hundred and fifty-two (252) accredited hours of continued Medical Education in Obstetrical emergency training. The team in this programme, which

highlights the importance of Healthcare Professionals working as a team, to serve patient's needs, and to enhance performance and patients safety. Obstetrical emergency topics covered during the training included, Electronic Foetal Heartrate Monitoring, Postpartum Haemorrhaging, Eclampsia and other Hypertensive emergencies. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this regard, Grenada is thought to be first Island, in the Caribbean, to introduce Team Steps, a Programme to enhance patient care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to comment, at this point-in-time, that while some of our Healthcare Providers embrace this opportunity and engage in the training, fully, we have to be honest and I must note that some did not, and, as a result, the entire team is not co-ordinated. And, those, who did not embrace this training, no matter how qualified, or experienced, they were previously, are doing a disservice to the public, at large.

When the Ministry of Health and the Government find an opportunity, through a recognition of a shortfall in services being offered, anywhere in our Health Sector, I think it is necessary and should be mandatory that all involved in the provision of that service, embrace the training, be it, if they think it is retraining, it is a fundamental principle, as a Healthcare Provider, Doctor or Nurse, for retraining and continued education. And, it is unacceptable, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to have some members of our team bringing the rest down, by not fully participating in any form of the training that we provide.

Mr. Speaker, Human Resource for Health; Mr. Speaker, the right mix and quantity and competencies of Healthcare Professionals are critical to the delivery of consistent Patient-Centred Care. During the year under review, the Ministry continued to engage stakeholders, to ensure that adequate staff was available at Healthcare facilities across the State.

In this regard, the following, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was noted: Staff Recruitment. The Ministry continues to ensure the availability of appropriate Specialist services to the public, including, through the Technical Corporation Agreement with the Republic of Cuba, Specialists Care provided by the Medical Professionals from Cuba, to strengthen and improve the critical areas of service including Pathology, General Surgery and

Maxillofacial Surgery, Anaesthesiology, Oncology, Psychiatry, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, services have also been provided to enhance the work of the Biomedical Department of the General Hospital. The Ministry has agreed to renew the Technical… well we have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, renewed the Technical Corporation Agreement between the Republic of Cuba and Grenada, to further strengthen the relationship and cooperation between our two (2) countries.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, regularisation of Nurses; in collaboration with GRENCASE, the Ministry of Health retained a number of Registered Nurses and Nursing Assistants to ensure the appropriate quantity of nursing staff are available to provide services to the public.

Additionally, the Agreement has been reached for the regularisation of Nurses. This process, which commenced in 2017, is expected to continue through 2018; so, any and all improvements in our Healthcare, in Grenada, starts with the people involved.

On this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to say that there are persons out there, providing yeoman service, persons, who, too often, don't get the recognition they deserve, and yes, the remuneration, as well, but, more importantly, the recognition, persons for whom it is not about the money. But, while, not about the money, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do need to get on with their lives. They have families to look after and ambitions, like the rest of us. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these persons deserve to have opportunities afforded to us, like those elsewhere in our Society. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am speaking of the issue of regularisation. The Ministry has aggressively embarked on a process of regularisation of nurses, as allowed, based on existing vacancies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while I support and understand the need for this initiative, I wish to offer the following observation. Fact, if a qualified nurse was working with a Private Institution, the Financial Institutions that lend money, would accept a job letter or a Pay Slip and offer that person a five/ten or fifteen year loan. But, if that person works with the Government of Grenada, I am told, Mr. Speaker, that the Financial Institutions do not offer a loan unless the person can produce a Contract, or proof of tenure within the Public Service. So, if a Pay Slip comes from the Government, then there is a need

for a Contract, or tenure of service with the Public Service Commission. But, if a Pay Slip comes from the Private Sector, a job letter would suffice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it possible that this is unconstitutional to treat equally qualified persons differently, based on their employer? Is this possibly discrimination, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I would continue to push ahead with the Regularisation Initiative, but I would like to address this anomaly, as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, investment in HR Development. Seven (7) Practitioners continue Postgraduate Studies in various fields in Cuba and the Republic of China, in fields of OBGYN, Paediatrics, Pathology, Anaesthesiology, Internal Medicine, Ophthalmology, Epidemiology and Hygiene. These Specialists are scheduled to return to Grenada, over the period, 2018 to 2019.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Grenada continues, through the Government and through our friendly Governments, and the St. George's University, to make significant sacrifices in placing resources that could be used elsewhere, to educate Grenadians in need, by giving a scholarship, and also giving scholarships in specific areas that fit with succession planning, that fit with the needs, the medical needs of our society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, like most of us here in this room, I understand National service and giving back to one's country, and following the principle of, 'to whom much is given, much is expected'. But, Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to remain silent. I cannot continue to remain silent on the individuals, who have received a scholarship from the State, at great costs to the State, who have been given that opportunity, and then, on completion of their studies, do not see it fit to give back National service, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Government of Grenada and the Government of Cuba, or the Government of Grenada and SGU have made the sacrifice to educate a Doctor, and that Doctor, on completion, whether bonded, or not, and if not bonded it would be through some loophole that they may have exploited, or a failing on the Ministry of Education, with respect to the bonding, regardless, no-one, in their right mind, can say that they have received a scholarship, from a Developing Country, like Grenada, in Medicine, to the tune of two hundred and fifty to five hundred thousand

dollars, and believe, in their right mind, that they own nothing to the Government; that they can walk away. **(Applause)**

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this has to be addressed. They need to come to terms with their own conscience. But, while we continue to serve the people, we need to look at the way that we choose individuals, who receive these scholarships and make sure that individuals who receive these scholarships understand what National service is, Mr. Speaker. I can speak to it. I never received a scholarship from this Government, but I understand what national service is. And, therefore, those who have received scholarships should understand...

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Nickolas Steele: …what National service is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I with respect to International Business; Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry successfully participated in Expo Astana, in Kazakhstan, where various inquiries were made into Grenada. We sent a team of three (3) persons there, for the period of the Expo, and Grenada was promoted, as a Tourist and Investment Destination.

Currently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are persons with confirmed travel itineraries, to travel to Grenada for our Chocolate Festival in April and for August Summer Festival, coming out of our representation there in Astana, as well as, between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of both countries, the draft of a Visa waiver, to facilitate further travel.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Expo 2020, in the United Arab Emirates, Dubai, is making a grant fund available to NGOs, Government and Private Sector Entrepreneurs and Youths, for various projects, in keeping with the theme and sub-theme of the Expo. The Ministry of International Business has publicised that information, and it is available to any and all, who would like to participate. Already, one Institution in Grenada, has been awarded one hundred thousand US dollars (US$100,000.00), based on a project that they submitted through GIDC for branding or rebranding in Grenada for their projects.

So, the opportunities exist there for Grenadian Entities, for Grenadian students, in particular, to apply for assistance between now and Expo 2020, funded by the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we continue to assist individuals and Companies with their Project Proposals. As a matter of fact, the Ministry is prepared to make its Human Resource available to Institutions that wish to submit Project Proposals to the Expo 2020.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other aspect of International Business, has been the Doing Business Ranking. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, Grenada has fallen in its Doing Business Ranking; the facts are the facts. Between 2016 and 2017, we engaged in the education of those who do the surveys, to educate them, as to the improvements that were made, within the various Sectors, that would improve our Doing Business Ranking. However, it is obvious, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, that initiative needs to be enhanced and that was not enough.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, based on our ranking and our analysis of the ranking, the improvements that need to be made, need to be made within Works, with respect to building permits and with Legal Affairs, with respect to Contracts and Judgments and Registration of Companies. So, we have assembled a team, based on the information, a specific team, to address these specific areas of improvement, for the Doing Business Ranking, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a continuous effort. It is one that one never rests on, and it is not just simply a mission of improving the way business is done, but to improve faster than other regional services. So, this is our commitment and our initiative for 2018, through the Ministry of International Business, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect to my Constituency, I have had the opportunity, humble, but proud opportunity to have served the people of the town of St. George in my capacity as Parliamentary Representative. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while I am going to list the various projects that have been done, the various concrete work, so to speak that which you can touch; and to list a few, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just to summarise, in Darbeau over eight hundred (800) feet of roads and walls and drains; in River Road, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over thirteen hundred (1300) feet of roads, walls

drains, etcetera; Tempe, two hundred and eighty (280) feet; Carenage, a hundred (100) feet of concrete road and eight (8) grills; Williamson Road, eighty (80) feet of concrete and a hundred (100) feet of concrete box drains; Mt. Rush over three hundred (300) feet of walls, drains and roads or pathways, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the tangible, but the most pleasing part of being the Representative is the intangible, making a difference in the lives of the people, working with the team, having the team embrace a united principle, a principle, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is that we serve all in the community; **(applause)** that it is not of value to mention all of this work being done, if we cannot also say that the work was done impartial and given to those who were capable, regardless of their political affiliations, Mr. Speaker; that in the Town of St. George, immediately after an Election, it matters not how you voted. What is more important is whether you have a need, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that principle has been embraced.

And, as I move on from the Town of St. George, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I am to be remembered for anything, it would be that, not the amount of work, but the principle of fairness, the principle of serving those who are in need, the principle of giving opportunities to those who need it, the principle of being colour-blind, with respect to the politics. **(Applause)** So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank the people of the Town of St. George for the trust they placed in me, the cooperation I received from them and the mutual benefit we were able to have while I was their Representative and continue to be.

The team that worked with me and continues to work with me there, providing yeomen service, being the brunt of communication both ways, of ensuring that the work is done in a timely manner, of ensuring that the feedback and the message of impartiality continues. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have become family, so I am fortunate, because, as I am wrapping up, I will speak of four (4) families that I am fortunate to have. The family of the Town of St. George that works with me; Mr. Deputy Speaker, everything that I mentioned, with respect to the Ministry of Health, Social Security and International Business is only possible with the family that I have at the Ministry of Health, Social Security and International Business. **(Applause)** We are a

team, yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I believe we have gone beyond that and we are family. We look out for each other and we will continue to work together, looking out for each other, again, with the principle of impartiality and serving the country, service first, Mr. Deputy Speaker

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the third family is the family within this room, the family in Cabinet, again, a team that is working together, but we have gone beyond that. We are a family, we share each other's joys, sorrows, pains and understand each other and I believe, as family, regardless of what happens in the future with the Town of St. George, with the Ministry of Health and with the family here, we will continue to have that connection that was built in this period. **(Applause)** Family, you can't change, once you become family, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, finally, my actual family, who have made the sacrifice, with me in allowing me to serve and allowing me to put country first before self, in understanding the absence, when I am elsewhere and not with my immediate family; of understanding that I am not less of a father or less of a husband, because I am spending less time there, but more of a person…

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Nickolas Steele: …and, the principles that I hope that I adhere to, are principles that they understand and respect. So, to my fourth family, it is to thank them for the sacrifice that they continue to make; to my other three (3) families it is to thank them for allowing me to be part of a family of many. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member for the Town of St. George. I recognise the Honourable Member for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs.

Hon. Elvin Nimrod: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to join the debate, on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year, 2018.

Mr. Speaker, before I move on, something captivates me, whether the last speaker, or the Member for the Town of St. George, so generously shared everything with everybody except the money. I didn't hear the money. But, maybe later on, I will hear it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me first acknowledge the Great Almighty for His abundant mercies and showers of blessings upon all of us. Mr. Deputy Speaker, please permit me also to embrace a very early opportunity to acknowledge and express my sincere thanks and gratitude, Mr. Speaker, to the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique for reposing their confidence and trust in me and for electing me to this Honourable Place for almost two (2) decades; my thanks, Deputy Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Last, but not least, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must proudly say that the Prime Minister, Dr. the Right Honourable Keith Mitchell and his talented and able team in the Ministry of Finance, deserves nothing less than gold, for both the content and the representation of the Budget. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I anxiously await what the response of the Opposition forces might be.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, no one can realistically talk about revenue and expenditure for Grenada, at this time, without making reference to the state of the Economy, as was inherited by the New National Party, when it came back into Office in 2013, and certainly the herculean task, which was undertaken by the NNP Administration, together with the majority of the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, foreign Donors and, of course, those who made the sacrifice to help steer the Economy back to where it is today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, how could we forget, how could we forget the eighteen million dollars ($18 m) monthly financing gap that existed during that period, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and now it means then, that after trying to get salaries and all the monthly obligations of the Government, they had a short fall of eighteen million dollars ($18 m).

Mr. Deputy Speaker, today that is zero. What a performance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by this Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, unemployment, imagine this, 40% unemployment, today, it's down to 24%, Mr. Speaker. What a commendable job for this Government. **(Applause)** And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, around this time, every month, during that period...

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

Hon. Elvin Nimrod: ...no one knew, none of the Government workers knew whether or not, they were getting salary. And, of course, true to form, they were not paid on time. Instead of paying salaries, Mr. Speaker, the Government of the day had to sell assets, sell assets to pay their debts. Mr. Speaker, that is a very serious thing, because just imagine one day you take up your television set and you sell it to pay some debt that you owe; the other day you take your car you sell it; the third day, Mr. Speaker, you might sell your children's clothes, and eventually you sell yourself. **(Laughter)** And, so, Mr. Speaker, I am saying all this, because I do not want us to forget those trying times because there are those that exist and still asking to give them another chance, Mr. Speaker, in a way as if they have just arrived from Mars, and they have never gotten a chance before. So, Mr. Speaker, we ought to be extremely careful, because we know that we are a Nation that do forget, and so, Mr. Speaker, let us call upon our people to continue the great effort to make sure that our country remain financially strong.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to turn to the Ministry of Legal Affairs which is one of three Ministries placed under my supervision and care. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Legal Affairs is a guardian and the doorkeeper, Mr. Speaker, of the Administration of Justice. The Ministry of Legal Affairs is responsible for providing professional and competent legal advice to the various Ministries, Departments, Agencies and, of course, Statutory Bodies under the Government's control.

Mr. Speaker, another very crucial function of the Ministry of Legal Affairs is to make sure that they vigorously pursue Legislative agenda of the Government. Mr. Speaker, as you know the Executive Branch makes policies, but, of course, Mr. Speaker, this goes down to other Departments of Government, such as the Ministry of Legal Affairs so they can draft legislation to make into reality the wishes of the Government, Mr. Speaker.

In short, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Legal Affairs is the Legal and Constitutional doorkeeper of the Government and must be very vigilant in protecting the interest of the Government, because, you know, Mr. Speaker, one simple error, or a decision that was not properly made by the Ministry of Legal Affairs, can cost the Government millions upon millions, and this is why the Ministry of Legal Affairs has to always be quite vigilant in making sure they give Government proper and competent advice.

Mr. Speaker, talking about our Legislative agenda, the Ministry of Legal Affairs, during this year prepared and submitted to the Parliament nine (9) Acts, seventeen (17) Amendments and thirty-two (32) Statutory Rules and Orders. Mr. Speaker, of note, is the Rehabilitation of Offenders Bill, or Act, which is now a Law of 2017, which seeks to redress certain impediments, which are experienced by past offenders. Mr. Speaker, what has happened is that many ex-offenders, especially Juveniles have done things, of course, or came into contact with the Law, broke the Law and now they're realising, Mr. Speaker, that these past records are standing in their way to make any significant progress in their lives.

First of all, they have problem to access employment, because, of course, the employer would want to know the criminal background of that potential employee. They cannot get a Visa to travel abroad, whether to live or to advance themselves, Mr. Speaker; and so, Mr. Speaker, these impediments lie in their way. But, Mr. Speaker, many other Governments, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, I think, Jamaica, Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines have enacted Legislation to remove these obstacles in the way of such persons.

Mr. Speaker, what it really means is that if someone commits a crime and he pays his fine, or he serves his time in Prison, when he gets out, if he does not get into any further trouble for a certain period of years, then, Mr. Speaker, he is eligible to have his criminal record expunged, or in other words, to remove from the official record, at that time, so he gets a clean start. Mr. Speaker, I know many might not be in favour of this, I am not sure. I know that our society is very conservative, when it come to commission of crime and they have all right to be so, but, Mr. Speaker, I know they are also very forgiving, and we believe that this piece of Legislation that is enacted by this Administration would stand up, as a bright light in the future of these young people, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, we are just asking to give these people a second chance. And, by the way, it does not mean that everyone, who commits a crime, serves his or her time, or pays the fine, becomes eligible to get this reprieve, so to speak. Certain categories of crime, because of the seriousness, like Murder, Rape and Kidnapping and those kinds of crimes, they are not qualified, they are not under the list from which, of course, the offenders can claim any credit.

Mr. Speaker, Case Backlog in the Court is a persistent problem for the administration of justice, because, Mr. Speaker, there is no reason why any Litigant should have to remain, for years, before they get their just day in Court, because Mr. Speaker, when that happens, as it is said, 'Justice delayed is Justice denied'. So, if, for instance, someone is waiting to be called to the Court, many years passed, what is likely to happen is that witnesses might disappear or die, evidence might be lost, Mr. Speaker, and so because of that, the Litigant cannot get a fair trial.

Mr. Speaker, there is also other impediments, because if you have someone in Prison, unconstitutionally, I should say, because, of course, he has been there for such a long period that he has been denied due process or justice, then, of course, a Constitutional Motion could be moved to set that person free and, of course, that would be a very bitter pill for the society to swallow.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Legal Affairs is aware and is cognisant of this problem and, of course, Mr. Speaker, many efforts have been made to try to deal with that problem. First of all, Mr. Speaker, two new Judges, some year and a half ago were

sent to Grenada and was specifically designated to work on the backlog situation, and, of course, that was a very successful project, Mr. Speaker, and yet for all, it did not take care of all the problems. And, so, Mr. Speaker, there are other efforts being made, such as upgrading and modernising the Supreme Court Registry, so that we can have the records expeditiously, Mr. Speaker; and, so Mr. Speaker, just recently I think in September we got another Judge in the Civil Division, again, to help ease the problem of backlog. But, Mr. Speaker, we know that justice is not cheap, and I know it's very burdensome at times, but, of course, everyone deserves a day in Court and that is an obligation for any democratic society, to make sure that justice is being served and served in a very timely fashion.

Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court, over the last couple of years, has been able to overcome a number of challenges during the year, many of which pertain to issues relating to infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, the Courts, now No. 4 and No. 5, had serious infrastructural defects, and, of course, had to be almost retrofitted to accommodate the business of the Court. Today, of course, Mr. Speaker, this problem has been taken care of, in some way, and, of course, the Judges and those who come before them are much more comfortable in dispensing justice than they were before. Despite this, of course, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the challenges faced by the Court, two (2) Sessions of the Criminal Assizes have been successfully completed. Additionally, Civil Cases have been heard throughout the year and, Mr. Speaker, there were also two Court of Appeals Sittings in the months of April and October. So, Mr. Speaker, we are making progress, we are making progress slowly, though it might be, but we are making progress to meet one of our very important obligations, in terms of serving Justice to the people of this State.

Mr. Speaker, the Deeds and Land Registry, which is a very critical part of the administration of justice, had been experiencing some difficulties. Of course, you would have the Lawyers and other Legal Practitioners, on a daily basis, expressing their disgust over the conditions in the Deeds and Land Registry in the sense that when they send their workers over there to get a copy of a Deed, sometime the record is all so tattered and so loose that they cannot even obtain proper record. I want to say, Mr.

Speaker, we've taken cognisance of the fact and, of course, work has been done and work continues, of course, to upgrade the Deeds and Lands Registry. Mr. Speaker, a recent project has been undertaken to write over the Index Book, and so far four Indices have been written over.

Mr. Speaker, CAIPO, which is Corporate Affairs and International Property Office, has just been relocated to new quarters in Upper Tyrell Street. And, Mr. Speaker, that Office generates a substantial sum of money in the Government Coffers, and so, Mr. Speaker, it is an Office that has to be treated in a way deserving of the contribution that they make to the Consolidated Fund. Of course, through the Registration of Business Names, Companies and Trademarks, Mr. Speaker, this office proves its importance, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to go into details on every aspect relating to the Ministry of Legal Affairs. But, I must say, Mr. Speaker, given the very small staff in the Ministry of Legal Affairs, I think that the operators in that Ministry must be commended. For instance, Mr. Speaker, we have the people who prepare this legislation, we call them the Drafters. I think now we have only two Drafters in the whole Division. They have to draft all these pieces of legislation, and when you call upon them they are always willing, ready and able to do so. And, so, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we owe them a depth of gratitude. Mr. Speaker, the Attorney-General, he is there any time you need him, any time you ask him to do something for the good of the Ministry or for the country, he is very willing to do so. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, the Permanent Secretary, I want to commend her, of course, for her stewardship in the Ministry of Legal Affairs, and, Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General, every time and any time I pick up the phone and try to reach him to ask him to do something urgent, he is always ready, willing and able. He has always been able to meet deadlines, and I really must take this opportunity again, Mr. Speaker, to say thank you to the Solicitor General for always making himself available to help out in the Ministry of Legal Affairs. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, our Crown Counsels, not many, but they are there. Mr. Speaker, the Registrar and the Deputy Registrar, they are doing a good job. The person in

charge of CAIPO, which I just mentioned, she too is doing her bit. Our Secretaries, our Assistants, our Drivers, everybody come together and make sure that they do what they have to do. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that for years, including now, that the Ministry of Legal Affairs is the only Ministry that does not have a vehicle? And, the Driver, although he is called a Driver, he is a walker; he has to go and drop these things all over the place, and I think, Mr. Speaker, we have to do something about this.

Mr. Speaker, let me say, of course, that for me, the Ministry of Legal Affairs, despite its little shortcomings, serving the Government and people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, in a very, very meaningful way, and we really want to say thanks to all of them.

Mr. Speaker, let me move on to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Usually, that Ministry is a very low key Ministry and sometimes we get the impression that we are not known to exist. But, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and I am very pleased to report on this very important Ministry and the work it is doing, which is done often behind the scene, with great results.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is the channel through which Grenada interfaces and conducts its foreign policy with other countries of the world. Mr. Speaker, to this end, the Ministry, and to a larger extent, the Government of Grenada necessarily maintains diplomatic postings in many countries of the world. Mr. Speaker, these diplomatic postings, some are called Embassies, some are called High Commissions, some are called Consulates, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Embassies are in jurisdictions or what you call non-Commonwealth jurisdictions such as the United States and of course the People's Republic of China, just to name two (2). The High Commissions are in the Commonwealth jurisdictions and so… such as the High Commission in London and the High Commission in Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, these Embassies are headed by Ambassadors, whereas the High Commission is headed by a High Commissioner, and, of course, the Consulates are headed by Consul Generals.

Mr. Speaker, let me say, it is extremely costly to maintain Diplomatic postings abroad, extremely costly. And, so, in making a decision, as to whether, or not Grenada puts a diplomatic posting in a foreign country, that must be preceded by some kind of an

analysis, cost benefit analysis, because, Mr. Speaker, even the larger, richer countries tried to cut corners. I can remember, of course, the British High Commissioner, when they had their High Commission in Grenada, made a request to remove the High Commission here in Grenada and take it to Barbados, as a cost cutting measure, and, of course, that one jurisdiction will serve the OECS and other Islands around.

But, it is strange, Mr. Speaker, when we try to approach on that issue, because we thought it would have been inconveniencing for our citizens to have to go to Barbados and elsewhere to get a Visa, but what we were told is that the Government had to cut costs. But, ironically, Mr. Speaker, when we, one year ago, as a cost cutting measure, decided of course, to, instead of a High Commission in London, we decided to have a non-resident High Commission and, of course, there was some resistance.

Mr. Speaker, joint representation in our foreign Embassies and Commissions abroad had been discussed at the level of CARICOM and OECS, but it remains just that, a discussion, at this time. For some strange reason, sometimes, it seems, Mr. Speaker, that we want to do our own thing, we want to have our own thing, although it will cost much less to maintain one or two Embassies, or High Commissioner and the cost is shared by various members. Of course, this has not happened, and so, Mr. Speaker, this is why the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has to be constantly making effort to mobilise resources to help not only domestically, here in Grenada, but also to help in our foreign undertaking.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that Grenada has normalised relations with the People's Republic of China in the year 2005. And, of course, the People's Republic of China has maintained an Embassy here in Grenada and, similarly, Grenada maintains an Embassy at the People's Republic of China in Beijing. Mr. Speaker, in addition, or besides the People's Republic of China having an Embassy here, there are many other countries that have Embassies located here in our own Capital. But, Mr. Speaker, if you remember, earlier I said that some analysis, cost benefit analysis has to be done in order to justify, in order to decide whether or not it is worth it. And, what is that leading to? What is the question that is now being begged? Are we saying that our relationship with the People's Republic of China and the fact that they have an Embassy here and

we have one there and we don't have in other places, does the expenses to maintain our Embassy in Beijing, would we say, of course, cannot justify having the Embassy over there?

Well, Mr. Speaker, as we go on later on, we will see, of course, the benefits that Grenada do receive from its bilateral diplomatic relations with many countries, including, of course, the People's Republic of China. We would see whether or not it is worth it.

Mr. Speaker, I said earlier that sometimes the players in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are not always identifiable, are not always in the limelight; but they are in the engine room doing all these works. You know, as I said before, in this Honourable House, the perception that Foreign Affairs personnel are just having a good time and, of course, drinking nice wine and wearing pretty clothes, nice ties, shiny shoes, it is more than that. It is more than that, because they are quietly behind the scene mobilising technical and financial resources, including scholarships. They have to, of course, keep abreast with other international and Regional Treaty obligations. Mr. Speaker, they are always making a concerted effort to increase the international presence. Mr. Speaker, the personnel in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs deserve commendation. **(Applause)**

This past year alone, Grenada hosted several high profile Meetings and Conferences. And, despite the lack of resources, of course, all these events were highly successful. Come to mind is the recent Heads of Government Conference in July, when and where our Prime Minister assumed the Chair. Everyone knows that, that was a very, very successful Meeting, so was which, of course, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs played a very pivotal role.

Mr. Speaker, I had the honour to represent Grenada in the 72nd Regular Session of the UN General Assembly in New York. And, with a relatively small delegation, Mr. Speaker, we were able to make the necessary interventions and engage the appropriate development partners towards our development goals.

Mr. Speaker, at the UN, I met with the Foreign Minister of Estonia, Russia, the People's Republic of China, India, Japan and the Director General of the World Health Organisation (WHO), among others. Mr. Speaker, these meetings were very useful, and, of course, Grenada will benefit substantially, as a result thereof.

And, Mr. Speaker, we received commitments for future cooperation, of which the following stands out: a commitment towards an X-ray machine and other equipment at the Princess Royal Hospital in Carriacou. What a coincidence, is it? I don't think so; Assistance to upgrade the Royal Grenada Police Force Traffic Department, IT Infrastructure; assistance with road traffic safety to minimise fatalities; support for Human Resource Development in Grenada. Mr. Speaker, follow-up work is taking place right now, as we speak.

Mr. Speaker, of course, as was mentioned before, our Prime Minister now Chairs CARICOM, the Small State Forum and, of course, the CDB. Grenada was also very successful in campaigning and lobbying very hard for a seating unit in the UNESCO Executive Board for the period 2018 to 2021; Mr. Speaker, a remarkable achievement for Grenada, because this UNESCO Executive Board is a very influential Board.

Mr. Speaker, let's go back to bilateral relations with the People's Republic of China. I had promised to come back to that. Mr. Speaker, at the end of July, I had the honour and pleasure of welcoming the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs from the People's Republic of China. Mr. Speaker, as a direct result of my meeting with the Assistant Foreign Minister and Vice Minister for Commerce, who visited Grenada in October, at this meeting we signed the following Agreements: Framework Agreement between the Government of Grenada and the Government of the People's Republic of China and the provision of a concessional loan by China to Grenada for the rehabilitation of the Maurice Bishop International Airport. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that China is a Leader in the International Community, both economically and otherwise. And, we have no doubt that the decision to observe a one China Policy and to normalise relationship with the People's Republic of China was the right thing then, and it remains the right thing now. And, Mr. Speaker, during our discussions, the Assistant Foreign Minister and I agreed to strengthen cooperation in the following areas: Agriculture, Education and Training, Housing, co-operation in Security and Law Enforcement. The Chinese Government has been and continues to be a very generous contributor towards its assistance and towards its development in Grenada. We are very grateful for their assistance, of course.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, EC$1.86 million has been approved by the People's Republic of China to Grenada for infrastructural works. Mr. Speaker, a Memorandum of Understanding and the Human Resource Development Corporation between the Ministry of Commerce and the People's Republic of China and the Government of Grenada; this Agreement will see more Grenadians receive short-term training in the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Speaker, we also received a US$2.8 million, in vehicles and equipment for the Royal Grenada Police Force. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, the question is, whether or not, in our analysis, we believe that it is better to maintain, or the cost of maintaining an Embassy in the People's Republic of China is justified. I am sure the answer would be, yes, a big yes.

Mr. Speaker, still on Bilateral, Mr. Speaker, the United States of America has also given a commitment for the construction of two (2) Emergency Operation Centres (EOCs) with disaster relief warehouses for Grenada and Carriacou, totalling US$2.4 million. The US Government continues to be a friend and has been key in supporting our disaster preparedness, since the passing of Hurricane Ivan.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, in addition to the People's Republic of China and, of course, the United States and others, we also have support coming out of other Allies, like Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, Cuba, Venezuela and Japan. And, of course, these relationships, Mr. Speaker, continue to bear fruits. Mr. Speaker for instance in Brazil, in addition to the short-term training courses in Agriculture, Disaster Management and Healthcare, we received a large quantity of Human Immunology medicine, particularly for patients suffering from Guillian-Barre Syndrome. Colombia also, of course, Mr. Speaker, is making its contribution. Mr. Speaker, Venezuela has been and continues to be a good partner in our development thrust. Of course, we know that Venezuela remains a friend to Grenada. We know, of course, Venezuela is going through trying times, but, of course, we remain friends, and of course we always say, that all we need is the best for the people of Venezuela.

