



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

First Session of the Eleventh Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

29th September, 2022

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
held on Thursday 29th September, 2022**

Table of Contents

Attendance	3 - 4
Prayers	5
Oath of Allegiance or Affirmation of a New Member (Election of Deputy Speaker)	5 - 6
Minutes	6 - 7
Announcements	7 - 8
Papers / Reports	8 - 9
Personal Explanations (Maiden Speeches)	10 - 28
Hon. Andy Williams.....	10 - 11
Hon. Ron Redhead	11 - 12
Hon. Kerryne James	13 - 14
Hon. Dennis Cornwall	15 - 16
Hon. Tevin Andrews.....	16 - 17
Hon. Lennox Andrews.....	18 - 19
Hon. Joseph Andall.....	19 - 21
Hon. Philip Telesford.....	21 - 25
Hon. Dickon Mitchell.....	25 - 28
Motions	28 - 51
Bills	51 - 53
Adjournment	53 - 65

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
held on Thursday 29th September, 2022**

Attendance

PRESENT

Honourable Leo Cato, MP	- Mr. Speaker (In the Chair)
Honourable Dickon Mitchell, MP (<i>St. David</i>)	- Prime Minister & Minister for Finance, National Security, Home Affairs, Information, Disaster Management & Public Administration
Honourable Philip A. Telesford, MP (<i>St. George South-East</i>)	- Minister for Social & Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs
Honourable Joseph Andall, MP (<i>St. Patrick West</i>)	- Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade & Export Development
Honourable Lennox J. Andrews, MP (<i>St. Andrew South-West</i>)	- Minister for Economic Development, Planning, Tourism, ICT, Creative Economy, Agriculture & Lands, Fisheries & Cooperatives
Honourable Tevin Andrews, MP (<i>Carriacou & Petite Martinique</i>)	- Ministry of Carriacou, Petite Martinique Affairs and Local Government
Honourable Dennis Cornwall, MP (<i>St. Patrick East</i>)	- Minister for Infrastructure and Physical Development, Public Utilities & Civil Aviation and Transportation
Honourable Kerryne Z. James, MP (<i>St. John</i>)	- Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment and Renewable Energy
Honourable Ron Livingston Redhead, MP (<i>St. George North-East</i>)	- Minister of State wrf Youth & Sports within the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture
Honourable Andy Williams, MP (<i>South St. George</i>)	- Minister for Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation
Honourable Peter David, MP (<i>Town of St. George</i>)	- Member
Dr. the Hon. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, MP (<i>St. Mark</i>)	- Member
Honourable Kate Lewis, MP (<i>St. Andrew North-East</i>)	- Member

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
held on Thursday 29th September, 2022**

Attendance

Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP - Member
(St. Andrew South-East)

Honourable Delma Thomas, MP - Member
(St. Andrew North-West)

ABSENT

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith C. Mitchell, PC, MP, JP - Leader of His Majesty's Opposition
(St. George North-West) (*Excused*)

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
held on Thursday 29th September, 2022**

Prayers

Election of Deputy Speaker

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

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

Mr. Speaker: Let's pray.

(House Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: I invite the House to join me as we say the Lord's Prayer.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Pray be seated.

(Sound of gavel)

Mr. Speaker: This Honourable House is now in session.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 3 - Oath of allegiance or affirmation of a new Member. (Election of the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives)

Mr. Speaker: Consequent upon the Elections, which were held on the 23rd of June, 2022, and in accordance with Sections 28 and 34 of the Grenada Constitution Order, it has become necessary to elect a Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives for the 11th Parliament of Grenada. Honourable Members of the House of Representatives, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3 of the House of Representatives, I now invite nominations for the Office of Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move to nominate the Honourable MP for St. Mark, Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen.

*Election of Deputy Speaker
Minutes*

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen has been nominated. Is there a seconder?

Hon. Kate Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I wish to second the Motion.

Mr. Speaker: Right. Honourable Kate Lewis has seconded the Motion. Is there any other nominations? There being no other nominations, I now declare Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives. **(Applause)** I now invite the Honourable Dr. Modeste-Curwen to come and take the Oath.

(Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen proceeded to the Clerk's Table)

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: I Clarice Modeste-Curwen do swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of Deputy Speaker without fear or favour, affection or ill will and that in the execution of the functions of that Office, I will honour, uphold and preserve the Constitution of Grenada. So help me God.

(Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen signs the Oath Book)

(The Clerk signs the Oath Book)

(Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen returns to her seat)

Mr. Speaker: I commend you Honourable Dr. Modeste-Curwen in your Office as Deputy Speaker of the House. You are an experienced Member of Parliament and I believe, I'm confident that you will bring that to bear in your role as Deputy as well. I commend you.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
held on Thursday 29th September, 2022**

**Minutes
Announcements**

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

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Ceremonial State Opening of the First Session of the Eleventh Parliament held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on the 31st day of August, 2022 be taken as read.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

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

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Ceremonial State Opening of the First Session of the Eleventh Parliament held at Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on the 31st day of August, 2022 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: I thank you. I first of all want to say to Honourable Dr. Modeste-Curwen, extend to you the sympathy of the House. I understand that you buried your sister yesterday and we as a House extend to you our deepest sympathy. Death is always a difficult thing to deal with and just to say to you that we have you and the family in our prayers. We extend our deepest sympathies to you.

***Announcements
Papers / Report***

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I much appreciate the expression of sentiments here. Sorry, I'm not in Committee. Mr. Speaker, I much appreciate the expression of the sentiments that you have made on behalf of this Honourable House. Some of the Members here have done similarly. My colleagues on "This Side" and also Honourable Phillip Telesford in his capacity as the Leader of Government's Business, and I am sure and also Honourable Joseph Andall. I know the others may not have been aware, but I know we all share that kind of empathy for the loss of a loved one. So it's much appreciated and I thank you.

Mr. Speaker: All right and just to inform the House that we had planned a Parliamentary training, I think from the British Parliamentary Association. It was supposed to have taken place in the month of September, but had to be pushed back because of the death and burial of the late Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second. The proposed time for that training is the first quarter of 2023. Those are the announcements.

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

Item 8 - Presentation of Papers and Reports from
Select Committees.

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

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I wish to move that the following Papers be laid before this Honourable House:

Firstly, the Grenada National Insurance Board, Annual Report 2021.

Secondly, Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Friday 9th September, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

And thirdly, Detailed Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for 2022.

And finally, Mid-Year Review Report as approved by Cabinet pursuant to Section 25 (3) of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) No. 17 of 2015 to be

Papers / Report

laid in Parliament together with the Supplementary Budget in accordance with Section 23.

