



GRENADA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

**Fifth Session of the Tenth Parliament**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*1<sup>st</sup> February, 2022*

**Sitting of the House of Representatives  
held at the Parliament Chamber on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2022**

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**Sitting of the House of Representatives  
held at the Parliament Chamber on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2022**

***Attendance***

**PRESENT**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Honourable Michael Pierre, MP, JP, MBE                                       | - Mr. Speaker (In the Chair)   |
| Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell, PC, MP, JP<br>(St. George North-West) | - Prime Minister and Minister for National Security, Public Administration, Youth Development, Home Affairs, Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Management                             |
| Honourable Gregory Bowen, MP<br>(St. George South-East)                      | - Minister for Finance, Planning, Economic Development, Physical Development, Public Utilities and Energy  |
| Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, MP<br>(St. Mark)                      | - Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Climate Resilience and the Environment  |
| Honourable Peter David, MP<br>(Town of St. George)                           | - Minister for Labour, Agriculture and Lands   |
| Honourable Kate Lewis, MP<br>(St. Andrew North-East)                         | - Minister within the Ministry of National Security, Public Administration, Youth Development, Home Affairs, ITC and Disaster Management wrf Youth Development   |
| Honourable Pamela Moses<br>(St. Patrick East)                                | - Minister within the Ministry of National Security, Public Administration, Youth Development, Home Affairs, ITC and Disaster Management wrf Needy Assistance, Uniform Allowance, Special Projects and ITC |
| Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP<br>(St. Andrew South-East)                     | - Minister for Education, Human Resource Development, Information and Religious Affairs  |
| Honourable Nickolas Steele, MP<br>(St. George South)                         | - Minister for Health and Social Security  |
| Honourable Delma Thomas, MP<br>(St. Andrew North-West)                       | - Minister in the Ministry of Health and Social Security wrf for Hospital Services, and Minister of Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment  |

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***Attendance***

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Honourable Anthony Boatswain, MP<br>(St. Patrick West)   | - Deputy Speaker                     |
| Honourable Tobias Clement, MP<br>(St. George North-East) | - Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition |

**ABSENT**

***(Excuses tendered)***

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Honourable Yolande Bain-Horsford, MP<br>(St. Andrew North-West)             | - Minister for Sports, Culture and the Arts,<br>Fisheries and Cooperatives                    |
| Honourable Oliver Joseph, MP<br>(St. David)                                 | - Minister for Foreign Affairs, International<br>Business and CARICOM Affairs                 |
| Honourable Kindra Maturine-Stewart, MP<br>(Carriacou and Petite Martinique) | - Minister for Carriacou and Petite Martinique<br>Affairs, Local Government and Legal Affairs |

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*Prayers  
Minutes*

***The Sitting of the House of Representatives began at 9:10 a.m.***

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

**(House Prayer was said)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Please join with me as we 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.

**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, as official in this House we seek your guidance again, remove the mask or we speak through it. I know it's only if it's not clear so I take your guidance.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think that we still have to maintain our mask, so whoever is speaking would remove the mask but the others around must keep their mask on.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** So if I am speaking I can remove the mask?

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**Minutes  
Announcements**

**Mr. Speaker:** You can take your mask off.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a sitting of the House of Representatives held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2021 be taken as read.

**Question proposed.**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes taken as read.**

**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 a sitting of the House of Representatives held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2021 be confirmed.

**Question proposed.**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes confirmed.**

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

Item 6 - Announcements by Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Members, this is our first sitting for 2022. We have gone through a year of great challenges and none of us have the recipe for the challenges that we are going to face again this year because one of the main scourges of the year; the pandemic is still with us. We don't know what would happen; we pray that things would get better. The Omicron variant is spreading very quickly and we are

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***Announcements  
Papers / Reports***

all exposed except some of us might be covered a bit because of our following of the protocol and our vaccination. But even if you are vaccinated you can still become affected, so I want to urge all Members to be very cautious in your moving, in your interaction because if you're sick or dead, you're of no use to the community that selected you. So I want to urge us and by the grace of God we would survive, we would conquer. So please let's use 2022 for the year of prosperity and may all Members of this House be healthy and strong. Thank you.

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 7 - Presentation of Petitions.

Item 8 - Presentation of Papers and Reports for 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:

1. Annual Report, Financial Statements and Audit Report thereon of Grenada Ports Authority for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020;
2. Grenada National Training Agency (GNTA) 2020 - Annual Report;
3. Annual Report of Grenada Authority for the Regulation of Financial Institutions (GARFIN) for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020;
4. The Financial Statement of the Budget Framework Paper, 2022;
5. The Financial Statements on the 2021 Economic Review and Medium-Term Outlook;
6. The Financial Statements on the Medium-Term Financial Framework 2022 - 2024;
7. The St. George's University Ltd. Amendment order 2022.

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

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***Papers / Reports***

**Hon. Tobias Clement:** Mr. Speaker, I did not see the 7 on the Order Paper or in my documents.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to confirm that the S.R.O. Statutory Rules and Order was indeed seen by the Leader of The Opposition because it was circulated before I moved to answer the question that he has not seen it on the Order Paper. Could I please get confirmation that indeed the Statutory Rules and Order was seen by the Leader of the Opposition because it was circulated. I admit that the Motion is not there.

**(The Clerk converse with Speaker in private)**

**Mr. Speaker:** It was circulated but if you need a hard copy we can have him get a hard copy at this moment. Honourable Leader of the Opposition, would you like to have a hard copy?

**(Inaudible response from the Leader of the Opposition)**

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Mr. Speaker, I wanted to confirm that the Statutory Rules and Order was indeed seen by every Member and I see the Clerk shook his head. So the Leader of the Opposition did see the Statutory Rules and Order and, Mr. Speaker, this is a negative resolution and a negative resolution, we know that immediately that the Order was signed and it has been signed. It was circulated signed by the Minister for Education, it is in effect and it must now be laid on the Table so that every Member can see it and be apprised of what it is, Mr. Speaker. So it is not... when the law requires negative resolution, it need not be a Motion on the Paper. It must be laid and so, Mr. Speaker, we are following the St. George's University Act and laying it on the Table. Of course any Member, once it is laid and if we take that is his intention,

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***Papers / Reports  
Questions***

we can now move or maybe I could invite him at the right time, Mr. Speaker, to move that it be debated. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition are you... right, good.

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 9 - Unopposed Private Business.  
Item 10 - Questions.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition I see a question here in your name.

**Hon. Tobias Clement:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, question number one, can the Minister for Education and Member for St. Andrew South-East provide the cost of registration upon entry to Public Secondary School for students who have exited Primary School in the State of Grenada?

**(Clerk converse with Speaker in private)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of the Opposition I think at the last sitting...

**Hon. Tobias Clement:** Mr. Speaker, if I may, I think the Standing Order for the House of Representative is quite clear. At the last sitting, the Member stood and answered the question but according to the Standing Order, the question should have been submitted to you through the Clerk of Parliament in terms of written and she can give a verbal answer if she so like. But Members cannot come to this House and just answer question ad lib without submitting the answer as protocol states in the Standing Orders. And, Mr. Speaker, yes she stood here and she answered the question but that is not the Standing Orders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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**Questions**

**Mr. Speaker:** I don't understand. A question was asked of the Minister and the Minister answered the question, you're saying that you wanted a written answer?

**Hon. Tobias Clement:** Mr. Speaker, in terms of... if you go back to the Hansard Report, what was not given was what was asked for. Can the Member provide the cost of registration upon entry to the Public Secondary School, that was the subject there... the gist of the question. That was not answered, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Minister for Education, do you have a written answer to give at this time.

**Hon. Emmalin Pierre:** Mr. Speaker, at the last sitting of this House I gave a verbal response to the question and I did indicate that the response in writing was going to be followed. I am sure that was done. I will follow up to see whether or not it was received by the House.

**Mr. Speaker:** Ok, thank you.

**(Clerk converse with the Speaker)**

**Mr. Speaker:** We have not yet received it so we will have to try to have it ready so that the Clerk can have it by the next sitting. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Tobias Clement:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the second question, question one, can the Minister for Legal Affairs tell this House if the Government of Grenada have been taken to court by True Blue Bay Development Ltd? If so what is the cost of this defence for such? I know the Minister of Legal Affairs, she has been out for a while so maybe the Leader of Government's Business...

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

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**Questions  
Statements by Ministers**

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Leader of the Opposition indicated the Minister for Legal Affairs is off and in fact she discussed the proposed question with me and I know that she has it drafted and we will definitely circulate it. She attempted to be here and of course all the medical people and what else would know that the timeframe is much too short. It is drafted and it will be circulated to the Clerk and the best time for that answer is when the Member is here. So there are other reasons why we postpone things and I am asking the Leader of the Opposition through you to give the Lady Member the opportunity to be here to present. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you. Thank you Leader of Government's Business.

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 11 - Urgent Questions under the provisions of Standing Order 20 (1) (Notice of Questions).  
Item 12 - Statements by Ministers.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew North-West.

**Hon. Delma Thomas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform this Honourable House that more help is given to the most vulnerable of our population. Mr. Speaker, you would remember that in our 2022 Budget Presentation this Government promised that they will increase the SEED benefits by \$150.00 per household. Mr. Speaker, in our payment cycle in January which started on the 18<sup>th</sup>, I am pleased to report that this promise was delivered. **(Applause)** This caring New National Party Government has begun its additional SEED support to the most vulnerable families. Five thousand, five hundred and thirty-one families on Mainland Grenada and 341 families in Carriacou and Petite Martinique **(applause)** received the increase, Mr. Speaker.