Mr. Speaker, scholarships. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to work with other bilateral partners to ensure that our scholarship numbers

continue to increase, so that our young people will continue to get opportunities to improve their lives and that of the families. You know, from time to time, Mr. Speaker, foreign Diplomats, including Ambassadors, make calls at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And, Mr. Speaker, I cannot remember any of those occasions, when we have not put in a plug, or make a strong request for scholarships, because, fundamentally, we believe in the Human Resource Development, and no one can doubt the benefits that come from Education; I heard someone mentioned that this morning. And, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the returns, in terms of the benefits that we receive from these scholarships, we know that our efforts are significantly justified, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we always say that, of course, Foreign Policy cannot be divorced from Domestic Policy, and since our Domestic Policy provides the framework with which Foreign Policy outcomes can be translated, we are making all the efforts to make sure that we keep the two at length.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me, of course, take the opportunity, first of all to commend and then to thank the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs starting with the Permanent Secretary, of course, the Chief of Protocol and all the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their able assistance and the very good job they are doing of course, to keep Grenada's flag flying high.

Mr. Speaker, I need not say, because we have heard it so many times, and those who do not want to believe, must believe that Grenada is doing well. Grenada has been recognised as a small, but progressive, peaceful country in this very stable Region. And, of course, Mr. Speaker, if we do not gamble with that God-given asset, of course, all of us stand to benefit significantly from the position that our country has taken in the world today. Mr. Speaker, we know that it is not without hard work and efforts, of course, but each of us must play our part. Each of us must realise that Grenada is our home, is our country, and no matter which side of the political fence that we are, ultimately, we have to go back to ground Grenada. And, so, Mr. Speaker, this is why one has to be very careful with what one does or says, in terms of not damaging the reputation of this beautiful country of ours, Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Mr. Speaker, let me, of course, make sure that I do not fall back into my bad habit, where, over the years, I always worry about time, when it comes to my

Constituency Carriacou and Petite Martinique. And, so, Mr. Speaker, I want to spend some time on this Constituency of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Mr. Speaker, roughly, twenty (20) years ago, a bond was formed between the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique and myself, and today I am very proud to say that this bond is unbreakable and unshakeable.

Mr. Speaker, when I first entered the political arena, I made a solemn pledge to the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. In that pledge, I said that, "if you elected me to represent you in the Parliament of Grenada, then we, together, will transform Carriacou and Petite Martinique into a Paradise." Mr. Speaker, needless to say, that both sides kept their promise, and today the rest is history. Mr. Speaker, in partnership and collaboration with the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and the New National Party Administration and myself, Carriacou and Petite Martinique can boast of receiving their fair share of the National development pie. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I want to start, in terms of the progress and improvement over the years with infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, I remember the time when returning nationals for Carriacou and Petite Martinique will make statements in disgust, and vow to go back to England, or wherever they came from and not to come back until the road have been fixed. Mr. Speaker, that was a herculean task, because those of us who knew what the roads look like then, will truly be able to make the comparison now.

And, Mr. Speaker, the first act, in terms of refurbishment of the roads, was that the New National Party Administration enter into a loan agreement with the Caribbean Development Bank to rehabilitate all these roads, or most of the roads in Carriacou. In short order, Mr. Speaker, almost all of Carriacou was enjoying a better Road Network. **(Applause)** And, Mr. Speaker, what happened from then, what I should call almost a rush, it was a massive influx of Carriacouans, Petite Martiniqueans, Mainlanders to come to Carriacou, and there was a massive economic spinoff, because, of course, people were bringing vehicles in, because now they can drive on good roads; people were making investment in the country, and of course, there was an influx of tourists. And, so, as fundamental and rudimentary as it sounds, in terms of just getting basic infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, it is more than that, because that can make the difference in

whether or not your country survives. And, so, Mr. Speaker, I always like to start up with the infrastructure, especially roads.

I cannot, at this particular time, in my presentation identify all the roads that were done, but it is coming and I can promise you, it's in a separate pile. I am telling you, not that I want to let the cat out of the bag, in so many words, but I am telling you that despite what others might say, Carriacou and Petite Martinique received their share. You know, and it's almost ludicrous, Mr. Speaker, when, of course, today, you hear people, who are supposed to be knowledgeable, make statements such as, "the Government and Nimrod did nothing for Carriacou and Petite Martinique." But, when they make those statements, of course, what they are doing, in effect, is getting people to have very little respect for them, in terms of their judgement; **(applause)** because, as people walk around and they see the progress, of course, they always acknowledge it, and that's only Carriacou, we have a lot more coming for Petite Martinique.

Mr. Speaker, another very important aspect of our development, and of course, I mentioned just now, but I am talking about in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Mr. Speaker, I remember the days, when the people in Carriacou and Petite Martinique did not even know when a Scholarship was available, because of course, for some reason, maybe those who were supposed to advocate for that, were not doing what they were supposed to do. And, of course, there were deficits, in terms of education and knowledge and human resource. And, we thought, of course, that was part of the agenda to address that deficit in education. And, so, Mr. Speaker, the New National Party Administration went to work in quick order, and made sure that the imbalance was cured.

I can remember in 1997, Carriacou and Petite Martinique alone received fifteen (15) scholarships to go to Cuba, fifteen (15) from the Government. **(Applause)** And, what is more telling and what is more exciting, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that each of these youngsters that took the opportunity and went abroad and studied, are today serving the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)** We have Medical Doctors, we have Psychiatrists, we have Engineers; as a matter fact, in Engineers, we have one in the Ministry down here; I think we had two (2), because we

had so many, we had an overflow, we had to send down some. ***(Laughter)*** We have Architects, Psychologists, and you know every time, I can tell you my satisfaction comes from this, anytime I run into any one of these youngsters, they say to me, "Minister, we could never forget you." And, I can remember, quite recently one of the Doctors said to me, "my parents could have never afforded to make me a Doctor, you did." And, those are the things that keep me feeling good. And, those are the things that make me ignore negative statements such as, "we have not done anything for Carriacou and Petite Martinique." And, so, Mr. Speaker, we have an enhanced educational structure, I should say, not only for Grenada, but for Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and, of course, it continues. It was not a one shot deal, because...

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Elvin Nimrod: …as of now, we are still getting scholarships from the People's Republic of China and other jurisdictions, the short training, Mr. Speaker. And, so today, we are very proud that we have done much to enlighten our people, to educate our people, and, of course, we know that the country, as a whole would benefit in the end.

Mr. Speaker, it seems, as I have to rush. Here, again, I get myself in the same trouble.

Mr. Speaker: You still have about fourteen (14) minutes.

Hon. Elvin Nimrod: Fourteen (14) minutes, fourteen (14) minutes. Mr. Speaker, I want to mention something else, in terms of education and how important it is, and how it can help lift a whole Nation. Mr. Speaker, the issue about TAMCC. As we all know it's a good Educational Institution. Many youngsters get the opportunity to attend that Institution, and the record shows that they are all doing fairly well.

Mr. Speaker, I can remember, when there were complaints that the youngsters from Carriacou and Petite Martinique were not getting a fair share when it comes to

TAMCC, because they had to undergo the added burden to come to Grenada to able to attend TAMCC. Mr. Speaker, I thought there was reason to fight to make sure we get a branch of TAMCC in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)** And, Mr. Speaker, working together with the New National Party Administration, a TAMCC was established in Six Roads in Carriacou. Today, Mr. Speaker, we have so many youngsters who, otherwise, would not have gotten the opportunity to attend TAMCC, who are there, who are doing well, and some have graduated and are doing well outside. Mr. Speaker, how can we condemn, and how can we say that this Government has done nothing for Carriacou and Petite Martinique?

Mr. Speaker, Lord, look at roads and more roads. Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on some fundamentals, because it might not be relevant now, but at the time, it was relevant. When I got into Politics, and I decided I would go around to see what is going on in the country, lo and behold we found out that in this modern day and age, Mr. Speaker, if there was a problem in a school, if a child got sick and they want to get in touch with the parent, or if something happened and you want to call the Police, you had to go by a neighbour and be at the mercy of the neighbour to get a phone call. And, I promised the people that when the time comes, I would make sure that every school in Carriacou and Petite Martinique get a telephone and that has happened and it raised the case right now, Mr. Speaker, and I am very proud of that. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little about the health facilities, and of course, we heard the Minister for Health talk extensively about health issues this morning. I just want to mention that this Government refurbished the Princess Royal Hospital. There was, at one time, as a matter of fact, in the early days, when you couldn't even find a Doctor, sometimes, in the Hospital. Sometimes that one Doctor had to work down here and work in Carriacou. Today, we have two (2) permanent Doctors and sometimes three (3) **(applause)**; sometimes three (3), and, Mr. Speaker, that did not come by just sneezing, there was hard work and I must continue to help.

Talking about the Fire Truck; Carriacou was the only jurisdiction that had a Fire Truck that couldn't carry water. **(Laughter)** I mean, I can't believe it. They had a fire once, and the Fire Truck was running away from the fire. And, I can remember, Mr.

Speaker, when I came and I made a request in the Cabinet, and I must give credit to my colleagues, because there were many other Constituencies that needed a Fire Truck at the time, but because of the geographical makeup, where Carriacou is separated by sea, my colleagues agreed that they should get the Fire Truck, and here and behold, Mr. Speaker, we got that Fire Truck.

The Police Station; and I remember, again, there was no Police, no Security, nothing in Petite Martinique. And, of course, people coming from the North, or wherever they coming, in the night and they commit their crime and they disappear. And, we decided we must have security there, and the Prime Minister and the Government at the time, decided they would have security. And, of course, at the time, we had some others, who did not want it, for whatever reason, and was trying to intimidate the people. But, eventually, of course, we got that service, and I want to say today that the people of Petite Martinique are very proud that they get that security measure, in terms of having a Police Station.

Vehicles; and I can testify to this for myself. We have never, during a period of time Vehicles; we have never, during that period of time, until the NNP Administration came, get a new vehicle for Carriacou; that didn't used to happen at all. When you get a vehicle, you had to drive it straight in the Dump House, because it's not working, and, of course, it was being dumped. From that time to now almost twenty (20) years, every vehicle that we received from the Mainland, Grenada, from the Government is brand new vehicles**.** I want to say, take out hats off to this Government. **(Applause)**

But, Mr. Speaker, let me just try to rush this quickly, because the people of Petite Martinique will kill me. You know, they brought this to me and they say, listen, this is our own budget, you have to present it separately. And, then they talk about some of the accomplishments, under this Government, and they talked about the established of the Petite Martinique Main Office which is equivalent to the Ministry.

The construction of the Jetty, and we can say that Petite Martinique had a problem in terms of a Jetty and you know it's a fishing community, and they were not able to ply their fish and we put a Jetty. There is a Hard Court, a brand new Hard Court, and a Pavilion and several pieces of roads were constructed; Sugar Hill Road, Village

Road, Mama Pome-Pome Road, I don't know, I never remember that one, Madame Pierre, Cemetery Road, Belle Vue Road, other roads and cross culverts, under Special Projects, upgrading of the Main Road, and presently construction of steps and rails at Madame Pierre, instalment of safety guard rails at Albert Bay, fencing and upgrading of the Playing Field. All these, Mr. Speaker, I cannot go into them today, but, as I said, the people from Petite Martinique are very, very grateful.

Of course, under Education, I spoke about it a lot. Housing, a number of persons benefitted from the housing in Petite Martinique; Security, I talked about the Police Station. Fishermen; the fishermen ply their trade in Martinique, and, Mr. Speaker, I know that we have done a lot, as the Government, to facilitate them. So, we are happy we were able to do this.

But, let me quickly; I have some big, thick items to touch, because I have not touched the Water Project yet, and many other things, like the Port. But, let me say this, under Agriculture, they completed the registration of one hundred and twenty (120) farmers and sixty-two (62) fisher folks in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. A total of thirty-three thousand, nine hundred and sixteen (33,916) pounds of fish were landed on Carriacou at the Fish Market, at a cost of nine hundred and thirty-one thousand, two hundred and ten dollars ($931,210.00). There are ongoing inspection of the fishing vessels and fish for export. Two (2) farms are currently equipped. Six (6) new Lockers were constructed for the fishermen in Petite Martinique. I mean, they go on and on and on, so let me just go on.

Public Works Division, the upgrading of our infrastructure took a priority position in 2017, and the following were completed; construction of ninety (90) feet of road, ninety (90) feet long; retaining wall and a section of concrete pavement on the Mt. Pleasant Main Road at a cost of one hundred and ninety thousand dollars ($190,000.00).

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Elvin Nimrod: Mr. Speaker, can I get …

Mr. Speaker: You have five (5) minutes.

Hon. Elvin Nimrod: Nothing else?

Mr. Speaker: You have five (5) minutes.

Hon. Elvin Nimrod: Oh. Mr. Speaker, I do know, I do know, Mr. Speaker, that you know today is a special day for me, and then I know you are very generous, so I can depend on you.

Mr. Speaker: For five (5) minutes more.

Hon. Elvin Nimrod: Alright. Construction of a Box Drain on the Tennis Court, construction of Box Drain at Prospect Hall; replacement of seven (7) metal grills; construction of nine hundred and fifty (950) feet of road, the resurfacing of roads and more roads, that's all I can say, roads and more roads.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about our recent development, in terms of what is happening in Carriacou. We heard the Prime Minister, on Monday, outlining a number of important investments that are taking place in Carriacou. I want to make special mention, of course, of the Carriacou Marina; that is almost near completion, and despite the hardship that they had in the past, because they were denied certain privileges, because of politics, and I am pleased to say that they are moving very quickly, and very soon they would have this Marina ready.

We have the Customs building at the Port, which would be ready sometime in December. The Prime Minister also mentioned other construction. So, I want to say that's a big plus for us, and Carriacou and Petite Martinique would benefit tremendously from that.

Mr. Speaker, the Water Project, and I don't really want to go into details, but I want to express thanks and gratitude to the Government, and the Five-Cs for the first time establishing a Water Project in Carriacou and Petite Martinique, two (2)

Desalination Plants, one (1) for Petite Martinique, one (1) for Carriacou. Many people are now getting water, through the pipe borne water, and there is a move, afoot, to extend the Project further down in Carriacou to the South.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this, the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, as I said earlier had a bond with me that seemed unbreakable. They had kept their promise to send me to this Honourable House and they have kept this promise, and for almost two (2) decades, they have not reneged. Mr. Speaker, the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique are my best assets. They are my best friends, and I know deep down in their heart they really want to see me stay. But, I said to them, always, no King lasts forever, and we have to move on. Each and every one of us, in this Honourable Chamber, one day, would exit. And, of course, we have to make sure, in terms of our legacy that we do the right thing, so that, our legacy will show the time that we spent in this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether or not I could have enough time to say what I want to say. I doubt it very much. But, let me, Mr. Speaker, say how humble I feel, how grateful I feel, how thankful I am for the support given to me by the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)** They are wonderful people, they are loving people, they are caring people, and, Mr. Speaker, I would never, ever forget. And, Mr. Speaker, today, and it's no secret, as I prepare to exit this Honourable Chamber, this bastion of Democracy, let me say that this had been my greatest experience in my life, and I would always treasure it.

Let us take it for real. There are only fifteen (15) persons that can get an opportunity, at any one time, to sit in this Chamber, only fifteen (15), and those of us who are lucky enough to make it here in this Chamber, we are to be extremely grateful for those who help us to be here. **(Applause)** It is not an everyday thing to sit in the Parliament of your country, and no matter what happen of course, I will see this as my greatest days.

My colleagues, the Prime Minister and my other colleagues in the Cabinet and in the Parliament, you have always been so kind to me, you have always done your best to support me, in whatever way. Every time I make a request, in terms for Carriacou

and Petite Martinique, you are always there, you always say, yes, and I want to thank each and every one of you, because, as I said before, this is a special gift, and I don't want us to take it for granted. It is a special gift, coming from God above, to have you sitting here in this Institution. And, so, my friends, when the history is written, let it show that I was in 'This Place' and at the time I did the best I can for my Constituency and for my country and that I have no regrets.

But, let me single out the Prime Minister. From the day that the Prime Minister took me on board, he has never stood in my way by way of progress. He has always fight to push me at the very top, and at this point of exiting, to hold the second in command must tell you what I have just said is true. Prime Minister, I really want to say thanks to you. **(Applause)** So, fair well and goodbye, but is temporarily so. I would be back in the Chamber, but not on official business, my friends, I am sure. But, again, I shall never forget you, my brothers and sisters. And, again, as I take my exit, I want to say thanks, and I do hope that each and every one of you here serve the rest of your time in an able fashion, and I know that you are capable of doing that. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, my friends. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Parliamentary Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique. If you had continued, I would never have rung the bell, but you didn't. This would not have been giving extra time, but it's paying respect to an elder Statesman. But, you did not take extra time. **(Applause)** This shows the humility of the man.

Honourable Members, at this time, I think we have reached the point where we must adjourn for lunch. Honourable Members, this Honourable House is now adjourned until 2:10 in the p.m. We're adjourned for lunch until 2:10. **(Sound of Gavel)** This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

House adjourned for lunch at 1:10 p.m.

House resumed at 2:10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Pray be seated. This Honourable House resumes. Honourable Representative for St. George South.

Hon. Alexandra Otway-Noel: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I rise in full support of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2018, as presented by our Minister for Finance. This is truly a well-designed, practical, modern day Budget, for a model Country, designed with the best interest of Grenada's people and future, as the priority. Congratulations to the Minister for Finance and his team.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly amazing, when we look back and see how far we have come in the last five (5) years, which have passed by so quickly. As the Parliamentary Representative for South St. George, I must say that we have felt the effects of progress in a big way. We have seen projects under construction, we have seen many jobs, and we have also felt the positive effects of the many Government Programmes being offered.

Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to my colleagues, over the last two (2) days, and all I am hearing is good news. The livelihood and progress of our Nation's citizens have always been top priority for this Government, and, indeed, many residents have benefitted.

Mr. Speaker, in the South, a total of four hundred and eighty-three (483) people visited our office, so far, in 2017. I am personally there, every Thursday, and will continue to be there, to serve the needs of our people. Our office on the Belmont Main Road is where we take this responsibility very seriously, Mr. Speaker. We have made great effort to show love and compassion and give support wherever possible to those, who need it. We have laughed and cried, we have been frustrated, we have argued and we have celebrated together.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure by now the Nation knows I have a lot of passion, and nothing, but the best of intentions. It is also known that I can be a bit of a rebel, but, hopefully, the lovable kind. ***(Laughter)***

I have to challenge my good friend, the Representative from St. David, and let him know that South St. George has nine thousand and twenty-three (9,023) registered

Voters, as compared to eight thousand, two hundred and sixty-four (8,264) last year, making it the largest Constituency, Mr. Speaker. But, I am very happy how hard the Member is fighting for his Constituency. Mr. Speaker, my grandparents are from Perdmontemps, so give St. David all they need, Mr. Speaker.

So far, into 2017, our field staff have visited with thousands of constituents in every Village. The issues that have been raised, in most cases, revolve around land, housing, road repair, jobs and educational opportunities. Mr. Speaker, we have been able to meet so many needs, and I agree with the sentiment that we don't need to publicise everything we do. So, you wouldn't have seen images of those, who received vouchers, or assistance in some way, but, I am sure, if you went around, people would tell you, all over, that they have felt the impact of this Administration. When you are genuine and you are doing things because you really care, you aren't looking for fame. You do it, because you love people. My mother always says to me: "Never mind, Alex, the Lord knows. He is the final Judge of what we do."

Eighty-one (81) families received materials for Housing, through the House Repair Programme, Mr. Speaker. Most of them were small loans and a very few special cases receive grants. I want to thank the Ministry of Housing and my Housing Officer, Mrs. Paula Mc Phail for her hard work in this area. It is not easy, when you have a limited budget, a strict list of Protocols to meet, and so many requests for assistance. I believe that the distribution of materials is important, but we must continue to look for long term solutions. The Housing needs in the South are many, Mr. Speaker, as the population continues to increase, and families continue to grow.

Land availability is a huge issue, and I would continue to push for more housing developments. We need to look at erecting more communities like the one in Frequenté, built with the assistance of the Government of the People's Republic of China, and I want to say a special 'thank you' to them for their continued assistance in this area; and, of course, congratulate the Ministry of Social Development and Housing for all the efforts they are making.

Mr. Speaker, some families lost their homes due to fire and natural disasters. Assistance was given to those families, using Government programmes, as well as

support from caring members of the Community. They received clothes, food supplies, and help with the rebuilding of their homes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that every time a fire has ravaged a home, my entire team has met me at the site, at any time of day or night, sometimes even in their pyjama pants, to ensure that the affected family receives the support they need; a great group of people, Mr. Speaker, great group of people.

The SEED Programme is a lifeline to many in the South, as it is Island wide. Mr. Speaker, four hundred and twenty (420) households, to be exact, in the South, are receiving assistance from SEED. One hundred and twenty-two (122) of those were added under the very specific requirements and all met the Proxy Means Testing (PMT). These households consist, in most cases, of the elderly, chronically ill, or households that require extra support where children are involved. I say a special thank you to Ms. Hazel-Ann Theodore, who has carried out her very sensitive duties, with precision and passion.

The South is a very diverse Constituency, and very large and has many needs. I have said before that I have fallen in love with everyone, and, you know, it was a calling, Mr. Speaker, which took over my entire existence. I went to Calliste on the last Fisherman's birthday, and I was asked by one of the guys why I was there. He said: "Ms. Otway, you're not running in the next Election, what are you doing here?" I reminded him that I never chose to leave the people of the Constituency, but that I am stepping aside, because that is what our Party thinks is best, at this time. I went on to tell him that I am here, because I want to be here, not because I have to be, and also because they make great Lambie waters.

Mr. Speaker, also while there, I had a very emotional exchange with a young man, who is functioning normally after being treated in the Decompression Chamber after getting the Benz. Mr. Speaker, I have to say thank you to St. Augustine's for procuring and providing this service; seeing that young man, so lucky and happy and walking was so wonderful. The fisher folk in the South are resting easier, and, of course, I still encourage them to get signed up at NIS.

Mr. Speaker, I have to thank the Ministry of Works for fixing all the potholes, in the roads in the South. I was pleased to hear the Minister for Finance announce the project to repair some of the main roads in the near future, as we strive to improve the infrastructure on our Island.

I also want to say thank you to NAWASA for the efforts that they made in the South, and more recently for the development of plans for a new sewerage system in the True Blue area, as it is becoming more and more populated, as the school continues to grow and more buildings are being built in the area. It is important that we protect our water quality and ensure that Planning Regulations are adhered to, as we strive to protect the health and well being of our citizens. Three million dollars ($3 m) would be spent on that project, Mr. Speaker, and at the end of the project, we will need to resurface that road, and so, I am making a plea, in advance, to the Ministry of Works, and I am sure they would help us out.

One of the projects that I mentioned that was in the planning stages last year, Mr. Speaker, and is now complete, is that of the Limes Basketball Court. I really have to thank my friends at the Sandals Foundation, who answered my request to help us with this project. The Limes Development Committee has been a model Community Group, and they strive to improve kids' lives through regular Sports and community events. Mr. Brian Benjamin and Coach Cox and their team have been really fantastic and run the programmes, being supported by the Sandals Foundation and the Dwayne Wade Foundation, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank Minister Steele, who has recently taken the initiative to help us set up phase two in motion, which is the levelling of the Limes Playing Field, a centre point of football matches and other community events in the area. In fact, Mr. Speaker, each and every individual, who took the time to help me, in some way, on this journey of service, 'thank you', it has been a fantastic five (5) years. We have done a lot, with so many helping hands. There are lots of good people in Grenada, Mr. Speaker, the ones, who don't hesitate to volunteer to help out at a Health Fair, like Kimal, Jen, or our darling, Ms. Hopkin. In fact, tomorrow, December 1st, Mr. Speaker, is World Aids Day, and Hayden, in our office, has coordinated with the

Committee to set up an event in Camerhogne Park, from 10:00 a.m., to 6:00 p.m., where there will be entertainment and health checks being done; so we want people to take advantage of that.

Mr. Speaker, the people, who go out of their way to help others, like the ones, when we visit the Children's Homes, Mr. Speaker, to lift their spirits. I want to thank Grace, Ellon, Patrick, Alex, Kevin, Rod and Richie. There are some, who came and help us, when we want to construct homes, like the SDA Maranatha Church Men's Group, who are most amazing group of men. Mr. Speaker, those who help us clean the beaches and roads, when we ask for help, not afraid to be seen picking up garbage, but rather taking immense pride in doing what is necessary to preserve our Islands beauty and health; Roxy, Cynthia, Lyn, Dianne, Ms. Magdalene, and yes, Rusty, too. The wonderful ladies, who cook for our charity events, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Margaret Mc Queen, Ms. Hazel-Ann Mark, Ms. Gloria Mark, Miss Emelia Charles, or people, who come, when you need them to give support in other ways, like Pastor Vonnie James, Prudelle, Richard, Squezo, André Sylvester, Mr. Leslie Baptiste, Paul Mark and William Thomas, who come, whenever we call, Mr. Speaker. In these cases, there is no money involved. This was just people, who recognised a need, saw an opportunity to help and jumped in. Mr. Speaker, these and so many others understand the vision and know it is better to be part of the solution, than part of the problem. They know that talk is cheap and actions make real impacts. Thank you to everyone for your help, whether I called your name, or not.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, I have to take the opportunity to thank my team, who I have worked with in the communities. They have gone above the call of duty, guided by the principle that honesty is the best policy, it is a drama free zone and everyone, who needs help, will get it, regardless. I hope that that would be part of my legacy; in the office, Danielle, happy birthday, Ms. Burris and Ms. Pauline Mark, who I have to single out, as being a major support to me. She has been a rock. Richie, Tricia, Calvin, Hayden, Ms. Nickham, Hazel-Ann and Paula, thank you all, so much, for everything. You will always have a special place in my heart and in my life.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to commend all the Foundations and Charities that have made efforts to better our Constituency. Thank you. This speech is sounding like I am going, Mr. Speaker, but I am not going, I am just finding different ways to give service to our country. I have to thank my dear Prime Minister, as well, which I would do more extensively later, but he knows that I am here to help.

Mr. Speaker, back to the Constituency; we completed a number of infrastructural projects, under Special Projects, in 2017. We worked with many Contractors, and, so far, we have engaged fifteen (15) of them. Some of the projects that we completed were in Mt. Hartman, we did concrete pavement, in Mont Toute by-road, we did concrete pavements, slipper drains and steps. In Golf Course, we did box srains; in Woburn, we did concrete strips; Cafe, concrete pavement; Golf Course, concrete pavement and slipper drains; Frequenté, we did slipper drains; in Belmont, we did slipper drains, concrete pavements; Mr. Speaker; Café Beau Hill, Dixie Hill, Café, Mr. Speaker, we have been all over the Constituency, doing pavements and slipper drains, basically improving the quality of life of our residents. In Woodlands, behind Kirani James Boulevard, in Springs, in Grand Anse Valley; so, Mr. Speaker, we have been all over. We have even helped to rebuild a house that a tree fell on, and, Mr. Speaker, we have submitted a few other projects that we hope to get completed very soon. Mr. Speaker, we did a lot. The Constituency is very large, and we had a lot of achievements. I mean, you know, we always hear about what we didn't do, but we did a lot. We spent five hundred and forty-six thousand dollars ($546,000.00), improving the quality of lives in the South of the Island, Mr. Speaker. Forty-three (43) projects are completed, and there are about eleven (11) more still outstanding that we hope to complete, very soon.

For this year, our Debushing Programme saw over seven hundred (700) individuals employed. As I always say, this goes beyond just providing a day work. The pride that has been shown by most of the teams in the South and really around the whole Island has been tremendous. We need to keep Grenada clean and beautiful.

I want to touch on the garbage issue, Mr. Speaker, and say that, again, I implore the public to take care with dumping their garbage. We have seen people turn over

bins, full of garbage into the receptacles. Now, there is indeed, an efficient Collection Service by Solid Waste, but these guys are having, now, extra work to do, to clean up that mess, Mr. Speaker, and it is really quite unfair to them. Please use a bag. It would also help to decrease the number of rodents, and, of course, we have heard, recently, in the news that we have had more cases of Leptospirosis, which is something carried by rats, so we need to look into this a little more closely, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, through the Grenada Development Bank, young entrepreneurs were given the opportunity to make their dreams a reality, and we now have many young people operating their businesses now, and it is very wonderful to see these young people, filled with pride and they are running their own businesses. It also shows confidence in their country. They are showing confidence by making these strides, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak a little bit about the IMANI Programme in South St. George. The Ministry of Youth and Sports, formerly the Ministry of Sports and Religious Affairs, has, and continues to lead the way to seek development of our youth in a holistic way. Of course, one of the Flagship Programmes is the New IMANI Programme, which, through scholarships, job opportunities, direct skills, internships and soft skills, our youths have been exposed to a better standard of living.