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

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Mr. Speaker, I seek your guidance in the matter under the Papers, section 8 where under the presentation of Papers as presented by the Honourable Leader of Government's Business, Item 2 - the Minutes for the Standing Committee of Finance, I seek your guidance as to the appropriateness of making any corrections. Should it be at this Sitting or should it be at the next Sitting of the Finance Committee meeting?

Mr. Speaker: I'm advised at the next Sitting.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: You're welcome.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Oh sorry. Mr. Prime Minister.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a follow up to the question posed by the Honourable MP for St. Mark, is it next sitting of the House of Parliament or next sitting of the Finance Committee.

(Clerk converse with Mr. Speaker)

Mr. Speaker: It's the next sitting of the Finance Committee.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Thank you.

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Andy Williams

Mr. Speaker: You're welcome.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 9 - Unopposed Private Business.

Item 10 - Questions.

Item 11 - Urgent questions under the provisions of
Standing Order No. 20.

Item 12 - Statements by Ministers.

Item 13 - Personal Explanations.

Mr. Speaker: Item 13 Personal Explanation. I am now providing the opportunity for our maiden Members of Parliament, to give the House, and of course, the viewing public, some sense of who you are, a sort of summary, you as an individual. Tell us something about you as an individual and now Members of Parliament. So this is for our maiden Members of the House. By this I mean, people who are in this House for the very first time. We have an interesting mix here of experienced, veteran, and maidens. So, folks who are here for the first time as MP, I now invite you to say to the rest of us and the world something about yourself. Honourable Andy Williams.

Hon. Andy Williams: Yes, pleasant good morning to all. Mr. Speaker, let me just say, the last time I was in this room, I could not help but to think of my constituents who fought hard to put me in this position. The last time I was in this room, I could not help but to think about our Prime Minister who saw the potential in me. The last time I was in this room, I could not help but to think about these wonderful Ministers here who I consider as colleagues and not only as colleagues, but as family.

Mr. Speaker, my name is Andy Williams, as everyone knows, and I will forever be grateful to the people of St. George South and Grenada. They were with me at my lowest points and still continue to be with me through this journey. They saw me cry and they saw me smile. Mr. Speaker, as the MP of St. George South, I thank the people who came before me, the previous Ministers who laid the foundation. I assure you that that your work will not go in vain.

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches

Hon. Andy Williams

Hon. Ron Redhead

Mr. Speaker, I plan not only to move the Constituency of St. George South forward, but I plan to break down the political barriers that have been hindering us throughout the years. I plan to bring back the community spirit that we once had before and that we know or that we knew about.

Mr. Speaker, the last time I was in this room, I felt comfortable knowing that I made the right decision, a son from the soil, a son from St. George South, and I will continue to be a son of Grenada and to move this country forward. And I want to leave with this message. Mr. Speaker, if I may. I did not come this far, to only come this far. I hear some people saying things like, when I make it; I will get up to the top. I will keep working hard until I get to the top, until I reach my goal. But, let me tell you something, there is no end, winners never stop. If you reach your goal, set a bigger goal. If you get to the top of the mountain, find a bigger mountain. It is a journey, the continuous spirit of growth, the constant seeking of improvement, the challenge that makes life great that makes a life fulfilled or a fulfilled life. And I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who showed faith in me and put their trust in me, for me to be here today. And I pledge to the people of Grenada and to the constituents of St. George South that I will continue to do my best to move forward and I will make St George South, the greatest or great among all. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member for South St. George. Member for St. George North-East.

Hon. Ron. Redhead: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise with a sense of honour and humility to acknowledge the incredible privilege of representing some of the best citizens at this Session of Parliament. I stand here today proud to be a Member of Parliament for over 8000 Grenadian men, women, boys, girls, and seniors, representing a constituency with so much history, so many accomplishments, talents and pride of belonging, known for agriculture, sports, culture, and community activism. I am proud to be the Member of Parliament for St. George North-East and I express tremendous gratitude and appreciation to all voters participating in the process from polling divisions H1 to H09. Whether you voted for

***Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Ron Redhead***

Ron Redhead and the National Democratic Congress or not, I sincerely thank you for your effort to preserve democracy and look forward to greater support in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I am thankful to my team of soldiers who demonstrated outstanding commitment, dedication, and creativity. The consistent late nights and early mornings were true testimonies of the love for country and the backing of my family and spiritual warriors was a reliable source of strength and inspiration that propelled me and the campaign to the finish line.

My return to the Honourable Houses of Parliament was indeed one for the record books and I owe this victory, not to my strength, but to the power of the people who toiled, laboured, and voted for the National Democratic Congress. In short, Mr. Speaker, I owe this victory to God Almighty, who knows the struggle we had to endure.

Mr. Speaker on June 23, Grenada ushered in generational change. We saw a country divided over personalities and egos, a country needing leadership and individuals to serve. Today, this Administration has given life to the belief that the resources of the State belong to the people and that is how we shall use them. A country, Mr. Speaker, yearning for solutions to years of problems with so much potential and for the first time in a long time, the people voted to move Grenada forward.

Our young leader is a beacon of hope that represents the possibility of all Grenadian youth who aspire to achieve and succeed. He showed us that age is just a number. What defines our contribution is the ability to preserve and push on through. Your experience means nothing if you do not have the true interests of the people at heart.

The Transformation Agenda, Mr. Speaker, that really seeks to tackle the old problems of the past with modern solutions, it acknowledges limitations and considers that the benefit of the entire State is what is required not just a few. Mr. Speaker, I believe therefore, that we are in for some exciting times ahead and call on all Grenadians to stand once again, focus on building Grenada through a genuine path of development as one people. Mr. Speaker, thank you and may God bless Grenada. I look forward to serve.

***Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Kerryne James***

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable MP for St. George North-East. Honourable MP for the Constituency of St. John.

Hon. Kerryne James: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at a very early age, my parents and guardians did not skip a beat when it came to underscoring the importance of reading. And while from their lens, reading was a way of their children, or my siblings and I to enhance our neurological and cognitive astuteness as students, I grew to love reading books or stories, as it allowed me to make my imagination soar and revolutionise my thoughts. It was then, Mr. Speaker, I grew to understanding the power of storytelling, and given such an important aspect of our culture and identity as Afro Caribbean or Creoles, I take this opportunity today to illustrate the power of storytelling.