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Mr. Speaker, this Government has proven time and time again especially in difficult situation amidst any crisis we are clear in our vision of putting people first. Mr. Speaker, while as a Government we balance the book, our greatest legacy is that we take extra pride in helping to balance the life of our people especially the most vulnerable among our population. And, Mr. Speaker, while we increased the SEED household by \$150.00, Government is also very cognisant that there are a number of additional families needing support and so under the Ministry we also implemented what we call a Horizontal Expansion COVID-19 Economic Enhancement Support where at present close to 1,200 families are receiving cash support. If this is not a Government that cares, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what is. So, Mr. Speaker I am pleased to be part of this very caring Government that look after the most vulnerable families across our Tri-Island State. And the buzz is on the street that the families are happy that in this difficult period they are now able to put more food on their tables. I thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Parliamentary Representative and Minister for Social Development. Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. George South-East and Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to compliment the staff of the Ministry of Finance for the work they have done during the budget, after the budget and even now, Mr. Speaker, as we support both the CESS and the stimulus packages. Since the announcement, Mr. Speaker, on the bonus for the workers, one month full pay for those in the Medical Profession and the Policemen and Women, Mr. Speaker, and half month pay for the rest, there was some organisations that could make it, Mr. Speaker, those organisations that we asked to give a token. Some of them had their resources and they did give a token centring somewhere around the half month pay, Mr. Speaker, and we wish to compliment them for their efforts at this particular point in time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker with respect to the CESS, the COVID19 Economic Support Secretariat, we're staffed there with persons who were unemployed and with IMANI's,

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Mr. Speaker, and I was surprised, Mr. Speaker, although we know that the economy is picking up, I was surprised, Mr. Speaker that nearly every month the number of IMANI's that we had left. When you ask why, they got employment, Mr. Speaker. And this is of critical importance to us as we follow what is happening in the economy, Mr. Speaker. We therefore have to reemploy or employ other persons to do the work and it is in this context, Mr. Speaker, that I am asking the general public to bear with the Secretariat as some of the responses... the time taken to respond could be lengthy. And we know this is not the best way to serve but we are certainly working on it and we're doing whatever is necessary to retain the staff. They come three months, get trained and they leave. So the response to you with your application really takes a hit in that particular instance. And we are certainly doing all that we can, in fact taking remedial actions whenever we have taken too long to respond to you, Mr. Speaker.

We expect, Mr. Speaker, to the bonus, we do have a Bill coming to explain to those who have received the bonus how the Income Tax will be deducted. In this context again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Members in the Ministry for Finance and to ask the persons receiving the bonus to use it, Mr. Speaker, in a manner that would help themselves. And if we look at the commerce during this Christmas season, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Commercial Sector could tell you that it was significantly better than last year. In fact some of them look at it as approaching what has happened in 2019. So the money spent in this regard really circulated, Mr. Speaker, and everybody in Grenada Carriacou and Petite Martinique benefitted. I thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Minister of Finance. Honourable Minister for Education.

**Hon. Emmalin Pierre:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning just to give a quick update as to the status as it relates to school and the operation under the current situation; COVID-19. Mr. Speaker, as you would recall when school closed the last term, we were anticipating continuing in January with full number of students in school. Mr. Speaker, while the Ministry for Health felt

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comfortable accessing everything as it relates to the variant that would have landed just about the time of the reopening of school, out of an abundance of caution, discussion with the Cabinet we decided that we were going to go on a phased approach to restart this new term. So, Mr. Speaker, we are currently on the 6 ft. physical distancing arrangement which we have had before. What does that mean? That means that some schools will be able to accommodate all students while some schools will be able to accommodate some students on some days. So we move from the exit grades and we move into the 6 ft. physical distancing.

Mr. Speaker, we have been having request from some principals indicating their readiness to embrace and engage all of the students in light of what has been happening. I want to commend our principals, our teachers, our parents and indeed our students for the level of resilience, the level of commitment, the creativity and all that has been demonstrated during this very tough time. As a matter of fact I have noticed that some of our schools have started their Sports Programme, not just for the competition and all of that but Mr. Speaker you would notice repeatedly the reference to the importance of psychosocial support. And so, Mr. Speaker, as we continue on this very uncertain journey, we have to be very mindful of two critical things: one, how we are going to fill the gap as it relates to the learning lost and so we've been doing a lot of training with our teachers.

We have been able to attract support from the OECS and we continue to empower our teachers. In the area of assessment, very critical; assessment cannot carry the same meaning as it carried before. It has to be something that is specific to this particular period and we have to ask ourselves some crucial questions as it relates to assessment. But strengthening teachers' capacity to assess with greater meaning but also very important, intervention strategies in the classroom that are so necessary at this time. Only yesterday I heard one teacher presenting her practicum at SGU and was speaking about the importance of differentiated learning and teaching strategies at this time. We must fill the gap and so those interventions are not just for supporting teachers but also for supporting students who have been identified by principals as lagging way behind. Notice I said 'way behind' because they are all lagging. Mr.

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Motions***

Speaker, one report recently and I will provide this to the House indicate that most of our students would be as much as 10 months behind academically and so there's a lot that has to be done and so we have to ensure that we continue to push ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make reference this morning to the launching of the National Mathematics Taskforce which would be in the coming week. Mr. Speaker, this is extremely critical for us not just in relation to what's happening now but an age old problem that we have suffered from and not just Grenada; you would notice it's regional. So, Mr. Speaker, I made a note here, in 2012 our CSEC pass rate in mathematics was 32.3%, in 2020 43.56%, 2021 34.98%. Mr. Speaker, the current circumstances make this situation even worst and so with the passion expressed, the commitment expressed, we have pulled together a strong team of persons to represent a national task force and we will be speaking to the public in the coming week of what exactly this task force will be doing to address in a very critical way the issue of low performance in mathematics. I want to make the point, Mr. Speaker, and I don't believe we have engaged him sufficiently, one of our own, Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister, a mathematician and he has agreed to be part of this launch. Mr. Speaker all hands on deck and you would notice from the composition, all hands on deck to address this particular matter.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to continue to wish all of our stakeholders out there all the success as we continue this journey through COVID-19 to educate our children. I want to thank our stakeholders, the overwhelming support, the overwhelming commitment that we have been seeing to the task at hand. I want to say a special thank you and to encourage everyone to put their best foot forward as we continue to deal with teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you so much.

**(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you Minister of Education.

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 13 - Personal Explanations.

Item 14 - Motions.

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**Motions**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one Motion on the Order Paper as correctly should be but listening to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, I will crave to move the Motion for the St. George University which would not be there but we want to give him the opportunity as he noticed since this morning and since in speaking, we have discussed with Legal Affairs, we've had a draft to bring it in and as under, Mr. Speaker, the rules for negative resolution, once a Member, any Member could take it up. And we infer, Mr. Speaker, from his intervention this morning that he would prefer or he would like to bring it forward. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence that it be added on to the Order Paper under Motion, maybe 14 (b) and the Quarantine Resolution be 14 (a). Mr. Speaker, "This Side" will bring forward the Motion since he has raised it, Mr. Speaker. And we crave that we dispense with the notice in order to get it on the Order Paper and to ensure that we really have this Motion cleared in all respects. So a proposed Motion 14 (a) Quarantine Motion led by the Minister for Health and 14 (b), that Motion will be taken on by the Prime Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Members, we have a question here that a new Motion be added to the Order Paper that is the Motion 14 (b) which deals with the Resolution for the Purpose of Section 5 of the Saint George's University Limited Act Cap. 294A, that it be included that we now take it on as a matter of the House. Is there any objection? It is on your computer. I have a copy here. Leader of the Opposition, do you have a copy of the Motion 14 (b) which deals with the Saint George's University? Leader of the Opposition, you have a copy? You have a copy? **(The Leader of the Opposition indicated in the affirmative)** Okay.

Does anyone have any objection to including it on the Order Paper? No objection? Then it's now included on the Order Paper. So we go back to Motion 14 (a). Sorry, first Motion, Leader of Government's Business, there's a Motion there for you or

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***Motions***

Minister for Health. Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. George South and  
Minister for Health.

**Hon. Nickolas Steele:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a Resolution for the purpose of section 4 (3) of the Quarantine Act, Chapter 271.

**WHEREAS** it is provided by section 4 (1) of the Quarantine Act, Chapter 271 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”) that the Minister may make regulations, as respects to the whole or any part of Grenada, including the ports and coastal waters thereof, for preventing –

- (a) danger to public health from ships, aircraft or persons or things therein, arriving at any place; and
- (b) the spread of infection by means of any ship or aircraft about to leave any place, or by means of any person or thing about to leave any place in any ship or aircraft;

**AND WHEREAS** it is provided in section 4 (3) of the Act that regulations made under section 4 (1) of the Act shall not have any force or effect until confirmed by resolution of the House of Representatives;

**AND WHEREAS** on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of November, 2021 the Minister with responsibility for Health made the Quarantine (COVID-19) Regulations, 2021 and on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of November 2021, the House of Representative by resolution confirmed the Quarantine (COVID-19) Regulations, 2021;

**AND WHEREAS** it is now expedient that the Quarantine (COVID-19) (Amendment) Regulations, 2022 attached hereto as a Schedule be confirmed by the House of Representatives to amend the Quarantine (COVID-19) Regulations, 2021;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that pursuant to the provisions of section 4 (3) of the Act that the Quarantine (COVID-19) (Amendment) Regulations, 2022 be now confirmed by the House of Representatives.

**Question proposed.**

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**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Minister for Health.

**Hon. Nickolas Steele:** Mr. Speaker, as was announced by WHO and other countries of significance recently is that COVID-19 is now endemic, which means it's here with us quite likely for good, that it's not going away. It's moved from being a pandemic to endemic, expect it continuing. But we adjust. We have made vaccines available. We have bolstered our health systems. We have done what many, if not all Nations have done as well. What this amendment seeks to do is just one more part of it. It seeks to specifically address in the Quarantine Act, the issue of someone being non-compliant coming to Grenada and specifically that level of non-compliance with respect to the PCR testing requirements for entry into Grenada.

Further, it is that if someone were to falsify that test, or arrive in Grenada, purposely without that test, knowingly, that there is a requirement for that test. It allows us to not tie up the entire Justice System, so to speak, but to have a police officer at the Airport issue, what we refer to as a ticket of an amount. And, if the person accepts that liability or guilt or culpability, then that person accepts the ticket and pays the ticket, like a speeding ticket. If the person does not, because it is always necessary to allow recourse then that person can and same with a speeding ticket or other citation goes through the Court system.

What we found happening, two things, one, is that the airport operations are not ideally set up for dealing with that. And two, persons coming in and out of Grenada on a regular basis can sometimes without us having to have police etc. monitoring which is not what we want to be doing, can leave the State and you don't want to be preventing and holding and creating all of this. You want to make sure that the regulations keep people safe, and that the penalties make people avoid the breaching. And this is what this seeks to do.

I ask this House to make one adjustment to that in terms of the value that's in the Schedule, to make that value of an amount that makes it a deterrent. In other words, if and my rationale for it, simply is, if the charge for entering Grenada without a PCR test is less than or equal to getting a test before entering Grenada, then there's no deterrent.