In the South of the Island, a number of business entities and institutions have benefitted from this Programme, Mr. Speaker, and they include the Royal Grenada Police Force, the Police Garage, Immigration, the National Youth and Cultural Centre, the Calliste Government School, the Home for the Aged in Grand Anse, the Rex Resort, the MNIB, Silver Sands, St. George's University.

We would like to thank the number of employers and individuals, who have collaborated and cooperated with the New IMANI Programme and our trainees from the South; Telfa's Electrical, Hosten's Electrical; in addition, Point Salines Hotel, Coyaba, Spice Island. Mr. Speaker, our IMANI in the South may also stand to benefit from some of these new projects that are coming on stream, as well. They are very happy to be living in a time of opportunities, Mr. Speaker. Approximately, one hundred and forty (140) of them have benefitted directly from this Programme. They would testify of that

themselves. And, just for those of you didn't know, IMANI means 'Faith in God, Faith in others and Faith in oneself.'

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about some of the assistance being provided. Uniform Assistance, Needy Assistance and, of course, the Special Projects are run from the Prime Minister's Office. And, if I can just give a little summary; the Government spent two million and twenty-seven thousand, four hundred and fifty-two dollars and sixty-six cents ($2,027,452.66) last year on Uniform, School Fees and Transportation. Needy Assistance, one million, nine hundred and forty-one thousand, five hundred and fifty-eight dollars and sixteen cents ($1,941,558.16) were spent. This is, of course, Island wide. And, Special Projects received a whopping nine million, nine hundred and ninety-seven thousand and eighty-five dollars and fifty-two cents ($9,997,085.52).

Mr. Speaker, the amount of money that is being given to these programmes, which are really critical, shows that this is a caring Government. It is a beautiful thing to see children bouncing off to school, able to focus on their work, because their confidence is high. These programmes make a huge difference. Several students benefitted with payments of their exams and school fees and funds were provided for medical assistance. Mr. Speaker, when a humble person comes to see you and they are scared and facing medical issues that they cannot deal with, financially, there is no question that we will make every effort to help them. I want to say thank you to the Special Assistance Department, who have helped us meet those needs; a caring Government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our young people are striving for excellence, and nothing should stand in their way. Under the Special Assistance Programme, we were able to help students at TAMCC, SGU, Secondary Schools, and some studying abroad, to reach closer to their dreams. So far in the South, we invested over forty thousand dollars ($40,000.00) towards those causes, Mr. Speaker. Dozens of young people were awarded scholarships to further their education, both at home and abroad. I met a lovely young lady, the other day, Mr. Speaker, who has thirteen (13) subjects, and she now wants to study Chemical Engineering. I have already tried to write to find out how

we are going to help her to do that, because nothing, nothing, at all, should stand in her way. Mr. Speaker, additionally, through the Grenada Development Bank, a few young Entrepreneurs were given the opportunity to make their dreams a reality, as well, and are also now operating their own businesses.

Mr. Speaker, we have been able to erect fifteen (15) streetlights and are working on getting another fifteen (15) from our list, hopefully in the near future. Literacy continues to be a priority and the Ministry of Education has made great strides to make education more accessible, and also to provide courses that are in keeping with the current demands in the workplace. Mr. Speaker, there are three (3) Statutory Bodies that are working to improve the calibre of education provided in our Nation. The three (3) are: TAMCC, the Accreditation Board and the National Training Agency (NTA).

Mr. Speaker, T.A. Marryshow Community College has been going on with a restructuring process, which began in 2015, and continues to occupy centre stage in 2017 and into 2018. The objective is to reposition the College to a number one Tertiary Level Institution in the OECS, capable of producing quality Graduates, who can then gain entry and compete, on equal terms, at any top level institution of learning, in the world. Mr. Speaker, they also aim to provide our citizens with the necessary skillsets that the world of work requires, and also to achieve a higher level of operational efficiency, getting value for money.

Mr. Speaker, there were three (3) key components of the restructuring exercise: Organisational Restructuring, which was to provide for new positions of President and two (2) Vice Presidents and a Director of Attainment. The second was Curriculum Reform, to forecast more on subject matters that are relevant to National Development, Technical and Vocational Skills, Science and Technology, Research and Development, etcetera; and, Mr. Speaker, the other one was to reform a process facilitated and supported with the financial and technical assistance of the Government of Grenada, PETNA, the Foundation and McMaster University in Canada, the Caribbean Development Bank, and finally new initiatives in Research Mobilisation, re the College must operate, as a business, Mr. Speaker, and must be successful.

Mr. Speaker, obviously, the Government sees education, as a top priority, and it would make sense, at this time, to congratulate the outgoing Minister for Education, who has served for four and a half years, and also to congratulate the new Minister for Education, who has taken up the reigns and has continued to make education a top priority. For our young people, the sky is the limit for them, Mr. Speaker.

The second Statutory Body, under the Ministry of Education, is the National Accreditation Board. This Institution is set up to ensure that Educational Programmes and Institutions, operating in Grenada, meet international requirements. So, in other words, Mr. Speaker, when you do a course here, at one of these schools, you would be able to work anywhere in the world. It would be accepted, your education would be accepted anywhere in the world.

In June of this year, the Accreditation Secretariat was set up, to facilitate the work of GNAB, which is the Grenada National Accreditation Board. Today, GNAB has completed the first phase in the accreditation of two (2) major institutions; St. George's University and the T.A. Marryshow Community College.

For 2018, the Board would undertake five (5) major initiatives, complete the accreditation process of SGU and TAMCC; begin the accreditation for new initiatives, programmes and short courses; initiate agreements with professional bodies for the accreditation of Educators and trainers for various professions, like Engineering and Law, etcetera; complete application for membership, with, at least, two (2) recognised Accreditation Agencies; and, then basic preparation, Mr. Speaker, is something that is happening, preparation for hosting of the 2019 Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education.

Mr. Speaker, the National Training Agency (NTA) is the third Statutory Body, and the NTA continues to make significant strides. Mr. Speaker, this year, there has been a huge increase in CVQ and NVQ Certification, over the last year. Also, NEWLO was added to the list of ten (10) Training Centres, approved to conduct training leading to CVQ and NVQ certification. Another six (6) centres were audited and are now awaiting certification to be approved, as Test Centres.

Fifteen (15) Assessors were trained in the areas of Cybercrime and Investigative Interviewing. Over one hundred and ninety-six (196) Operational Standards have been approved for training in Grenada. Five (5) NVQ and two (2) CVQ Standards were approved in 2017. Mr. Speaker, one thousand, one hundred (1,100) NVQ Certificates were issued by the NTA in 2017, as compared to six hundred and three (603) in 2016. That brings the total of three thousand and forty-seven (3,047) NVQs have been issued by the National Training Agency, since its inception in 2011. So, we have to congratulate them, Mr. Speaker. Our young people have opportunities. **(Applause)**

The NTA will continues its collaborative arrangements with the various Government's Ministries and Agencies to successfully train a cadre of persons, who can meet the necessary skills to improve our Nation, Mr. Speaker. So, we can see that education is well on its way and opportunities are available, and we are very proud of our Ministry of Education.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the rest of world, you turn on the T.V. and you see war torn countries, you see famine in others and corruption in many. Children are dying every day, because bombs are falling on their schools. People are starving and oppressed. Some do not have access to education. Some cannot even get water unless they walk for miles. Those who strive are nomadic, having nowhere to call home. People struggle in this world everyday for basic human rights.

Mr. Speaker, we have to thank God for this beautiful place that we live in, and stop taking it for granted. We must not tear each down. We must count our many blessings and thank God every day. We have to be good neighbours, and not degrade this Paradise that He has given to us. Spirituality and goodness come from within, and we must consider the consequences, Mr. Speaker, of what we do, and search ourselves for the clarity to do better, to be better; that's a new campaign, Pure Grenada, the Spice of the Caribbean, we are the best. ***(Laughter)***

Mr. Speaker, the big picture that I have always seen is that we should hand the Nation to the next Generation that is safe, with the conveniences we need and the opportunities we desire, a place where our children can be free, be happy and thrive, where we respect each other and where no-one is left behind; a place, Mr. Speaker,

that produces food from the healthy soils and manufactures the rest, to share with other Nations; a country, Mr. Speaker, that, although small, is loud with achievements and successes. Mr. Speaker, it sounds like I am describing Grenada, because that is exactly the kind of country that we are.

Mr. Speaker, this Administration's vision encompasses all that, and has been achieving so much and more. It has been a great pleasure, working with so many different people and having the opportunity to serve, at this level.

Mr. Speaker, when we heard the Honourable Member for Carriacou, we have to stop and realise how lucky we are, to have distinguished gentle like him, giving exceptional service to our Nation. **(Applause)** I, for one, I am sure we can all agree, Mr. Speaker, that we were very inspired during his closing remarks. All of these Representatives, Mr. Speaker have made such amazing contributions to this Nation's advancement and I feel proud to have worked with them in this Honourable House. As we definitely work well under pressure, I was overwhelmingly proud of this Nation, how we pulled together to help Dominica and other Islands after the hurricanes. Grenadians are awesome.

Let me also congratulate NaDMA for a job well done. Mr. Speaker, with a small staff NaDMA has reached the entire State with some aspects of safety education and training. Mr. Speaker, NaDMA received regional recognition for reaching over twenty-one thousand (21,000) people and evacuating up to a thousand (1,000) during the Tsunami Awareness Event a few months ago. Furthermore, the Tsunami Ready Programme is currently in progress at a cost of forty thousand US dollars (US$40,000.00) and is being rolled out in the Northern Coast of the Island. It will see the erection of Billboards and the identification of evacuation routes throughout the communities.

NaDMA's new website, which was officially launched last month, will enhance its Educational Outreach Programme. Mr. Speaker, NaDMA also collaborated with local partners to improve resilience in the communities and to develop a strong volunteer Corp for disaster management. GIS was also quite instrumental in mobilising resources

for our neighbouring countries in the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria. Mr. Speaker, we must commend the Minister and staff for their leadership in this regard.

In 2018, through the Canada Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Fund Project, valued at a hundred and eighty thousand dollars ($180,000.00), we will upgrade ten (10) Emergency Shelters with facilities suitable for vulnerable populations. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the Japan Aid Grant, which was approved in 2016 in the amount of eight hundred thousand dollars ($800,000.00) will come to a realisation by August 2018. The grant will fund the acquisition of the emergency response equipment for the Agency. The Agency also received, from the US Government's Humanitarian Assistance Programme, Grants in the amount of US$1.4 m to construct an Emergency Operations Centre and Warehouse on the Mainland and one million ($1 m) to construct a warehouse in Carriacou.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has done an incredible job. I am proud of what our Nation has achieved, Mr. Speaker, and it's important that we share the good news, and our GIS has been doing an excellent job of keeping Grenadians in the loop. In fact, they have made significant inroads into making the transition from analogue to digital operations. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, Parliament is being watched around the world, thanks to GIS.

The Social Media Department also saw an increase in the level of activity corresponding with the growing number of hits and widening audience share. All major activities of the Government have been captured through varying information products offered by GIS including daily print releases, radio, news bulletins, daily television newscast, weekly television features and special television documentaries.

One of the biggest achievements in the Year in Review has been the designating of one of the employees to function in the role as Programme Director. Mr. Speaker, in the Newsroom they also had many achievements. GIS played a significant role in educating the public on topics like the Government Tax Amnesty, major projects, consultations through interviews with officials from Ministry of Finance and Inland Revenue, with a view to ensuring that people were made aware of their roles, responsibilities and benefits.

Mr. Speaker, other major subjects covered during the year include National Health Insurance consultations, the Inaugural Grenada Invitational, Grenada's achievements under the Structural Adjustment Programme and the importance of Fiscal Responsibility Legislation, as well as the construction boom, which has been mostly in the South of the island, at the moment, Mr. Speaker. Following the compilation of the National Report, the packages were disseminated to mainstream media via email and also placed on the GIS Facebook page to ensure maximum viewership. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the GIS has a lot of work to do, because there is so much good news to report.

The Programme Department has adopted a few new strategies that have improved the flow of work and production efficiency. Mr. Speaker, the 24 hour broadcast with GIS has been broken down into programming blocks to cover issues such as Health, Culture, Agriculture and Tourism, among other things. Educational block is the new dimension of the GIS Programme line-up, running from 2:00 to 5:00, which will show educational documentaries, quizzes and debate. Congratulations to PBC, who recently won the debates.

Mr. Speaker the next stage of the Educational Block will be to incorporate programmes reflecting syllabus lessons in the areas of Math, English and Foreign Language for kids, and Storytelling and Craft Making will also be part of the line-up. Mr. Speaker, they have special promotions, as well highlighting Government's achievements, more structured method of airing promotional videos, Mr. Speaker, the Spice Morning Show and State of Affairs Show. All of these, Mr. Speaker, have been remodelled and have been put out there to ensure that the public is getting the information.

The Technical Department also saw advances. GIS has improved on the quality of their video equipment and cameras and computers and so they are able to keep the public in the know. Mr. Speaker, of course, they have Facebook pages and we want to encourage the public to log in and like the GIS Facebook pages, so that they can keep on top of what's going on. There is so much good news and you have to find out, somehow, so why not from the GIS Facebook page.

Mr. Speaker, the words that I utter, I believe to be God's honest truth, and that is quite frankly, that I've travelled all over this world and everywhere I go people are shocked at how far we have come. We all had to make a sacrifice and our Prime Minister and Minister for Finance had to make some tough and not so popular choices when he and the team designed the strategy for the Structural Adjustment Programme. But Grenada got behind him and we buckled down and now we can celebrate what we have achieved.

Mr. Speaker, a surplus for three (3) years in a row; Grenada, you know. Mr. Speaker, a Phoenix has risen from the ashes. I have had the privilege of travelling to represent this country at various Investment Conferences, and, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you a little bit about our Citizenship by Investment Programme. It has exceeded all expectations in 2017. Our Programme, which commenced in 2014, is now regarded as one of the highest rated Citizenship by Investment Programmes in the world. **(Applause)** And, the past year has seen Grenada's programme continue to establish itself among global second citizenship options. In a time where many other CBI Programmes have struggled to maintain the interest of potential applicants, Grenada's Programme has been significant and across the globe, we have seen it gaining more and more momentum, Mr. Speaker. People recognise that we have high standards and are operating at the best international practices. The success of our Citizenship by Investment Programme is a result of integrity and credibility. Our Programme enjoys international credibility.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the IMF lauded our Government for setting up a legal framework to prudently manage the inflows from the Citizenship by Investment Programme and declared the Programme to be the gold standard in and amongst other regional Programmes, because of our transparency, Mr. Speaker. I want to categorically state that our Programme's due diligence procedures and security checks are second to none with an approval process for granting citizenship that is unique to Grenada, when compared with other Citizenship by Investment Programmes.

Our Programme has been properly constructed and managed by a Committee of seven (7) persons of integrity, who are qualified and have many years of experience in

matters relating to Law, Finance, Trade, Investment and other relevant areas. To further safeguard the security and integrity of the Programme and to ensure investor confidence, we have continued to introduce protective measures where and whenever necessary, including the recent Citizenship by Investment Approved Projects Regulations, which provide oversight, controls and accounting for the funds deposited by investor applicants into Programme Approved Projects.

Mr. Speaker, the approved projects under the CBI Programme now number eighteen (18), in key sectors of the economy such as Tourism, Agriculture, Agri-business and several of them have commenced implementation. In particular, special mention must be made to the St. David Agro Project, which is leading the way in the medicinally recommended soursop tea and the Hideaway True Blue, both local home grown CBI Projects. Additionally, the Silver Sands, the Pointe at Petite Calivigny and Kimpton Kawana, where construction is underway, creating jobs and opportunities and creating significant inflows into our economy.

Mr. Speaker, jobs for our people and world class hotels. Mr. Speaker, the main source of resources from the CBI Programme to the Government remains the capital grants received by the National Transformation Fund. The National Transformation Fund has delivered $72.3 m in receipts, Mr. Speaker. These funds allow Government to invest in critical programmes, such as Road Improvement and Maintenance, Community Self-help, Medical Equipment, Home Improvement and Special Projects, and, very importantly, to serve the country's rescheduled debt obligations.

Mr. Speaker, this Programme all comes back to the people. This Programme was developed to help our people and the money is used to continue to develop our country. In line with our efforts to maintain fiscal discipline, we have adopted conservative assumptions for receipts from the CBI Programme to next year to be at eighty-one million dollars ($81 m).

With our planned re-profiling of the Programme, aimed at increasing our presence in the marketplace, conducting further due diligence, strengthening relations with our marketing and local Agents and international streamlining of managerial processes, we can be optimistic that inflows can even be more. Mr. Speaker, there is

money in the bank. It doesn't mean we are totally out of the woods, but it means we can breathe easier. We don't want to get complacent, but Mr. Speaker, as we explore our resources, as more hotels and other businesses open their doors we can, certainly, breathe easier. I want to congratulate the Private Sector, who continues to raise their standards to meet the needs of our citizens. They have been investing and growing their businesses and that is simply, because they have confidence in where this Nation is going.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how many more times you will hear my voice in this Honourable House and words can't really describe how I feel. I just want it to be known that it has been an honour and a privilege. I am grateful to God, my family and friends, our dear Prime Minister who gave me the opportunity to serve, my constituents, who had the confidence in me to give me the opportunity to represent them, and I honestly hope that I made you proud and that I served you well. Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied with my contribution that I have made and in this capacity and I hope that my constituents know that I will always be around, and who knows, Mr. Speaker, what the future holds. It has been an interesting time and there were highs and there were lows, but, Mr. Speaker, all in all, it's been a fantastic five (5) years. 2017 was a good year and now it's almost behind us and we get a fresh start again.

I want to say to you and your family, Mr. Speaker, God bless you and thank you for allowing me to speak in this House. You have been very kind and the bell hasn't rung yet, which is very good. I would like to extend, through you, to all my colleagues, the very best wishes for the holiday season and, of course, I want to extend those wishes through you to the entire Nation. I wish you all peace, love and happiness always. I want to thank the Honourable Prime Minister and the Member for North-East St. George for giving me the opportunity to be part of this amazing squad and to have confidence in me to have given me roles that I hope I was able to make a strong contribution to. I remain at the service of this country and will find ways, wherever I am needed to assist, and, Mr. Speaker, with that I bid you *adieu* and thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representative for St. George South. I know you were listening for the bell, you would not have heard it. Thank you. Honourable Representative for St. Mark.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin on the last comment that you would have made, if you would permit me, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to assure you, I would not be listening for the bell either.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my unequivocal support to the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, as presented by the Member for St. George North-West and the Minister for Finance, our Prime Minister, Dr. the Right Honourable Keith Claudius Mitchell.

Mr. Speaker, this Budget is one of the best that I have seen and we've had many good ones, and I want to complement him and the staff of the Ministry for Finance for the comprehensive work that they would have done taking into consideration the priorities for this country and the fact that while we have to increase on our revenues, we also have to look at how we can effectively decrease on our expenditure, cut down on waste and make it really work in a still difficult and trying economic times.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes the gains of this country are taken for granted, the surplus that we would have had, the fact that Customs would have exceeded their revenues and the expected revenues. These things are taken for granted and sometimes it is felt that these monies came easy and so they must be spent just about anyhow. But, we in Government know that there are a number of competing interests, and, therefore, Mr. Speaker, while I cannot say I am ecstatic about the allocation for Tourism, which is the Ministry I represent, but I am satisfied, knowing that there are other national competing interests, and so they gave us a little more than last year. For 2018, the amount allocated for Tourism is twenty-five million, six hundred and seventy-nine thousand and ninety five dollars ($25,679,095.00), and that is $3.3 m more than we got last year, and I want to assure this Honourable House that our Ministry being

cognisant of the constraints and the needs in our country, would make sure that we maximise the benefits of these extra monies.

But, also, Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Finance spoke about certain things that could happen, if the fiscal space allows. And, knowing what has happened in 2017, we did more than was expected. I am expecting that the ten million ($10 m) that was promised, or is being conceived to be shared between Tourism and Agriculture and maybe one or two other Entities, that that will happen in the quantities, so that we can do much more with what we have, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have received more funding for a few key areas for which I am happy, the improvements and maintenance of sites. Mr. Speaker, there are several sites that are under the purview of the Ministry of Tourism and, therefore, we have to keep them in extremely good condition, so that the people of this Nation and also the visitors find it pleasing, when they go to these attraction sites and can enjoy themselves. The Tri- Centennial Park has been on-going for too long, and I trust that for 2018, we will see the removal of ongoing and see completion of that project.

Also, the National Parks, the Member for St. John spoke about it, that there will be a concerted effort between Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture to expand the list of our National Parks and to make these truly National Parks, so that we can preserve our heritage and keep it for posterity.

Mr. Speaker, also three hundred thousand dollars ($300,000.00) has been allocated for the Pure Grenada Music Festival, and I know the organisers, they did lobby very hard for that and I know that they are going to be happy for that. It is good for our Nation, directly, because many of us enjoy the Show and also it is good, indirectly, because it brings Tourists, and spreads the Tourism dollar in our country.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I would have liked to see a little more, bearing in mind that Tourism contributes, significantly to the GDP, and I just want to mention, in terms of Hotels and Restaurants, it is said that Tourism contributes 6.9% of the GDP and employs, approximately, 8.8% of the total Labour Force in this country, and these are significant statistics, Mr. Speaker. But, as I said, I understand and I am asking myself even if we have to get a little more, where would we pull it from, Education? We cannot

take monies away from the education of our children. Should we take it away from Works? We can't take it away from Works. As a matter of fact, over the years, my biggest complaints and the Member for St. George South–East knows that, and all of our complaints have been, we cannot get enough major infrastructural works done. We cannot say take it away from Works. And, if we look at every Ministry, not Health, not Social Services, all of us depend on these services and, therefore, I am happy with that. The only thing I ask, Mr. Speaker, through you, Mr. Speaker, is that when people sit at the bargaining table, that they do not only remember or hear that there is a surplus, but that they must also recognise that there are other things waiting for the little fiscal space, so that the money can be shared around. **(Applause)**

The monies, the excess and the surpluses cannot go to one group of people, because the majority of Grenadians fall outside of that. So, if we enhance one group of people, what happens to the rest of us, and I would just beg that common sense and goodwill prevails, so that we do not all want to grab it for us, but we have cousins, we have friends, we have nephews. There are other sisters and brothers in Grenada, who need other services for which all of us, as Parliamentary Representatives can say, we could have done with a little more for housing, a little more for this and a little more for that. But, I believe that given the circumstances, the Minister for Finance and Prime Minister and our Government has done extremely well with the monies that have been placed in our hands. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I want to go now into the Ministry that has been entrusted in my care for the time and that is Tourism, Civil Aviation and Culture. Mr. Speaker, I mentioned Agriculture, because that's the page I am looking at, and the first thing I have is Agriculture and Tourism. I didn't even say Tourism and Agriculture, you know, Agriculture and Tourism, because we know the importance of Agriculture in this country and also we know the importance of Tourism. And, sometimes there seems to be a little bit of fight, a little bit of antagonism, well, Tourism is getting all the money.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that in the last few months, I have been really encouraged and heartened by what I have seen, in terms of the persons in the Private Sector in Tourism, working along with farmers, working along with MNIB to ensure that

Agriculture is not just a subsistence thing, but that it can bring valuable dollars into the pockets of our farmers, and this is what we want to see, and we are a Government, who have worked and who are very interested in that. And, so from the time I came into Tourism, I have been engaging my sister, who was my predecessor in Tourism, to see how we can get this relationship, harmoniously working for our people, how we can get dollars into the hands of our farmers, whether it be somewhere in Tufton Hall or Belaire, or whether it be somewhere in St. John, or anywhere that you have farms, let our farmers and let our young people see that Agriculture is, indeed, economically viable and sustainable.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have been speaking to the Hoteliers. I am sure others have been speaking to them and they have heard the cries. So, in recent times, we heard that there was an agreement signed between the Sandals Foundation and GRENROP… is that the correct name? Anyway, it's a Cooperative of women farmers, and they have agreed that they are going to purchase the cash crops, the vegetables, from this Organisation, GRENROP and also that they will help provide certain assistance to the tune of thirty thousand US dollars (US$30,000.00), so that they can purchase seedlings or seeds, because seeds can be very expensive, they can purchase Irrigation Systems, because no longer can we just depend on the Wet Season to plant and reap and the Dry Season we have nothing. We cannot do this kind of subsistence farming, this kind of Wet Season/Dry Season farming, inconsistent production, because that is one of the things that the hoteliers were saying. They want the same crop, in good quality, in same quantity, year round, and that has been our problem.

But, I think we've come a long way, with support from the Ministry of Agriculture, providing Irrigation Systems to our farmers, in collaboration, also, with our friends, the Chinese. The MNIB has been doing a fantastic job and growing and now we've reached the point where farmers can produce almost anything, any time of the year, not in enough quantities, as yet, but we're working towards that. And, with the kind of soil we have, the Hoteliers will tell you that we produce some of the best fruits and vegetables, best tasting fruits, in the Region and, perhaps, worldwide, just as good as any.

And, therefore, all we have to do is to work on that, in a sustainable way, that it is produced all year round. So, Sandals Foundation had that arrangement with this group, and then Silver Sands, which plans to open somewhere in March of next year, already, they have approached this group, as well as other farmers and recently I had a meeting with them and a couple other Hoteliers and MNIB, to speak just about that, how can we get you to purchase more from the farmers; how can we work together to get the farmers to produce for you in the quality and the quantity and the consistency that you need and they are well on the way. The Head Chef, who is planning for Silver Sands, he says he has been going all around the Island and building trust and building a relationship, and now they already have a projection of how much of what they need. And, what he is saying is that if he tells a farmer that he needs one ton, whether the number of guests in the hotel go up or down, at least he might increase on the numbers, but he would not decrease, so that it would be predictable how much they can sell to the Establishment and they already have purchased their equipment at the hotel, so that they can store the surplus, so that there is minimal, or no spoilage to these things.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am very heartened to see that the courtship has progressed, so that dates have been set for the marriage, and I am sure that both the Hoteliers and the farmers will be very pleased. And, I want to thank those Hoteliers, not just those that I have mentioned, but our small and indigenous Hoteliers, have, too, over the years, been purchasing directly from the farmers, or from MNIB, but also the larger Hotels now that have the potential to purchase in greater quantities, they, too, are coming on board, to ensure that our farmers get a fair share of the market that they provide. So, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that that is happening, and over the next few months, we will hear much more of that relationship. Mr. Speaker, we have continued the development of our Tourism sites, because we know that we have to keep them maintained and in good condition, so that Tourists could continue to come to our shores.

Grand Etang; in Grand Etang, we have had repairs to the Monkey Rail and also restoration of the Shoreline Trail and the LaBaye trails, as well. We have effected enhancement at the Concord Waterfall where, as you may be aware, Mr. Speaker, and

the Nation is aware, that occasionally we have had tragic accidents in that area. So, we got together with the Police and sought to see how we can make it safer for the visitors to that Waterfall, whether it be local or foreign, and with a joint effort, they came up with safety rails. They came up with the Floating Rings, so that if someone is having difficulty in the pool, those rings can be thrown to them and they can be pulled to safety without someone else going in and complicating the matter. And, also, they have installed Warning Signs, in three (3) languages, English, Spanish and French, so that persons will know that they have to be careful.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate and applaud Mr. Forrester, who is one of the businesspersons at that site. He saw it fit to put a Viewing Platform from where persons can stay in safety and have a look and enjoy the Waterfall and its surroundings. So, this was a very good example of a Public/Private/Partnership to improve on the attraction that we have in Concord Waterfall. And, Mr. Speaker, we are working with the Parliamentary Representative there. There are other things to be done, and we are hoping that maybe that so very important Special Projects can play a role in enhancing.

We have also done enhancement of the Kirani James Boulevard. Persons who travel along that area would recall that there were some very unsightly boats that were in serious state of disrepair. Some of them were irreparable and just strewn all over on the beach side and on the side of the road and creating an ugly site and also creating the potential for animals and other nuisances to inhabit. And, again, we got together, with the Police and Ministry of Health and all of those were removed.

Mr. Speaker, oftentimes, when these unsightly objects are removed, it stays empty for a while, but then people feel that the space was created, so that they can put more. So, through you, Mr. Speaker, I want to appeal to the public that now it is a very pleasant place to be. There are benches where people can sit down and relax and have a look at the beautiful sea going out there, and I hope that it remains that way.

Mr. Speaker, if you travel from Tanteen, let's say towards the Carenage, as you pass the Post Office, you would see a lovely mosaic of art on the walls. And, that, again, was an example of Public/Private/Partnership. We did have some donors, who

contributed and a young man, a young, local man by the name of Akim Pierre, he is the one. I don't know, he might be related to you, Mr. Speaker, and you might know who he is, but he did a fantastic job there to create that mural, that all of our visitors and even locals stop to visit.

When people come to our shores, one of the things they like to do, and when we travel too, we like to take some photos so that we have fond memories of our travels, and that is one of the place where we see a lot of the Tourists stopping, so that they can have a photo of, because of the beauty and the finish of that work that he has done; so, my compliments to young Akim Pierre.