On May 25, 2018, an ambitious young girl or some have said, a political infant was afforded a prestigious opportunity of having a voice or platform to speak on the behalf of her cohorts in one of the most Honourable Houses in our country, on the issues that affected them first-hand. She was the voice for a lost generation, and a strong advocate for the creation of a brighter and more transformative future for all of the citizens of her country. Every chance she got, she reinforced in the minds of our colleagues, the importance of having someone like her, not only for diversity's sake, but because representatives that embodies all of her country's reality and demographics, made that Honourable House better and inevitably strengthened democracy.

Mr. Speaker, if there was ever a time in this young girl's life, when Proverbs 18, verse 21, or as we put it in our local parlance, "the power of the tongue" held true, it would be now. Four and a half years later, when the latter part of that young girl's Maiden Speech informed the Members of the "Other Place," that one day, she will be in the driver's seat of her Constituency, and that she will create the foundation for a legacy to be built beyond her generation.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to introduce that young girl to you. She has now metamorphosised into a well-rounded and politically astute young woman. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I am Kerryne Zennelle James, a proud, proud product of Gouyave, St. John, born and bred, and I couldn't be any prouder of that. I

***Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Kerryne James***

am a former Senator, the youngest to date in the history of Grenada and the Commonwealth of Nations. **(Applause)** And I am now the Member of Parliament for the Constituency of St. John, making me the second person to win the seats for the party I represented at the general election and the only female to win her seat for the winning party overall.

Mr. Speaker, I say thank you to the people of St. John, for placing their trust in me to be the agent of change that they so desperately longed for, for more than five years. I am proud of the people that we have been able to mould in St. John, and Grenada should be proud of that too. One of my main interests, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that I seek the best for my constituents so that more history makers can tell their stories in order to motivate and inspire future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also place on record that I am extremely proud and honoured to stand in this House as Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment and Renewable Energy, a Ministry that will play a fundamental role in executing our Government's Transformational Agenda, and a Ministry that will once again make Grenada noticeable among the other Small Island Developing States within the context of the international and domestic climate change and renewable energy affairs. As a Ministry, we will embark on the implementation of comprehensive policies and initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change and protect our unique environmental systems ultimately building the resilience of our country.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to share with all young women and young men too who are watching and will be watching this Sitting after today. You are not defined by where you come from, nor how old you are, and not even by what others say or think you are. Always remember that you are the only narrator of your story, so make it worth the read.

I look forward to representing the great people of St. John, Mr. Speaker, in this Honourable House over the next five years and beyond. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member for the Constituency of St. John. Member for the Constituency of St. Patrick East.

***Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Dennis Cornwall***

Hon. Dennis Cornwall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise here this morning and humbly stand before my colleagues to express my gratitude to the Constituency of St. Patrick's East and the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Let me begin by saying that I come from very humble beginnings in the parish of St. Patrick's, in the village of River Sallee in particular and throughout my life thus far I have been of service to the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I have been an educator, I have been a former senior Public Servant within the country. I have served the Private Sector here in Grenada and throughout the region as an employee of the Eastern Caribbean Home Mortgage Bank in St. Kitts for a period of 16 years. On my return to Grenada, I also served as the CEO of a local private company that is attached to the Tourism business here in Grenada.

When I took the decision in April of 2022 to join the excellent team on "This Side" to participate in the election and to represent the people of St. Patrick's East, I did so with confidence and knowing that I am supporting an entity that is ready to transform this country on the basis of good governance, integrity and accountability. Let me also place on record my thanks to all the villages that constitute the St. Patrick's East Constituency. I do not want to go naming each one of them but they know who they are and I want to say to you that without you I could not have done it here today. I also want to thank those Members of Parliament for St. Patrick's East that would have gone before me. Again I would not name names but you would have set the foundation in my constituency to make sure that where we are today we can build on it. I want to also say that there are certain things that we have actually started in the constituency, some of them are difficult ones to deal with and I am referring to the farmers who are yearning basically to provide food security in St. Patrick's East. I am talking about the farmers who are looking at the Shambo lands. I will not want to speak here today about what I intend to do but I just want to tell the farmers and the people of St. Patrick's East that I have your back and I am proud to be able to represent you in this House.

I recall when I was campaigning for a period of 44 days there about to be able to at least capture the St. Patrick's East MP seat. Most people I would have told them I wanted to be your voice in Parliament, I wanted to be that person who can take St. Patrick's East further north. When I say further north, I am not saying it is not

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches

Hon. Dennis Cornwall

Hon. Tevin Andrews

in the north of Grenada but you know where I am coming from. Poverty has been something that is stripping our paths and the rural areas of this country. And I am committed as an MP for St. Patrick's East to ensure that I work arduously to ensure that my constituency and the rural parts of Grenada rise to the occasion where they belong.

Mr. Speaker, I have a few concerns that I need to make here because to-date we have been pushed back on by our constituents for not having an office at this point in time to be able to operate and to meet and to hear their concerns. I have told many of them that we are working on it and I do hope that the Clerk of Parliament would assure that in short course of time that those offices are ready and prepared so that we can meet our constituents there. I know my constituents, some of them are very impatient, we are only three months in office today and they have been asking for a lot of things. What I can say to you at the moment is that we are working on your behalf and we would ensure that the transformation process that we have started continue until we get where we want to be. So to the constituents of St. Patrick's East, again I want to thank every one of you who have been there during thick and thin and to let you know that I am there for you, I have your back. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Patrick's East. Honourable MP for the Constituency of Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Hon. Tevin Andrews: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise here today very humbled. Taking into consideration my background, my family's background, if you told me as a child that I would be standing or sitting in this Parliament Building as an Honourable Member I would think that you are telling a story. History has indeed been created in many ways in Carriacou and Petite Martinique, one of those is that after twenty plus years the seat of Carriacou and Petite Martinique being in the hands of another political party, it is now in the hands of the National Democratic Congress, the safest and the best hands and it will remain that way for a mighty long time.

***Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Tevin Andrews***

I want to use this opportunity to thank the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique for giving me this opportunity so that I will be their defenders, their champion and their fighter. The Prime Minister is smiling because it already started in Cabinet and I intend to use the same force and vigour in this great House of Parliament. The People of Carriacou and Petite Martinique have made the best choice and they would not be disappointed. It would be remiss of me if I didn't mention and thank two individuals, one who I believe wherever he is, is smiling down at us today; former Prime Minister, former Member of Parliament for Carriacou and Petite Martinique who was a mentor to me Nicholas Brathwaite and of course Joan Purcell who mentored and mould me and even continue to do so today who was also a former Member of Parliament for Carriacou and Petite Martinique and former President of the Senate. Those two individuals planted a seed many years ago. Many years ago I once supported another political party but because of their mentorship and their leadership I decided to change course and thank God I have made that decision, though the battle was rough. So I must commend and thank and put on the public record, express my thanks and gratitude to former Member of Parliament Joan Purcell, former Prime Minister of this country Nicholas Brathwaite for their mentorship.