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***Motions***

Then a person just simply says, well, I can choose, either pay for my test wherever I am, or when I arrive in Grenada, pay the fine and it's the same. So, it cannot be that small or the amount that's placed there. It must be of a deterrent that makes a person say, one, I must be responsible and not put the people of Grenada, my brothers and sisters of Grenada at risk and two, if I were to make the mistake, and do so that there would be a significant charge which is the same that we've seen in other Parliamentary systems. In Canada, it is extremely high. I'm not asking that we go to that level, but I am asking that we go, or we consider it to be the amount equivalent to 1000 US Dollars or 2500 EC dollars be the charge. The person who feels that they are wrongly accused can go through the Court system, but that a person who has blatantly or who accepts entering Grenada without following the regulation has the ability and opportunity to pay that charge right there. That's what I'm asking the House to consider as an amendment to the Schedule being laid before the House now, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.  
**(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Minister for Health. The Motion is before the House. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Tobias Clement:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while I do concur with the Motion, I think it was raised and probably it should be raised in terms of falsifying documents to come into Grenada. And the Honourable Member spoke to the Court system. And I'm thinking about probably a visitor in Grenada for a couple of weeks or month or even less than a month that have to come in and leave, and in that case, how do you subject that visitor to the Court system when we know the court system in Grenada really move at a snail's pace? Is there a particular court system that will be set up to deal with that particular issue, if it so arises on a speedy basis? I wish not only for this occurrence, but there are so many other things that I wish the Court system could deal with on a speedy basis. But, Mr. Speaker, again, I want to urge us and urge us as a people, as a nation to continue to observe the protocol for COVID in and out of Grenada.

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I had the fortunate experience of listening to an interview by former Prime Minister of England, Gordon Brown and he was talking about the disparity of people in the world with COVID and COVID vaccination. And it was no surprise that Omicron came from Africa. Mr. Speaker, you know what he revealed? The United States, England, Canada, 70% vaccinated, Africa 7% vaccinated. The longer the virus stays within a community, it will mutate, it will change and we may have something else coming again. So that is why I'm urging our people to do the right thing, get vaccinated, go to your doctor, check even if there is a fear there, because the longer it stays within our community is the more harmful it becomes. This is why I said at the beginning, if COVID-19 is anywhere, it is everywhere. And for me it was shocking to learn, 70% vaccinated opposed to 7% vaccinated. So this is what we have now.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, thank you, Leader of the Opposition. Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Motion as presented by the Minister for Health. He has clearly articulated, Mr. Speaker, the cause for the Motion and the concerns raised. In particular, Mr. Speaker, we are hearing more and more from the travellers coming in of persons presenting certificates that are not valid. In other words, I have been tested, when as a matter of fact, they have not been tested. So this in particular, and the other offences mentioned by the Minister do warrant, Mr. Speaker, an increase, a deterrent as he placed it in the penalties system. I have been advised that the \$2,500 can be treated as a ticketable offence, because the maximum penalty is \$10,000.

So, I support the Motion, Mr. Speaker, for increasing the penalty for these, not the norm, but these more grievous offenses. You can't come to the Airport present a ticket or present a certificate and all the health officials are happy, in you go, either you're vaccinated when you're not, so you immediately walk through or you have a test, a PCR test which says, yes, I am negative and you walk through when indeed you never took the test. It speaks, Mr. Speaker, to what can happen even in developed

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countries. And when we walk through a system, and you know that you're walking in from Grenada with a card saying that you are PCR negative and the officials in the developed countries look at the card and say, fine you can go, you know what danger this will bring, if we do not supervise our systems in our various countries, somebody walking in with a negative PCR and this person could be bringing even a new strain.

I agree with the presenter, Mr. Speaker, that this, the penalty for this should be upgraded. His proposal Mr. Speaker, is left to the House, but his proposal is \$2,500 ticketable offence. So when we say, will the Courts get involved? Yes, everybody, anyone can apply to the Court, but this is not a system as proposed that you go to the Court and you're charged and the police bring, if you do not want to pay, then you may clog the system. But I don't believe that anybody who is caught would want to go to the Court and be proven that they did in fact commit the offence. If you did not commit the offence, there's always the room for you to go to Court, but this will be one in a few. So, Mr. Speaker, I support the Motion moved by the Minister for Health. **(Applause)**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion approved as amended.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Prime Minister.

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to move the Motion that you've already indicated as Item 14 (b) which was circulated while it's not on the direct sheet that we have before us. And it's related of course to the amendment to the Saint George's University Limited Act. And the Motion states, Mr. Speaker:

**WHEREAS** section 5 (1) of the Saint George's University Limited Act, Chapter 294A (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") provides that where any amendment of the Charter or the Agreement is accepted by the Government and the University, the Minister may, by order amend the First Schedule or the Second Schedule, as the case may be, in order to give effect to such amendment.

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**AND WHEREAS** section 5 (3) of the Act provides that an Order made under section 5 (1) of the Act shall be subject to negative resolution of each House of Parliament;

**AND WHEREAS** the Government and the University have deemed it necessary to amend the Second Schedule of the Act;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the House of Representatives that the Saint George's University (Amendment) Order, 2021 which is attached as the Schedule to this Resolution be now laid and approved.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Prime Minister.

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I do just want to just make the point that when I read, when I said "2021", it was "2022", yes, in 2022.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is well known by almost everyone in this country, that the Saint George's University has been making an enormous contribution to the development of this country. And the whole question of education, health, and of course, economic activity, because it is also known factually that 25% of the GDP of this country is associated with the work of the Saint George's University. It means therefore, every improvement or developmental activities that occur with Saint George's University has enormous impact on the economic life of the citizens of this country. Similarly, any negative thing that happened that affect the University has serious impact on the economy of the country.

So, the advent of the worldwide virus from March 2020 and with the University having to do most of its work and teaching online, with the loss of thousands of students and faculty from Grenada, it is known that it has had tremendous impact on the economic life of the country. Because so many of our citizens have in fact invested in apartment buildings for housing for students, and seem not to be able to have enough every, every period you can see more and more applications through the Physical

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Planning and Development Unit for approval for more apartment building, because there was a lot of Grenadians seeing the benefit of opportunities, and were investing in these facilities. Well with the advent of the virus and the loss of these thousands of students and faculty and other persons servicing the University, many of these places were left vacant.

The resultant impact was that many persons who were working within those facilities were left without income, in many cases, because the owners of those buildings themselves since they were not getting revenue and have to be paying the bank, and the bank, of course, had to agree on concessions, allowing many of these facilities to continue to not have to pay that monthly support for interest and principal on a regular basis. But the fact is, it did have enormous impact and even when they came back temporarily with what was perceived to be the reduction in infection with the Delta virus, a number of the students came back and we saw a lift, because in talking to a number of those persons who invested in those buildings, they were very happy. But then Omicron came, and infection rate, as we understood it to be much more, much stronger than the one before. It means that what happened is that many of the students again went back to their various destinations. Up to today, the situation continues to some extent. So while there are more people back in, but the majority of those persons are still out.

It was learnt only yesterday, an announcement came that the Saint George's University is now saying that they will be officially back on physical teaching, and little or no, not much online activities from August 2022. I know that will be extremely welcomed news for all persons in this country. **(Applause)** And of course, the banks, that has to in fact, give concession on these loans that are available.

So it is critical and that's why we have to constantly remind all and sundry that when something affects the life of the people of the country in general, then we cannot be thinking of our own little institution, our own institution, I shouldn't use the word "little", our own institution on the persons that we are associated with because the impact is not just on those persons. It is all the persons in the country, in every aspect of life that are being affected by what we do.

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So when the University indicates that it wants to have their workers vaccinated, as was just articulated by the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Health, the fact that this virus is here to stay to some extent, and that people are still dying and people are still getting sick and being hospitalised, albeit less than what Delta was doing previously, but the fact is, the danger is there. And the University therefore, has to protect the institution. So, if someone comes in and the University does not do what it's supposed to do based on the health reasons and the scientific facts and they can prove to be negligent, you could have scores of students suing and family suing the University and a suit could be millions of dollars for one case. I mean, come on, you have to understand this thing, they're saying that you have to come in to work on a basis that you have to be vaccinated. The Government doesn't have to go to Parliament to pass a Law to tell you, you must obey that and because the Government has not mandated it, then you are saying the Government is using the Private Sector to force people to vaccinate. This is for people's interest **(applause)** their own livelihood, their own health, Mr. Speaker. So I ask my friends in any sector that feels aggrieved by this should understand and I have said over and over, the Government is clear that mandatory vaccination, we have no problem with that. I have not been hesitant or unclear on this. No one can ever say that I have said that I don't support it and I don't believe it's legal. I'm clear about the legality; my problem as I have said over and over is the mandating, will it solve the problem that I want? And I have said I am not yet convinced that that will in fact force people to achieve the objectives that we want, to set ourselves to achieve; that is the fundamental reason.

If and when I believe that it is necessary and the Cabinet feels so, then we have no problem with indicating this. So I don't want anyone to feel that we are not equivocating on a matter of this fundamental nature because I don't see why I have to pass a Law to force you to protect your own life, that doesn't make a lot of sense to me. If it becomes necessary and it will do precisely this and achieve the level of herd immunity that we want to achieve then clearly we would have no choice so when that becomes the case I will precisely do that. And I always say to people over and over, Mr. Speaker, I am not thinking... when I am dealing... I have said to many of our own

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constituents and when I go out and people ask me questions, this is not about vote. I said to people I have to leave a few votes for saving lives, lives first, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** Lives first, I make no joke about this because you don't do it and you lose a lot of people dying, you may lose a lot of votes in the end anyhow and that makes no sense. You cannot be putting the same level of proportion.