Mr. Speaker, as we speak, work is ongoing at the Grand Anse Jetty, to replace the Floating Jetty that used to be there. That jetty, although costly, it was not a one-off cost. There was always recurrent cost, when the seas got a little bit rough or we had a surge, that jetty would be easily damaged and had to be constantly repaired at, of course, a heavy cost to the Tourism Authority or the Ministry of Tourism. What we have done now, we have contracted a builder who builds jetties, and he has come up with a design that is going to give us a fixed jetty. It's going to be bigger and he said such a jetty would give us something like thirty (30) years warranty or guarantee, and so for a long while we would not have to bother.

Mr. Speaker, the last time that that floating jetty got damaged was when we had some hurricanes in the area, either Maria or Erma and we had a sea surge and that got broken. But, you know, it was very interesting to see how the proverbial drowning man was catching at a straw. You know, we go to other countries and people talk so good about Grenada, and I would give you a few examples, shortly. But, there are some people, who are like vultures, because they know they are dying. People could die gracefully. A political Party could die gracefully. You don't have to bury your country to die. **(Applause)** Look how the Member for Carriacou bowed out gracefully, the Member for the South bowed out gracefully, even though she said she might come again, and she might come back again, who knows. But, the point is if you're dead, you're dead, just die gracefully.

Mr. Speaker, there are some people, and maybe if they just lie down, they might not die, they might rise again, who knows. But, you want to kill Grenada, every little thing that happens, one little accident, one little death, and we come as the country with the biggest statistics for crime in the world.

Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, I was in Jamaica, and there was a panel discussion between myself, the Minister for Jamaica, Honourable Bartlett and the Prime Minister for St. Lucia was the moderator and, of course, the great Butch Stewart, owner of Sandals, was there. And, when that man started to speak, we know St. Lucia get bigger numbers than us, Jamaica way ahead of us, but the man started to speak about little Grenada, the beauty of this country, the beauty of the people in this country and how we conduct ourselves. And, you know what he spoke about, and I want to compliment the Minister for Education before, the present Minister, those before, and our people, maybe our parents, teachers. He said when he came and they started to interview young people for jobs in Sandals, he was impressed with the academic level that our children had achieved, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** In the midst of countries that had Universities of the West Indies and so, that was a priceless advertisement for Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

And, he spoke about the crime. At first, he said a country with little crime, and then he said look, the crimes are so few and far between, Grenada has no crime, it is a lovely place. But, just wait and you will hear them. They are on Facebook. They are on, what you call it? Instagram, whatever; all kinds of things, Social Media, bad talking poor Grenada, as though it is going to hurt only Keith Mitchell. It is going to hurt us, because if you love your country, when people bad talk your country and malign your country, it hurts you, but more importantly, it hurts our elderly that we take care of, it hurts the young people that we are doing a future for and it hurts everyone in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique and makes our country suspicious. So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot to be thankful for.

Mr. Speaker, so we are replacing the jetty, so the little straw that they were catching at, it is no more, because what is there to say, we are building a top of the line,

we have a Contractor whose work is in high demand in every country in the Region. He knows what he is doing, and therefore, and we found the money to do it, Mr. Speaker.

So, we have a Prime Minister, who works. I know he is a Statistician. I hope I said the word right, it is a kind of big word. But, it is just amazing how the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance makes things go around, so that attention can be paid to the things that matter. So, recognising that the Water Taxi people would be, you know, like fish out of water, if they didn't get that done and knowing that it was the end of the year and the close of the budget year, our Prime Minister and Minister for Finance said it has to be done, let's do it, and so that project is on stream, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to give some statistics later on, of our performance. And, we have done, again, extremely well, especially, in terms of Stay Over passengers, especially Carnival. Carnival was a bumper Season, the best ever, in terms of numbers, from the Region and otherwise. But, all I heard from a gentleman, who wants to be a Leader, who wants to be a leader was that cruise numbers had gone down. That is all he could have seen, in all the good that had happened, all of the great reviews from BBC, Wall Street and all other… how do you call them now? They are Travel Writers, one thing he could have seen, that it had gone down. So, that is why he was always negative, that's the only thing he could see, because under him, as Minister for Finance, the country was always in negative, so I couldn't blame him for only seeing that. He does not know that there is a positive side to financing, as well. I think our Statistician has to teach him a few little tricks, you know. PM, you have to feel sorry for your neighbour.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have done a number of other things, in terms of seeking to develop Community Tourism, that is from the Public Sector side, the Tourism Authority and the Ministry. We will soon be unveiling a new Petroglyph Tour, and that Petroglyph Tour takes you from Queen's Park, where we have the first one, all the way up Grand Mal, up to Waltham and Duquesne Bay, and all the way into St. Patrick, Mt. Rich. All of these areas have been found to have the Amerindian Petroglyphs that were left by the persons who inhabited these countries before. I can't say they are our Ancestors, but they were there before us and they left their mark. And, it is always important to

preserve your culture and your heritage and, therefore, that new Petroglyph Tour will be one of the things that we will be unveiling for locals, as well as Tourists. I know, as a child, they used to call one of those Petroglyphs; in an area we call La Source, they used to call it the Carib Stone or the Carib Man Face or whatever. That is the same thing, the nice word; people from St. Mark, the nice word is Petroglyphs. So, Mt. Rich will be unveiling their Amerindian site on December 11th and a number of others will be, and so by early 2018, all of these will be put together in a comprehensive package that locals can learn, as well as visitors.

Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, we signed an agreement for Airbnb, in which it is a new type of Tourism. When I speak to the cruise and the drop in the cruise numbers, I will speak a little bit more; well, I would join them up right now, the Air, Bed and Breakfast, it is a means of bringing Tourism, not wanting to take everything out from the Tourism belt, from the white sands and so on, but giving another dimension to Tourism, because there are a group of people that are called Millennials, they want to go into the communities and live, and we have been a little bit slow in catching on to that. So, while you have a number of establishments and homes and buildings that are up for Airbnb, we do not have enough in the community. They want to go and live there, in one little room that Brother Boatswain has, or Brother Pablo have in St. Patrick, or go in St. Andrew, where Sister Delma might have something and see how the people live. And, when we have a Saraka, or we have a Fish Friday, or we have a Food Fest in St. Mark, they want to go to that and sit down and be with the people. They don't want to jump from a bus in the South and go there, but they want to live from day one and spend a few days, or maybe mix it up between the hotels and that. So, it provides an avenue for the trickledown effect of the revenues generated by Tourism into the pockets and into the hands of the small man. And, so it can go from one room to a whole apartment, but these have to be certified, in terms of the standards by the GTA, the Tourism Authority. So, whereas the Legislation allowed for three (3) rooms and up, to be under the jurisdiction of the GTA, with the coming of the Airbnb, we have to, in the very near future, change the legislation. Cabinet has already approved, but we have to bring it down to one, because you can do Airbnb with one bedroom.

The other added benefits of Airbnb are also to provide more people, that critical mass for Airlift. When you are speaking to the administrative persons, the Executives of an Airline, what they want to know, one, is your room stock; one of the first questions they ask, is your room stock. And, therefore, although our room stocks have been growing in leaps and bounds, it could still do with a little addition. So, the people who go to the Airbnb facilities would provide that kind of leverage that we are looking for.

But, Mr. Speaker, I go now to statistical performance. Stay-over arrivals increased by 7.43% for the period January to October, 2017, and we expect that by the end of the year, we will have an increase of 8.5%. I think this is a significant improvement, Mr. Speaker, in the Tourism Sector, and we are all appreciative of this, more monies going into the Airport, because they have a lot of things to do, more for the taxis, more for the hotels, all over.

The Yachting Sector, Mr. Speaker, also increased. At one time, we were concerned that the numbers were going down a bit, but they have started to bounce back, and that is because a lot of work has gone into marketing and other means to ensure that people know about Grenada and come to Grenada. So, visitors to the Yachting Sector have increased by 1.77%, and we have a number of other exciting things happening. Cruise though, is the one that had decreased by five, in terms of number of visitors, declined by 5.7%, Mr. Speaker, but that will not be for long, because I am going to inform this Honourable House, through you, Mr. Speaker, about the number of things that we are undertaking.

So, as I said, we have been a bit slow in catching up, in terms of implementing the Airbnb, but everything is signed, sealed and delivered, all the arrangements are there and we will see an upsurge in Airbnb.

We have also increased on adventures, because the millionaires they like adventures. They want to do trails, they want to climb mountains, they want to climb Mount Saint Catherine, Mount Qua Qua, whichever mountains we have, and they want to do River Tubing and those things. And, a number of initiatives have been taken, in this regard, so that we can find adventure for the Tourists. So, no longer it is just the quiet, sitting on a bench, sitting on a nice chair on the beach, but they want to go out

into the communities, eat a little Bakes and Salt-fish, a little Oil Down, something like that, and enjoy themselves. But we are fast catching on, Mr. Speaker. The Ministry of Tourism, the Tourism Authority and the Private Sector, we are working together to deal with that.

Recently, we contracted a Consultant, who has about thirty (30) years of experience in the Cruise Industry, and he has started to work with us to see how we can adjust our Tourism offerings, our attractions, and we can vary them, because the Sea and the Sand will always be there and people will love that. But, we also have to vary our attractions, so that people who want some more adventures can have adventures and so in Seven Sisters Falls, we have the High Wire Zip Line up there, and the reviews on it is really great, people love that. I do not know if I am brave enough to do it, but many who go there, they just love it, Mr. Speaker, and they go back repeatedly and they also love just dipping into the Waterfall right after that.

Also, we have engaged a Company, formed by a Grenadian body and someone, externally, who has a Zip Line in two (2) other countries, and we are finalising the arrangements, so that we can have a Zip Line over Grand Etang and we believe that, too, will enhance our offerings for the Tourists.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned our little concern about the Yachting Industry, and very recently the GTA signed an Agreement with RORC, that is a yachting group. They have been coming to Grenada, passing over; let me look to see the country that they say these people are coming from. I'll find it. It is somewhere here, but I haven't found it yet, Mr. Speaker, I'll find it for you just now. But, they have signed a three (3) year contract; alright they are coming from Lanzarote in the Canary Islands; I knew the Canary Islands, I couldn't remember the Lanzarote. It takes some days for them to come from that place to come to Grenada and we have a three (3) year Agreement with them, Mr. Speaker. When they started off a couple years ago, three (3) years ago, there were ten (10) yachts, now it has more than doubled to twenty-two (22) and the yachts are getting bigger and finer, Mr. Speaker, and they are just loving our country; so we are happy to have them.

Mr. Speaker, a number of other things, the first Dive Festival in Grenada. As we know, Grenada is well noted for its diving facilities and people love what they see under water. Our Underwater Sculptures are one of the things that attract them, also the Underwater Wrecks, and I see the uniform people are here and I note, Mr. Speaker, that the Police did give, recently, one of the ships that they couldn't use anymore, they gave it to the GTA, and worked with the GTA to prepare it, so that we can sink it again, so we have one additional wreck, when we advertise our Dive Festivals and our Dive areas. So, Mr. Speaker, a number of things are happening and in the very near future, we will see the negative going into the positive.

Mr. Speaker, the FCCA (Florida Cruise Ship Association), they have a yearly competition, and you would have heard me mentioned and others would have mentioned the academic ability of all children. Almost every year in that Competition, someone in Grenada wins, either first or second or third. And, this year, we had Renee Sandy from Beacon Learning Centre High School, and she attained second place, Mr. Speaker, and that would allow her to get one thousand, five hundred US dollars (US$1,500.00) for herself and one thousand, five hundred US dollars for her school, Mr. Speaker. And, through you, I want to compliment, both the school and this young lady for grabbing the second place in that Competition. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, we have done a lot of destination marketing. Since BREXIT, our numbers coming from UK and Europe would have lessened a bit, and so we decided to aggressively market in those destinations and already we are seeing a pickup in that area and we expect to see much more in the year to come. Our Air Canada Flights have increased. There were two (2) months in the year, October and November, when Air Canada Flights did not come into Grenada, and so we have signed a new arrangement with them, so that they will cover those areas, and we have seen that for 2017, the numbers coming into Grenada has already increased by 35%, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, people book flights, they get on a plane, they either leave here and go to Canada, or they leave Canada and come here, but they do not know it takes something, and they usually say to us 'you have to pay to play'. And, even though the flights are coming in full, because many people will tell you, you need more flights from

Canada, we cannot get flights, but still we are getting a hard ball, we are getting a little squeeze there and we have to find something in excess of four hundred thousand US dollars (US$400,000.00) just to contribute to marketing, so that these planes can come. So, I think it is important that our Nation knows that, that every time you travel on Air Canada, there is a little contribution that is made on your behalf, so that you can travel there.

Mr. Speaker, also we have partnered with a number of Travel Writers, Facebook Bloggers and so on, so that we can send the word out, as far and wide as possible, that Grenada is up for business and that we are doing well and we would have love to have more people into our countries. So, there are a number of persons that we have been working with.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have an E-business Department in the GTA (Grenada Tourism Authority), and they are doing a fantastic job of marketing Grenada through all of the means that Social Media offers. And, we get into the thousands of numbers of hits, good results, ninety-one thousand (91,000) made page visits, and there are some other numbers, I will find them, Mr. Speaker, as I go along. But, we also feel that not only must we improve on our attractions, but that we must educate people, as to how to manage their service and to provide a service, in a way, that people want to come back to experience that service. And, so, we have put a programme, a fifteen minute programme twice weekly, 'Pure Grenada Power' it is called, and that is to provide information to the public out there, letting everyone know that Tourism is everyone's business, and we do have a part to play and we must inform ourselves, as to what is happening in Tourism. And, then, we have a weekly programme, a Radio programme that also provides valuable information regarding the Tourism Sector.

Mr. Speaker, we love our spices, we love our cocoa and our nutmeg, cinnamon, all of those spices, but not every visitor wants to buy spice, not every visitor wants to buy chocolate, and it has been a concern for us that we must provide more variety in the offerings. It has been a concern for us that not enough foreign dollars are being spent, in Grenada, to boost our economy, and so what we thought was that we needed to expand on the variety of offerings that we have.

So, in the Ministry of Tourism, the then Minister for Culture, I always get a little tied up now, how do I call it, the then Minister, so she is Mrs. Brenda Hood, because she is no longer a Minister, and I, we got together and we knew some people who could do Batik and Tie Dye and make bags and make earrings, all of them made in Grenada, because there is no problem in purchasing something that is made elsewhere in a shop in Grenada. But, when one comes and visit a country, they prefer to buy something that is genuinely made from scratch in Grenada. And, so we have fifty (50) women, at this time, women from St. Patrick, St. Mark, St. John, different Constituencies in St. George, St. David and St. Andrew, they have been trained in those skills and they are doing a fantastic job. And, therefore, all that remains is to have their graduation, which will be held on the 5th December, 2017 and for us to provide avenues so that they can sell their produce. This work was limited only to the Mainland, but from next week, first week in December, training will move across to our Sister Isle of Carriacou.

But, Mr. Speaker, we also, on one of my visits to Cuba, I met with the Minister for Culture, and we have a verbal Agreement and we are working on an MOU now, whereby persons from Cuba, if anyone has gone to Cuba, they know that they are highly skilled in Wood, in Shells, a number of areas. And, so they will be sending three (3) persons for a fairly long period to train our people in that, so that the quality and the finish of our produce would entice anyone to leave a dollar or two on Grenada's shores, and this is what we are looking for.

But, in addition, we have been training persons in Introductory Tour Guide training, and that was done at the Diamond Chocolate Estate, in St. Mark, and a number of women, I think about fifteen (15) of them were trained in Tour Guiding.

We have Safety at Sea and Care of Safety Equipment Training for Carriacou Water Taxi providers. I think the importance of that speaks for itself, Mr. Speaker, and a number of other areas, six (6) areas, in total, where persons were trained, so that we can improve on the quality of the service that we provide.

Mr. Speaker, a number of persons were licenced over the period, from the last Budget to this one, one hundred and forty-nine (149) Taxi Drivers; twenty-eight (28) Tour Operators; thirteen (13) Water Sports Operators; seventeen (17) Care Rental

Operators; sixty-seven (67) Tour Guides; forty-nine (49) Accommodations, and that number brings us to three hundred and twenty-five (325) persons. So, Tourism is really delivering. It is providing jobs for a variety of persons, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, can I please know what time I have left? I have a large contingent from St. Mark, and I want to make sure that I make their trip from St. Mark worthwhile, Mr. Speaker. Can I know how much time do I have?

Mr. Speaker: You can proceed still. We will calculate your time and I will let you know.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: So, when you see my light flash, it is just to tell you the time.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. A few months ago, in October, just about two (2) months, we hosted the State of the Industry, which is the Tourism Industry in this country, and this a Meet where persons, from various walks, in the Industry meet, to share their ideas, share their experiences and learn from each other. Some are seeking jobs, as Consultants, etcetera, etcetera, and they meet, to look at what is happening in the Region and what kinds of Tourists are coming, and that is where we have been learning, so that we are looking at more adventures, we are looking at more trails, because this is what people come for. Even when people come on the Cruise Ship, they still want to go out and do a bit of hiking and do something that is a little bit robust, and so we have picked up on that and we are fashioning our Tourism offerings to suit that kind of demand.

Mr. Speaker: You have thirty (30) minutes more.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, there is some time. Thank you. So, Mr. Speaker, we welcomed here twenty-three (23)

Government Officials and Ministers to SOTIC from all over the Region, from Belize, right up to Jamaica. They all came to this country, and we had three hundred and ninety-two (392) attendees to those Sessions. And, so it provided a melting pot for a lot of ideas, a lot of conversations, a lot of linkages in the Industry. Mr. Speaker, Grenada was well marketed. Recently, I travelled on Caribbean Airlines and when I looked at the videos that were played, we are, indeed, blessed. God has given us a real beautiful country, and it was played over and over and I could see that people were impressed with what they saw, and I heard the comments, as well.

Mr. Speaker, Pure Grenada received four million impressions and it reached over one million people on Social Media alone, as a result of the networking for SOTIC. One thousand, three hundred (1,300) viewed the destination briefing and more than three thousand, seven hundred (3,700) persons looked at the Youth Congress, Mr. Speaker. Overall, we had thousands looking at Grenada, and I am sure that, that would make a lot of difference for our country.

Mr. Speaker, we got a number of good reviews. One person, although he was a little bit scared, he said it was incredible fun; that is the high wire experience, up Grand Etang area, by the Seven Sisters Fall, and he said the Waterfall, afterwards, where he took a dip made it just perfect.

Hugh Riley, who is the CEO and Secretary General of CTO, he said that the Conference, itself, delivered what it was worth. Everything went well, and it was one of the best SOTIC that they have ever had in the Region. **(Applause)** One other lady said, again, that it was the best, mixed with the people, mixed with the destination and the peace and tranquillity, they all loved our country.

Mr. Speaker, all of the reviews, and I have pages of it and I brought some to share, because I know, in the interest of time, I would not be able to speak to all, because these are the testimonies of people, who have come to Grenada and are speaking well about the services that are provided and the attractions that they see, Mr. Speaker.

But, you know so many good reviews came out about Grenada. BBC and the Wall Street Journal came out and placed Grenada, I think, number six out of ten best

destinations, and so many reviews, on and on and on and on, about our people. And, one lady said that somebody approached her to purchase something and when she didn't want it, he just said thank you and he walked away, which was different to what she would have experienced in other Islands, where people would pest her. So, for those who are thinking of pestering the tourists, please, they appreciate a little bit of quiet time, as well.

But, Mr. Speaker, I was a little taken aback, when I read the venom, from one; we had so many dozens of Travel Writers coming to Grenada, all positive. We encouraged them to come, we invited them, but we never tell them what to say. They say what they want to say based on what they have seen. But, one lady, one lady was spitting venom, and I don't know what went wrong before she came here, because it was not in this Paradise it happened. Something spoiled her feeling before she came here. The lady said, this is a country where we know Customs is doing well, we have a surplus, our Economy is good, we help our neighbours. How many millions did we give to our neighbours after the two hurricane? $1.5 m, two million something, millions; we have been helping. We are not destitute. We take care of our young people. We take care of our elderly, as we have heard, but she attacked the Economy.

And, then she attacked the Nutmeg Station, the people working there, so somebody did something to her, or somebody paid her. Mr. Speaker, I hear some people begging for five and ten dollars; I want to beg Grenadians, don't give that money, because he must be paying people malign our country, because I cannot understand how everybody else could be so positive and one person, they found that person somewhere in a dump and she decides to take a little money and come and bad talk Grenada.

So, Mr. Speaker, she talked about how they are cracking the nutmeg just as how they used to do it before, but you don't have to do everything modern. Who said you have to mechanise what you do? If people are happy with it and the GCNA is happy with it, and if visitors love it, because they love to see a little bit of the old time ways, what is wrong with that? I am proud of what we do until GCNA says it is not economically viable, we have to move to the next stage. But, I am not ashamed of it. I

am not ashamed of the pot we put on the three or four stones and put the wood below it. If it is coo-coo, it makes it better. If it is Oil Down, even better yet. What are you talking about? And, the rum in River Antoine. So, that is a sick person. I know the Ministry of Health is doing something with the Carlton House, so maybe she is crying for help. When people do that, they are crying for help. So, the Minister is not here, but I think somebody has to help that lady. And, we did not answer, because we did not think that we should pay attention to negatives. But, I think, sometimes, we have to let people know that we are proud of what we are. We are proud of our people, and one fly in the ointment would not change our feelings for our country, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, as I see our uniformed friends across there, I want to compliment them on the work that they have done in maintaining the peace and stability in this country, **(applause)** because, again, a Grenadian I met in Trinidad a few days ago, he was saying, but we don't have crime. It is very little, and you know what is the good thing, anybody that dares to commit a crime, the Police are right there to hold them. Police Officers, through you, Mr. Speaker, you are doing your job. Keep on doing the fantastic job that you are doing and working with us in Tourism to keep the peace and stability in this country. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, Commercialisation; our Minister for Finance has always said that the Private Sector could do the business better, in a lot of instances, but not all. There are some things that Government has to do and must do, but there are some things that the Private Sector can do better than the Public Sector. So, we have decided, based on the directive of our Minister for Finance to commercialise some of the sites. So, some of the sites that are down to be commercialised are the Annandale Waterfalls, the Grand Etang Lake area and also Fort George. And, Mr. Speaker, I do not want this to start creating fear in people's minds, because what we have seen in Tourism, in other countries is that people take their culture, their heritage, their history and they package it in such a way that they can share it with their locals, they can share it with visitors, but it remains unspoilt, and that is what we plan to do through a project for Fort George, which is sponsored by the World Bank, a World Bank Project in Caribbean Compete, and that is what we intend to do with Annandale Waterfalls and Mt. Gazo.

The Private Sector person has already been selected for Mt. Gazo. Mt. Gazo has been officially launched, the project has been launched, and we expect to see it operational in early 2018.

Annandale Waterfalls, we have been talking to NAWASA. We have been talking to Forestry and everybody concerned, so that we come up with policies and guidelines, what you can do near to the water, what you cannot do, so that we keep it clean and sanitary, but also, there is obvious need for improvement at what we do, at Grand Etang, and what we do at Annandale. As a matter of fact, the RFPs, which is the Request for Proposals have been already sent out for Annandale, so, Mr. Speaker, through you, any Grenadian, wanting to try their hand at some Tourism business in Annandale, we welcome that. So, the selection process for the proposal will start, very early, in 2018, because we have already requested proposals.

Mr. Speaker, there are many plans within the Tourism Sector, the Ministry of Tourism and the Grenada Tourism Authority, to do a number of things. One of the main things that we want to do is to create the awareness of the importance of Tourism, and we want to do things to bring Tourism into the Community, so that everyone can see Tourism is their business and that it can bring food to the table.

Earlier, I mentioned the partnership that we are working on between the Hotel Sector and the farmers, through MNIB or directly with the farmers, however, they chose to do it and we think that these things would have a very positive impact on the Economy of our country. So, we are starting an Awareness Campaign; as a matter of fact we have launched a book in collaboration with GHTA, the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association, to teach children, because they say if you teach them from small, they learn better and the teaching is more valuable than if you wait too late. So, they have launched it in some of the schools in St. George, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and that will expand, so that, eventually, every child, over the Fourth Grade will have a book, teaching them about Tourism, all of the opportunities, the options, the job possibilities within the Tourism Sector, because Tourism is here to stay, and it is growing in leaps and bounds.

Mr. Speaker, I know Silver Sands had announced that they are going to be interviewing people for jobs, and on that day you could not get a bus to come into St. George's, Mr. Speaker. So, Tourism is doing its share to provide jobs for this Nation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to be continuing to develop the products and the services. I know the Minister for Finance did say that there is some money, or he is looking at the fiscal space to see how much money he can put to assist the small Hoteliers. I don't think the figure has been given yet, but I know whatever it is, it will make a difference, and we have met with them and they have agreed that we would use it in marketing, because some of the smaller Hoteliers do not have the fiscal space to do that. But, our Government will assist them in doing that. They are indigenous Hoteliers and they have a place in the Tourism Industry just as the larger hotels do have, Mr. Speaker, so we are going to assist them in that regard. **(Applause)**

We are going to look at enhancing the Pure Grenada Brand. And, I remember my sister, the Member for St. George South, she worked with the GHTA on that Brand, and the Pure Grenada means just that. It is natural, it's beautiful, it's clean and pristine, and, therefore, we have to do everything we can to maintain that concept, because when people hear it and they see styrofoam boxes all over the place and plastic bags floating all over the place, then they are asking you, where is Pure Grenada? They are still looking for it.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are going to be working and we have started to work with a number of stakeholders, and I am thankful for those who have offered to work with us, to help clean-up, Mr. Speaker, but also to educate the public on the importance to health and the importance for our Industry that we keep Grenada pure and pristine. So, the partners that we have worked with, we will continue to work with them. We will continue to go to our Trade Shows and the Consumer shows and I know that the people in St. Mark will understand that if their Rep has to go somewhere for Tourism, it is time well spent, because we work to ensure that people do come to our shores, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Room Stock; I mentioned, earlier, how important it is for us to get the leverage to negotiate with…

(Time Bell Rings)

Mr. Speaker: Oh, you do have fifteen (15) minutes more.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Mr. Speaker, just about five (5) minutes ago, I heard half-an-hour. Mr. Speaker, time has really put on wings. So, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of initiatives, but I think I would have to pass and move on to the Airport. Under the leadership of the CEO, they are moving in leaps and bounds, and I just want to mention a few things that they have done. They have upgraded their CCTV System; new cameras are being put in place, so that they can ensure the safety and security of the Airport. They now have screening machines for cargo, which they did not have before, and I know it was always a worry to staff, because the fish and other produce would come well packaged, and they didn't want to ask the persons who were exporting the produce to open and unpack, and sometimes they took it on trust. But, now they have purchased a Cargo Screening machine, so that they don't have to unpack, you can just push it through the screening, and I think that is a great addition to the equipment. They work with Customs to purchase a Baggage Scanner. The Airport Authority contributed 60% of the cost and Customs 40%, and the new machine would be operational from March, 2018.

Purchase of other equipment, a High Lift Loader. Amerijet has changed their flight to some bigger planes, and, therefore, the persons, who put the luggage on the planes, it would have been impossible for them to reach to the top. But, they purchased the High Lift Loader between ASG and the Airport Authority, they have done that, so that it would ease the burden of putting up those heavy boxes and containers on to the Amerijet, particularly.

The Console System, which is the main Communication System between the Airport and the planes that are coming in, is old and it needed upgrading, and so they have started to do that at a cost of $1.4 m, and it would be fully operational in 2018. Mr. Speaker, a number of things have been happening at the Airport, too numerous to

mention, but, over time, we will find the opportunity to spread the word around as they continue to improve on what they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the Ministry of Culture on their Patois workshops, on the numerous Dance Programmes that they have and the music that they are teaching our children and they have plans to expand that, Mr. Speaker.

Also, I want to compliment Spicemas, for an excellent Carnival. Again, we cannot have the peace and the stability without the watchful eye of the Police. We want to thank them, again, and compliment them. Spicemas achieved a lot of things. I was looking for how much they had improved, in terms of their numbers and, in terms of the monies they have generated, but they have done a great job, except in the area of Panorama, which had to be aborted, because the proper arrangements were not made. But, since then, we have had dialogue with some of the Pan players. We have met with the President of the Steel Band Association and they presented us with an MOU that we are having discussions on, to see how we can collaborate more. But, one of the things that we have agreed on is that if we want Pan to survive, it cannot just be Panorama. Pan has to be year round and there are a number of avenues where Pan can play, and I believe we now have a better understanding, and we will work together to ensure that Panorama and the Steel Band survive and continue to improve.

Mr. Speaker, when Panorama didn't happen, there were lots of reviews on Facebook and Social Media. There were lots of upset about Panorama. I just hope that, that upset can be translated into goodwill, so that 2018 Panorama, all of the Stands would be filled with all of the good supporters that cared so much about Panorama. In the meantime, I want to compliment the young people for being involved in the Steel Band, which I consider to be our Heritage and to encourage them and to let them know that the Ministry of Culture is behind them and is determined to make Pan a staple in the culture of our country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take the last few minutes to speak about my Constituency. We all know that we cannot be here without some people going to the Polls and voting for us in their numbers, so that we can represent them. And, when they vote for us, they expect proper representation. I want to thank my Constituency for the support.