The Member of Parliament for St. John said something and I want to build on that point especially to our young people. Whenever you have a dream, a vision, a goal, go after it, fight for it with every ounce of energy regardless of what the naysayers may say, regardless of what people might do or say, go after it. It will be hard, it will be tough, as a matter of fact nothing good comes easy and I know like the Member of Parliament for St. George North-East how we struggled in the political vineyard making selfless sacrifices for years. People laughed at us, scorned us, even some of them ask us “wey we de dey”, go and look for work but because of the persistence, because of determination, because of grit, because we did not give up, look at us today. So young man, young woman use that same energy, never give up even when the going gets tough, it will pay off one day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Lennox Andrews

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable MP for the Constituency of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I now invite the Honourable MP for the Constituency of St. Andrew South-West.

Hon. Lennox Andrews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise here with nobility and humility and I want to say to everybody that I am happy to be here. But I first want to express profound feelings of gratitude and thanks to the people of Andrew South-West for the opportunity to serve and for the demonstration of confidence in my ability to represent them, to speak on their behalf and to fulfil their needs with honesty and impartiality and objectivity. Mr. Speaker, let me also say thanks to our Prime Minister for placing the economic development of this country into my hands and I want to give him the assurance that I will work hard to achieve the goal of economic transformation and development of our people.

Mr. Speaker, what brings me here... Mr. Speaker, the greatest merit that one can achieve is to be at the service of his country and people and therefore I am here to serve. I am here because I am guided by a philosophy of life, the great men of this earth, the relevant personalities of history never fought for wealth, they never fought for money, they never fought for power. They believed that a man must be prepared to give his life for a cause that is just and dignified, they fought for an ID, they fought for a philosophy of life. They fought to eradicate poverty and give their people a better life. They fought, Mr. Speaker, for a philosophy that says that the place of a man in society has nothing to do with his inheritance, his propaganda or his bribery but it depends on his merit exclusively on his work. They fought, Mr. Speaker, for a philosophy of life that says that work is the greatest value of mankind and that work must be the source of all income. Mr. Speaker, they fought for a philosophy that says that a country's development lies with its people, its people as the object of development and its people as the subject of development and that the role of Government in that construct is to put people to work by giving them a hand up, not a hand-out and by facilitating and regulating economic activity. It's work, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, therefore with this Administration, what we want to do is to build a country, build a country that is based on industry and pride. We want to ensure that

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches

Hon. Lennox Andrews

Hon. Joseph Andall

our people have economic independence by giving them the individual freedom to utilise their time, their talent and their treasure to produce a good or a service for which there is a demand so that they can earn a decent income and live a decent life and in so doing through the invisible hand, contribute to the social and economic transformation of our homeland and of our people and for this to happen, Mr. Speaker, Grenada must be seen as a big school. A big school where the opportunities are available to all to be what they want to be. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, in the end if you achieve it then as a people I contend that we should all live like ants.

Mr. Speaker, there are two traits of ants that I consider good for human behaviour and for peaceful co-existence. Mr. Speaker, just think about it, when an ant find a crump of bread on the ground, it does not eat all for itself, it calls the others to share with it and what's left they all carry it away for others to enjoy. Mr. Speaker, that's the act of sharing and when ants meet as they travel in opposite direction they don't pass each other straight they stop, give each other a kiss and then continue their journey. Mr. Speaker, the act of kissing is a sign of caring but in caring we must not be careless neither should we care less for others and so as a nation and as a people I want us to take the example of the ant and share and care for each other.

Mr. Speaker, before I end let me say better days are coming, better days, Mr. Speaker, are coming for the people of St. Andrew South-West. Better days are coming for the people of all of St. Andrew and better days are coming for the people of all of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Andrew South-West. I now invite the Honourable MP for St. Patrick West to now take the floor.

Hon. Joseph Andall: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to my colleagues on "This Side" as well as my colleagues on the "Other Side". Good morning to the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique but in particular to the good people of St. Patrick West who have seen it fit to repose their trust and

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Joseph Andall

confidence in me to become their Parliamentary Representative. This morning I reaffirm my pledge to the people of St. Patrick West to be a representative for all of my constituents regardless of whom you may have voted for. As I said during the campaign I went to you wearing an NDC shirt, when I am in this hall my NDC shirt is off and my MP shirt for St. Patrick West shirt is on and I pledge to defend your interest with every bit of strength in my body.

My journey has been a simple one but one characterised by tenacity and resilience. Like almost everybody else my origins are very humble, my father still alive at age 91 kicking strong with his one leg, hi dad. He is 91 years old, retired fisherman. My mom was an Agricultural labourer and a market vendor. I say this so that those of you who may believe that the odds are against you should disabuse yourself of that notion. If you walk around the breadth and length of our country, you will not find one odd, it's all in the mind, it's all in the power of self-belief, in the power of hard work and making use of the opportunities as and when they present themselves.

Mr. Speaker, without the support of my team and without the support of the people of St. Patrick West as well as my colleagues sitting around here and elsewhere I would not be standing here today and therefore I wish to take this opportunity to say a hearty thank you to all of you who have believed in me and who have supported me along the way and again I give you my pledge that I will not disappoint you. I wish to thank also the Honourable Prime Minister for placing his trust and confidence in me by giving me the portfolio which represents the doors, the voice of our country; Foreign Affairs, Trade and Export Development. Already we have begun to work to represent the best interest of our country and I am confident that going forward things will only get better.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time in many years we have an almost ideal situation as far as the practice of democracy is concerned in our country. For the first time in many years we are going to have robust opposition (**applause**) we expect the debate to be maybe even fierce sometimes. But there is one thing I wish to impress on all my colleagues, those on "This Side" as well as those on the "Other Side". We are adults, we represent a civilised nation, the eyes of the world are on us and therefore I implore all of us that even as the debate may rage on, let us do so with a

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches

Hon. Joseph Andall

Hon. Philip Telesford

spirit of mutual respect and civility. There will be little ones looking on and we do not want them to be saying “Lord this is what Parliament looks like? Mark me no share.” We have an obligation to set good and proper examples. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, there is a level of symmetry in this Parliament, on one side we have six and the “Other Side” we have 9, please let us not confuse them. **(Laughter)** Mr. Speaker, the symmetry continues further in that on the “Other Side” there is one Member who is serving his 9th term; 9 for 1 and on “This Side” we have 9 Members each serving a first term 1 for 9. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, I am a bit regretful that the Honourable Member for St. George North-West, the father, some may even say the grandfather of the Parliament is not here to hear this but I expect him given his longevity and his experience to be the guiding figure in this House. I expect him to serve the example of decency, dignity and decorum in this Honourable House so that the young Member from St. John can have an example to emulate, **(applause)** so that the young member from Carriacou and Petite Martinique can say this is what I want to be like when I’m serving my 9th term.