Mr. Speaker, therefore the Order amends the 2014 Order of the St. George's University changing several aspects of the St. George's University limited and the Government of Grenada's Charter. Historically the Charter is the document that encapsulated the relationship between SGU, that's the St. George's University and Grenada, how SGU operations in the country, the incentives extended to the world class university and the stipulated contributions SGU makes to Grenada. I mentioned some of them in some cases direct grant support to the country. By this Order, Mr. Speaker, SGU and the people of Grenada further enhance their relationship and following are some of the positive aspects of this. Financial, as part of the transaction with changing of shares for the University's control, in the changes identified in its equity holdings, the University has agreed to provide a US\$20m grant payment to the Government and people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, **(applause)** immediately. Mr. Speaker, we have done nothing except satisfy the Law that we have signed. Other Governments have been involved in that too, over the years since St. George's University way back in the 70's when it was started, they get free concessions on a number of the activities they are doing. So we've satisfied that, we have done no more than that. We're getting US\$20m for changing shared ownership and they agreed to give us another advance of US\$10m. So when this is done at the Parliament of the country, by the end of this week, early next week we will have US\$30, Mr. Speaker, addition to the coppers of the tax payers of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)** US\$30m, that's over EC\$80m, Mr. Speaker. Can you imagine what that can do? And that's grant support; it is not a loan, its grant support, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time, there is now being placed a mechanism for St. George's University to make grant payment to the Government of Grenada when there are any equity changes to the University, directly or indirectly from the owners of the

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University. What is significant, Mr. Speaker, from all the work that has been done, this agreement goes for 10 years, if there are any changes within that 10 year period or further changes in share ownership of the University we expect to get 3% at least of the value of that share changes. Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that the next possible change in share ownership, that the country could benefit for at least US\$50m based on the 3% calculation, based on the value of the University at this particular time. It tells you something that has started and that's why the university have always said they have given the former Prime Minister, Sir Eric Matthew Gairy and the GULP Government a lot of credit for the bold decision to have given them the license to start this when most of Grenada was saying where he going with this, bringing dead body here to kill our people, all sorts of propaganda. You know every time something is coming here, I am sure you have seen it happening, other initiatives that this Government has taken, there is always some negative forces who put the worst spin on some noble decisions. They have consistently praised the GULP Government and praised the NNP Government for being responsible for most of the expansion and development that has taken place in St. George's University has been in the time of the leadership of the New National Party's Government. **(Applause)** Because right now the shares are trading at least over a billion US dollars, Mr. Speaker, that's a lot of money. Mr. Speaker, SGU has generally been exempted from taxes so while the future grant payments has been made on equity changes by the university and not taxes, they will be in effect direct contribution, grant contribution to the top coppers of the country.

In the area of education, Mr. Speaker, SGU now will be giving a minimum of 22 medical scholarships to Grenadian students to study and gain their medical degrees at the university and over 100 undergraduate scholarships to the citizens of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Mr. Speaker, that's another major **(applause)** major achievement. And indicated, that in spite the increases in the scholarship, whenever there is a hardship case, Mr. Speaker, of some poor student with their family being unable to pay the fees at the University and the scholarships, because it has to be competitive based on the various criteria. If they did not get the scholarship and we bring special cases as we have done over the years, they have not once turned us

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down. No child who is qualified, capable and having the necessary problems of being unable to pay with their parents or family, all those children have been given opportunities. People who are doctors today will never see the face of a University for medical degree had it not been of the generosity and the support of the present Chancellor Dr. Mordecai and the ownership of the St. George's University. They have been very good to the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Similarly, the additional undergraduate scholarships and we have now spoken to them. We have had a lot of scholarships and they have not turned down others who are interested and are not able to pay and did not get a scholarship, anytime we ask them, they have them. But, Mr. Speaker, most significantly they have made it very clear that their role is to play a stronger role in the development of the health care system in this country. Part of the new Charter that has been signed is an agreement that faculty members and other persons in the medical field who are attached to the University, especially in the clinical areas, there now will be the signed agreement that they have to give some service to the hospital and medical services throughout the length and breadth **(applause)** of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Mr. Speaker, in my discussion with the Chancellor and the team, because wherever I go and I know most of my colleagues will do the same thing and Grenadians who travel. Everywhere you go someone asks me, are you from Grenada, the Prime Minister from Grenada, yes; I have a cousin who study at St. George's University, my mother or my father, somebody's relative who are serving other countries in Europe and North America in various fields of medicine having graduated from that University. And as I said to them with that sort of image, it must be in Government's interest or the St. George's University interest to not see that the medical and hospital services in Grenada continue to improve and become better and better and therefore the St. George's University has a moral responsibility and they have accepted it and the Government sees it as its own moral responsibility to use the help of St. George's University.

So there would be more and more because one of the problems we've had, Mr. Speaker, is some of our own medical graduates who have had the services of the people, the tax payers of this country. I use the word some because we have some real

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committed patriotic Grenadians and some who are still patriotic but seem not to give the level of importance. Because I have seen students over and over for most western countries, students who go to University usually by the end of the term of schooling and training, they owe hundreds of thousands of US dollars that they have to pay in loans back so while they are working as doctors. In the case where the scholarship is given by Cuba, the scholarships given by the St. George's University not a cent anybody can say they owe generally speaking, very few people owe anything. So it's important when you are finished serving the bond term that you should see it... everyone should see it as a responsibility to help the people who gave you this opportunity that you now have. People like myself would not have been able to get a scholarship or be able to study medicine if I wanted to and many of us here would have wanted to because we didn't have the capacity to do so and there were no opportunities at the time. So it's so important for us to understand the value of this, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, additionally the St. George's University will now pay 2 full time experienced clinical members to staff the facilities at the hospital services in Grenada. In addition to the part time and other services that each staff member with this capacity would be giving, they will be paying two full time staff members; clinical staff persons to the hospital as part of this agreement. So this to me again, Mr. Speaker, is extremely positive. Coupled with the above they will also introduce for the first time, Mr. Speaker, other persons would be asked in addition not by contract but to give some service. It may not just be in the area of medicine but there may be services that the hospital needs, so please give some help because the salary levels that the university pay, we will never be able to pay that as a country and that's understood, Mr. Speaker.

The following also are major long term commitments being made by St. George's University to Grenada for the first time. SGU has committed to having no competing medical school in the Caribbean region including US, French and Dutch territory without the approval of the Government. That might look as if it is not a very serious point but it is very serious. In other words, St. George's University cannot just go to another country and set up a school in the name of St. George's University which competes with the one in Grenada. On previous arrangements they could have done that if they

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wanted to. In addition, they cannot just pack up and leave, that is part of the conditions. It is well known; Ross University in Dominica overnight left and caused enormous pain to a lot of people in Dominica. It was in the Universities best interest with a hurricane having occurred and the loss of many of its buildings that we had there and the economic loss of getting the students back. Barbados was opened; they went to Barbados; under this new arrangement that will not be possible.

St. George's University has also agreed not to use the brand SGU or St. George's University in any other part of the world without the Government's approval. SGU has also committed to maintaining its operations in Grenada indefinitely and even if there is a health or safety crisis that causes a break in its operations locally, it has committed to returning fully to Grenada once those circumstances in Grenada have been addressed. SGU previously relocated during the revolution after hurricane Ivan also and recently COVID-19 and on each occasion they have returned to the country. Mr. Speaker, with all these positive, I am more than pleased to ask the Honourable House to give strong support to this resolution; the St. George's University operation in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Prime Minister. Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South-East.

**Hon. Emmalin Pierre:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my fullest support to the resolution that has been tabled and to use this opportunity to also say that having listened to the Prime Minister, to me this is a reflection of strong leadership, excellent negotiations and great relationship. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, this Government has enjoyed an excellent relationship with St. George's University over the years and that relationship continues to bear significant fruits for the people of our country and, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the resolution that has been tabled actually adds value to that relationship and the benefits that are going to come to our people.

Mr. Speaker, the relationship with the St. George's University is one that has been growing and for me, Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as Minister for Education, one of

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the things that stood out to me during this period of the pandemic was the request of St. George's University at their weekly leadership meetings to have the presence of the Minister for Health and the Minister for Education because they were very clear that whatever they did during this pandemic, whatever the situation they want to ensure that St. George's University remains in line with the expectation of Government and give all the possible support that they can give to the Government and the people of Grenada during this critical time. Mr. Speaker, I applaud and I recognise the St. George's University for its commitment in that regard.

But I also want to use the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, as St. George's University just celebrated its 48<sup>th</sup> year to note that and to congratulate them on recent accreditation. Mr. Speaker, Marine Wild Life and Conservation Biology Degree, they have just been accredited (**applause**) a major achievement. Mr. Speaker, they have been accredited by the Royal Society of Biology in the UK but what is significant about this accreditation is that it is the first such accreditation in the Western Hemisphere, (**applause**) Mr. Speaker. One of eleven accredited programmes outside of the United Kingdom and I really want to congratulate them on behalf of our Government for this outstanding achievement that is going to bear more fruits for the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also add this morning that in 2014 when the Government and SGU sat down and negotiated an agreement, a very significant part of that was that arrangement through which the Government of Grenada was going to be able to access scholarships for our young people of this nation through an arrangement where concession facilities were going to be given to the University. Mr. Speaker, over the years the Government and the University has been working extremely hard as Prime Minister indicated every year to increase the number of opportunities for our young people here at home. Mr. Speaker, the parent who never had the opportunity to attend a University, the parent whose heart bleeds because they could never see the possibility of sending their daughter and I am speaking now about parents like that who I know personally and I am sure every Member in this House could identify a parent like that, who has never been able, Mr. Speaker, to see the possibility of sending their

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daughter or their son to study to become a medical doctor. Mr. Speaker, that mother may have five children struggling to send them to school with support from the Government and nowhere in their thinking have they been able to visualise one of their daughters or sons becoming a medical doctor; Mr. Speaker, the cost, over EC\$600,000 dollars. But, Mr. Speaker, right here through the St. George's University and through the arrangements with the Government of Grenada, many of our young people have been given that opportunity to go to SGU to pursue a medical. Mr. Speaker, for parents that I have seen break down and cry, I actually feel their emotion this morning speaking about that so I can think right now of a mother in Telescope, St. Andrew, when you listen the passion, when you listen the gratitude, Mr. Speaker, you understand what this means. And that is why this Government, Mr. Speaker, will continue to fight, will continue to push for more and more opportunities for the young people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, St. George's University has also had a long standing agreement with T.A. Marryshow Community College and, Mr. Speaker, recently the University has indicated its willingness to revise that MOU to ensure that it can give greater support to TAMCC. Mr. Speaker, think of the technical support that TAMCC can benefit from working closely with St. George's University, what a commitment that University can make.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make mention this morning that many of our students have had the opportunity as I indicated, to specialise, to go off, residency, Mr. Speaker. A network of over 19,000 doctors worldwide, what an achievement right here in Grenada as I saw in one publication some time ago, we are producing medical doctors throughout the world. But, Mr. Speaker, as I say this, it concerns me and Prime Minister made the point, the number of persons locally who have that opportunity to go off on residency and never one day came back to give back to this country. Mr. Speaker, what I admired about a conversation with St. George's University, they said, we are very concerned about this, this should never happen and they went further to make the point; no student receiving a medical scholarship is going to get the opportunity to start at SGU without signing their bond anymore. So you refuse to do it with the Ministry of Education, SGU is saying we are very supportive of what happens here and we are not

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going to accept that student at St. George's University. In other words, Mr. Speaker, they are going to work closer with the Government to ensure that our students come back to serve. And they said if we have to do externally, whatever support we have to give because they understand that we cannot just be having medical doctors trained here and exporting them all. Mr. Speaker, we must ensure that the people who benefit, I just mentioned over EC\$600,000, the value, you must give back something. As a matter of fact it is a moral responsibility, I believe that every student has to come back and want to give something back to their country.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I want to close by saying this, it is an excellent partnership, it's an excellent relationship and I encourage all of those who have the opportunity, who have benefitted from the opportunity to remember that just as it was given, remember your country, remember to give back. I said six hundred plus; Mr. Speaker it is actually over \$800,000.00 and so I want to commend St. George's University for all the work that it has been doing. I want to commend our students and to say that this Government continues to have education at heart. It is the reason why such negotiations continue, not just for the economic benefits but also the educational benefits and I am sure the Minister for Health will speak about the health benefits, significant benefits from these agreements. And I just want to thank and recognise our Prime Minister for leading on the negotiations in this regard. Thank you so much.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Minister for Education. Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. George South and Minister for Health.