They came out in their numbers. They have been here all day, and I should have gone earlier this morning, but it didn't happen, and so I just want to inform the Minister for Finance it cost me some lunch, so we might have a little talk about that later on, but I am happy that most of them stayed here.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to the achievements we have had in the Constituency. There is a statement that is going around, no matter where you go; "He didn't do nothing, she didn't do nothing, they didn't do nothing." And, if what I am going to say here is nothing, I would always like to be doing nothing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about the soft side of things, the things that are not so obvious, because, usually, when we talk about accomplishments, we look for the big infrastructure and we say, well, if you do not build up something big, you have not done anything. But, Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the achievements we have had and the opportunities that I would have been given and my colleagues would have been given, to reach out and to bring development to our Constituency and, by extension, the State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

So, I want to start with Human Resource Development, Scholarships. Mr. Speaker, over the past four and a half years, every year we have numbers, we have additional scholarships. The Prime Minister goes in places and he negotiates for more. Foreign Affairs go to places, they negotiate for more, and there is not a shortage of scholarships. The Minister for Education speaks with SGU, more scholarships, a number of opportunities. And, so, in St. Mark, a number of young people would have had the opportunity to go in a number of countries; China, Cuba, University of the West Indies, be it Barbados or Trinidad, that's where most of them go to, Trinidad and also, right here, at St. George University, numbers of scholarships, and we have gotten our share. And, the thing about it is, the scholarship is the great equaliser. It is the equaliser in the sense that everyone has a possibility to reaching for the stars, in terms of getting a profession, or earning some academic prowess. So, whether you are rich, or you're poor, you have that kind of opportunity to get a good education.

And, in speaking to somebody this morning, the person was saying, they were talking about scholarships and saying in my little area, twelve (12) persons are in

different places, Cuba and Trinidad, in one little area in St. Mark. Imagine twelve (12) people came back Doctors, Engineers, Architects, whatever have you.

(A Member said Politician)

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Politician too? I don't know. ***(Laughter)*** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if we have any course for Politics, but if we have, we might some coming back too. And, Musicians, because in speaking to the Pan Association, they are asking for more scholarships in Music, and this is something that we are talking with the Ministry of Education about to ensure that our players are knowledgeable in Music. But, when these people come back, the value they add to their country is not just about them and their family, but they bring benefits to the whole country, Mr. Speaker. And, I know that those who went, maybe all may not come back, but a significant number do come back to make their contribution to their community. So, I am very proud of the opportunities that they would have gotten to do that.

Mr. Speaker, in St. George's University, there are a number of scholarships, but those who are not successful for these scholarships, because they are so highly and keenly competitive...

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for...

Mr. Speaker: You have five (5) minutes more.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Mr. Speaker, those who didn't get the scholarship, they go and Government still assists them in paying the tuition. We still assist them in paying the bus fare, so that they can get a higher education, and we have a number from St. Mark, who have gotten that kind of assistance.

Uniform Assistance; we started it and then another era came and it was stopped and now it is back to the New National Party Administration to assist persons in ensuring that they have the proper uniform to go to school. I know we are criticised for giving handouts, but if we are criticised for giving hand-outs to people, so that later on they can become independent and make valuable contributions to their society, I love that kind of handouts and I make no apology for it, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, and all of that comes under the Prime Minister's Ministry. So, I want to say to the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, whatever is the magic he is doing; because no student has come to me for support to pay tuition, whether it is St. George University, or outside, whether it is the Online courses and they have been turned down. So, I don't know what he does, but I know God is guiding him in what he is doing and he is succeeding. So, thank you very much, Mr. Minister for Finance.

In St. Mark, the Youth Programme, the FLY Programme, and it is not the fly that is buzzing about. It is a Programme for the level headed youth, Fostering Level-headed Youth, so it is not the fly that is buzzing around, but FLY means Fostering Level-headed Youth. We had fifteen (15) young people trained in Plumbing and in the next phase, come January, they are going to be doing general construction. And, when I sat down and I listened to them, at the completion of what they had done, how happy they were. They were taught how to manage their monies, manage their finances and to be successful business people. I want to thank the Ministry of Youth and Sports for making that injection into the knowledge of the young people in St. Mark.

MAREP; MAREP trained sixty-two (62) persons from St. Mark alone. But, it is not just the numbers. So, there were twenty (20) males and forty-two (42) females. It is not just the numbers, but it is the Disciplines, sixteen (16) Disciplines, in Cruise Ship, General Cosmetology, the ladies love that. They would spend any money, to fix their hair, fix their nails and all kinds of things. There is money in that kind of business. And, maybe, if I was smart, maybe, when I come back in the next world, I won't go and study for seven (7) years, because you can study for six (6) months and you are making more money, than those, who studied for seven (7) years.

But, Cosmetology, Garment Production and Design, Personal Computer, Housekeeping, all things that have a demand and a number of things that get them ready for the Hotel Sector. So, now that Silver Sands is interviewing and within the next few months, the Kawana Bay Resort will be doing a similar thing, and a number of other Hotels that we do not hear about, that have added rooms and smaller hotels that are going up, this country has taken off, Mr. Speaker, and nobody should try to stop it, because they cannot. We are on the move, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, so all of these trainings: General Agriculture, Food Preparation, Agriculture and Food, these are important areas in the Job Sector, and, therefore, all we have to do now is just sit back and relax and wait for these people to get their job and take their rightful place in society; sixty-two (62) young people.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier about the Craft training for the women that we were doing it for. There are eight (8) from St. Mark, who are training in Batik and Tie Dye and other things, they are making earrings, so that they can provide another option for people to buy things, Mr. Speaker, and I am happy for that.

The St. Mark Women's Group, they also did some training and we got some funding from the New Zealand Embassy to do that, for training in Short Crop Production and in Horticulture. So, very soon, they will be coming to you, Mr. Speaker, maybe to sell some lovely plants that we can put around, when we have Parliament, in the new Parliament building, I mean, not necessarily this one.

Mr. Speaker, we have trained seven (7) young women. I don't know why it was only women, but it happened to be women, well, I said young and they are young, but they are people, who have children, they have responsibility and have nothing to do and do not have skill. We trained them in Homecare, and they are going to be getting a certificate, but it is a job training situation, where they go out to the Homes and take care of elderly persons, or disabled persons, so that these persons have a good quality of care. They are also going to be working with the Charles Memorial Home, to provide some services for them, as well, so that we can have quality caring of our elderly.

Mr. Speaker, the Welfare Group, they provide Hampers for the elderly, on a regular, monthly basis. They visit them. My office staff chip in and they visit these

people; maybe just to comb their hair, maybe just to sit down and hear an old story, but they give them that feeling that they are valuable in our society, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, through the Prime Minister's Ministry, we were able to give four (4) persons spectacles, because they needed that to go to school and they needed that to read their books and write. So, somebody might say it is inconsequential, but if you are going to school and you cannot see to read, then you have a serious problem. We provided water connections for twenty-one (21) persons, Mr. Speaker. And, now, we have joined our brothers and sisters, we are also adding bathroom and toilet to the House Repair Programme, so that you up the quality and the standard of their lives. You do a little board house and that is it. They still have to go, either build a pit and sometimes depending where it is, you cannot build a pit, and some go in other places, other than where they should be going. So, Mr. Speaker, we recognised that we have to get beyond that. And, so, as we build the houses, we are singling out first, the indigent, the very needy persons, those with disabilities, and we are providing toilet and bathroom facilities for those people.

Mr. Speaker, through Special Projects, again, an important invention by our Minister for Finance and Prime Minister, we were able to provide funding for a Tuck Shop for the Samaritan Presbyterian School, and through BNTF, improvement in Bonaire Government School, and also the rebuilding of the Day Care Centre, and, of course, a brand new Library upstairs, Mr. Speaker, so that we can keep our children well educated.

School Furniture; we have provided over the years, furniture for schools, because, sometimes they have shortages and at this time, we are in the process of providing school furniture for Samaritan Presbyterian School. That same school, Mr. Speaker, has some infrastructural problems, and so we are working with the Ministry of Works, so that when they go on vacation for the Christmas holidays, that the work can start right then, Mr. Speaker.

As I am on schools, I want to just mention that we are looking to improve on the St. Mark Secondary School, and the Member for St. Patrick West, who spoke about

Education, mentioned those two schools, and I am happy to know that it is not just in my head, but it is also on the books of the Ministry of Education.

Diamond Housing Project; I cannot leave without speaking on that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative, I do not want it be said that I am giving preferential treatment to the other two (2) gentlemen, who must report.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, can I have one minute to wrap up?

Mr. Speaker: Because I am not going to give it to them.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: One minute to wrap up, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Right. Wrap up in one minute, please.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: So, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the Diamond Housing Project. It was already mentioned by the Minister for Social Development that the signing has been done, it has been sealed, and it will be delivered in 2018. I am happy for that. This is the third time that St. Mark has had a Housing Project, one with Uncle Gairy, the next one under the New National Party Administration, this one under the New National Party Administration. So, the people of St. Mark know if they want a Housing Project, they had to make sure, because Uncle Gairy has gone already, so, it is only one entity that could give you a brand new Housing Project.

Mr. Speaker, there are many things. I just want to assure the people, who took the day to be here, to let them know that the Farm Roads, Lacka Dee, again, Belaire Road and Red Mud roads, these will be built under the Farm Roads Project; Maran Playing Field would be lighted up; Victoria Medical Station is in dire need of improvement, that would be done; toilet facilities for the people of Bonaire; Victoria Catholic Church Sea Defence, that has been tendered out, and it should start very soon

once the bid has been opened and the winner selected. Fountain Road is going to be done. We had a major slippage and also Mayochet Bridge; if I didn't say that, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't go back home. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether we are going to have another Session before Christmas. I want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank you and the Clerk of Parliament, the Deputy Clerk and all of the staff, for the excellent work you are doing. I want to thank all my colleagues for the support within this Honourable House, and the honesty and the way they have elevated the bar, in terms of what we do here, even without an Opposition. So, the fact is you do not need an Opposition, if you have good people in the Honourable House, Mr. Speaker. I am sending that message loud and clear.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my constituents for their love, for their attention and the caring that they have done, and to thank Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, for being the people that they are, the loving people that they are. Let us keep crime down. Let us keep this place safe. Let us love one another, and let us grow in the fear of God. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative. I want to assure you that you owe me four (4) minutes. I don't know when I am going to collect it, but you owe me four (4) minutes. Honourable Representative for St. George South-East.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give total support to the Motion, as moved by the Minister for Finance and Prime Minister, with respect to the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2018.

Mr. Speaker, looking from outside and looking from within, it is abundantly clear to me, Mr. Speaker, that this Budget, as presented by the Minister for Finance, encompasses all that we have sought, particularly, Mr. Speaker, since we commenced the Structural Adjustment Programme.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, only too well, as Leader of Government's Business, being called by officials of the World Bank and the IMF the night before a specific

Sitting, asking that certain things be included and certain things be removed from the draft, which they always had a copy of, Mr. Speaker. And, looking from within and looking from outside, Mr. Speaker, I see only, too clearly, the enormity of the task before us.

Some others would say, Mr. Speaker, that we do not do this and we are not doing that. In this very House, Mr. Speaker, I remember when many of us were clapping and hailing, this was a very first, because Grenada put into effect certain actions, I thought to myself, then perhaps, we too, were not so very clear of the enormity of the task before us. And, as we listen today to persons who are in positions, to persons who are asked to participate in moving the country forward, I say to myself, Mr. Speaker, we must educate ourselves and the Nation. That is why, Mr. Speaker, we must continue to testify. **(Applause)** We must continue, Mr. Speaker, so that all of us, from the top to the bottom, would understand the enormity of the task.

I listened to certain utterances, Mr. Speaker, after the Budget was delivered, and I could hear certain statements and the sentiments, and I said to myself, "Lord, if such persons assume the leadership of this country, we are not only going back, Mr. Speaker, we going back, back, back, back," and that is clear. As I sit and I listen, we must be able to see before us our Public Servants, our Farmers, our Teachers. We must be able to see the pathway before us, Mr. Speaker, that if we slip, we slide. So, I want to commend, Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Finance and his staff for bringing us, thus far. But, I want to encourage us to participate more fully, through testimonies, day and night, night and day, morning and evening, so that our people would understand, our youth, our professionals and some of the most negative things, sometimes come from our professionals. And, I have to say, Mr. Speaker, we have a long way to go; that is why the theme, Mr. Speaker, is so relevant and important: ***'Safeguarding our Gains.'*** We must do this, and continuing our Programmes, fundamental, Mr. Speaker.

And, so, Mr. Speaker, as we recognise how we distribute the limited pool, and this is done through the Standing Committee on Finance, Mr. Speaker, nothing shall be brought before this House unless it is approved by the Standing Committee on Finance. That is where, as my colleague was saying, Education would be asking Sports to give

up, and Works would be asking someone to give up, but we must do it in such a manner that the theme is preserved: ***'Defending and Preserving our Gains,'*** Mr. Speaker. And, that is why the Ministry's objective is in playing its part in reducing unemployment through ICT, Energy, Physical Development and Infrastructure. And, Mr. Speaker, in one year, under these trying times, if we can reduce unemployment by 4%, Mr. Speaker, that, in itself, is a milestone, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** It is a tremendous output, because, as you go through the Village, you see the effect of unemployment, and having to cope with the Fiscal Responsibility Act, which demands that you have a certain Debt to GDP Ratio, which demands, Mr. Speaker, that you need to have a surplus, so that you can continue with the development of the country, it is a remarkable feat, Mr. Speaker.

So, as I turn, Mr. Speaker, to the Ministry, and, as indicated on page 340 of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, the amount allocated to the Ministry of Communications, Works, Physical Development, Public Utilities, ICT and Community Development for 2018, is sixty-one million, one hundred and eighty-seven thousand, five hundred and forty-five dollars ($61,187,545.00) of which eight million, four hundred and seventy-seven thousand, five hundred and forty-five dollars ($8,477,545.00) is recurrent and the balance, fifty-two million, seven hundred and ten thousand dollars ($52,710,000.00) is capital.

However, Mr. Speaker, as I have done through years gone by, and as it was so expedient to do, by the Minister for Agriculture, we have investigated all the Votes to see where the Ministry of Works must function. We do that every year; not because an infrastructural Project is placed under the Ministry of Finance, we do not have control over it. Everything done there is the responsibility of the Ministry of Works. So, if the Project fails, no matter under which Vote it is, so we must analyse every Vote and see where we must put our attention.

And, so from the onset I want to say, Mr. Speaker, with such a small recurrent expenditure, for a Ministry, and when you look at all the projects, over three hundred million dollars ($300 m) worth of projects that the Ministry is responsible for, yet our recurrent expenditure is extremely low. But, I want to commend my staff, not only

because of the hard work, Mr. Speaker, but because they understand the philosophy, and they understand where we are going, so no one would come to say, we need fifteen (15) more Engineers. We know we need them, Mr. Speaker, but they would come to say, how we can get the work done. I want to commend my colleagues, because when we move up to them, we know we cannot increase the staff, so you would not hear from the Ministry of Works that we want fifteen (15) Engineers. You would hear that we want permission to buy certain services, and we would negotiate for these services.

At present, Mr. Speaker, we have Dewey, a Consulting Firm, who has engaged its staff, and we asked them to take on certain people, young Engineers, who came by, and they are there, working, in order to get the projects through, Mr. Speaker. The Ministry can't do for itself. We cannot increase the staff, because we have the arrangement with the International Institutions. Remember, they wanted us to send over three thousand (3,000) people home, one blow, and we said, no, we will do it by Attrition; that is why they cut the financing to us of over twenty-one million dollars ($21 m), just that. If we had agreed to send home three thousand (3,000) first batch, three thousand (3,000) second batch, they would have paid all of them, and then you would hear the country receiving some two/three hundred million dollars. But, what would have happened to our social fabric, Mr. Speaker? We have to take it, so the enormity of the task. And, when I hear others speak, Mr. Speaker, they do not have a clue; and our people must ensure that certain elements, those who think that they are good. I remember they used to say, the boy is bright, but we got some brightness from 2008, Mr. Speaker, to 2013, we got it then. **(Applause)** If we want to go back there, to the boy is bright, we are going to see it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me turn now to our Roads Infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, and I want to start with Road Maintenance, the Asphalt. We know we have been battered by the rains, and a lot of work needs to be done, and I hear the hue and cry from people in my Constituency, from Representatives in other Constituencies, from the busmen that would stand up and say, well, I know you do well, you know, but try and get it done a little faster.

We spent $8.8 m, Mr. Speaker, to date, of which five million, three hundred and twelve dollars ($5,312,000.00) would be for material; that is the bitumen, the aggregates, etcetera. And, do you know what, Mr. Speaker? You pay first and you pay in US dollars before the bitumen comes to Grenada; that is why we must ensure that we have the cash and the budget to always keep things rolling, Mr. Speaker.

Major asphalt works were done in the following areas: Dr. Belle, St. John, we know why. We had closed the Lance Bridge, and so we must give the commuters, on the Western side, something reasonable to go by, so we concentrated there. Dr. Belle, St. John, Main Street, Victoria Town on that Western Side, Grand Anse Main Road, critical, that is a project. If you look at the size of the trucks passing on that road now and the damage being done, and we are being told in the Ministry of Works, we must ensure that the people pay, when they damage the road, so I will be going to the Transport Board to pass certain legislations. It is there in the Act, but it is not too strong, so that we can maintain our roads.

The Calivigny Main Road, Mr. Speaker, the Happy Hill Main Road, the Eastern Main Road, Grand Etang Main Road; so we have been doing all this work. But, if we do not pay to get the particular type of bitumen, if we do not pay in advance, and we have a little in stock, then we use it and it is not right for the road, but the busmen and people would say, please, just do it. It is going to move in six (6) months, just get it done. So, we are doing that and right now, Mr. Speaker, we do have the right bits of material, because we paid it in advance. And, when you buy, you are at their mercy, you know. If you call them too many times, they say, I will put you in the back of the line. What do you do? You call again and you're threatened, well I don't need your little bit, or something like that. So, sometimes we have to go down and meet the CTO and plead, so that we get the bit, Mr. Speaker. So, working in the bitumen field is not easy.

Mr. Speaker, the Road Maintenance and Debushing Programme will expend, by the end of the fourth fortnight, the fourth one is starting on Monday, and over the year, we will expend twenty million dollars ($20 m), Mr. Speaker. And, we always do this at Easter, the back to school, August/September and Christmas periods, Mr. Speaker. We employ on average, four thousand, two hundred (4,200) persons, per fortnight. We are

not saying it is a job, but we appreciate that it is a social exercise, where, sometimes, that is the only work that some people get. They do not have the skills, they do not have anything, that's the only thing they get, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** So, a fortnight or two is good. What we note, Mr. Speaker, 78% of the total represent female and 22% represent male.

Earlier, in 2013, Mr. Speaker, it was 50/50 or 40/60 males fighting with the poor elderly for a job. Now, we see, with the boom in construction, we know where the young men are, and sometimes they can't tell you, they say, no, no, what are you asking me about cutting? I am doing something down there; forget about that. So, it shows the distribution, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that our young men are working.

Other Main Road Projects that I would quickly mention, the Western Main Road Corridor, that has been mentioned already, and that's where Prime Minister Cameron came into the Region and he gave grant funds to Grenada. The Project would be split into two phases. We have about twenty-eight million US dollars (US$28 m). The first phase will run for twelve (12) months. It is the preparation phase, and it will culminate in the completion of the design, contract and Project Planning for the construction phase, and it will train people in the Ministry of Works; that is, we want to bring in about six (6) new Engineers, so that they can be trained; albeit, as soon as they stay with us, Mr. Speaker, for two/three years, they know we have great experience with that, then they are hopped up by the Private Sector, and we have gone right back down into the same boat. And, it is not to say that you could; even if you double the wages, Mr. Speaker, they will still get more on the outside. But, that is a price we have to pay for development in our country. We are developing our human resource management, Mr. Speaker. The project is managed by UNOPS (United Nations Office of Projects Supervision), and that's a UN Entity. They work in big places. This is the group; they sit in Washington and they manage the rebuilding of all the Middle East that has been blown up, as you see it. They manage these things. They have total and great experience, and they are imparting a lot of knowledge to the Ministry, Mr. Speaker.

We have the Feasibility Study in the Western Main Road, funded by the Kuwait Fund. We have used five hundred thousand US dollars ($500,000.00) and our target

will be to look at the Mabuya landslip and narrow bridges, and we would want to get that bit down once and for all, so we can have direct traffic along the Western Main Road, Mr. Speaker.

The Grenada Agricultural Feeder Road, Phase 3 cost thirty-seven million US dollars (US$37 m). The Government of Grenada must put in 9%, the Kuwaiti Fund will put in 45%, and the OPEC Fund would put in 55%. So, Mr. Speaker, the names of the roads in St. Andrew: the Claboney/Munich/Bacolet Bridge, Grand Fir, Ben Jones Extension, there are small roads and some larger ones; Bacolet, La Pastora/Laura Bridge; Apres Toute, Pomme Rose; and, in St. George, La Borie. And, I want to make some special mention of La Borie, it was on the Programme, Phase 2. As soon as the last Administration came in, it was stopped. But, it was already approved on the books of the Kuwait Fund, and so, as a matter of fact, they are the ones, who really push for it, and others that were approved and stopped; Morne Delice, Westerhall, Flamingo Bay Road, Willis, Constantine, Belle Vue, St. George Estate, Mango Road, Concord, Douglaston, Brothers, Morne Sinee, Pleasants Estate (this was there a long time, Mr. Speaker, and was taken off); Lacadagan, Red Mud, Belaire, Limlair and Cherry Hill in Carriacou, Mr. Speaker. This is the largest Agricultural Feeder Road Project undertaken, to date, and one of the most ambitious, Mr. Speaker. It will employ, directly, one thousand (1,000) persons, Mr. Speaker. The last Farm Road Project employed over five hundred (500), and I could listen to the workers now, in 2008, when the Regime packed the CCC ago, and they were very blatant in their cry, that they voted out their work, Mr. Speaker. I think they made that correction in 2013, and now we will see benefits. It is more than they who were there, will be employed, from over five hundred to now, one thousand (1,000) people, Mr. Speaker.

The St. Patrick Road Network upgrade, and this, I know, my colleagues, from St. Patrick West and East would both be very interested in it. This project is being financed by the OPEC Fund for International Development and the Government of Grenada. Fourteen (14) kilometres of roads and eleven (11) bridges would be constructed in two (2) Sections; Section 1, and this is what my colleague was not aware of; from Mt. Fendue to Pointzfield, and Section 2, from Duquesne to the Western Main Road,

through Prospects, Mt. Alexander, to the Town of Sauteurs. This Project now has to be split. The monies allocated for it was EC$27 million, but along that main corridor, the designed by a specific Firm, and that Firm had its contacts, a Firm from Barbados. The narrowest portion of the road was twelve feet. My Lord, Mr. Speaker, in these days, where would you have twelve feet in the road.

So, now that we have the new Consultants, it has been redesigned to meet the approval of the Kuwait Fund. You must get no objective from them with the design. If you send a twelve foot road up there, there is no way they would pass it; and now the narrowest portion of the road will be sixteen (16) ft, and so expanding it, we have to use more monies, so we have to split the projects in two. And, so, phase one would cost the twenty-seven million dollars ($27 m), and Phase 2, a smaller component will cost about fifteen to twenty million EC dollars (EC$15 m – EC$20 m). We are negotiating with a Financing Agency, to see where we can get Phase 2, but we are certain that Phase 1 will start, Mr. Speaker. And, I know that people are concerned about the bridges in this area; just let me give an idea of the bridges that will be done under Phase 1 with the roads: Mt. Fendue Bridge, Link Road Bridge, Ellie Hall Bridge, Mt. Rich Bridge, Historic Arch Bridge, Hermitage Bridge, Hermitage South Bridge, Belmont Bridge, Pointzfield Bridge; only three (3) Bridges will be left out under, because they are along the second phase, Mr. Speaker. And, I could recall, Mr. Speaker, the period, in particular, when the CCC was run out of Grenada, and when Grenada approached the Financiers, the Kuwait Fund, to ask them, after someone had won a Contract, to ask them, if somebody else could get the Contract. Well, this put Grenada worse in the Black Book.

When your humble servant went to Kuwait and had to renegotiate, they asked, and to them, you know, it is not one Government versus the other, their culture is, Grenada is coming, so forget who did it. So, you could imagine the task of your humble servant, to even get them to think about funding anything more in Grenada. That is why they are so meticulous, Mr. Speaker, and we know that certain things would not pass. And, the Kuwaiti Fund always works in tandem with the OPEC Fund, Mr. Speaker.

The Procurement process for the St. Patrick Road Project is on route. Tender documents are being picked up by various persons, and so, Mr. Speaker, we expect this to start by March of 2018; sixty (60) days, or ninety (90) days to mobilise, and there we go, Mr. Speaker.

Other infrastructural projects, already mentioned, the Beausejour Road, the La Sagesse Road, that's where we have the Housing Programme, the Car Park in Concord is completed. Ongoing infrastructural works in Dr. Belle, the Belle Vue concrete Road, this was financed by the Indian Government, and it was very meticulously carried out. There is the Breakwater in St. Patrick, we have heard a lot about this. The Guayava Bridge, we must complete this. The Member for St. Patrick West will know this will be completed, at a cost of five hundred and fifty thousand EC dollars (EC$550,000.00).

The Lance Bridge, Mr. Speaker, is ongoing and this one needs particular attention. Imagine a massive project being held up, Mr. Speaker, and we have to do so many things. It took the intervention of the Minister, with the powers under the Physical Development Act, publishing something in the Gazette and ensuring to give the Police Officer the authority to move a simple person. In other words, we were paying and we had to pay the Contractor, for every day delayed, over fifty thousand dollars ($50,000.00), and I am sure we delayed that by more than ten (10) days just trying to work and make a bid with the persons, Mr. Speaker, and so we had to invoke the powers vested in me, so that we can get that bridge continued, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the rebuilding of the Hubble Bridge, this is already said, and I want to move to the Grenville Bus Terminus, Mr. Speaker. This was a project and a lot of people are talking about it; this was a project that was financed by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), it was constructed. But, do you know what, Mr. Speaker, it could not be utilised. Now, we have the Grenada Ports Authority taking it over. They have to spend one million dollars ($1 m) to make this workable, Mr. Speaker, and they are going through with this electrical backup supply, expansion of the Holding Bay, placing of speed bumps, shelters, outwork and new toilet blocks. All of these things must be placed, environmentally. In fact, Government built it, but if they went to Physical Planning to utilise it; that is why the Act is saying now everything go to Physical

Planning, you would not even get permission to build it. There is a practice that it's Government's own, so build it. But, when it comes to utilising it, and the Physical Development Act is very specific, someone could come and take the Government to task, because it was not being brought in the first place. We expect this to be completed by the middle of December, Mr. Speaker.

Medical Centres and Stations; we hear the Minister for Health and what he is trying to do, the networking and computing for the Medical Stations. But, do you know what? We, in the Ministry of Works had to prepare the building. We had to spend over five hundred and nine thousand dollars ($509,000.00), not for the computing system, just for the physical infrastructural works to make it plausible. So, the Ministry's hands are in everything and nothing starts or moves before the Ministry gets going. So, with our limited staff, we serve our various Ministries, please see that we're there in everything; and rather than coming down, you have to quarrel, if you don't get something done, but recognise the staff is doing their utmost. As a matter of fact, they leave there, the Permanent Secretary, the CTO, the SAO, some accounting staff, the Engineer, Mr. Noel, they leave there 11:00 o'clock every night. Is that correct? Because they're trying to satisfy both the internal and external customers, Mr. Speaker.

St. George Hospital, new wing, again, mentioned by the Minister for Health. But what I did not hear mentioned, Mr. Speaker, was the additional kitchen that's there, it is necessary and a Car Park. If we go to the Hospital, we would recognise we cannot continue with this, Mr. Speaker. So, between the kitchen and the Car Park is an extra five million dollars ($5 m).

We want to see after our health, so then when we hear other persons talking to take the limited pie, to move it one way, so that we continue with our health surroundings from, at least, deteriorating, we must testify, so that they understand, Mr. Speaker, where we are going with it. **(Applause)** We have to. We must testify. So, five more million dollars ($5 m); five million US dollars (US$5 m) is the project ongoing, but five more million is to get that kitchen and to get a Car Park going there, Mr. Speaker.

The Mirabeau Abattoir; the retrofitting of this Abattoir, Mr. Speaker, is well on its way. All the tools that were bought; again, this was something that was put down, but we spent over three hundred thousand dollars ($300,000.00) changing the chimney and everything, so that we can get it going.

We have had the trial run slaughtering. We thank the Policemen and the Prison Officers, who worked with us. They came and we slaughtered. They worked beautifully. All we were waiting on was something for the Air Dryer. You can't play with this, because you will kill everything, that part is in and we're ready. The Ministry of Agriculture must take over now. They have the Trailer Truck. They must bring their animals to be slaughtered in a Trailer Truck and the Ministry of Health would work from thereon, and we expect them to do whatever they have to do, as of now, so that by the middle of December, they can get going, Mr. Speaker.

The Olympic House; yes that is funded by the Grenada Olympic Association, but the Ministry of Works is the one who designed it and the one who is supervising. Few people know that. You think they would hire a Consultant? No, the Country, the State must put something in, and since we have no cash, our limited staff must do this. So, one must supervise Project A, Project B, Project C, Project D, etcetera. So, as a matter of fact, I say that I am not practicing Engineering, but they always engage me. Sometimes they would say: "Chief, you know, we have to do this, because we have to get the work going." Mr. Speaker, the building is 70% completed, at $2.8 million.