Mr. Speaker, as I end I give you my pledge, I give Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique my pledge to work together with all my colleagues on “This Side” as well as on the “Other Side” to move Grenada forward. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable MP for St. Patrick West. I now invite the Honourable MP for St. George South-East.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to Members of the House. It is indeed a privilege for me to be here this morning and I think this is a very emotional one for me in the sense that it is a dream that was very unlikely. I stand here this morning to offer profound appreciation to my wife and to my four children for their support. Had it not been for them I don’t think I was going to be able to stand here this morning because I had to get their consent to get involved in frontline politics.

Mr. Speaker, I offer thanks also to my father who might be watching this morning at 93 and still going strong and my mother at 83 also going strong. They

***Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Philip Telesford***

have sown the seeds of discipline and hard work, respect and honour. They have taught us well and as many of my colleagues, we came from very humble beginning and their toil is what caused me to be able to ascend to where I am today. I'm deeply moved by their contribution to my life. I also offer much appreciation to the church and its membership that I attend. The Pastor, Pastor King and his wife and the rest of the leadership of the church, I offer my gratitude to them this morning and to the many prayer warriors in the church and around this country and the group of women who continue to pray daily for me and for members of this team. Prayer indeed moves mountains, God indeed... the God that we serve is a miracle worker because our presence here this morning is indeed the manifestation of a miracle and so we offer our appreciation to the almighty God and to the church.

I also say thanks to the leadership and management of the National Democratic Congress for firstly allowing me to be a member and for allowing me to pass that rigorous test and I hope that the exams would be much softer next time around, **(chuckles)** it was indeed very, very rigorous but I can say we made it and so we are here this morning amidst all of the challenges. I want to offer my appreciation to the Constituency of St. George South-East, and my campaign team who worked miracles. That's the only way I can put it, on my behalf. They toiled and toiled and toiled, and through hard work, through determination we were able to meticulously achieve our objectives. It was a numbers game and we worked the numbers, and I thank God for them. I thank God for the members of the constituency who believed in the message that we carried, who believe that it was time for change, time for something new and something different who took the chance to dream with us. I can assure members of South-East, St. George that their vote will not be wasted, because what we are going to do in South-East will bring joy and great reward to all the citizens in that constituency and by extension Grenada.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to also thank our Prime Minister, Honourable Dickon Mitchell for placing that confidence in me, to allowing me to serve in the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs. I never thought in my wildest dreams that he was going to place me there. Indeed he is a man of wisdom. I had a passion for many years, because I've gone through some problems as a male, as a man and that caused me to start going on the street, start speaking

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Philip Telesford

to me, male folks, to my brothers. I've done that for nine consecutive years on Fridays in the city of St. George. One wonders why a Chartered Accountant would finish work early, travel to Saint George, park his vehicle and get behind the Andall supermarket, observing guys trading the drugs and decide to speak to them about turning their lives around.

Mr. Chairman, our male folks are lost. They're in a very deep and dark place and we need to rescue them. The Ministry that I serve in, there is about maybe between 45 to 50 people, and maybe just about five male folks there. We talk about gender equality, gender balance, so many things but we have done very well with helping our girls and putting them on the right track, and I commend the past Government for doing just that, because I have a mother who's still alive, I've a daughter, I've sisters. And I also thank them, my sisters and brothers for helping me in the campaign. But, Mr. Speaker, we need to focus on our men. Not ignoring the ladies but we must rebalance our society and bring our young boys at every level, within sharper focus. Because after we would have done all the wonderful things, training and equipping our female folks, they will one day turn around and look for a husband to marry, or a father of their children. And so I believe in the wisdom of the Prime Minister, he's placed me there and I don't think he knew my passion, but maybe he saw something good in me and placed me there. I'm a Chartered Accountant by profession, I'm a farmer by practice and I'm a father because of love.

(Laughter)

Mr. Chairman, I made it thus far because of my teachers, those who taught at the Happy Hill Secondary School, my Alma Mater. At that school, we were introduced to all the bad things as well as all the good things, and we had to sift through all of that and make a determination as to where we must go. I am very proud of that school, because there my skills were awakened, dream was awakened. They taught us woodwork, technical drawing, home economics, textiles, poultry rearing, farming and so many different things. We were exposed to a full complement of skills including debates and drama, performing arts, right in school. The school was a live place, especially on Friday evenings. We had people coming in from the outside, we had long assemblies, but those long assemblies were not left to waste. We had the opportunities to look at movies, and debates and hear from

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Philip Telesford

people of all different walks of life. And that, Mr. Speaker, is what helped us to turn from a life of waywardness and to refocus a life of purpose. I salute those teachers who taught at the Happy Hill Secondary School and the past students of that school also, some of them joined me in the campaign.

I also salute the St. Paul's Model School. They too taught some skills but I was young. There was the Home Economics Centre, I remember very clearly maybe because I liked my belly during those times, but there was the centre there where we used to do Home Management and a little cooking and baking and so on, and that helped a lot, helped to build you, helped to focus you. There was the community centre and the court, or courts close by where we were able to burn up our waste energy and so, we were able to go into the discipline. I salute the teachers, students of the St. Paul's Model School now called the St. Paul's Government School and the Morne Jaloux R.C. School now called the St. Joseph's R.C. School at Morne Jaloux. Both of these primary schools, Mr. Speaker, I attended, both contributed to my overall development. I am deeply humbled.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to salute the Credit Union Movement in Grenada. We cannot underestimate the contribution of Credit Unions in this country. The Credit Union Movement helped me immensely by way of training in so many different disciplines and development, but especially when it came to corporate governance and management at the highest level. It was the Credit Union who identified me as a leader, pulled me through the system, offered me training. I was able to travel to quite a number of different countries, paid for by Credit Union to attend training and conferences. It is voluntary indeed, you give up your time but when you demonstrate interest and passion for what you do, I think they reward you by way of offering you training in various disciplines, so that in turn you can make a contribution. So I salute the Credit Union Movement this morning, for their continued impact on ordinary lives and on the socio-economic development of the country.