**Hon. Nickolas Steele:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give support to the Motion, but also to recognise not just what is mentioned in the Motion. Let me start by saying, Mr. Speaker, that what is in this Motion is a minimum that St. George's University as we move forward is now obligated. But in many, if not most of those cases, apart from the dollar values that were mentioned, these are things that St. George's University was contemplating or willing, but we've made it now obligatory. Because as this Motion speaks to, the ownership structure may change, so in other

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words in looking to the future, the personalities may change but the relationship with respect to the benefit to the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique will remain, as best as possible, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to point out specifically the contributions to date as well from St. George's University within the Health Sector, but most significantly over the last two years and some, as we have gone through together this COVID-19 journey or trial and tribulations. That we are where we are today as well, because of that cooperation that we have had with St. George's University in the medical field. Their ability to reach out to their alumni and get support in combination with our ability to reach out to our diaspora, and in many cases there was an overlap, that it's Grenadian Doctors who passed through or started their Medical Careers at St. George's University, giving back to Grenada in a time of need. Mr. Speaker, St. George's University actively works with us now in our Phase II with the labs, our testing of PCR. We were one of the first Caribbean countries, CARICOM countries to be able to start the PCR testing for COVID-19, because of our relationship with St. George's University and working together, hand in hand with them, and continue to work with them. Every Saturday I personally am part of a team with St. George's University volunteers, who are testing and vaccinating people of Grenada, in the south of Grenada, and I know that they are around in other constituencies with other Members doing the same. I know my sister from St. Mark's does so as well and has her volunteers to come to help us, St. George's University personnel, some students and some professors, doctors, teachers etc...

Mr. Speaker, the relationship so to speak, grows from strength to strength, but from a Ministry of Health standpoint, I would say that it has never been stronger. However I applaud the fact that in this Motion is the obligation, not desire, not request, but the obligation to give to the Health Sector of Grenada, time, personnel. Too many times previously, unintentionally persons would serve and then move on. They serve their bond and they move on. They move on while trying to find a way to stay in their beloved country, they move on to St. George's University, and we do not have the ability to keep them within our system. With this agreement now, is that ability for the

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person to benefit, St. George's University to benefit, and the health system in Grenada to benefit as well, in the presence of our Grenadians, taught in Grenada by St. George's University, having the ability to continue to work within our health system and also benefit from employment at St. George's University. So I applaud in particular this part of this Motion and proudly stand in support of that, Mr. Speaker. I think this part has a legacy that will grow from strength to strength for us all, to see our health and system and St. George's University growing together.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, as we move forward it's just simply to stand in support of this Motion and also to stand and recognise once more, in this House, the contributions of that partnership and the benefit of that partnership to the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I've been proud to be part of a government that has made that co-operative agreement, now and amicably so an obligation, a contract that both parties have signed. I have sat with and continue, as the Minister for Education has said to, she too joins me every Friday and we meet with the senior management of St. George's University. Throughout the pandemic, we've done so and before, to find ways of cooperation. So it comes as no surprise of the willingness and the ability from that relationship that has grown from strength to strength, that we are able to have this Motion laid before the House and we're able to put this legacy to the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you Minister for Health. Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give total support to the Motion as moved by the Prime Minister, with respect to the amendment to the St. George's University Order. Mr. Speaker, I reiterate the sentiments expressed by the presenter and the other two colleagues who went before. Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise these two points with respect to the University, to reiterate the point that they have contributed significantly during the last two years of the pandemic. It is of extreme

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importance and we are here today, Mr. Speaker, because of their help and we look forward to their continued help with respect to the scientific analyses that must be done, so that the Ministry of Health could really plan and know exactly what is happening, which variant etc., etc., Mr. Speaker.

But I want to point out to, Mr. Speaker, in that at very short order, we've looked at our Ministry of Agriculture and our Veterinary doctors, Mr. Speaker, and with one simple approach as we plan to move forward in the Agricultural Sector, in the Animal Husbandry Sector, we increase with them, the number of veterinary doctors scholarships could be offered to, Mr. Speaker. And this auger well for the plans in the Ministry of Agriculture with respect to making certain farms in Grenada leaders with respect to animal husbandry. No longer will we have to import from our neighbours and wait for proper breeds etc. I really want to compliment them, and they operate in this manner, Mr. Speaker, in education as well, because at short notice they will facilitate requests for increase in medical doctors as well as, that is not the obligatory point, that's not the obligation, but if the request is made, Mr. Speaker, they do facilitate.

And, Mr. Speaker, of critical importance, I've been advocating for quite a while and the Prime Minister in his negotiation and the Ministry of Education have taken up the matter with them, and they have agreed, Mr. Speaker, to look at the relevance of the programmes offered. We know, Mr. Speaker, that in the developed countries, you used to have people with PhD's who cannot find employment, people with Masters and Bachelor Degrees in certain areas who cannot find employment. I remember vividly, Mr. Speaker, I think in the 80's, you will hear that the people, not that you look down at the garbage cleaners, but they were making so much more and they had employment when people with degrees did not have, Mr. Speaker. So I'm extremely happy that the University has responded positively to our request, to make the science and technology their Arts and Science more applicable in the sense that we call it, we say 'applied'. It is as what Physics is to engineering. The application of Physics is where the industry goes, where the Commerce Sector goes, where jobs, Mr. Speaker, are made. And so, while they have a beautiful Arts and Science Programme, you have many young people, as I sit in the Constituency Office, Mr. Speaker, I hear the complaints and I'm

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sure many of my colleagues come, I have completed, first is a scholarship. You move, the St. George's University facilitate with a scholarship in the Arts. Lo and behold, four years later, the same student is coming to you and says well I can't find a job. So we must respond, Mr. Speaker.

Adaptability is the way the world is going now with the great pace of change. And in that context, Mr. Speaker, the programmes must be applied, Arts are applied, technology, science, in this context we know that the world is moving to renewable energy and the school itself had great plans, Mr. Speaker, for entering the renewable energy phase. Now we are in the position to implement all of these, not only the school but many businesses, hotels etc. There is no barrier to you participating in cell generation. In this context, not only Asia and the developed countries must look at renewable energy as an area where jobs will be. Everybody sooner or later, 90% if you don't want to say everybody will have solar, renewable energy panels on their system. They need to be maintained, Mr. Speaker, and as we look in the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, we could see a minimum of 1000 jobs, a minimum you know in this sector. St. George's University could play its role there; they too will need it, because they're not barred anymore from moving forward with renewable energy.

IT, Mr. Speaker; the programme in IT, not only in St. George's University will equip people for a standing. It is as if it is helping you in accounting, but we want applied information technology, so that the persons can go out there and get jobs in the sector, whether it is in refurbishing a yacht, whether it is doing something in your home, whether it is in the area of automation but we have to see what the industry needs. We do not want our young people to go to school... remember we have given up taxes and the University is using that to help for the scholarships. And when you come out, you must not face the uncertainty of not being able to get a job in quick time, particularly after four years of university studies. So this is of critical importance and we look forward, the Minister for Education, the Minister for Health, normally attends their meeting as you say, so we look forward to your promoting this sector and do not hesitate to call on any department, any ministry to sit in there, so that we can articulate

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our plans and our programme. And as a beautiful partner we know that the St. George's University will facilitate us, Mr. Speaker. So I really want to, and while the leader of the negotiation may not have mentioned it, he has confirmed that they have agreed to move in that direction, so I want to give them great credit, Mr. Speaker.

Before I take my seat, Mr. Speaker, the House and the Nation would recall that I moved to get this Motion on the Order Paper, because the amended order is in effect since it was signed by the responsible Minister. However the Leader of the Opposition, made a certain statements and comments, he's not wrong at all, Mr. Speaker, for asking of it, but it pointed to a certain direction, facilitated under the negative resolution and so we grave your indulgence and your permission to dispense with the notice and to get it on the Order Paper. **(Applause)** I hope that he would be here to make a contribution. But, Mr. Speaker, I recognise his difficulty on this predicament, having to have an arrangement with persons who may not be like minded in the treatment of our partner. I think that may be, at his involvement, his participation, his relationship with both sides, I think his absence may be perhaps well thought out and give the Leader of the Opposition that, Mr. Speaker. He, the others may think that he is stupid, but I don't think so, certainly not we on "This Side", Mr. Speaker. So I would want all of us to look at his absence not being rude, or not trying to display any disrespect to any of the parties, but in perhaps taking that road for himself that would not cause injury to any side, SGU, the government or anybody.

In that way, Mr. Speaker, I just want to close for saying how I think. I cannot be correct, but I know that the public will be saying, well the Leader of Government's Business moved the Motion and he's not there to support or deny. Maybe that was his intention and it maybe for good reasons. Mr. Speaker, I support this Motion whole heartedly. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Prime Minister.