Carriacou Ministerial Complex Building; Carriacou is renting. We have put five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000.00) in the Budget, but the Ministry has already designed the Complex, looking for financing and we will now have to implement; well, that one is a Government building, you might say we expect this, twenty thousand, three hundred and forty-six square feet (20,346), Mr. Speaker.

The Member for St. Mark has spoken about the Union Multi-Purpose Centre. The foundation is 40% completed, and we are working with her to get this through, funded by the Indian Government, but, again, it's the Ministry of Works. The Indian Government calls us nearly every day, what are we doing, and so we have to make

sure that we slot things in to get the work done, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this has cost over $1.4 million.

The Parliament Building; we have visited it on so many occasions. The public has seen it on TV. Right now we have a construction contract for $24.3 million with Quinn Company. But, the total to complete this is $12.7 m, at EC$33 million. Our Prime Minister has indicated that he has reached an agreement with the President of Mexico and that two million dollars ($2 m) will go a long way in completing the Project. It may be usable, but a lot of external works need to be done, and for the hallmark of our democracy, we have to put a lot into it, Mr. Speaker.

The CAIPO Building; that has been completed and we have renovated it to accommodate some of our staff in the Ministry.

The Market, Mr. Speaker; the Market in St. George, it has jurisdiction over three hundred (300) Vendors, and I want to commend my colleague, the Minister for Tourism, who is always on my back and who has really laid out the road map for us to move on with this, Mr. Speaker. I think they call the particular area, is it Jam Rock, or something like that, and it is giving our country a very negative feedback.

The Minister for Tourism will call me 1:00 o'clock in the night, saying, what are we doing? And, when I listen to her again and I look at the bigger picture, do we want to lose four/five Cruise ships? No, we don't. So, we have the design for this, Mr. Speaker, and we will be ensuring that we work with the Minister for Finance to get the sum. And, not only that, you know, it's a two-story building that we want to place there, so that the people downstairs can do legitimate business, like cooking and the restaurants and so forth. So, it is not an easy task, Mr. Speaker, in getting it done.

Repairs to the sidewalk in the heart of the Town; signage to highlight the history of the Market; construction of sheds. The Town Hall Building must be revamped and we have already gotten the permission to have a mini Police Security presence there, at all times, yes, we have to do that. **(Applause)** Reconfiguration of the Foods and Drinks places and the Vending Policy; I think we will work with the Ministry of Tourism for this. The drainage, putting vent traps, so that water would not remain in the drains under the Market and the trash disposal. Well the Minister is pounding it into me every day; trash

disposal, so the erection of steel bins, that can be washed and disinfected instead of the normal way of collecting the trash. Then, we have to light the Market, Mr. Speaker. In conjunction, this has been brought to head by a chore of Security Forces, Mr. Speaker.

And, then we look at the Physical Planning Division, again, a lot of complaints, and we're trying to move to correct some of this. The public will, through you, Mr. Speaker, remember that we passed an Act here, because, originally, it was only one person, who could sign anything to give you permission, or to tell you have to reduce, or to give you any notice. So, we passed the Act that says it can be that person, or any other senior person in that place. So, that will remove where you have a problem where that particular person is on holiday, or out of the country, it was at a standstill. And, this was annoying to our Investors and more so, it was hindering our economic development, Mr. Speaker.

For the period January to October 2017, a total of five hundred and six (506) permits were approved and this has already eclipsed what was in 2016.

Development, Mr. Speaker; a number of residential permits, including apartments, a lot of apartments are coming in, Mr. Speaker, submitted to the Planning and Development Authority for the first ten (10) months with four hundred and thirty-eight (438) applications. And, we get a negative ranking, because, as much as we will pass through a permission in twenty-eight (28) days, there are a few, more than we would like, that will take six (6) months. So, when the World Bank is doing its research, do you think it is taking the twenty-eight (28) days? And, it does not come to the Ministry. It goes to the Contractors out there, to the investors and say, what is your experience? And, and you are so angry already, you changed six (6) to nine (9); so on Grenada's books, you will see between six (6) and nine (9) months, and that is the time you will need to get approval. Would anybody come and do business here, if that is the case?

So, we are addressing this, Mr. Speaker, through introduction of an Online System of Approval for developmental permits. **(Applause)** So, you put your plans, you stay in the US, you stay in New York, by the time you come here, you know it's

approved or by the time you send your Agent here, Mr. Speaker. That's one critical issue.

Then we are moving, Mr. Speaker, to statutorise the Physical Planning Unit. Already, the Act provides for it to be a Statutory Body, but we're still operating under the auspices of the Ministry. So, move away, get the efficiencies of the Private Sector, although you're not totally Private Sector, but when you have a Private Sector Board, and you're out there at arm's length getting your own finances; yes, the State may have to provide some finances from Parliament, but then when you have people on the Board, who sit down and recognise that investors must invest their monies, they will turn the sod to ensure that we get things going, Mr. Speaker. Not somebody who will say, well, this could wait for tomorrow. It cannot, Mr. Speaker.

ICT; Mr. Speaker, we have done a lot with respect to ICT. With the IP/PBX System and those of us in the Public Service know now, we now use that, the Internet to communicate with each other. We have had a Consultant on board and this Consultant came from Guyana, and he has been working with the Design and Implementation Plans for the use of technology in schools. Remember most of the Laptop Programmes failed in many countries, because we gave the students laptops, but we never provided for the Teachers and the interactive way of training with the modern technology. So, this is what he is concentrating on. He has designed the document for the Education Network for schools, so that students and teachers would be adequately served. He designed for the Public Safety Networks, Mr. Speaker, and we ensure by the time we get into CARCIP, which would provide the infrastructure, we should have the human resource development. This coupled with the Reform Sector in the Public Service where we will be using some of the sixty-seven million IDA monies, to ensure that we have an upgraded Public Service, in total, that we will be using the modern way to serve our people. So, you don't expect many people to come and knock on your doors. You expect to get into work, get on your system, give the service to the people, and if they have to come and collect a receipt, that should be all that they are doing.

When you are paying your licence, you shouldn't have this big long line, Mr. Speaker, people losing a day's work in productivity and so forth. No, you pay that Online, and that's what the CARCIP Project would do. It would give us the backbone, the fibre, and and the training will give our people the necessary skills to work within our Public Service, in particular, Mr. Speaker.

Licences; I have reported here, on many occasions, that we were pirating Microsoft Licence, and every time you look at your Board, it tells you this is not a genuine copy, and it tells you, please, take the upgrade. But, all of us are smart, we're not taking the upgrade. As they get into the licence on the net that's gone, so we say, no, you want it no, and it bumps up and it keeps saying no. But, we can't continue like this, Mr. Speaker. There are significant consequences.

So, instead of paying a million dollars like this, we were budgeting for it, but we got with the Agent. DIGICEL is an Agent, so I asked why Cable and Wireless is not an Agent. They say Cable and Wireless is an Agent, as well. But, they came with a proposal and we are paying just about eighteen thousand US dollars (US$18,000.00) per month and we have all the legitimate licence; and the gov.gd that we cannot use, pretty soon that will come up into effect, because we will lose the various platforms. It is now truly licenced, and let me give you an instance that we are now. Our external Lawyers will not send us any document, or send any document to them unless it is safe; in other words, the client who we are against must not be able to infiltrate our communications. So, I asked, has that been done? And she'll say, 'oh, is that being done, by any means necessary.' So, we are now paying the licence and now we can communicate using gov.gd. For the meantime, we've only started with six (6), the Legal persons and myself, but very soon the Ministry, we will expand it out, throughout the Public Service and you will be able to use gov.gd, you will be able to secure it how you want it.

Now you're sending a letter outside there. You're sending it from the Government and people seeing Gmail and they're calling you back, is that you? Who are you? Why not gov. or something like that; that is something that we have to move away from and be clear with, and we are well on our way to doing that, Mr. Speaker.

The CXC Online Exams; we boasted about this already. We are one of the first people to try that. The support for the Health Immunisation System; the ICT part of it now, not the infrastructural part, the ICT Ministry is involved in this, as well, Mr. Speaker, and the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, they're financing some part of it. The Central Medical Stores Inventory Management Software, that's where you know, we purchase from there, the ICT Ministry is involved in that. It's a Health something. They will say how to go about it, but we will work with them on the ICT, Mr. Speaker.

Electronic Medical Records; the Ministry of ICT is involved there also, and this is a critical one; Support for Systems Associated with FATCA. Remember when we passed the Law here, we have to spend and use our resources to put certain things in place. And, I asked the Minister for Finance and Prime Minister, I said, why we can't get something back, because we have to implement something, at the dictates of, we're small countries and much bigger countries than we are, rushed to do it before. So, now we have activities accomplished and associated with this Project include the implementation of FATCA software. We have to implement it, and we have to purchase it, you know, a hundred and fifty thousand US dollars (US$150,000.00). The purchasing of the hardware, five hundred thousand (EC$500,000.00); Training, twenty-five thousand US (US$25,000.00), Security Control, smart locks, fifty-four thousand EC (EC$54,000.00); Penetration Testing, sixty-four thousand EC (EC$64,000.00); Maintenance costs, twenty thousand US (US$20,000.00), yearly. We have to maintain this. You better maintain it; otherwise you don't have corresponding banks, as Minister Joseph is always saying, you can't send money to the US, and you can't purchase anything else anywhere, so you better make sure you have it; and then, miscellaneous, thirty thousand EC dollars (EC$30,000.00). That is what our Ministry is deeply entrenched, in ensuring that these things are in place, so that we can follow the Laws that we have passed.

Remember the Girls in ICT; our Ministry is pushing young ladies… not that they need a lot of pushing, because when you look at the number of men, or the ratio of boys to girls, even in the IMANI, you will see the ratio that the girls are pushing ahead. And,

then our first Global Robotics Competition in Washington, where we sent our team out there, who made us extremely proud; again, from the Ministry of ICT. And, then, finally, we are purchasing hardware, four hundred and forty-nine thousand, three hundred and sixty-two dollars and eighty-two cents ($449,362.82); so all Ministries, we're purchasing from one central point, and it will be distributed through contact with the various Permanent Secretaries.

The CARCIP Programme, Mr. Speaker, the PPP, where DIGICEL is spending nearly three hundred and eighty million dollars ($380 m); that's what a PPP is. They spend, they get the Government as anchor, we have to use them, and they put in fibre optics throughout, linking the schools. After fifteen (15) years, they leave and everything returns to the State, that is a PPP and I want us to keep that in mind, Mr. Speaker, because we're coming back towards it under a special Statutory Body. And we were asking, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, we're all in the PPP together, and some of them were asking, well, we should have members on the Board, and the Consultant said, have you done a risk analysis? If you want to make this where you have shares, you have responsibility, as well; so anything goes down, not because they have the major shares, they could call on you under the Company's Act. They could call on you to do a lot of things and everybody backed off, but we maintained a regulatory role. They must report to us. We must see what's going on and they can't do something that will cripple the country. They must make back their monies and they must make a percentage of it, that is the essence of the PPP, and so, pretty soon, we'll be going and we'll have this project in. An undersea cable from here to Carriacou to Petite Martinique, so that they can be served; the students there can have broadband, and broadband is what it says, you know. You must not see any fuzzling, you must not see anything at all. You must not see any buffering or so, instantaneous. The teacher must be talking to you and you must be speaking back to him, so you need broadband, Mr. Speaker.

And, under the CARCIP, I want to mention, animation. A lot of things were done and we spoke about them already, that's where you have the one hundred and fifty thousand dollars ($150,000.00) for ICT projects, as grants, and a lot of people made

use of this. My only disappointment was that people, who were already in business, gobbled it up, whereas a lot of our young children, boys and girls did not take advantage of it. That is why we're working on a next tranche, so if it comes, we will stick into the rules, that our young boys and girls, these are the people, who are not working, they must get the first preference, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Animation with CARCIP; the Ministry thought animation, and you know animation, you would see the little Cartoon and you can advertise with it. We now have a Studio down here, Mr. Speaker, and they will be engaging the persons, who are trained. We have enrolled fourteen (14) students, and so as soon as they have reached the stage, then private Companies could go to them for animation to advertise their products. So, we will not take the Football Star anymore, we will let these young people do the animation, Mr. Speaker.

One hundred and fifty (150) teachers were targeted and trained, a total of ninety-eight (98) teachers completed the training, not in Animation now, that is in ICT, so it can impact knowledge, and we will continue to do this, which is fundamental, Mr. Speaker.

We trained fifty (50) persons in Medical Billing and twenty two (22) of them have sat and passed the International examination to enable them to find employment, in the US, Canada, wherever they go, they can find employment in Medical Billing, Mr. Speaker.

And, now I turn to the Statutory Body, NAWASA, and it's a good boast to hear, Mr. Speaker, that Government has paid all its bills a long time and for the year past we have paid $4.3 m and Government does not owe NAWASA **(applause)**, not one cent, Mr. Speaker. But, what is more so, three million dollars ($3 m) of those monies were used to do little projects; so, as Government paid, they took it and they did work in Spring Gardens, St. Andrew, Mount Horne, Paraclete, Mardigras, Good Hope, Old Westerhall, Mt. Agnes and Gouyave, in St. John. So, when the Member for St. David spoke about his project, it is because Government paid. And, why did we pay, Mr. Speaker, because we disciplined ourselves that we would reduce unpaid claims to people, whether you are local persons and we owe you, we will pay you, and that

circulates throughout the country, and that is why we see, Mr. Speaker, lots of things are going on in the country.

Mr. Speaker, negotiations continue between NAWASA and the PWU and TAWU concerning the restructuring of NAWASA's long term pension liability. Here you are, Mr. Speaker, we know that some persons who worked in the Public Service through the Pension Disqualification Act, would not receive a pension, and the little bit they get from the NIS is not sufficient, so we're trying to put it back, but, here is NAWASA, owing, Mr. Speaker, $66.7 million in Pension liabilities. This was one of the Institutions that the IMF took to task and told us, we should get rid of this on our books, because although it is with NAWASA, it was reflecting on the Central Government. We, again said, it is the same principle that we're going to use. So, any day, Mr. Speaker, if, per chance, we gave the bright boys a chance, again, and this country reaches back, not only do we have to pay all the loans that we got as haircut, but then NAWASA would be in serious trouble, because it's nothing… they have to go back to the Institutions and they say, you failed, we give you and you fail. No. Before we assist you, again, you must get rid of this; $66.7 million in pension liabilities for the workers of NAWASA. Where is that funds coming from? Do they have it? What would the IMF say? Increased rates on the consumers and the taxpayers, so you can get some of these monies. So, increase in your water bill; if you used to pay seventy dollars ($70.00), now pay a hundred and twenty ($120.00), and they put aside the fifty, so that you could amass this sum of money. But, they are working with the Unions to see… they know, just like we cannot go back to the fiftieth pension, they know this is unsustainable, it cannot be done, so we have to clean the books, and I encourage our Social Partners to look not only... They're looking the Government, yes, we're working jointly, but we're working with Statutory Bodies, as well and that's what the IMF say, this is the way that debts will be calculated. Statutory bodies back on the Central Government.

Mr. Speaker, the True Blue Sewerage Project, $3.5 m, and we know what is happening there, a lot of developments are going up there, and we are affecting the coastlines and so forth and immediately NAWASA must do something to clean that.

The Point Saline Outfall that has been damaged, the Eco-system is going. I think the Environmentalists all throughout the world know about this, and so we must move speedily to correct it, $1.3 m.

The Sambuca Treatment Plant, seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars ($350,000.00), that is to help to get better supply to various areas throughout the country. The new headquarters, I think is an issue again with the UN, six million dollars ($6 m). NAWASA has to find the monies to build their new Headquarters, Mr. Speaker, and they have two hundred and twenty thousand dollars ($220,000.00) from CDEMA to put water tanks in schools, Mr. Speaker.

The Grenada Postal Corporation, this is one of the two (2) institutions that we have agreed that will form a PPP. And, the World Bank gave us $5.7 m to pay the workers off; so right now, we're looking to find the correct partners. There are lots of people who are coming in, small partners, who cannot make the necessary investments, so we've gotten our Embassies abroad, to get people interested in it, and we're going to go out there and spere outside and ask persons to come in and send business. It is not that we are not asking, but when they look at it, the interest is not great. We have to whip up the interest now and our Embassies abroad are so doing. We are seeing a great rise in interest and very soon then, we will be able to go through the selection process to get someone who would partner with the Postal Corporation and we expect this partnership would be, come in, take over the assets, put in your monies, after ex number of years, give us back a beautiful and better system to run. If we feel that you're doing it good, we could go through the process again, and say hold this, work with it, after fifteen (15) years, give it back to us; that's the system of a PPP that we want to engage, Mr. Speaker.

And, one important issue, there are lots of training going on within the Organisation, Mr. Speaker, and they have brought in thirty five (35) Kiosk machines, nationwide, to be placed in commercial areas, so you can go in there and pay your bills, pay your taxes, pay everything on it, pay your utilities, anybody can go in and pay on that; you can use cash or anything like that. This is one area of diversifying, because nobody sends letters anymore. You send letters on this and on the computers and you

speak on it and nobody writes anymore. In the US, they lost five hundred and forty thousand (540,000) jobs, through the Post, but they are ranging it themselves, worldwide, and that is what we have to do here, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the National Telecommunications Commission, the NTRC, just to give an idea of the funds they collect, it's not theirs; most of it is not theirs. Receipt from ECTEL, they get nine hundred and twenty-nine thousand dollars ($929,000.00); Applications, if you want to do Radio Stations and so forth, thirty-four thousand, two hundred and seventy-two (34,272), and by the way, Mr. Speaker, we have nearly forty (40) Radio Stations. You can't hear them on the Air, but they're there. So, we have to clean up the spectrum, because the spectrum would be needed for other things. We have a particular block for the Security Forces and everybody comes, they want a next Radio Station. We have to clean it up, Mr. Speaker.

Domain names, fifty thousand dollars ($50,000.00), that's the gov.gd; annual licence fees, four million, seven hundred and eighty-three thousand dollars ($4,783,000.00), that's where they collect from FLOW and DIGICEL and the others, and this is passed through to the Government of Grenada.

Numbering, and that's why the utilities pay for the numbers, okay, the 534s and the, this and that belong to DIGICEL, they have to pay. The 407s, the 406s belong to another one, they have to pay.

Spectrum fees, that's for the mobile phone, $1.3 m, that goes to ECTEL and the USF fund, $1.6 m, and I just want to say a little bit about the USF funds, Mr. Speaker. What they plan to do with the USF fund is $1.7 m upgrade to TAMCC; they do projects, as grants; Broadband enhancement and ICT for persons with disabilities. We are always working with them, three hundred and fifty-one thousand dollars ($351,000.00); equipment for the Computer Lab at NEWLO, one hundred and twenty-two thousand dollars ($122,000.00); the Inter-island Connectivity, ICT Centre, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, one hundred and five thousand dollars ($105,000.00), and the Public Safety LTE Network, three million, five hundred and ninety-one thousand dollars ($3,591,000.00); so that's a public network that they will build and the various utilities would manage it. I think the Police have a big part to play in that one, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Gravel and Concrete, a PPP, of all the good praises that we get from the IMF Institution, when they come to my office; they indicate that they don't want to write it in the place, but we are failing. We do not have a PPP for the Postal Corporation, and we do not have a PPP for Gravel and Concrete; they are going to write it one day, you know, but we keep telling them we are trying and when they look they see that we are trying. We advertised for a partner for Gravel and Concrete, we got three (3). Three (3) persons tendered; two (2) locals and one from Trinidad and Tobago. The two local persons, they wanted to divide the Gravel Pit and say do what you want with this, and we said, no, you must take everything. But, Mr. Speaker, after careful evaluation, the Company, Computer Holdings from Trinidad and Tobago was given the nod, Mr. Speaker.

The main tenets of the Agreement is, he will come in, he will take over all the debts of the Corporation, the lands will be leased to you, it is not a sale, and when you hear people coming and say, oh, you're selling Gravel and Concrete, and I hear some of our own people saying that, Mr. Speaker, you sell Gravel and Concrete. It is a PPP, that's why I say listen, it is a Private/Public/Partnership. So, you come in, you put in your monies, you take control of the operations and after a time, you give it back to the Government. So, the buildings would be leased to you, the lands would be leased to you, but when we look at the aged equipments and the trucks and the so forth that we have there we say, we must put that in, that won't attain to any sort of business. When we put that in, we would get something from it. And, then he has to pay the Severance Pay of all the workers, estimated at some $5.8 m, you got to pay them off. Even if they don't leave now, you got to put that in ESCROW, in a Holding Bay, so if they decide to leave over three (3) years, their money is there. And, these monies must not be paid by Grav Con, the new Entity. What we did, on this occasion, is reform a Private Company. I say that we should not go that route. We formed a Private Company and we gave Government 30%. He has 70%. But, all that we are doing, we are leasing them the land, we are leasing them the building and all that we are putting is our aged equipment.

And, so, Mr. Speaker, we had some disturbances with respect to the Board. We have, in the Board, a situation where a member of the Union sits on the Board and

represents the Union. But, when it reaches the stage where that same member led negotiations against the Board on which he sits, we thought nobody should speak to that person, because that person has, you know, knowledge. And, when that person further advanced to be a member of the Legislature, where in there he could influence Laws, because it is a Statutory Body, nobody should tell such a person that you should leave.

And, further, Mr. Speaker, with the new Entity, all the workers are passed to the new Entity under Labour Laws, they are the bosses. Now, if you say that your ultimate goal is to look after the workers, then what you should try to do is to get on the Board of the new Entity, of the PPP, because Gravel and Concrete no longer will control the workers; they will no longer be able to bring benefits. You now have to negotiate with the new PPP.

And, to say, Mr. Speaker, that things were done blind and they have no knowledge, that is not so. Firstly, the Legal people came in and we gave them the main tenets, just as I am telling you now; take the debts, put in immediately, three million EC dollars (EC$3 m), you take everything, you buy equipment up to a further $2.8 m, so that your total input is $14.5 m. What we are looking at now, as the two Lawyers are meeting, is to get part of this, or to get part of that, because you could read two things and we are straightening that component, in totality, Mr. Speaker.

So, I want to say, now, that everything is clear and nothing was done in secret, we advertised, so Gravel and Concrete is at that point. We are at the situation now where control should have been passed with the PPP by a specific date; that date is passed. And, since time is of the essence, we have to change the date; no one could go on the other one's shoulder, because the time is passed; it's either we go back and agree to what is there. We would be controlling the price of aggregates in Grenada. **(Applause)** We will be controlling the price; the Government will. We will also be controlling the rate of extraction, because one of the Union's legitimate concern was that if we extract too much, and you are there for twenty-five (25) years, by ten years, you extract and you sell, so all the workers get out of a job. The State will control these two things, Mr. Speaker.

And, it was the same individual who said, well if that is Government policy, the Minister, under Section 4 (2) of the Act, should put it in writing, Mr. Speaker. We put it in writing and yet you decide, well, it's the Government, the Government dictates its policy, the Act provided for this and you understood all that is going on, because you were a member of the Board from day one. So, Mr. Speaker, we are at the stage where, because time is of the essence and the time has passed, we take every little comment we hear and make sure that it is incorporated in the Agreement, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, now I just want to move a little bit into Energy. The Korea projects; Korea gave us some projects. They gave about twenty-four (24), I think, Solar Panels to put on poor people's homes, the indigent and the needy, we have done that, and they are getting electricity and some small businesses. Phase (1) is successful; they will do a Phase (2), Mr. Speaker.

The World Bank is doing a Pilot Project and we are going to put it on TAMCC, that's where we are going to put some two hundred kilowatts; that should light up the whole of TAMCC, and they would now be able to teach people about Solar Installation, etcetera, Mr. Speaker, because they have one on their own building, Mr. Speaker.

We have the Geothermal, where the bank is prepared to lend us twelve million US (US$12 m)...

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me just quickly move with this one. But, none of this would have been possible unless we changed the environment, because it was GRENLEC, who controlled everything. But, now, things can go forward. Because of the Law, Mr. Speaker, we know GRENLEC has taken us to Arbitration to force us to buy back the shares. We said we don't want the shares, but they say buy it back, because that was signed in 1994. And, if we were purchasing it at a good price, fine, but, we are purchasing it at a terrible price, so the Arbitration Panel will decide on this, Mr. Speaker.

But, what we have done with the Social Fund, Mr. Speaker, right now, they operate what they call a Social Corporate Responsibility Fund; it is not that. The monies is the consumers' monies, because they regulate themselves, they could overprice and overcharge and they take these monies out and they give it back to you. Besides, the Government is giving them tax breaks on it, so they are not even recognising the Government, Mr. Speaker. What the new amendment will do, it will say the Public Utilities is set up, the Public Utilities will determine the rates, so that GRENLEC can live and they make their returns, and on top of that rate, it might be only .1 of a cent. The Public Utilities will allow a .1 of a cent, so they will just collect it, and they will give it to the Public Utilities Commission, who will manage this fund, with a team set up by regulations, by the Minister, and these are the same funds, it's the same value that you would get. If they want to exercise corporate social responsibility, then from their real profits, they can do whatsoever they wish, continue to do what they have to do. So, it means that the Public Utilities Commission would be running some projects and they will run theirs in the same manner. Nobody is stopping them, because nobody is supposed to tell you what to do with your social corporate responsibility; do that on its own, Mr. Speaker.

Lastly, I want to move, Mr. Speaker, to Oil and Gas Exploration, and just to say that we are cautiously optimistic. But, I recall, Mr. Speaker, in days gone by, we should have been in this stage way beyond. In 2008, when the Regime of the day asked the investors to come and sign a document about Gregory Bowen, saying that he did this and that and you would get your license. When the investors came, you asked them. I had to stop them to tell them, well, don't really put that out there. They wanted to hang Gregory Bowen. So, if they had only signed; but, I said these people stupid, eh, so, if the investor was in wrong doing with me, he would get a license and then they will lock him up, too. **(Laughter)** But, I don't understand how they could be so stupid. **(Applause)**

I remember, in the Senate, one of them said, well, we just allow the time to run and you can't do anything about it. So, they allowed the time to run out and the investors had to go away. We renegotiated, again, they are back here, they spent

monies and now they are saying we are cautiously optimistic. But, if the day comes, when the result comes from the Laboratory, because they are here and they're in the US, and it says that we have a commercial fine, I will sit back and say, thank the Almighty, because He used your humble servant to defend Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, so that we can be reaping the benefits today. **(Applause)**

When I defended against Grynberg, Grynberg still have a lot of Territories tied up, you know, in the Region, our neighbours, you know; nothing was being done. But, I defended and he had to go, because I saw his aims, and how he was going to take us to chance. If you are an investor, invest; don't do this thing, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to thank, you know, in those periods, my wife and family and some beautiful mothers in the Church. Some of them have gone to the Great Beyond. They did a lot, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the Prime Minister, because he was one of the few. He supported in the payments. I had to pay the fees, and the two (2) non-Grenadians, they put in their widows mite, so that your humble servant could pay the fees to reach where we are today. I will say more, Mr. Speaker, just let the Lord bless us and let us say that we have a fine, when this country can benefit billions more. **(Applause)** I remember a Radio Station took a clipping and sent it up to see if he could make Grenada lose the system there. I want to remind all of them, Mr. Speaker, about those times.

And, now, Mr. Speaker, I must quickly turn my attention to the Constituency, Mr. Speaker, to report on my Constituency, Mr. Speaker. Our Constituency has developed. It has made great strides in twenty (20) years from then. If you look at St. George South-East, then and you look now, you will definitely see development. They tell me so, even those in the Opposition, who are fighting against us, they told me so. But, Mr. Speaker, we still have great needs and we are still trying to consolidate the gains, so we cannot expand, as we wish. We must go forward and we must keep the course, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to mention some of the things that we have done, even in the tight environment. Mr. Speaker, Paddock, we did road, drainage and placing grills over

gaps; in Springs, Tabacay, Quacoo, drains, retaining walls; De Foo, Calivigny, Mr. Speaker, thirteen (13) projects, roads, drains, Calivigny and Confer.

In St. Pauls, Mr. Speaker, we had type 2 drains, storm drains and that is coming on. NaDMA, storm drains is becoming a very, very troubling problem, Mr. Speaker. Roads, box culverts in Roebuck, Mt. Airy, Bay Garden, Spring Garden, the Rocks, Mr. Speaker. The Bocas; we had river cleaning, retaining walls; Hope Vale, drains, grids, retaining walls; La Borie, we had a lot of projects there, Mr. Speaker, storm drains, again, concrete roads, retaining walls. In Petersfield, Top Road, Haynes Road, Madoo Back Road, and the Peterkin Road, Mr. Speaker. Marian, we had concrete roads, retaining walls, culverts in Cocoa Road, Hague Road, the Mill road, Cottage, Coconut Wharf. Mr. Speaker, we touched a lot of areas; Richmond Hill, Creighton, guardrails; Upper Peas Road, Morne Jaloux, Mr. Speaker, Reginald John Road, the Gibbs/Bain Road, by the Post Office, at the entrance.

Others, Mr. Speaker, the Morne Jaloux/Ravine Bridge and road, the Petersfield and Worme/Sandiford Bridge; the Marian Preschool, and I want to compliment the teacher there. It was during the holiday and she organised and we came out and help. We got the material, Mr. Speaker, and we installed cupboards, doors, painting and plumbing.