I also wish to identify the places that I worked, as Financial Controller at Coyaba Beach Resorts, a locally owned hotel 4-Star Hotel right here in Grenada. And the founders now deceased, the Cherman family, the siblings are alive and carrying on, demonstrating the importance of succession planning. **(Laughter/Inaudible comments)** Thank you, children not siblings. **(Laughter)**

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches

Hon. Philip Telesford

Hon. Dickon Mitchell

Mr. Speaker, these hotels continue to struggle, local hotels, locally owned, but that's another story for another time, but I worked at the Coyaba for 15 years of my professional life and I learnt quite a lot, because the owners of that property came to work on time, worked late and never abused their own property, by way of simply taking as they want. As a matter of fact I cannot, maybe just once in 15 years I think, the owner of the hotel actually spent a weekend there with his wife, maybe just once I think, demonstrating, leading by example, the importance of discipline.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say thanks to all of these people who have made these deposits in my life. These are the building blocks responsible for my being able to stand at this most Honourable House this morning. I want to thank you also, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to stand and to present to the nation what has made me who I am. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable MP for the Constituency of St George South-East. I now invite the Honourable Prime Minister and rep for the Constituency of St. David to be our final speaker.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Honourable Members, pleasant morning and a pleasant morning to the small audience that's in the Parliament Chamber this morning. I can't help but note that on the last occasion Parliament sat **(laughter)** the Chamber as well as the grounds was overflowing. It probably means we need to get to the point where we move past ceremony and make substance a bit more of what we treat with. I was remarking to my colleague for St. George South-East, that a starting point may perhaps be to allow school children when Parliament is sitting to attend, so that they learn from an early age the values and the principles of our democracy. So that it makes it easier for them to defend and it makes it easier for them to recognise that we should not take our freedom, our liberties and the principles by which our State is founded for, for granted. So I hope, Mr. Speaker, that collectively we can all do more to ensure that, not just when we have pomp and ceremony, that when we have real substantive debate, that the Chamber of the Parliament is also filled and overflowing.

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Dickon Mitchell

I am honoured, Mr. Speaker, to stand this morning, to essentially express my profound gratitude for the confidence placed in me and the Honourable MP's who emanate from the National Democratic Congress. It is not lost on me that I should take no credit for the fact that I stand here today. It is all the doing of the people of Petite Martinique, Carriacou and Grenada; it is all the doing of the Members of the National Democratic Congress; it is all the doing of the citizens of the great parish of St. David. I see a few of them in the audience and if I were to stand and say thank you to everyone who contributed to this journey I will be presenting a speech in line with the great President of Cuba, Fidel Castro (**laughter**) or the late great President of the Bolivian Republic, Hugo Chavez, which means we'll be here all tonight. So I think it really is for me to say a heartfelt thank you to all of those who took part in the democratic process, to all of those who ensured that there was a rebalancing of our democracy, to all of those who ensured that we have both a Government and Opposition, to all of those who ensured that we have a fair gender balance in the House, and to all of those who ensured that we have fair age disparity in the House.

I think the ages range from early twenties to mid to late seventies and that indeed spans, I think the average lifespan of the people of Petite Martinique, Carriacou and Grenada. To the constituents of St. David, you can rest assured that my public service to you will be fearless, will be fair, will be equitable and will be to the best of my ability. I may not please you all the time but I certainly will aim to do so. You may not be happy with me all the time but I will certainly aim to make you happy as best as I can. In order to transform Grenada, it requires the mind set of our citizens to take a "**can do**" attitude, it requires the mind-set of our citizens to not let our size, our education, our lack of resources to become a hindrance to our growth and development.

The fact that a new Government was elected three months ago, when many doubted the possibility, much less the probability of that happening, it's testimony to the fact that Grenadians as a whole have the collective capacity to transform their lives. And I will repeat that. Grenadians as a whole have the collective capacity to transform our lives. Our lives will not be transformed merely by politicians. It will not be transformed merely by the 15 Members of Parliament. It will not be transformed merely by the Public Servants or the Civil Servants. It requires all of us, collectively

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches
Hon. Dickon Mitchell

to want to improve our lives, to want to make Grenada a better place for the next generation of Grenadians. And so as Prime Minister of the country, my job is to lead and govern on behalf of all Grenadians. Half of Grenada cannot transform Grenada. **(Applause)** And we will not be transforming Grenada if we only transform half of the lives of our people. So all of us are required to work together to move Grenada forward. It doesn't mean we should not debate, it doesn't mean we should not disagree; it doesn't mean we should not criticize, because that is healthy. And in fact by doing so, that is part of the transformation process.

But what we must not do is continue with the tribalism, continue the unnecessary personal attacks and demonisation of each other. That is not progressive and it will not move or transform this nation forward. But it means that we must be responsible. Those of us who are required to do our jobs must do our jobs. Those of us who are required to show up and work must show up and work. And we cannot expect that a Government can continue to simply pay people who do not wish to work, when there are jobs available. We cannot expect that we should not educate your children, that we should not expose them to the wonders of the world, we should not cite to them the countless examples of Grenadians throughout the length and breadth of Petite Martinique, Carriacou and the diaspora, who have demonstrated that regardless of their background, their parents' background, the village they were born in, the house they grew up in, that they have managed to overcome the odds and become successful.

And the more we demonstrate this, to not just young Grenadians, because I think there's a suggestion that the focus is on the youth only, but to all Grenadians, that we were truly begin the mind-set change that is required to start transforming Grenada, to start moving Grenada beyond the period of stagnation that has plagued Grenada largely from 1985 to present. And whether it's the US intervention that did psychological damage to us, we need to get up, take our country by the scruff and move Grenada forward for all of us. And we need to ensure that we preserve our democracy, we need to ensure that we build the institutions including this Parliament, to ensure that each and every boy and girl understands that there is nothing mystical, or mysterious about being the Prime Minister, or about being the Speaker of the House, or about being a Member of Parliament to represent the

Personal Explanations – Maiden Speeches

Hon. Dickon Mitchell

Motions

constituency that you either came from, or the constituency that you adopted. So that more of us can feel the need and the urge to serve without fear, favour or victimisation. And that we recognise that there is genuine honour and dignity in public service, because at the end of the day, this is what it is about.