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I stand in closing the debate on this Motion. I thank all Members for their contribution. I think it's well known that this is

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as I said, it's extremely important to the country. I'm proud to be associated with this change of the share capital of the University and the ownership, and knowing that the Chancellor still would remain the Chancellor of this institution, and he has consistently been a great friend of Grenada, not just to St. George's University activity, in all aspects of development, he's always been in the forefront in helping our country. So, I commend this Motion for passage in this Honourable House. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Prime Minister. I just looked over to see if our Leader of the Opposition was present but I realised that he's not in at the moment, so we will move on.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion approved.**

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to introduce for first reading the Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Income Tax (Public Service 2021 Bonus Income) Bill, 2022.

**Clerk:** A Bill to stipulate the Personal Income Tax payable by individuals employed by or providing services to the Government of Grenada in respect to a bonus income received from the Government of Grenada, shortly entitled, Income Tax (Public Service 2021 Bonus Income) Bill, 2021.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

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**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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.**

**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:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we all recall the bonus paid to our frontline workers and to the general Public Service workers in December of 2021, for their service to this nation during the pandemic period. And, Mr. Speaker, we have our Income Tax Act, and in the budget presentation, Mr. Speaker, as Minister for Finance I indicated that the monthly pay will be, tax will be deducted so that if your after tax pay in the norm for a month is \$8 then your bonus will be \$8. So it is not the gross and that was very clear to everyone, Mr. Speaker. In order to maintain that, we knew that we had to come back to this Honourable Place and to craft legislation to confirm with this, Mr. Speaker. So in order for you to go home with your same pay after tax, the taxation regime in place has to be followed. Therefore, \$3,000 per month must be deducted, the next \$2,000 at a 10% and above the \$5000 range at 28%. That will ensure that you go home with your same after tax pay. Mr. Speaker, the timing of the essence, the people in the Ministry of Finance, we worked feverishly in order to ensure that the payment can be made on time. Mr. Speaker, this was done also for the half month's pay.

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This works out very clearly. Some people say you use it as a 13 month in the year, because you're already paying tax, if you simply take the 10% of this, or you take the 28% of it, it will not equate with your after tax payment. So we're coming to this Honourable Place now, Mr. Speaker, to amend it, to ensure that it happens, Mr. Speaker. And what is even more critical, the workers are coming to the Ministry of Finance, Inland Revenue Department asking for the forms so that they can make their Income Tax Return before the 31<sup>st</sup> of March. So we need to give them some guidance, and it is not our intention, Mr. Speaker, where you paid a little less tax one way or the other to ask you to give it back.

Let me give you an example, Mr. Speaker. If your pay was \$5,000 your taxation should be \$200, \$2,000 exempted, \$2,000 at 10% you should pay \$200 in taxes. So your bonus would be \$4,800 that worked beautifully for the system. Those who received half pay though, they should get \$2,400 but they received \$2,500 that is those close to the 50, but if you're just above 30, like 32 or 3300 you might receive, you might pay, it would not be different. Half pay is the problem, if you look at the formula, subtract the 300, and we recognised that. So some people should have paid \$5 more in tax with a maximum of 100 more in taxation, that's those at the half month. So we're coming here to ask this Honourable House to approve, Mr. Speaker, a regime that you keep the 5 you pay, you keep the 20 that you should have paid. Don't come and full up a big set of form and say that we'll deduct that from you. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we are proposing that the form be used as was used in the calculation when we paid the bonus, deduct \$3,000, but then if you're being paid \$2500, half month pay, when you deduct \$3,000 from this then you don't have to pay anything, because you automatically did not meet the threshold. Remember this is not being added onto your yearly taxation. Your yearly taxation goes the same way and you pay that. This is a bonus which we said how it will operate, so what we could do is put an elaborate set of calculations. For example, instead of deducting \$3000 for the half month pay, deduct \$1500, and you fall back on target and when we reach to those above the \$5000 deduct half of the 10 and half of this, etc. The formulas are there, we know it but what we don't want to do is when you come to full up the taxes, have all the people in IRD engaged

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with all the Public Servants. Well what we should use 15, what we should be using 3000, what should be used here etc. etc. So we're asking this Honourable House to accept the formula which is basically what is used for the regular systems and not just simply lump the \$5000 you should get and tax it away at 28%, because that will not give you, your after tax pay. And that is what we indicated in this Honourable House will go forward, Mr. Speaker.

One of the other important items, Mr. Speaker, is the word Public Servant, it is defined again in the Act, the bonus income is defined, the public worker which is defined solely for the purposes of this Act. So we know the Constitution has a connotation for Public Service and for Public Worker, but in terms of calculating your taxation, Public Worker is **“any individual employed by, or providing services to the Government of Grenada.”** So it is not Public Service Commission appointed persons. If we do not define it here for the narrow interest of this Act, you'll find a lot of people who got the bonus will not be entitled. So this Bill defines this, Mr. Speaker, as well as the regime we used to give the taxation. So those who got the full month pay, it worked out beautifully, those who got the half month pay because we don't want to use \$1,500.00, then \$3,000.00, then this \$1,00.00 and you have to pile up and get all of those things simply because we gave the workers a bonus. Give the Ministry for Finance a lot of headache and there are a lot of errors being made here and there. So if we use the \$3,000.00, yes those who got half month pay will pay a little less tax but not a whole lot. The maximum is \$100.00. And, Mr. Speaker, I therefore move that this Bill be accepted for its second reading and in particular the form on the Bill for those who receive the bonus to be simple. Minus \$3,000.00, full stop and we will work from there. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Mark.

**Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the amendment of this Bill as proposed by the Honourable Minister for Finance and Member for St. George South-East on the amendment on the Income Tax

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Bill. Mr. Speaker, the Member has been very eloquent and he is very schooled in mathematics and so I wouldn't endeavour at all to try to explain this explanation that the Member has given. But we are all well aware in this country of the impact that this decision that Government took to give this bonus in a very difficult time, the difference it has made in the lives of our people; the young and the old and everybody else. Mr. Speaker, as one young lady put it and I couldn't put it any better and I have to be her voice in this Honourable House because she doesn't have a voice here but she said to me "aa papa thinking young" and you know, Mr. Speaker, when experience, compassion, love, caring can be mixed with youthful thinking, I think that's the best combination in the world, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to mention some of the beneficiaries, the front liners, those in health, the police, those in Customs at the airport, at the Port who had to interface closely with people and whose lives were more at risk, that's those who got the full thing and some of us may have wanted the full one but we're not eligible because we were not as exposed as others were. But I also specifically want to single out a group of persons who keep reminding me all the time and they are the Solid Waste Workers who collect the garbage. We call them garbage collectors, whatever we want to call them and we forget the importance of these people in creating a healthy environment for this country and we forget what it used to be like when we had an ad hoc manner of dumping garbage anywhere and the difference we see now. And even though we see some unsightly occurrences unsightly behaviour, people still come to our country and they comment on how clean Grenada is. So it could be cleaner, we could do much less in terms of indiscriminate dumping, we could do much more in terms of reusing, recycling and reducing waste but our workers, whatever waste is thrown they are doing an excellent job (**applause**) and they reminded me, Mr. Speaker. They reminded me that we only thinking about the nurses and the doctors but they said to me Minister, we are front liners just as them because we keep this country healthy. And so I want to pay homage to these people who on a daily basis, early in the morning, get up when we probably still are in bed who come out and I am really pleased.

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The thing about this one is and it shows how far thinking this Government is and how all inclusive we are and I say we are in thinking of our people and their needs because these people are technically not Public Servants. They are employed by Private Sector persons but we are also aware in Solid Waste that the revenues that they earn... that the contractors earn it is computerised, it is calculated based on fixed expenses. So much for this, so much for that, so much for your equipment and there isn't much of a margin for significant profit and so if we ask these people to pay their workers whatever is the package, it would put them in a difficult situation and you reduce their earnings, you also reduce their ability to provide services for this country, sanitation services. And therefore our Government, our Minister of Finance, our Prime Minister, they insisted and they supported the request that was passed through me by the Solid Waste administration, that we give serious consideration to them. So others might hear that they got it and it is well deserved, Mr. Speaker.

There is absolutely no apology for this benevolence of our Government in this matter and I want to really want to compliment the Government and even those who got the half, they might not be as frontline as others but so many of them came out. The people in the Ministry for Finance, in other places, they were there in meetings and some of these meetings could not be held virtually, some of it they had to be there physically and they came out. They may have used transport and they were at some measure of risk and they complied with their duties, Mr. Speaker, with a conscience. For those who received it and stayed at home when they should have gone out we know that some would have gone out but if we started to nit-pick who came every day and who did not come every day, the Ministry of Finance will still be working on the payments. And therefore in the interest of those who came out and did what they had to do, some would have benefit. All I can say is, those who know that they didn't work when they should have worked, then I am happy that you benefitted and maybe the love and the caring that is demonstrated therein by that act, they may say to themselves next time I am going to make sure that I go out.

So, Mr. Speaker, it made a difference, the businesses they said you know, even the expenditure in the businesses, some business people was saying that their

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revenues exceeded pre-COVID times. And so this thing circulates and I know our Prime Minister who is a statistician and knows about figures and how these finances things work, he said when you give poor people money, it circulates and that is exactly what happened with this. So it was not just the direct beneficiaries, those Public Servants and so on, it was the indirect spinoff of that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to lend my full support to this recommendation to this amendment by the Minister of Finance and I look forward to other times like this when prudent fiscal management could allow us to do such kinds of things for our people. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Patrick West.

**Hon. Anthony Boatswain:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my support to this amendment as presented by the Honourable Minister for Finance and Parliamentary Representative for St. George South-East. Mr. Speaker, I join with the Member for St. Mark in commending the Government for this great initiative by way of providing that extra income to those who gave beyond the normal call of duty during what can be regarded as one of our most difficult times when the COVID pandemic was at its most devastating level. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the initiative, this bonus to the workers who came forward was well received and I applaud the Ministry of Finance for the formula that was used in calculating the impact... the Income Tax effect of the bonus. Mr. Speaker, what is obvious is that by using this formula the integrity of the Income Tax Act itself is maintained. That is not being disturbed because it is applied only on the bonus. And as the Member quite rightly said, if everything was lumped, it would have created a disincentive because it means that the deductions would have been much higher if everything was lumped as part of the regular income of the worker. But by separating it and applying the formula on the bonus, it gives the worker... there are no extra burden. There are no additional incidents on the tax, it is as though it was just a regular monthly payment and therefore I think that this must be commended as well.