We did Hope Vale, Marian Bridge, La Borie Preschool, Mr. Speaker, that's a beauty now; Morne Jaloux Playing Field and Club House, a lot, and I want to compliment the Contractor there, in particular, Mr. Speaker. Retaining walls and box culverts, roads, guard rails, Lower Morne Jaloux, Creighton, Richmond Hill, White Gun; we had guardrails done there; that's where a vehicle went off the road and we put some guardrails and we see, thereafter, throughout the country we should be proactive not reactive. Springs, close to the Clift, mirrors, De Foo in Morne Jaloux; mirrors are something that are needed Island wide, and we are getting them in and putting them in, Mr. Speaker.

The La Borie Playing Field and Pavilion, and this was partly funded by GRENLEC, other part by the Government of Grenada. The Marian Basketball Court, again, this was done by the Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, we still have a lot to be done, Tete Mont Road, White Gun retaining wall, and these are in the process, contract signed, that we have to prevent the wall from collapsing there. The La Borie Stretch, those of us who drive across there, will see a bit of wall that could collapse any day. The contract for this is on and we have to do that. We must remove the boulders and expand the roadway at Spring Garden; Lower Bay Garden, storm drains; Mt. Airy Cemetery Road, the entrance widening. And, I want to commend and thank Mrs. James, because that road is very narrow, and if you go to the Cemetery, you can't go and come at the same time. So, she owns the property next door, she came from abroad, and she decided she would give it to us to expand. So, we are moving at it, very speedily. Thanks, again, to Mrs. James, Mr. Speaker.

Holder Hill retaining wall, we have a big slip there; Marian Road, asphalts and concrete works, Mr. Speaker, concrete selected. St. Paul's Police Station and I see the hierarchy of the Police Force here, Mr. Speaker, I know they have been complaining of this a lot. I will work with the Commissioner and the Minister for Finance. We will take some of our votes there, because a lot of work needs to be done, so I am just asking, through you, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister for National Security just encourage us to move along that line, Mr. Speaker.

Then housing, Mr. Speaker; housing is one of the critical areas. We have over three hundred and fifty (350) persons in line, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding in 2017, one hundred and ten (110) persons got assistance. Working with the Ministry of Social Services, we are limited with the amount. I do not know where some areas will come and say well they are getting more. We don't go more than five thousand dollars ($5,000.00), give or take, so that everybody can get. And, when I explained to my people, we have so many people and when you come in line, you have to go three hundred (300) down. But, if you are in such in need, I will speak to the people before you and try to bring you up; so, we do it in a transparent manner, Mr. Speaker.

The Students' Assistance, Mr. Speaker, we have two hundred and twenty-four (224) persons receiving Transport Allowance; one hundred and seventy-two (172) persons receiving the elderly, the SEED sum of two hundred dollars ($200.00), Mr. Speaker, and we also have our IMANIs, one hundred and fifty-one (151), a small

number compared to the other places and we are working with them to keep them on track, Mr. Speaker.

(Time Bell Rings)

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One minute, please, just to wrap up and to say thank you to my Constituents, thank you to the people of St. George South-East for placing their confidence in me and for giving me the opportunity to serve them and more so, as I said, for giving Grenada the opportunity of my services, as well. Everything comes through the Constituency, Mr. Speaker, and I want to say thank you to all of them.

I want to thank the people at the Constituency Offices and I want to thank the staff of the Ministry of Communications, Works and Public Utilities, Mr. Speaker, for their continued diligence and support in serving Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

I wish everyone, Mr. Speaker, my constituents, to you and to the Clerk and the others who do not have a voice here a very, very Merry Christmas. I do hope that we may have another session, but if we don't, do enjoy the Christmas Season. Thank you and thank you to the Nation. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. George South-East. Now, we will listen to Minister for Finance and Parliamentary Representative for St. George North-West.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, in standing to close the debate on this extremely important Motion, which, of course, deals with the approval of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year, January 1st to December 31st, 2018, I must say that in standing to do so, I believe that we have a lot of testimonials. I listened to so many testimonials throughout the entire period of presentations, made by different Members of Parliament, and, of course, this whole concept of testimonials has

become the order of the day. So, I would continue in that same vein and, of course, end on that same note.

Mr. Speaker, in putting Budgets in historical context, usually, at the end of the presentation of the Budget Address, usually there are comments and concerns raised by persons in the country, whether they are Opposition, or persons in independent areas of interest in the country. And, therefore, usually, the Minister, in concluding, has to attempt to explain, or respond to some of these comments or issues that are raised. But, listening to the comments made after the Presentation, I don't know that I have a lot to explain. I only think that I need to refer to some issues that I think needed some more clarity and to be able to satisfy the concerns of some of our people.

And, let me say, Mr. Speaker, therefore, one of the things that I wanted to do, as I listened to some of the comments made, and it was related to the one-off payment that was being referred to in certain quarters, and I think it is important for me to point out here that I am hearing that the Government offered seven hundred and fifty dollars ($750.00) per person, which was rejected. This does not tell all the story, and therefore, I must testify. The Government's Negotiating Team, in attempting to reach an amicable conclusion, because this is what this Government is about, achieving an atmosphere of peace and harmony, offered an amount, on condition, that many of the regularizations that are necessary, may not be able to be done; in other words it cannot be done. In other words, the Government was making it clear; it does not have more money to give one-offs to Public Servants. And, I think it was pointed out, over and over, by several speakers that we have a lot of areas to satisfy in the country.

So, I want to be clear that the Government did not offer seven hundred and fifty dollars ($750.00) without condition. The last offer was six hundred and fifty dollars ($650.00) with the regularization; so it must be clear. I thought no one is referring to this side. I listened to all Radios, all comments made, and I am hearing that the Government just offered seven hundred and fifty (750), so we have more. We don't have more, but we are trying to find some medium of compromise. So, I think, I want it to be extremely clear that this is the situation. I would say a lot more about the fiscal situation confronting the country, at this time.

I also heard that the Government reduced the amount of money it was going to spend on Agriculture. The Minister did attempt to give an explanation, but there was a lot more addition to this. So, I wanted to make it very clear that Agriculture have received, probably, some of the most significant portion of the country's resources, will receive in 2018, and I would outline the specifics. As was said, the Budget document for the central part of the administration of Agriculture, is twenty-four million dollars ($24 m), but that's not all part of the Budget process.

The Minister for Works pointed out, whereas his Ministry, sixty-one million dollars ($61 m), the Ministry of Works tentacles exist in several other areas. So, let me point out, in addition to the central support of twenty-four million dollars ($24 m), the Feeder Roads, Feeder Roads mean what it says, that CCC, in this phase to start in 2018, it already had been appointed, the total allocation for the next three (3) years for Agriculture, and Feeder Roads is thirty-seven million US dollars (US$37 m), which is over one hundred million EC dollars (EC$100 m). That is all going to go towards maximizing the results of the Agricultural Sector, to protecting our food security, enhancing productivity, increasing employment opportunities and ensuring, Mr. Speaker, we can eat more healthily, as possible. So, even if we assume out of the hundred plus million dollars ($100 m+), we only spend ten million dollars ($10 m) next year, which is very conservative, it means that in 2018, that is ten more million dollars ($10 m), at least, and that, as I said, is very conservative.

The Budget document itself says so, that MAREP has to do thirty (30) Farm Roads, specific, $8.1 m, plus $5.3 m for irrigation of farms in the country. And, I know all of us understand what irrigation simply means, because one of the problems that the hotels and businesses face in this country, historically, is that, they are attempting to get local produce from farmers. At a certain part of the year, you would get unlimited supply and just a short period and that, the story ends. No business can operate on the basis of some pumpkins or watermelon for a short period and then they can't get, so they have to go to constant supply outside, Miami, or wherever they can get it, because, in most cases, the Dry Season, there is no water, so putting $5.3 m in addition to the $8.1 m for MAREP, for farm roads, $5.3 m for irrigation.

In addition, the Government is adding $5.4 m to support the Bureaucratic System and other support services on that same project. In other words, Mr. Speaker, you're talking, literally, almost nineteen million dollars ($19 m) addition. That is Agriculture. Is it Sports? Not Sports, not anything else, it is simply Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, the Marketing Board and other businesses are now investing from the Government, again, $5.4 m through the Government support services, to aid the farmers in several aspects of modernizing and increasing productivity on the farms, in reaching out, Pack Houses and all other aspects of what they are doing. These are, in fact, initiatives of the Marketing Board through the Government's support to aid the development of Agriculture, another set of money, Mr. Speaker.

We have the Cane Company Limited, that's the Renegade Rum Distillery. This, of course, is now designating several forms to the Farming Community for project. You see many canes. Some farms that were left lying waste before are now with a number of young canes. This is a major project that will continue to feed opportunities to the Agricultural Sector, employing scores of people. In fact, a lot of persons are already permanently employed; they are leasing lands from farmers; that is more support to the Agricultural Sector.

Mr. Speaker, in looking at the Budget, we decided that we need to do something special and specific for the Productive Sectors of the Economy. What are they? Agriculture, Tourism and Manufacturing; these are the main ones, but there are others.

We have decided, Mr. Speaker, that based on our Fiscal Responsibility Act and we are managing ourselves, we accept responsibility to manage ourselves and everyone has to do so, in your own home, in your own businesses, and Government is a business, we have to manage ourselves. So we've decided that based on the room that we have now on the projective income, we say six million dollars ($6 m), but the plan is to add another four million dollars ($4 m) if the 'fiscal space' allows it.

Now, I hear there is a joke going around, everything is the 'fiscal space.' Well, I don't know that's a joke, everything has to be the 'fiscal space.' **(Applause)** Well, I don't understand this. Mr. Speaker, this is not the Government that put out a billion dollar Budget and they don't have financing for six hundred and something million

dollars. No wonder they could make joke of 'fiscal space', because they don't have a clue of the definition of 'fiscal space.' How can you have a Budget of one point odd billion dollars and knocking your chest, as if you performed so well? According to a famous President, fake Budget, and as the Member for St. George's South-East said, they too bright. When you're too bright, you don't understand anything.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, and we could say, we are very confident, because, last year, for example, Mr. Speaker, we said to the Nation and to the workers, look, accept this, and if the fiscal space allows it, we will, in fact, increase, but we must have the resources. We're not going to promise things that we cannot deliver. But, what happened? Last year, in the Budget, we said so, the fiscal space had some room, we now offer additional support.

So, in other words, we met our commitment to what we said we will do. Similarly, we said, that if we have more fiscal space, we had a few million dollars in Housing, we almost doubled it, after the period, to help many of the poor persons to fix their homes, because the fiscal space allowed it. **(Applause)** We don't want to be irresponsible and just say, we will do this, make the Budget big, and then you can't achieve it, fool people. We're not going to do this. Some people love to fool people. Like, I remember they had a Budget, two point something million dollars in the Ministry of Works and on the Budget paper they said sixteen thousand, five hundred (16,500) jobs. I say that's a Magician. And, that's the same people now, they're talking about $2.5 m for Ministry of Works, sixteen thousand, five hundred (16,500) jobs. These are the kind of people talking out there now.

We said also, if the fiscal space allows it, we would add more to the Needy Assistance Programme, an additional five, more million dollars to fiscal, now added. If we didn't have the fiscal space, with all our good intentions, we couldn't do it.

Roads, again; in the Budget we had five million or something like this for Debushing. How much did we spend this year? **(Minister Bowen indicated the amount).** Twenty million dollars ($20 m); if we didn't have the fiscal space, how could we do it? In other words, our track record of meeting our responsibility for what we say is there. **(Applause)** So, it means that we have an additional expected ten million

dollars ($10 m) for the Productive Sectors, and, therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture would have additional amounts on this. And, we believe that it must go towards the small farmers in the country to help them in meeting their responsibility to improving the productivity and, of course, more employment in the country. So, if it means helping them with labour support, to clean their farms, that could be part of it, that is going to be done in conjunction with negotiations with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Farming Community, the Marketing Board, many aspects of the development of the Sector.

Similarly, the Hotel Sector; the Minister mentioned what the small hotels are saying. We believe it should go towards small hotels. We don't expect a big hotel to come and tell us they need support; small hotels, the bonafidé home-grown hotels and products, they would help them with marketing. Maybe it helped them with renovation, to bring their property up to certain standards, so they can compete. More jobs for the country, enhancing our own local product and further development for Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

And, the Manufacturing Sector, right now, they cannot survive, and that takes me to a point that I always feel that I must talk to. This madness of having electricity costs choking everybody in this country. Everyone is being choked by the price of electricity, and every time I talk about this, it hurts, because I cannot understand, Mr. Speaker, how any Grenadian, who calls himself a Patriot could announce support for a Company that is beating the hell out of us in this country, with the price of electricity. And, if you move to liberalize it, Gregory is against you, the Government against you. We are not against anybody. We are for the people of Grenada, Carriacou, and Petite Martinique **(Applause).** I always say to people, look, for me, I don't worry with GRENLEC, you know, I could pay my bill, it doesn't hurt me. And, then you hear this nonsense about how they're helping locals, they're giving a two dollars ($2.00) there and are helping some school and they're giving Knowledge Bowl. That is our money, that's not their money. **(Applause)** And, some people playing, as if they're giving us a favour. They're not doing us any favour.

Mr. Speaker, I was shocked, recently, talking to the powers that be, at St. George's University, when they told me that their electricity bill that they pay to

GRENLEC, per year, was ten million US dollars (US$10 m). My God! One Company? This so-called godfather of Grenadians, who loves us so much that they're giving us free things, a few hundred thousand dollars of our own money. They love us so much, but ten million US dollars ($US10 m) coming from one Institution for that Company. They can survive, pay their workers much bigger salaries, give a lot more and still pack away millions from one Company in Grenada, and don't talk about the rest of the population, the hundreds or more millions there. And, then, some of us, we have, I call them wicked Grenadians, for you to stand up and make statements in support of a Company like this beating your people, because of a few little things they're giving you. Something is wrong with some of us. We would put ourselves, our Political interest, first, and then you hear them jumping up, we're not getting any help, we're not getting this.

We know better, Mr. Speaker. The time will come, when we will expose some people for what it's worth. We have information that we will give the Nation of how some people prefer to sell their country for a few pieces of silver, Mr. Speaker. We are not going to hold ourselves back. This is not about NNP, you know. There are some things in this country, Mr. Speaker, that we should not have political divide on. This NNP stood… the same position we took, when we were in Opposition, we took the same position in Government. We don't change our tongue, based on what somebody gives us, or intends to give us. What is right for the country is right for us, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

So, they were talking about Small Business, about support for the Agricultural Sector. Small business loan to GDB, the Government, again, over eight million dollars ($8 m) were given this year to GDB to unlend. 70% of the loans, Mr. Speaker, identified by the GDB went to farmers and fishermen, Mr. Speaker. So, what have I just said? In effect, if you add what I said, Mr. Speaker, ten (10) plus eighteen (18), twenty-eight (28), plus five, thirty-three (33), plus what the Sugar Cane Industry is owing, ten (10). Let us suppose we give five (5) from the ten million dollars ($10 m), that's thirty-eight, and the Small Business Loan, another, Mr. Speaker. You see, what we're talking about, Mr. Speaker, and that's just a portion of what we're talking about. So, in other words, the

Agricultural Sector for anyone who says that this Government is not doing much about Agriculture, I hope what I have done today, Mr. Speaker, has put that to rest, because I think it's important, because I would not want to be leading a Government that has marginalized the Agricultural Sector, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to make a statement, as it relates to the Fiscal Responsibility Act. Mr. Speaker, I want to give a lot of thanks to the members of the Fiscal Responsibility Oversight Committee (FROC) for their work, as Patriots of this country, accepting responsibility to oversee the Government's fiscal situation. And, in the first report, I need to make the following comment.

Mr. Speaker, while we appreciate the highlighting of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, I want to make it clear that the Act cannot be read in isolation of Section (8), which is 1(8) in its entirety. Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that the GDP, the Debt to GDP Ratio, in 2013, was 109%. At this point, it has gone down to 69%, and with recent statements by the Venezuelan Government that is prepared to forgo 50% of the debt to Petro Caribé, which could be as much as eighty million dollars ($80 m) or more. In other words, that ratio will go down even further.

So, the Committee, in making its statement, pointed out that we had not achieved our target of 55%, but the target was never meant to be achieved overnight. It is something that you reach over in 2030. I think they read it wrong and they're all human. But, I think it is important, because somebody reading their statement would think that the Government missed a target, this is certain.

The World Bank, the IMF, all institutions are extremely happy. They have not seen a country move from 109% Debt to GDP ratio to 69%, in just four and a half years. That is almost miraculous, and at the same time achieved growth rate of over 5%, and at the same time, bringing down employment, from 40% to 24%, paying Back Pay, doing all the number of things that we're doing. They have not seen that happen, Mr. Speaker. So, we just wanted to comment briefly on that particular point.

There is also, Mr. Speaker, the question of Public/Private/Partnership and its relation to Contingent Liabilities. They were saying that we had not met that target. But, the target says the following. It says, and I want to read it. Mr. Speaker, yes, right,

"there were no PPP in place…", the Representative for St. George's South-East pointed out. That was the intention. We would love to have a PPP with the Post Office and the Gravel and Concrete, but none has been achieved yet. So, if you take the definition from FROC, it means that the fiscal rule of the PPP related contingent liability should not exceed 5% of GDP. But, it has met it, because it's 0%. So, in other words, it could not be stated that we have not met that condition, when, in fact, there'll be no PPP established yet. So, there can't be no contingent liability, as far as that is concern. So, I think that that is something.

And, then there are thorough comments on the Wage Bill, and other aspects of this, which proclaim was not absolutely correct. But, the point is, this Government is prepared to put all its actions and its fiscal situation in the hands of independent Grenadian persons, who would assess what is happening and report to Parliament, not to the Government, report to the Parliament. And, these persons, as was announced in the Parliament are independent people that cannot be said to be associated with this Government, in any shape and form, and we very happy with this.

In fact, while Jamaica, as the only country in the Caribbean besides Grenada that has gone to Parliament with a Fiscal Responsibility Act, we are the only country to put in place, as a part of the Parliament, an Oversight Committee. Jamaica is looking at this one. In a meeting in Jamaica, recently that I attended with Prime Minister Holdness and the Managing Director of the IMF, Christine Lagarde, she said that Grenada's model should be adopted by most countries, because of its success. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I also want to give an idea of some of the achievements of the Department of Public Administration that has been providing yeoman service, because the Department of Public Administration is an essential element in the management of the Public Service and the management of Government activities. Because, historically, having been part of Government for many years, Government used to be hiring people and no one knows how many people in the Public Service, what are the limits that we have, and what are the responsibility, every single person was hiring, every Permanent Secretary, even below Permanent Secretaries were hiring. Ministers were hiring. So,

the Public Service became bloated, because of the lack of accountability and lack of a proper process of management.

So, the Department of Public Administration was established, specifically, to manage the Government and to account appropriately, for the number of persons in the Public Service, and the Government Wage Bill, in a general sense, because they're correlated in a general way. They have an essential responsibility. So, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, many times, when we take things to Cabinet, we found out, look, have you gone to the DPA, have you gotten permission? And, if it's no, then you have to go back. It happened to me, too. So, we all have to live within certain fundamental rules, because that is the only way this country would progress.

In effect, what we are saying, Mr. Speaker, what we are doing today should not be done by this Government only. When we leave, there should be a legacy in place that no one can interfere with, that they must continue under this path. **(Applause)** Whether it's this Government, NNP and another Prime Minster, whether it's a new Government, or another Prime Minster, we must live under this rule; otherwise we will be breaking the fundamental Law of the Land.

So, let me give you some of the things that they are doing; regularization of the Code of the Public Service. We have twenty (20) Nursing Staff that are holding letters of appointments now, that they have been made permanent under the Public Service Commission, twenty (20) Nursing Staff. Over one hundred (100) Officers, in Acting positions, across the Public Service, are now regularized, notably within the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs, Finance and Audit Department. Forty-three (43) Public Service Commission temporary appointments have been now approved for regularization, once all the criteria have been met.

Mr. Speaker, these are all regularizations that cost millions of dollars. **(Applause)** So, when people are talking they must give the whole picture. The Government did not only provide one hundred and six million dollars ($106 m) and counting, in additional resources to the Public Service, but it also regularized workers, to the tune of millions of dollars. So, in other words, that's the picture and it comes from one pot. And, that's why we are saying to our friends that you cannot expect to get

everything that exists in the Public Service. So, the fiscal space that's available is fiscal space for the Public Servants? Well, what kind of… what kind of Government is this? The fiscal space must be made available to all and sundry. So, the old lady, who needs a two pieces of board, she needs the fiscal space to get the piece of board. So, those of us who already working cannot expect to get all.

And, it is said the Government could pay. The Government never said it cannot pay; well, I don't understand, what kind of logic is this? If the Government says we cannot pay more, do I have to say, I cannot pay again? I don't know what kind of language is this. What I am saying is, whatever space exists, it must not come to you alone; that's all I am saying. Unfortunately, the only persons in the Public Service that have not got any increases in four and half years are the poor Ministers sitting here. I am not calling myself poor, them I am more concerned about, because I don't think it's fair. I watched, as Minister for Finance, what my document that came from the Ministry of Finance says, and every time I look at it, I feel I could cry. At the top of the list, you see Minister, Minister, sixty-seven thousand dollars ($67,000.00); below, Permanent Secretary, eighty-four thousand ($84,000.00). Now, tell me something, there must be something fundamentally wrong with this. But, nobody is speaking for the Ministers. We need a Union, you know. Nobody's speaking for you, Minister for Labour. What are you doing? I told my friend, the President of the TUC, that we might appoint him, as the Shop Steward for the Ministers, but that's after the election, not this time.

Mr. Speaker, short-term Scholarships Awards, significant increase in the China Multi- Lateral Short Term Award from one hundred and fifty-three (153) in 2016, to three hundred and twenty-four (324) persons in short-term training in China. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, these short-term courses, Mr. Speaker, goes to the heart of empowerment of the people, of the Public Servants, because the necessity to train people, whether it's in Health, Education, Finance, Youth Development, Sports and Agriculture, all these are critical for going forward, as far as the Public Service is concerned. Some substantial increases were also recorded in the China Bilateral Awards, that's from ninety-three (93) in 2016, to one hundred and ninety-three (193) in 2017. **(Applause)** Courses were offered in such areas as Anti-terror Capacity Building, Bio-technology on Food

Industries, Macro-Economics and Planning, Stadium Maintenance Technology, Journalism, Editors Seminar, Cultivation Technology in Fruits and Vegetables, Agriculture Processing and Preservation Technology and a host of other support training, Mr. Speaker. In addition, there were twenty (20) other Awards, including those coming from Chile, Japan, South Korea and India.

Mr. Speaker, it means that the DPA has been doing enormous work. They have now established, Mr. Speaker, a Training Centre, which is at the CAIPO Building. In addition to the work of CAIPO, there is a training component that will help in training, in a very scientific way, the Public Service, from now onwards, Mr. Speaker. In other words, we are going to be continuing to meet some serious responsibilities, as far as the Public Service is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also address this issue. The Minister, in her address, Minister for Tourism, did not go through, at length, what was happening at the International Airport with that new project of sixty-six million dollars ($66 m), a soft loan from the EXIM Bank of China. This is crucial, and I just want to apologize. In my Presentation there was an error that I made, when I said there was a second runway. It is not a second runway, it is a Taxiway, so it was my wording that appeared to have created some confusion, so I need to correct it. In other words, one thing, Mr. Speaker, when this Government makes a mistake, it is not afraid to admit it, like we admitted that we should do better in the Doing Business Ranking, as the Member for St. George South-East and the Member for the Town of St. George already mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for me to mention what this Project will be doing. Mr. Speaker, first of all, we would be resurfacing the current runway. We have been told that if we don't do something quickly, we could lose our first class rating that we have, and that would be dangerous for Tourism. The FAA can, in fact, impose that condition on us.

We also have and I mentioned the Taxiway that would be constructed, we have construction of an Administration and Emergency Centre; that is also going to be a major part of that activity, and we are talking, Mr. Speaker, of sixty-six million US dollars (US$66 m) at $2.68 m. Mr. Speaker, if you multiply that out, you are getting almost two

hundred million EC dollars (EC$200 m). It's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about. So, we are talking about a lot of jobs that are going to be created, starting next year, again. And, in addition to this, we would have the construction of a by-pass road, to improve the traffic flow at the Airport. So, that would be further opportunity for people, using the Airport, Mr. Speaker, making things much easier for them. Right now, there is a lot of congestion going in and out of there.

There would be a Terminal expansion and retrofitting of the current Terminal, that would also be a major addition to the work that would be taking place. The construction, also, of a Cargo Facility; that has been something that people are crying out for, that is going to be there also, and the construction of the new apron for Cargo and General Aviation Operations. So, Mr. Speaker, there will be enormous expansion of opportunities, as far as that project is concerned. So, I think it is important for us to understand that this project is a serious project, and, I, therefore, want to thank the Ministry of Finance staff and the Airport, itself, for the work that they did in making sure that we reached this stage, and I also want to thank the Chinese Government, and I want to say special thanks to the new Ambassador. I have found that the new Ambassador has been very aggressive, in attempting to do a lot of things that help this country to move forward.

We had a serious problem with the Housing Project that has been stalled for years. We had a problem with the Sewerage System, with the roads, as part of where we had accepted responsibility. Under the previous Government, they agreed that we would do the roads. We are now asking, and we say that has been a problem, because we don't have the funds to do the roads, and, therefore, the project has been delayed. So, the Chinese Government has now accepted the responsibility to do a lot of the infrastructure work for us, as part of the Project. So, this is why they have now signed the official contract and that work is expected to start next month, as I mentioned, officially, in the Budget.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make a point about the whole question of what was said, the unemployment situation. It's being said that they don't see where the jobs are going to come from. I don't understand that, you know, Mr. Speaker, because I thought,

when I went through the Budget Document and I explained all the different projects that will be coming under the activities that we mentioned under the Statement, it is here, we listed, not only the construction and the jobs that will come, but we listed the permanent jobs that will be there. So, I don't know how anyone, listening to this, seeing this, and while I was making my statement, the projects were being shown. You cannot say it is fly in the night, or we promised this, most of them were already ongoing projects.

Mr. Speaker, coming from the Gym, last Saturday morning, and I was passing by Renaissance, I saw a whole line of people. So, I turned to my Security man and said: **"What is going on here?"** He said, **"Silver Sands is having interviews for jobs."** And, I was sure, Mr. Speaker, I saw some people in the line, who, already, were working. But, their perception is that Silver Sands will pay more money than where they are, so some of them were lining up for the jobs. And, therefore, it means, Mr. Speaker, this project, like all the other projects, will be providing permanent employment. So, for someone to say that they don't know where the jobs are coming from, they don't see where we are talking about jobs, Mr. Speaker, I just refer them to this.

But, I want to make another point. After yesterday afternoon, I left here to go to St. Andrew, because I was invited to this formal Ceremony of the KM2 Company. They mentioned that they had Call Centres in several parts of the Caribbean. They are in Barbados, in Dominican Republic, they're in Honduras, they were in Dominica for a while, but because of the problems there, and they mentioned some other countries. And, the Managing Director said that the Workforce that he has in Grenada is the best Workforce that his Company has had, over the years. **(Applause)** And, I had to reiterate a point made by Butch Stewart, to me, and he was reporting it in Jamaica where he is from, where he publicly said, of all his Hotel Projects, all over the Caribbean and outside of the Caribbean, the Grenadian workers are the most skilled and the most productive ones that he has in the entire operation. That is a serious compliment for this country and to the young people. **(Applause)** So, the gentleman, they are now moving up to five hundred (500) employees. You are asking where the jobs coming from? Five hundred (500) jobs is not just a drop in the bucket; that is a serious percentage of the Workforce in this country.

And, you know, that brought me back to a point, Mr. Speaker, to that meeting, in Jamaica, where the World Bank was involved. As I mentioned, the Chairman of the major activity there, was the Managing Director of the IMF and myself and Prime Minister Holness were the two (2) Prime Ministers there. The Chief Economist of the World Bank said, in his presentation, in looking at the prospects for economic activity, because that was the theme of the Conference; for economic and infrastructural resilience in the Caribbean Region, that the key areas for economic activity, for the Caribbean Region, as he sees it, in the near future, is ICT, the Blue Economy and Resilience of Climate Change activities, and what next… Call Centres.

Mr. Speaker, this is significant, because he is saying, in effect, if we want to create serious job opportunities, these are the key areas for us to invest in, and that, to me, is highly significant. So, when I went up there, left the Parliament, because it is not easy to leave the Parliament business, but I thought it was significant enough for me to do so, and I was extremely pleased, because I saw something there happening, which is really part of our vision and understanding of the way forward for this country. And, I remember, Mr. Speaker, that we attempted to bring Call Centres to this country, the first attempt, under the NNP Government, in '95 to '99. We attempted to do so, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I remember there were over six hundred (600) persons employed, and we went to the Service Provider, Cable and Wireless, at the time. I said, my God, the cost of a call that you are charging the Company would make it impossible for their operation to survive. It is not costing you anything, it is God's space; my God, reduce the cost, so that the Company could make profit and would employ more. You are not losing anything, you're still making profit, but not to the extent you would make. They insisted that they had a monopoly; at that time there was no competition.