So I wish to thank again the Constituency of St David, the countless volunteers, prayer warriors, financial supporters, the “Sou-sou” group, the “Sou-sou” campaign, the members of the diaspora from Atlanta to Washington to New York to Toronto to London to Germany, who all rallied behind the call to begin the process of transforming Grenada. And I look forward to working and continuing to work with all of the Members of House, with all the citizens of Grenada as we embark upon what in my mind is an exciting journey ahead of all of us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker: Thank you to Honourable Prime Minister and the entire team. If I may, team of maidens, in terms of the parliamentary process. I sat and observed the remarks of each one and it came across very interesting, how individuals respond to one given thing in their own way, very interesting. And this is really what life is all about. Life is about approaching the task in your own way, because we were created as individuals. So I want to commend the Prime Minister and the members of Cabinet for telling us something about themselves, and in some cases telling us more. Alright, so we now move back to the flow of things.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 14 - Motions.

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

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

WHEREAS debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the First Session of the 11th Parliament on the 31st day of August, 2022 was deferred to a date to be fixed;

Motions

BE IT RESOLVED that the debate on the said address be now further deferred to a date to be fixed.

Question proposed.

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

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Address by the Governor-General is always a prelude to the next year's appropriation. In this case it will be the year 2023 and the accompanying annual budget debate. This debate will encompass and look into many of the pronouncements made by the Governor-General. It is in this context, Mr. Speaker, we are proposing that we accept the Governor-General's Gracious Speech, with the understanding that the content of the speech will be debated in a few months. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House, section 27 (a) I now propose an amendment to the said Motion which would read:

BE IT RESOLVED that the said debate on the Address be now accepted.

Question put and agreed to.

Gracious Address accepted.

Motion approved as amended.

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

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Motion number 14 (b) standing in my name, which reads:

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 69 (1) of the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives provides for the election of a Committee to be known as the **Public Accounts Committee**;

AND WHEREAS it is further provided that the Committee be elected at the first Sitting of each session at which business of the House other than the reading of the Throne Speech is transacted;

Motions

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable House doth now elect the Members to the said Committee.

Question proposed.

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

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, thank you. The Standing Orders in section 69 (3) identifies the Leader of the Opposition as Chairman of the Committee. Mr. Speaker, I would like to nominate the following Members to the said Committee: Honourable Peter David, Member for the Town of St. George; Honourable Kate Lewis, Member for St. Andrew North-East; Honourable Salim Rahaman, the Private Sector Representative in the Senate, Senator the Honourable Quinc Britton.

Question put and agreed to.

Members of the Public Accounts Committee appointed.

Motion approved.

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

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Motion number 14 (c), standing in my name, which reads:

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 70 (1) of the House of Representatives Standing Orders provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of a Chairman and two Members to be known as the **Standing Orders Committee** which shall be elected as soon as may be after the beginning of each session;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable House doth now appoint the Members to the said Committee.

Question proposed.

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

Motions

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to nominate the following Members to the Standing Orders Committee: Member for the Constituency of St. Andrew North-West, Honourable Delma Thomas and Member for St. Patrick East, Honourable Dennis Cornwall.

Question put and agreed to.

Members of the Standing Orders Committee appointed.

Motion approved.

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

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Motion, number 14 (d) standing in my name, which reads:

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 70 (2) of the House of Representatives Standing Orders, provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the Speaker, as Chairman and four Members, to be known as the **House Committee**;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable House doth now appoint the four Members to the said Committee.

Question proposed.

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

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following Members be appointed to the said Committee: Member for St. Andrew North-West, Honourable Delma Thomas; Member for St. John, Honourable Kerryne James; Member for St. Patrick West, Honourable Joseph Andall; Member for St. Andrew South-East, Honourable Emmalin Pierre.

Question put and agreed to.

House Committee appointed.

Motion approved.

Motions

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

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Motion number 14 (e) standing in my name which reads:

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 70 (3) of the House of Representatives Standing Orders provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the Speaker as Chairman, and four Members to be known as the **Committee of Privileges** which shall be elected as soon as may be after the beginning of each session;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable House doth now appoint the four Members to the said Committee.

Question proposed.

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

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose the following Members to the said Committee: Honourable Andy Williams, Member for St. George South; Honourable Ron Redhead, Member for St. George North-East; Honourable Peter David, Member for the Town of St. George and Honourable Delma Thomas, Member for St. Andrew North-West.

Question put and agreed to.

Members for the Committee of Privileges appointed.

Motion approved.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for Finance.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Motion 14 (f) standing in my name, which reads:

WHEREAS it was necessary to provide for the services of the State of Grenada for the year 2022 by means of a Supplementary Appropriation Act;

Motions

BE IT RESOLVED that Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2022 for the period 1st January to 31st December, 2022 be approved.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, since this is a Money Bill, I would wish to indicate that I have the consent of the Governor-General to proceed.

Mr. Speaker, the Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2022 for the period 1st January to 31st December, 2022, has become necessary because the sums appropriated in the Appropriation Bill for the year 2022 does not make provision for the expenditure that are set out in the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. As you're aware, Mr. Speaker, the Constitution of Grenada, section 77 (2) makes it mandatory that for the expenditure for the State of Grenada to occur, that that expenditure has to be approved by Law, which means it has to be approved by Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, during the period November to December of 2021, this Honourable House approved an Appropriation Act in the sum of \$1,352,210,635. That Appropriation Act regrettably does not cover the additional expenditure that the Supplementary Appropriation Act is now seeking to cover. And by way of explanation, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things which has happened in 2022, which makes it mandatory for us to seek the approval of Parliament for the Supplementary Appropriation Act, the first of which being the change in Government. As a result, there has been realignment of Ministries, and in particular the creation of a new Ministry known as the Ministry of Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation. Naturally, the Appropriation Bill that was passed in 2021 would not have made any provisions for that.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the High Court Ruling, in what is popularly known as the Pension Case involving public workers, the High Court ruled that public workers were in fact entitled effectively to be paid pensions, as per the respective Pension Acts pursuant to the Constitution. The categories of workers range from teachers, public servants, police officers, prison officers. Mr. Speaker, as part of our commitment to the public workers during the campaign, we indicated that

Motions

we will comply with and honour the Court ruling and pay the pensions. Upon assuming office, we reiterated that commitment and in order to fulfil that commitment, naturally, such a proposal would not have been covered by the 2021 Appropriation Act. The retroactive aspect only of the pensions is estimated at \$60 million. As a result, it has become necessary for this specific sum to be provided for. And, Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the estimates set out in the Appropriation Act, we would see that the payment of the retroactive pension is in fact the second largest single aggregate item.