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My only query here, Mr. Speaker, is the definition, defining those who make contribution as it say a Public Worker; **“an individual employed by or providing services to the Government of Grenada”**. I recall that a call was made, I think by the Minister for Finance and other Members of Government for other workers to come forward. I recall that members of the Statutory Bodies, I do not know if they are included in this, I need some clarity, that members who work in Statutory and State-owned Bodies, whether they are included, if they receive the bonus. Is that calculation included here? Are they included before I proceed? I need that clarification. Parastatal workers.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government’s Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. With respect to the taxation we realised that it covers the Public Workers. The Bill, Income Tax (Public Service 2021 Bonus), so it covers that sector; the Public Service Sector.

**Hon. Anthony Boatswain:** Just public workers? Because I recall a call was being made to everyone, parastatal workers, workers in Statutory Bodies, even the Private Sector. I recall that call being made to Private Sector employers to compensate their workers as well, those who came forward. And I’m wondering whether, if they had responded, if the Private Sector workers that responded to the call, whether this Bill would have taken care of them, because the call was made for them to come forward in the fight, parastatal workers, workers in Statutory Bodies. Had they come forward, what would have been the implication given the normal framework of this amendment and this is the clarification I will like to make. Because certainly they would not have been included in this based on the definition that we used.

So to make a call on certain segment to come forward and yet when you do your calculation they were not included, I am just wondering what would have been the impact and how this Bill could have been fashioned to take care of workers who would have volunteered from the Private Sector to come forward in the fight against COVID. It

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was really done for a specific purpose and again I see this as what you call a piece of sunset legislation because it is not indefinite; it is for a specific purpose at a specific time, so it is a sunset legislation. So it means if a next time we have a similar situation we have to go back for another amendment again because this is not indefinite. So these are some of the concerns that I do have, Mr. Speaker. But I do applaud the initiative. I believe based on the formula used, it is one that is fair, it is equitable in the sense that it did not impose any extra burden. The incidents of tax did not increase disproportionately based on the bonus that was received and I thought that was a very good move in so doing rather than having it lumped as part of the regular income where the tax would have been much higher for those who volunteered and those who offered to provide a service in those times. So I commend again the move but I am a bit concerned that while the call was made for others to come forward, I do not see here anything that would have rewarded them had they come forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable. Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and let me commend my two colleagues for the wonderful contributions that they have made. The Minister for Tourism, particularly with respect to the passionate plea of acknowledgement of the workers in the Sanitation Sector; we all agreed when she made her request that they too deserve.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Patrick West really made a good point but remember in the speech we called on the Private Sector, Statutory Bodies, State-owned Enterprises to give a token within their means. In other words, we are saying remember the taxation comes to the State and just as we did not interfere to tell them how much or what they can give or that it was compulsory for them to give, we thought that we should just at the same time just deal with the persons directly involved with the State. We said one month and half month, then we are looking at the taxation for that because it was coming out of our package to pay them, the tax payer's money. In other words the

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Private Sector could say I am paying one week because that is all I can pay. Of course the taxation there would be reduced significantly but in the Public Sector where we said two weeks or half month pay or one month pay and we articulated what that one month pay will be and we're holding to that statement by looking at the Income Tax Act reflective of the people in the Public Sector. So yes your point is well taken that the taxation should cover those who made it in the sector but they did not have a commitment to meet. They could have given something small. that's totally acceptable. Some of them may have given and have not even reported it to us, we don't know. So while we take your point of it, we're still of the opinion as you hinted to that this should remain within the Public Service. Mr. Speaker, I recommend the Bill for its second reading.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Clerk:** A Bill for an act shortly entitled, Income Tax (Public Service 2021 Bonus Income) Bill, 2022.

**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 proposed.**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**House in Committee.**

**House resumes.**

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**Mr. Speaker:** I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment. Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

**Question proposed.**

**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 proposed.**

**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. Mr. Speaker, I beg to introduce for first reading the Bill for an Act shortly entitled Legal Profession (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

**Clerk:** A Bill to amend the Legal Profession Act, No. 25 of 2011, shortly entitled Legal Profession (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

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**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Mr. Speaker, just by way of explanation, our beautiful colleague is not with us today; the Minister for Legal Affairs and so we will simply maintain the first reading of the Bill and move on to give her the opportunity. That's why I indicated before it is similarly with the question from the Leader of the Opposition she has requested to give her the time. Normally 3 months the mothers and the ladies would... we hope she will be with us very soon so she can conduct the areas of her responsibility.

**Mr. Speaker:** So this Bill is just for its first reading at this sitting?

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** First reading. And let me just say that I know it's early, it's never early that I announce to you that lunch is ready and here. I would be guided here; it is just 12:00. We can do one of two things, take lunch or take a Bill.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Mr. Speaker, the Bills are very short and we have three more. I think we can dispense with them very quickly.

**Mr. Speaker:** Alright. This satisfies true to everybody? Good thank you, let's go.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** So, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move for first reading, the Bill for an act shortly entitled the Exchange of the Information (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

**Clerk:** A Bill to amend the Exchange of Information Chapter 93A shortly entitled Exchange of Information (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

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**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg that the Standing Order of the House be suspended in order to take the Bill through all its stages at this Sitting.

**Question proposed.**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**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. As by now we should become familiar that the Caribbean Financial Taskforce in conjunction with the Global Financial Taskforce, the organisations that fight against money laundering and money crimes and all of those, they inspect the various countries ever so often and they look at the shortfall that could come forward in the areas where we might be deficient and they have asked us, Mr. Speaker, to implement certain amendments to our Laws. In particular this one is in the exchange of information. A competent authority in another country will come in and ask for information about somebody in our country or somebody about whom we may have certain information. And the existing Law did not allow that to happen expeditiously and quickly, you have to get permission. Now the authority, the Global Authority, including our component in the Caribbean here, Caribbean Financial Action Taskforce, they're indicating that the Law should be amended to allow the competent authorities here when requested to give information

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that they need not go to anybody. Once you are a competent authority then you give them the information.

Clause 2 provides for the amendment of the schedule in the principal Act to the definition of regulatory authority the following entities: the Financial Intelligence Unit. So at FIU or whatever it is called in another country will make contact to the FIU about a particular person in Grenada that they want information on and it passes through. The schedule before did not allow that. The Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting Terrorism Financial Commission; so the Commission in Grenada will get information from maybe an FIU in another country, you simply give it to them. The Royal Grenada Police Force, they may be asked from another competent body, it may not be the Police Force but maybe a Financial Action Taskforce in another jurisdiction then you give it to them.

But, Mr. Speaker, what it is clear and I have always been asking for that is that if we were to give you information, then if we ask then you must give us too, these are the conditions under which we are making the amendment. And of course when they visited, the Attorney General participated, the PS in Finance, the Police participated and that was raised; reciprocity. I cannot be giving you everything and you are a big powerful country not giving me. And I daresay, Mr. Speaker, that was one of my fears when we passed these Laws back in '14 and '15 but I see that when we ask for information we get it, Mr. Speaker, and we get it reasonably quickly. So I think my fear of this has gone a bit but it must be in our Laws that you must be one who has signed with us the reciprocity arrangement before we would be able to give you this. So it is automatic but similarly you must be able to provide us with similar information, Mr. Speaker.

The current list of regulatory authorities we have in Grenada is the Attorney General, the Registrar of Companies, so if they want to know if you submitted company here and you're passing monies through it, they can go to them. The Grenada International Financial Services Authority, GIFSA, the Supervisor of Insurances. So, they're looking at every angle where money can go. The Department of Co-operatives, we will never be thinking, Mr. Speaker, that you will try to pass monies through this area

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Co-operatives, a local entity, what there are involved in. But I remember, Mr. Speaker, in 2016 or somewhere around there, I remember the Member for St. Patrick West, I think may have been the Minister for Finance, when it came out that the churches, Mr. Speaker, must be succumbed to this and we wondered why. But in the international community, a church is a church, but in the far East, I think they found information where monies was passed through a church, maybe not our Christian faith or otherwise, but passed through there to get into the wrong hands. So they imposed the statement that said churches must also be subjected to these. And so, we can see why, where some of the fears will come from, and why certain things are done.

The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, well, while we do not believe that the Bank will be participating in any unsavoury issue, but the bank will see funds passing through it from a private bank and these people could go to the ECCB and get information and could zero in on a person using a private bank and getting it out to the international banking system through our Central Bank. So, they're the authorities and they are required now to give information if asked.

The Supervisory Authority and these are the agents in Grenada, Mr. Speaker, the bodies who after the amendment now, will be able to exchange information free because the Parliament of the country has now mandated them to so do. So, it is flowing. It's like the Public Service in operation, information in and out, but it's really to combat money laundering and monies used for crime and terrorism. So, Mr. Speaker, I recommend this Bill, amendment for its second reading.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Patrick West.

**Hon. Anthony Boatswain:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to give my support to this Bill, the amendment, but not without expressing my concern as I have expressed in the past, that while we do have that international obligation to keep our society and the global society free of terrorist financing and money laundering and such other financial crimes, I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that the word "exchange" is really a misnomer in the sense that it is always a one way flow. The onus is always on the

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developing countries, countries like ours to provide the information. And when we fail to do that the OECD, other jurisdictions, they will blacklist us for non-compliance, but at the same time, we cannot get that information. If we request of them that information, we won't get it. So it is not, there is no free flow of exchange of information.

As the saying goes, when you poor, you know, you poor, you expose. We do not have terrorists in our region. I mean, this is not something that is germane to our region, but yet we are obligated by international treaties to provide such information. But at the same time when we request of them, they do not comply, putting mechanisms in place to facilitate the information that they are requesting from various sources is very costly. Banking now, opening an account in a bank is a very tedious and costly activity right now because we have to comply with those international requirements, very, very costly. So in essence, we are paid here locally to ensure the security and safety of the bigger nations. That's what we are doing and there is no compensation in return.

So, I'm saying, yes, we have to provide it, but why not ask of them to provide us with more resources to help us to do the things that they want us to do? We are poor, those systems that we have to put in place, the manpower, the technical resource we have to put in place to generate that information to give to them costs a lot. And we are not the beneficiaries in the long term, they are the beneficiaries, they have to protect their countries and institutions that the terrorists attack. We don't have terrorists attacking us in the region here, albeit that we cannot be complacent, but at the same time, it is too great an imbalance on us.