I met with the top members in Britain; I have never forgotten this, the Head of Cable and Wireless, and I said to them, **"Guys, in the future, within ten (10) years, this Company will not survive, if you continue with that mindset."** They thought I was a crazy man. I remember we were having lunch, I don't think we all finished the lunch, because I had to tell them that they misused the Caribbean Region. And, that is why it is the same thing I see, when I talk about electricity. When Cable and Wireless

was here in the Region, I am not talking Grenada alone, they were making millions of pounds, and they gave West Indies Cricket Board a couple million dollars. So, when they were being challenged for liberalization, you know, what they said, the same thing I am hearing today, we are going to reduce the social projects we are giving. They said we are going to stop funding West Indies Cricket, because we are making such a sacrifice. What sacrifice? West Indies Cricket was getting three and four million dollars a year, while they were making twenty/thirty billion dollars, over the Region. The Caribbean was the most profitable area for Cable and Wireless business; so these Corporations, they are not doing us a favour. They are out to make profits.

So, I am saying, going back to this whole question of these Call Centres, had they reduced the costs, we would have had hundreds and thousands of jobs today, but the thing had to close down, so they got no money. The Call Centre disappeared. We lost all the jobs, so they lost, we lost. I never see something more foolish than this. But, they had a monopoly, so they felt that this monopoly will continue forever and ever, amen.

But as it is said… it is significant, Mr. Speaker, you know who, as fate had it, we moved to liberalize telecommunications in the Caribbean, the OECS, and that was led by myself. I was Chairman of the OECS, and they made me Chairman to negotiate with Cable and Wireless. I was the most unpopular man for Cable and Wireless, in the Caribbean Region at the time, and Minister Bowen was there with me, as Minister, at every meeting I attended. And, I remembered Errol Miller, from Jamaica, was being chosen, as their man, to negotiate with me, but he is Jamaican, so he had a certain sympathy. So, when he proposed certain solutions to move the thing to a partial liberalization, the next thing, I got a call from Miller and told me: **"Boy, they fired me last night."** They got rid of him, and next thing I saw a fellah from London appeared and say, **"Well, I am the new man negotiating with you now."** But, what happened? They thought they could have stopped that process. Liberalization came, Mr. Speaker.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, now the Call Centres can become viable. We can get more jobs, more opportunities, and the kind of income that the workers there can make, it would be income that anyone could be proud of. Because when I hear the workers

talk about the environment and some of the conditions, Mr. Speaker, I feel that we have done the right thing, and that this country is certainly, moving in the right direction, in every respect.

Mr. Speaker, I just now want to turn to an issue related to some major meetings that would be taking place, soon. And, I am making a further point, it is not about me, but I am talking about the significance of these meetings. It is about the future of Grenada. On the 7th of this month, I travelled to Antigua to chair a meeting with the President of Cuba, Raul Castro, at the CARICOM/Cuba Summit, and a number of major issues would be on the agenda, as far as the relationship, given the problems related now with the new Administration in the U.S and some of the initiatives that Obama took, with respect to liberalizing the question of travel to Cuba and their problems; that we are making it clear that we would work closely with Cuba on the whole question of the way forward, because we see Cuba, as an essential partner in the whole question of development in the Region. So, the issue of the economy in the Region and Cuba's role in Tourism, the issue of healthcare, they will be discussed, and we hope to sign an Agreement for relationship in Science and Technology with the Cuba Government. As you know, Cuba has been at the top of the line, as far as healthcare and their technology are concerned. So that is an area we will be, certainly, settling on.

And, then, I travel to France; I received an invitation from the President of France, for an important Summit called 'One Planet Summit'. That is, because of the present situation of Climate Change, President Macron has decided to take a serious initiative to invite some World Leaders, and I represent the CARICOM Region, to a Summit to look at ways in which we can work together, to deal with the whole question of Climate Change, and to deal with the whole question of resilience and the whole question of the reconstruction process, after disasters. All these are going to be major issues that would come to play. We expect that we will be preparing appropriately, for this.

And, then, Mr. Speaker, soon afterwards I leave France and head to Boston, where I am being invited by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to do an Address and have discussions with them on the whole question of… a Conference on

Resilient Reconstruction for the Caribbean Region, as a whole. Mr. Speaker, this has enormous significance, because one of the things we found out that MIT has been doing, recently, touches me very closely. It is known that MIT is one of the leading Universities in the world, with respect to patent of technologies and so on, and they have been doing enormous research and highly successful, in terms of putting out some of the best Scientists outside there. But, they have been criticized for not doing enough in the Social area. So, recently, they have been doing a lot of work with inner City youths in the United States, going into certain communities and taking people on the Blocks and providing them with certain skills in certain areas of Technology, and providing them with opportunities and hope, and has been highly successful, and they have able to trace a reduction in crime, in those communities that they have been involved. I want to be able to leverage that sort of initiative, with them; so, it is my opportunity to go there, to deal with this Conference. This is not only about the Conference, but it is an opportunity to provide hope and opportunity for the young people of this country.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make this point, because we are looking towards the future, not just now, Mr. Speaker. This Government has a vision. Long after we leave Government, we have to look at how we can build resilience to the economy of this country and provide permanent hope for the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to turn to some issues of importance to me. My view, Mr. Speaker, as I witnessed today and during this period of Presentation, I won't call it debate, because it cannot be a debate, when there isn't an alternative side. These are Presentations and comments related to Ministers. What got to me, Mr. Speaker, is that there is a team of persons, who came into an area of sacrifice, helping their country and sometimes taking a lot of unnecessary licks, not being paid; in fact, even what they are paid is not theirs, because most of their monies go towards helping people. If you want to survive in this Politics, and you don't share most of what you get with your Constituency, you won't last. It is simple like that. In other words, a Public Servant, who earns his resources, he spends his money, or her money, on his family, or whoever

he wants to. The Politician does not have that choice. If he wants that choice, he better get out. But, it got to me that four (4) Members of this House were presenting what they considered to be, their last Budget Presentation, and it was highly significant, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in some cases, it was emotional, Mr. Speaker, because; and I missed it, I said four (4), it is three (3); because in going out, there was no bitterness; in fact, if anything, there was a sense of joy, that they came in, gave service and were leaving with a clear conscience. **(Applause)** Having served and given their all, they were leaving on a positive note.

The Member for Carriacou and Petite Martinique, served for four (4) terms in this House, and it is emotional for him, giving his all to this job of representing his Constituency, but leaving on such a note, that we would always remember, because some were speaking, as if it may be their last Parliament speech. It may not be their last Parliament speech, because I did not call the date for Election yet, so it may not be. Some of us may have to be back here before. But, it would certainly be the last Budget speech.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, when one is elected into Office, you did not get into Office to get a Ministerial job, or to be in a position of power, because I heard a debate, recently, Mr. Speaker, about a certain Member on 'This Side' of this Government, refused to take a Ministerial position, because he was making more money somewhere else. I don't know the Member was elected to become a Minister. When you go to people for vote, you are elected to represent your Constituency. **(Applause)** The Prime Minister, may, or may not, ask you to be a Minister of Government.

In the British Parliament, there are four hundred (400) odd Parliamentarians, but there are forty something Ministers, or thirty something Ministers. So, the most of them are Backbenchers, but they service their Constituents. So, the Member that was criticising the other Member, he is criticising because, as far as he is concerned, running for Office is to become a powerful Minister of Government, to talk down to people and to treat people, as they wish. And, in fact, that individual only wants to be the Minister for Finance. He doesn't want any other job. Why do you want only the Ministry of Finance? What so sweet there, juice flowing? I don't know about the juice,

because I don't see it. I don't see it, so I don't know what about it. I gave it up twice already, so I don't see what so sweet about it, Mr. Speaker.

But the point I am making, Mr. Speaker, the Member involved, service his Constituents, provide roads, all sorts of development, as a Member or Backbencher of the Government. The Member, who became a powerful Minister, did nothing in the Constituency. So, who is the best person to continue to represent the Constituency? The people of St. George North-East will determine this.

The other point I want to make, this issue, Mr. Speaker, being here, this is about love, Mr. Speaker. If you do not have love, don't go in this job, because you would not last. You would be found out. People know when you love them and when you do not love them. It is not something you could fake. You cannot do it just when Elections are coming, and you're around the place, putting video and cutting grass, they say planassing grass. You cannot do it, because you never held a cutlass in your life, so you must planass the grass; you know, it doesn't work so. You have got to be there, on the ground, consistently, all the time, to show that you love people. And, if you love them, Election time you don't have to go and beg them for any vote. They know what is good for them. One thing I know about Grenadians, Mr. Speaker, after my years in Politics, Grenadians are not an ungrateful people. If you stand with them and you support them, they don't let you down.

I have heard several Politicians, over the years, during my tenure, as a Representative, when Election is over say, "them people wicked." What do you mean they are wicked? Them people smart. When I was out of Government, I didn't blame people, I blamed ourselves. The Grenadian people know what they want, and they judge us, based on our performance, because sometimes we believe in ourselves so much, that we believe we are so good, and we don't get enough time to assess how people see us. So, sometimes they give us sabbaticals, quite rightly so. But, I am making the point, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned the Members, who are leaving, I want to thank them for their service to the people, and to say, this Government, this Party, would not forget you guys. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I just want also to move and say something about the people, who service my Ministries, and, first, I want to say something to the Police. Watching many members of the Police here today, I want to say how proud I am, as a Grenadian. Wherever I go, people talk about our Police Force. **(Applause)** They talk about the professionalism of the Police Officers. They talk about the character and leadership of the Commissioner of Police and the top hierarchy of the Police Force. It is no coincidence that recently a top member of the Force was asked, in the Dominica operations, to lead the RSS contingent in the entire Region, to lead that for several weeks. That would not have come, if the respect wasn't earned by the members of the Police Force. Members of the Police Force must take a bow, **(applause)** and we got tremendous commendation for the professional work of the SSU Service members, who went to Dominica to provide service to the people of Dominica. They stood out and made all of us proud, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank them again. **(Applause)**

We have crime like all countries, but the fact is this country is known to be the most, in terms of that, the most peaceful country in the Caribbean Region, that's a fact. **(Applause)** We have issues, we have problems and we cannot rest until we deal with all, but we must commend our Police Officers, in general. Now, everyone is doing what they should do, but, I don't know any institution is a perfect institution. But, I want to say this, I am proud of the fact that… I used to get a lot of calls about the Immigration Department, a lot of calls about attitudes of some Immigration Officers. In the last few years, there is only commendation. I want to commend, through you, Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner and his Police Officers **(applause)** for the level of Personnel that is at our International Airport and at our point of Immigration Support Services, because they make us proud. I keep telling Custom Officers and Immigration Officers, those who work at the Airport; you are not just a Custom Officer and Immigration Officer. You are a Diplomat. Sometimes, you're the first person, another individual, coming from the outside, are interacting with, and, therefore, you have to show that level of warmth while you do your work. They must not get away with any nonsense, but you could do it with a sense of humility and professionalism. This is what the Immigration Department is doing, at this particular time, and I certainly, again, want to commend them.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, the Police Stations, some of them are still not… We need to do some work on, I think the Victoria Police Station. We have given serious direction to start, as soon as possible, because I will provide the resources, because I don't like what I see. But, we have done a lot of work on many of the Stations. As we pass by, people come by and complain. We have improved many of them.

To date, through the Chinese Government, it was mentioned already, the amounts of vehicles that have been given to the Force and other equipment and support services to help the Officers. And before that, we made available a few hundred thousand dollars to buy some vehicles for the Police Force, because we recognise without the equipment, they can't do their jobs. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that to the entire Force.

Well, we know the question of promotion is always an issue. I wouldn't want to be a Commissioner of Police. Sometimes you have twenty (20) positions and you have three/four hundred people looking for that twenty (20) positions, so I don't care how you do it, some people always feel that they should get before the next one. It's a very difficult job. My only concern is and as I indicated to the Commissioner and his top members, maybe we should make it, probably, a little more transparent. Maybe you need to have a committee of members of the Force, but some professional persons outside of the Force, a joint Committee, who will do the interviews, and we are looking at that construct. In some countries, they do it. So, in other words, it shouldn't be all Police Officers making a decision, because, sometimes, you're a human being, you have a friend, everybody has friends, everybody has relations, and it's hard when you're making a choice and you have responsibilities to pass off your friend for someone else, even if that persons turns out to be probably more capable than the next person.

So, I understand the tremendous problem faced, and as I've said to people, over and over, I don't get involved in recommendations. Some people come to me and I tell them, look I don't, I honestly don't... In fact, I was so far from the point that I got blamed and I knew absolutely nothing. But, I do ask questions now and I said I was too far from the process, because, in the end, as Minister, you still have to respond to concerns of persons. But, I make this point, because I think it's important to point out, while we

strive towards ensuring that we have the best Police Force, we know that we have to do our best in doing things in a way that everyone can see that they are given the kind of support that they require. But, these are all, Mr. Speaker, to me, these are all testimonies.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Cabinet Secretariat, led by a noble lady, one who can't stop working, doesn't know how to stop working and who probably is of one of the least paid Public Servants in the Public Service, but who works night and day. I do not know how she does it, but I want to thank her and the Cabinet Secretariat for the leadership of the Pubic Service and for the work they have been doing for this country, without fear or favour. **(Applause)**

I also talked about the Department of Public Administration already. I talked about the work that is being done and led by another noble lady, who has been working, again, beyond the call of duty, providing enormous service to our country. I owe them a lot and they are some of the people I see every morning, when I go in at 7:00 o'clock. They are there, like the Cab Sec and others. So, again, Mr. Speaker, to the staff and I have some excellent people, not just the Permanent Secretary, at lower levels of the Department of Public Administration, who are doing yeomen service for this country, who, I believe, need to be given opportunity in higher places of the Public Service, some of them I see the work that they have been doing. I want to thank them, Mr. Speaker, again. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Finance, I am not there, physically, so the staff has to perform. They have to do a lot of work, on their own, so I go there sometimes, twice a week. But, the teamwork I see there, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that we've lost two (2) of the most noble Public Servants, in Timmy Antoine and Mike Sylvester, it was hard to see them go, but I am one who believe a man should not be prevented from moving forward in life, because of his performance in a particular area, in another spot below. People must be given an opportunity, because I believe if you give others an opportunity, they will, in fact, move up. And I want to thank the staff and the leadership of the Ministry of Finance for their excellent work and the work done on this Budget. Mr.

Speaker, it's one of the better presented Budgets that I have had the responsibility to be involved in. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, on a final note, before I close, I must say something about my Constituency. It's been thirty-two (32) years and counting. They have stood with me, in the worst of times and, certainly, the best of times, and I feel that I owe them a lot. In fact, very soon, they have to do, as I told them, one more nomination to have me as their Parliamentary Representative. A lot of people don't like to hear me say one more. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the time must come for all of us. I've watched my Brother Nimrod today, emotionally. My time will come, sooner than later, and I want to say thanks to my Constituents for the service that they have given me, the loyalty and the support.

I think for one, Mr. Speaker, in your lifetime, to be given the endorsement and support of having, in each of those, elected up to the last time, 89.8% of the votes. How many people in life could say they have been representing a group of persons and to be given even stronger and stronger endorsement? In fact, the highest we went was 91%, in 1999, but to have that sort of level of support, I just want to thank my workers, the workers in my Constituency and throughout the length and breadth of the Constituency, whether it's Cherry Hill, Fontenoy, Grand Mal, Mt. Moritz, Moliniere, my own home village of Happy Hill where I grew up, Beausejour, Brizan, where I was born, New Hampshire. All of those areas, Mr. Speaker, I owe them a lot, and I want to thank them. As we move towards the Yuletide Season, I am deeply appreciative of their continued support. And to say, Mr. Speaker, to the Houses of Parliament, to the Members of Parliament, as it was said already, we don't know, we may have to come back here one more time, I am not sure. The Leader of Government's Business will indicate to us whether that is the case.

But to say, Mr. Speaker… to wish everyone the best Christmas that you'll have. I am confident, based on what I am seeing out there, that people are certainly enjoying themselves. The country's economy is moving. The atmosphere is right, I feel proud. Mr. Speaker, as I go around, I can tell you this, I feel more warmth outside there today than I have ever felt in my political life in this country, and that's a fact, because I know how it feels. I know Grenadians are not difficult to know. It's not difficult to know when

they are not happy. As you pass by, if they feel good, they're waving you and they're shouting you out, and if they're not happy, they either turn their face, or they… I don't get much of that now, Mr. Speaker, so I know things are not bad. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everyone and to say, look, we have had a lot of testimonials, we have testified. I am happy, Mr. Speaker, I am a free person, in every respect. I feel I am entering a period in my political life, that I feel I could prepare myself for a proper exit, because I believe I have given the service that I wanted.

When I left Washington, several years ago, Mr. Speaker, and gave up a serious professional life, where I was at the peak of my professional life, as a tenured Professor at a University, consulting, making money and had to come in a period of chaos in this country, when every member of my family thought I was a mad man to come to Grenada at that time; not one person supported me. But, they understood that I wanted to do it. I can say today, Mr. Speaker, I feel that decision was justified, so I testify. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I wish everyone the best Christmas, and thank you all. Mr. Speaker, therefore, I now propose the passage of this special Motion to support the passage of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2018. I put it before this Honourable House. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, at this time, we would take a break for fifteen (15) minutes. We would break for fifteen (15) minutes and then return for the other Motion and Bills. So, we only break for fifteen (15) minutes. This House now stands adjourned for fifteen (15) minutes.

House adjourns for fifteen (15) minutes.

House resumes.

Motions

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I stand to move the second Motion standing in my name which reads as follows:

WHEREAS Section 56 (1) of the Public Finance Management Act No. 17 of 2015 (herein referred to as "the Act"), provides *inter alia* that no money shall be raised on the credit of the Government of Grenada except under the authority of this Act or under an Act of Parliament or Resolution of the House of Representatives;

AND WHEREAS Section 56 (2) of the Act provides *inter alia* that the Minister for Finance may borrow when authorised by Resolution of the House of Representatives money on behalf of the Government of Grenada in any form and from any legitimate source on terms and conditions to be agreed with the Creditor;

AND WHEREAS it is further provided that the amount shall not exceed in the aggregate the sum specified in the Resolution;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient that the Minister for Finance be authorised by a Resolution of the House of Representatives to borrow on behalf of the Government of Grenada money to the amount of not exceeding in the aggregate the sum of sixty million dollars ($60 m) to meet current expenditure requirements;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives hereby authorises the Minister for Finance to borrow on behalf of the Government of Grenada money to the amount not exceeding in the aggregate sum of sixty million dollars ($60 m) for the period 18th January, 2018 to 17th January, 2019.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Minister for Finance.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, since this is a money Motion, I just want to tell this Honourable House, through you, that I have the approval of the Governor-General to proceed.

Mr. Speaker, this Motion is a routine Motion of the House of Representatives, because, historically, Government, in attempting to manage the affairs of Government,

to meet current expenditures, has to obtain overdrafts from the banks or financial institutions, so that if, for example, the current revenue is not able to meet Government's responsibilities in a given month, then it can, in fact, use that overdraft facility to be able to continue the operations of Government. So, historically, over the previous Parliaments, it used to be for every six (6) months, so every six months we had to renew that Resolution. But, it was in recent times, under the previous Government and, probably, they were wise to do so, it was extended for every year.

Now, usually, Mr. Speaker, the Government has been able to use this. But, you know, what is significant, Mr. Speaker; in recent times, while we have the overdraft facilities, we have hardly used it, Mr. Speaker, so the banks have been complaining. The one thing they are not happy about this Government, at this time, is that the amount of interest they used to earn from the overdraft facilities, because they used to charge us something like 9% for the overdraft. And, sometimes, in some cases, the Government had overdraft reached almost forty million dollars ($40 m); now, we literally almost zero, so they are not getting any interest from us. It is just like how I operate with credit cards. The minute I use my credit card, I pay it off, immediately, because I can't afford to be paying 10 and 12% interest, and whatever you have in the bank, they are giving you 1% and .5%; it makes no sense. So, that basically is the situation, Mr. Speaker.

So, while we have it in place in case it becomes necessary to use, then in recent times, we have not had to use much of an overdraft facility to manage the affairs of the Government. So, in effect, we are doing an excellent job, as we have mentioned before, in managing the affairs of the Government and living within the means of the country. So, I just want to officially put this Motion before this Honourable House for its passage. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative for St. David.

Hon. Oliver Joseph: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give my support to the Motion, and just to be very clear, because it seems that when you pass a Motion or

Resolution, you always have some different views and that's something I cannot understand.

Now, this does not mean that the Government is going and borrow sixty million EC dollars (EC$60 m). Let me say that from the very beginning, because some people will say, look, we are seeking authorisation to borrow sixty million dollars. We are not doing that. We are saying for the overdraft facilities, we are authorising the Minister for Finance to borrow up to the limit of sixty million dollars ($60 m) in case you need money for recurrent expenditure; that is what we are seeking. And, as the Minister explained, we may not use none of it, Mr. Speaker. It is just that we are seeking it now, in case that we need to use the overdraft facilities, but it is not that we are going and borrow sixty million dollars ($60 m) from the local bank. So, I want to make that absolutely clear, because some people will still say the Minister for Finance came with a Motion to borrow sixty million dollars ($60 m); that is not what it is about. It is an overdraft facility and, of course, the overdraft facility is a loan. We have to pay interest. It is a loan that we are afforded, but it must be very clear that it is just a facility. If you need to use it, you have the authorisation of Parliament to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. David. Honourable Minister for Finance.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I just stand to thank the Member for his further explanation of what this is all about and to commend this Motion for passage.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.
Motion approved.

Bills

Clerk Assistant: Item 15 - Bills.

Clerk: A message from the Senate to the Speaker and other Members of the House of Representatives:

"*Mr. Speaker and other Members of the House of Representatives, the Senate at its Sitting on Friday, 24th November, 2017 considered the Bill for an Act shortly entitled, National Insurance (Amendment) Act, 2017 and made the following amendments:*

1. Clause 2 was repealed and replaced with the following:

Amendment to Section 36 of principal Act

2. Section 36 of the principal Act is amended by inserting after subsection (2) (a) the following new subsection:

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of this Section and subject to subsection (4), nothing contained therein shall prevent the payment of sickness benefits directly to an employer of an insured person, provided that written instructions have been received from the insured person.

(4) For the purposes of subsection (3) the payment of sickness benefits paid to the employer shall not exceed the sum paid by the employer to the insured person in respect of sickness benefits.

The Senate recommends that the aforementioned amendments be considered by the House of Representatives."

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. The Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the House accepts the recommendations from the 'Other Place'. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. We would so advise the Senate of our acceptance of the amendment. Leader of Government's Business.

Bills

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Appropriation (2018) Bill, 2017.

Clerk: An Act to appropriate a sum not exceeding one billion, one hundred and twelve million, thirty-nine thousand, nine hundred and thirty-eight dollars ($1,112,039,938.00) to the service of the State of Grenada for the period January 1 to December 31, 2018 shortly entitled, Appropriation (2018) Bill, 2017.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the House be suspended in order to take the Bill through all its stages at this Sitting.

Question put and agreed to.
Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill is to give effect to the Motion that was passed and to allow the State or the Ministry of Finance to commence expenditure and to expend the funds appropriated under the Act.

Bills

Mr. Speaker, all the many contributions made by the Members are pertinent to this Act, and I simply want to say that the sums of monies are, indeed, within the limits, as required by the Fiscal Responsibility Act, and, certainly, all the conditions have been met. It provides for the country, living within our means, and it also promotes for good order, with respect to the finances and development of our country. I, therefore, recommend it for the second reading.

Mr. Speaker: And, I assume that we do have the consent of the Governor-General.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, as a money Bill, we do have the consent of the Governor-General.

Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the House resolves itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

Question put and agreed to.
House in Committee.
House resumes.

Mr. Speaker: I must report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendments. Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question put and agreed to.
Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a third time and passed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to introduce for first reading, the Bill for an Act shortly entitled, 2018 Budget Loan Authorisation Bill, 2017.

Clerk: An Act to authorise the Minister for Finance to borrow from various sources a total amount not exceeding one hundred million Eastern Caribbean dollars, shortly entitled, 2018 Budget Loan Authorisation Bill, 2017.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the House be suspended in order to take the Bill through all stages at this Sitting.

Question put and agreed to.
Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Bills

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these two (2) Bills, customary, are necessary to be taken after the Motion is passed in conjunction with the dictates of the Public Finance Management Act. The first, Mr. Speaker, empowered the Parliament, because a Resolution alone will not survive with the Appropriation. It is necessary, it must be a first step, and then we have the Bill.

The Budget, therefore, Mr. Speaker, will tell you how much is financed by grant, how much is financed by loan and how much is financed by internal and local revenues. That is the one billion dollars, Mr. Speaker, plus in the first Bill, must be financed and the Standing Committee on Finance, this Honourable House, both have approved the various components.

Now, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the grants, we don't need approval to go, the more grants we get, the less we will borrow. So, we are now making the provision for the borrowing, the grants will come, we don't have to make provision for that, and the taxes, the local revenues are already empowered under various Acts, that is the Customs Duty Act, so you must pay customs when you come in, the VAT Law dictates that you must pay VAT, the CET Laws and so forth related to the Customs Act, they are all approved. So, everything that is done here now, with respect to monies, in particular, is being done under specific Acts. But, the loan component, we do loan specifically. Now, we want to be able to borrow, if necessary, to meet. We do have the CBI Programme that's doing very well, so if we get all the monies from the CBI Programme, then we don't need to borrow. But, if we need to borrow, this Budget Loan

Authorisation Bill is giving us this, Mr. Speaker, authority to do so. And, the Bill authorises the Minister for Finance to borrow a total amount not exceeding one hundred million Eastern Caribbean dollars to cover the financing of the Budget. All monies borrowed under this Act shall be effected and secured pursuant to the terms and conditions specified.

So, the Minister must go out, and he or she, well, the specific Minister is the Prime Minister, but the Act is referring to any Minister, go out there, get the best terms; in other words, as concessionary, as possible. It does not have to say it here, but if you are prudent and you are managing efficiently, you will not go to Barclay's, into First Caribbean now, assuming that I want to call Barclay's, because you are not existing. You are not going to Barclay's when they are offering you 11%, and leave Cooperative that is offering you 3% and forty (40) years.

So, that is the expectation and the mandate, to go out there, Mr. Speaker, negotiate, and come and lay whatever the terms, as they may be, before the Parliament. They must be specified in the Schedule and the Schedule, Mr. Speaker, tells you what you could borrow. The normal loans, you could float bonds, short term notes, or any other financial instruments that you would have, three years, medium term bonds, as the case may be, and the purpose is to finance the Budget and the Currency. It could be Eastern Caribbean dollars, or United States dollars, and the lenders from whom you should borrow, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Development Association (IDA). I think their loans are very nice, if we could get from them for our Budget, it will be very good, although they look at projects and so forth, but we could still try them.

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, we could go to them, they give lovely conditions too. The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), they are a little shorter and a little more, but we could go to them or other Companies. There are legitimate Companies, who may want to lend you money; most of them do it through buying your stocks and bonds. But, if they want to give you a loan, per se too, you say you can take it, banks or any financial institution. And, as you say, tabling of Agreements, you negotiate a good interest rate, good terms and repayments, so you go

out there asking for forty (40) even if you know, they might chop it to twenty (20), forty (40) years or so. The fees to be negotiated and all Agreements signed pursuant to the Loan Agreement shall be tabled in the Parliament. So, the Parliament and the people would know what you are borrowing and maybe judge you and say why did you go and borrow at 15%, whereas you could have borrowed later. All of us will pay the price, political, social and otherwise, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will make one amendment to the amounts being borrowed, so that the currency could simply change to United States dollars instead of Eastern Caribbean dollars, and remember it is an amount not exceeding. And, if we do our homework very well and raise a lot in the CBI and even get other grants and so forth, then we may have to borrow very little or not borrow at all, and that is the intention, Mr. Speaker. I therefore commend this Bill for its second reading.

Mr. Speaker: And, Leader of Government's Business, this is also a money Bill.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Mr. Speaker, we do have the Governor-General's permission to proceed.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House resolves itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

Question put and agreed to.
House in Committee.

House resumes.

Mr. Speaker: I must report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed with one amendment. Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a third time and passed.

Clerk Assistant: Item 16 - Request for leave to move the adjournment of the House on matters of Urgent Public Importance.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move the adjournment of this Honourable House ***sine die***.

Question proposed.

Adjournment

Mr. Speaker: Is there any Representative who would like to speak on the Adjournment? Well, let me say thank you for your cooperation during the entire process, for your Presentations and your discussions. If there were any misbehaviours, I have already forgiven. Certain words used here are fast becoming household words in Grenada, on the buses, in the taxis and all around, you hear people saying: "I will testify." So, I thought it was a word used mostly in Churches and Religious Institutions. So, the presence of God is strong in this place, so a lot of people testify.

Let me say to you, your Presentations were all of a very high standard, and I feel proud to be part of this family, even if there are times, when it appears as though I am giving preference to certain people with their timing. This time, nobody asked for extra time, except one person owes me just about four (4) minutes. I don't know when I would claim it, but I would get back my four (4) minutes.

So, I want to wish everyone, after today, you must be a bit tired, after the two (2) days. I don't want to wish you all of the things I want to wish you as yet, because I have a feeling that we would meet here again, before the end of this year. I have a feeling and my feelings are usually right, because I want to say Merry Christmas to you properly.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourn *sine die* @ 7:50 p.m.

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