The cost to us, for us to provide, to comply is high, whereas the benefits flow in one direction, primarily. And I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, yes, we must, do what we have to do. But I believe that as a region, we must make a greater demand on those countries that are asking us to provide information to assist us, provide us with the resources, so at least there could be greater compliance, and not just act yes to every request, although if we fail to, they could use the big stick, blacklist. When you're blacklisted, financially you're crippled and they know that. But at the same time, I think we collectively in the region should be more assertive, and make greater demands on

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the countries that are demanding of us to provide this information for their own security, primarily for their our security, not ours. And this is my concern, Mr. Speaker. We have to comply, if we don't, they'll use the big stick, but I think we should muster that courage to demand of them assistance in putting the mechanisms in place to ensure that we could generate the information they're asking us for on a regular basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Patrick West. Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to commend my colleague the Member for St. Patrick West, for his stance. I think we have grappled with this and that's what we have there, the powerful nations.

Going into the bank today, Mr. Speaker, when you're asked to fill out a form for an amount over \$10,000, this is where it came from and both the banks as the representative said, must put resources into it and the customer is coming in. On many occasions, you know, you get a cheque from the Government for doing infrastructure work and you have to fill out a lengthy form. And a lot of the person, where did you get it from? Well, it's a cheque from the Government, the Government paid me, but you still have to do it, Mr. Speaker. And those are some of the concerns that my colleague has been speaking about.

So, in addition to the bank must put out resource, this is a very simple one, but the bank must put out a lot of resources. That's where, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the charges are coming from and every day, the Member for St. John is talking about the charge, you know, in the bank for this, what you withdraw something, so there is a charge, and there is another charge and another charge, but it's because of these institutions imposing certain things on them. I'm not saying that all are because of those indications or concerns, but yes, it is something that we must, we could only fight so much, Mr. Speaker, but then it's always coming back, the corresponding bank. Well, if you don't want to do these things, you're not passing money through my bank. And

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immediately the matter is closed, because if you can't get EC dollars to a corresponding bank in the US, or some other place in Canada and somewhere in the European Union, then you can't trade and so that is a stick over our heads.

So the Member is correct. We will ask and continue to ask, but in the meantime, we could only push as much, and I'm saying that one of the push we've made here is reciprocity and I think it's agreed when the big team will go through the various countries. That has been agreed. So we have taken a step, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Member for St. Patrick's West. We know it's not a lot to go and I think the Member himself knows how difficult it is to fight with the powers that be. In that context, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the bill.

**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 have to 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.**

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**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, Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

**Clerk:** A Bill to amend the Proceeds of Crime Act, No. 6 of 2012 shortly entitled, Proceed of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** 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:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

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**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill follows on the heels of the first which is the powers, sail through the various territories and look at anything. And as the Member for St. Patrick West again said, their safety in many occasions, their safety, you know sort of coincide with ours, but the intent is for their safety. And as they came through, Mr. Speaker, and looked through at our Laws and our weaknesses, as they say it for us in the region, then they recommend many of the Bills that we passed before be updated and amended, Mr. Speaker, and some of the amendment, look at an addition of relevant offences under section two.

So we had two or three relevant offences. And so, now we have to add and expand it and we have "(a) any indictable offence or offences triable, both summarily on the indictment in Grenada, from which a person has benefited, as defined in sections 6 (9) and 6 (10) of this Act, other than drug trafficking offence. You see it was drug trafficking, money laundering, but they have increased it and broadened it, if you look any avenue that you can take. So once it's an indictable offence, then they must be able to ask you for information on it. You must be reporting on it and you must have it within the network, not just drug trafficking, right. If you're charge for something other than that, and it has a relationship to money laundering or anti-terrorism, to safeguard their shores, then you must expand it. So, we're following through, Mr. Speaker, on the commitment given that. Any omission, had it occurred in Grenada would have constituted an offence as defined in the subsection above. So, Mr. Speaker, you did not do something, but it's an omission, but it could fall into the line of this broad system, you got to report on it, and you can be dragged into the net on it, anyway, anyhow. Again, the authorities in Grenada must expend their resources.

So, the Member for St. Patrick West is again correct, we should ask them, but again, we know what it will be. Well, you can't use my corresponding bank. The country's debt closed. We have to follow suit there. And every day something comes

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up, I mean a real incident comes up, it reinforces their requirement and particularly if it happens in our region, makes it worse, Mr. Speaker. We just have to follow the suit.

You see any offence falling within the designated category of offences. So, it's broad and big, outlined under the FATF recommendation, and contained in the Schedule. So, you have to expand your schedule, do everything. After they visit, you better do it, Mr. Speaker, because when they come back, we know what that threat is. Any offence from which a person has benefited for the purpose of section 6 (9) and 6 (10) other than other than drug trafficking again. So, if you've benefited from some anti-money laundering or something like that, but it doesn't have to be drug trafficking, it doesn't have to be with the aim to do terrorism, but any in that broad offence now, you're into the net. So we here must expend resources to look and when they ask for the information, it better be sent. Any offence falling within the designated category of offences, again, so you have a broad category and you can't escape, any offence within there, they ask for information; give it to them.

Clause 2 provides for the insertion of a definition of "Commission" within section 2 and "*Commission means the Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Terrorism Financing Commission established under section 63.*" So, this is there already. So, they have now the responsibility of looking into and expanding and saying which offence is which, and saying yes, the information should be given etc.

Any purposes of making a confiscation order, reference to an offence to which this Act applies are reference to all indictable offences other than drug trafficking offences, because that is already covered, save for the purpose of making a Confiscation Order.

So, Mr. Speaker, Clause 9 goes on to say, a fine not exceeding quarter million dollars, \$250,000 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding four years or both, with the penalties in these cases. And, Mr. Speaker, Clause 4 provides for the amendment of section 29 (a) of the principal Act, is that the definition relevant businesses. So they could ask you for information on certain businesses through which you can transmit funds. Before, we know it was a bank, remember we heard it, the Co-operatives that we were so concerned about and other things. Now, it's a broad range of businesses,

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you might have a housing development and if they figure that you can transmit funds through that, this falls within the net as well. So it's just broad and broader, can't escape. What do we have to do? We have to put the resources to gather the information for them.

A relevant person on a relevant business, listed in paragraph (a) to (e), and list (a) to (e) is because you have a bigger net on top, saying that nearly every business, you know, qualifies. So the persons, regulated body, all of those, so the person here is not a living person, there're more businesses. Non-profit organisations, remember we mentioned the church before, now they're saying bring in non-profit organisation because they've targeted those that you can use and so they're going through the churches and non-profit organisations. So, if the non-profit organisation believes they are out of the net, no, they are not. When you ask them for information they must give you, where did you get this money from? You have to say, no matter how small it is, because we too must answer to the powers that be or face certain consequences, Mr. Speaker.

And the only other point, I want to make is that the registration fee have been increased, banks to \$1,500, virtual asset service providers and that's one area where you have the virtual asset and the crypto currencies and so forth. Oh, they're zeroing in on that. The regulation fees and this one is not to do with them, it's \$1,500 to be registered, insurance company \$300 licence, up to \$500; Gaming businesses \$500; Casino Gaming Business \$2,000, an increase for Insurance Companies from \$300 to \$500, based on the value of your insurance claim that you can deliver. So in a nutshell, Mr. Speaker, these are the things, but it is all from the same visit and expands and gives us information when we ask for it. I recommend the Bill for its second reading.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Leader of Government's Business. We have any?

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

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**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House resolves itself in 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 have to 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, Casino Gaming (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

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**Clerk:** A Bill to amend the Casino Gaming Act, 2014 shortly entitled, Casino Gaming (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that 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.**

**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. The purpose of this Bill is to create an offence under section 4 for operating a Casino without a licence and to provide under section 12 for disqualification of a Casino for a licence, if a beneficial owner has been convicted of an offence involving fraud, dishonesty and violence. And three, Mr. Speaker, to correct references in section 3 to the Gaming, Lotteries and Betting Act Cap. 120 and the National Lotteries Act Cap. 205, with reference to the Gaming Act, 2016, to reflect the development of the Law.

So, Mr. Speaker, under the first is to create an offence. So you cannot now be operating without a licence. This, Mr. Speaker, carries with it now a maximum fine of \$100,000. The amendment seeks to extend the application to beneficial owners. So,

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who are the beneficial owners? And the beneficial owners mean the natural person who ultimately owns or controls the company, hotel or resort on whose behalf the business activity is being conducted. So whom would you charge? So, we have now defined. So, we brought in everybody into the picture, once you're the ultimate owner, Mr. Speaker. In the case of a legal arrangement, a partner, so if you have a partnership, you're the partner, you're the one who would ultimately be paying the price or be paying the charge. The trustee, or other persons who control the application, what some people do, they put trustees in front and that's where again, Mr. Speaker, the drive towards finding all these people, while this did not come from them, in terms of what you must do, but obviously a casino is being looked at, it's trapped in the businesses. It's being looked at to see who owns it, who could be laundering monies, who could be induced and so when you're charge you must have a licence so that information must be given because you have to give under the licence. And, you must know who the owners are because you target these people and then their ultimate goal is money laundering, Mr. Speaker.

The Solicitor or other persons by whom the legal arrangement is made; so what do we do? We put trustees. So it would say, you will pay the price for it. So, we're staying outside behind some Solicitors. Solicitors, you will pay the price for it. I'm doing business on you. So, you can't hide anything more. Ultimately, again, Mr. Speaker, it's anti-money laundering. Yes, and anti-terrorism that they want you to put in place. While this didn't come from there, it has their consequences, Mr. Speaker. So, in a nutshell, the three activities create an offence for operating without a licence provide under the disqualification, you can now disqualify the casino and to correct the reference to these two laws because it has been replaced, the Laws have been developed. So, you don't talk about the Lotteries Act anymore. You talk about the Gaming Act right on and then we put to tell you who are the officers responsible and answerable to the charges. Mr. Speaker, I recommend this Bill for its second reading.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

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Adjournment**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government 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 proposed.**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**House in Committee.**

**House resumes.**

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without 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 proposed.**

**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.**

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 16 - Request for leave to move the adjournment of the House on matters of urgent public importance.

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***Adjournment***

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the adjournment of this Honourable House, sine die.

**Question proposed.**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**The Sitting of the House adjourned sine die at 12:46 p.m.**

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