The Government has set up the Pension Secretariat by the Ministry of Finance. The Secretariat is located at Mt. Wheldale in the Corporate Affairs Office. The staff at Mt. Wheldale are working tirelessly to ensure that the processing of the pensions occurs and that it is paid by 30th November 2020. In order for this to happen, we are required to make the necessary appropriation to pay the pensions.

Sergeant-at-Arms: Deputy Speaker, in the Chair.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Honourable Member, you may proceed.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, as well, the largest single aggregate of estimates under the Supplementary Appropriation Bill falls under the Ministry of Infrastructure, Fiscal Development, Public Utilities, Civil Aviation and Transportation. There are significant sums there and they total in excess of \$80 million. Upon assuming office, particularly as it relates to the Public Sector Investment Programme, there were significant and extensive projects that were on-going, some of which incurred increases in the budgeted figure for a number of reasons, ranging from increase in overall cost of bitumen, which has led to an overall increase in the cost of the road projects, increase in the cost of concrete. In fact, there are 280 on-going or completed concrete projects and as a result, we are required to continue paying for the completion of some of those projects and for paying where some of these projects have already been completed, but funds have not been paid. This includes the Feeder Road Projects, Schools Rehabilitation Projects, the concrete drains, the concrete walls and the concrete road projects.

Motions

I will simply highlight, Madam Deputy Speaker, some of the major ones. So, we have estimated in the appropriation an additional amount of \$20 million to make payments under approximately 280 contractual commitments, in which concrete pavements, retaining walls, drains and culverts have been constructed to protect the integrity of roads. An additional \$6 million towards the Agriculture Feeder Roads; the existing contract was for \$87 million, but these have been since under budgeted, and as a result, the additional sum of \$6 million is required. The renovation of existing schools, an additional \$8 million is required to assist with the completion of the renovation of the schools. The initial allocation was for \$3 million, but over 100 schools are required to be repaired or renovated. And many of the schools including my Alma Mater, the St. David's Roman Catholic School is in a terrible state. So that when the renovation work started, it became apparent that far more extensive renovations were required. And in the case of the St. David's R.C. School, for example, the entire school has to be temporarily relocated.

The retrofitting of the traffic lights, an additional four million sum is being requested. The initial allocation was for \$3 million. However, there were significant delays in the project as a result of COVID-19 and work is now on-going and it is anticipated that this will be completed by December of this year. The St. John's Flood Control or Mitigation Project and that should really read the St. John's River, what is more often known as the River Road River, an additional sum of \$11,500,000 is being requested to fund the on-going contract obligations on that project. And I've simply highlighted some of those so that Honourable Members of this House we understand that a significant portion of these sums as I indicated are in relation to infrastructure, utilities, etc.

There are miscellaneous sums, which cover the Ministry of Health. These sums relate mostly to procurement for the respective hospitals and I will simply highlight some of them. In the case of the Ministry of Health, an additional sum of \$500,000 for salary allocation for 65 Nursing Assistants; an additional sum of \$500,000 for the General Hospital...

Sergeant-at-Arms: The Speaker in the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: You may continue Honourable Prime Minister.

Motions

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. ...an additional sum for \$500,000 for the General Hospital for procuring goods and services; an additional sum of \$100,000 for the Princess Royal Hospital for procurement of supplies, materials, food, fuel etc.

So in summary, Mr. Speaker, the two main significant items in the aggregate are the \$80 million plus for the Ministry of Infrastructure and the \$60 million for the payment of pensions. These two sums total in effect \$140 million. The votes range from the Office of the Governor-General, and many other significant Ministries, but that's the bulk of it. So for instance, the Office of the Governor-General, the sum requested is an additional \$168,000 and that is to meet operational expenses specifically for the Integrity Commission. The Office of the Prime Minister \$100,000, that is to assist with training of the new Ministers over the next four months. The Royal Grenada Police Force, a sum of \$883,000, that is to purchase a fire tender for the dear citizens of Carriacou. An additional sum of \$360,000 for training of 75 new recruits for the Royal Grenada Police Force, which includes things like meals and uniform; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an additional sum of \$1 million. That has arisen because of the rationalisation of the Diplomatic Post. As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, we, as the new Administration have indicated that we are recalling our Ambassadors, so that we can have dialogue with them, and so that new appointments can be made. Naturally, that requires us to treat with outgoing Ambassadors who have to recall the expense of coming home etc. and so a sum of \$1 million is required for that.

There are on-going projects within the Ministry of Finance that requires additional sums. These projects in particular are all projects that have been inherited by this Administration, and which we are continuing and in some instances expenditure were incurred, which were not provided for in the 2021 Appropriation Act, which would have authorised expenditure for 2022. And I will highlight some of those, the Grenada Development Bank Special Loan to the Government of Grenada full time employees. The sum is \$10 million. That expenditure would have occurred prior to our Administration, but at least that provision would have occurred prior to our Administration assuming office, but that had not been budgeted for in the 2021 Appropriation Act. So, although it was approved by the prior Cabinet, there was no

Motions

actual appropriation which sanctioned it, and therefore, we are required to in fact get authorisation from the House. That's \$10 million.

There was also a Grenada Development Bank, Student Loan and Low Cost Housing Loan. The sum there is \$50 million and that was to provide credit facilities for students and for citizens for low income housing. Again, this project was approved by the prior Cabinet, but it had not been budgeted for in the 2021 Appropriation Act. And so, Mr. Speaker, that's simply to give an outlay of the context in which the sum moves to \$190 million.

So in summary, Mr. Speaker, the recurrent aspect of the Appropriation Bill, amounts to \$77,144,438,000 out of the \$194,702,991. So the bulk of it is in fact capital expenditure and a little, about 40%, being the recurrent expenditure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister, and of course, Minister for Finance. We now invite questions. Honourable, is it Honourable Kate Lewis? Yes.

Hon. Kate Lewis-Peters: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while we do accept that Law provides for Supplementary Appropriations to be made to increase allocation for expenses that were not budgeted for, we have to ensure we do so within the confines of the Law. So I wish to comment on the establishment of a new Ministry using the Supplementary Appropriation Budget. As the name suggests supplementary means to add to something that already exist and I therefore want to encourage the new Government to pay close attention to sections 23 through 30 of the Public Finance Management Act. This will assess the legality of creating a new Ministry using a Supplementary Budget especially for something that never existed. Particular attention should be made to section 23 and section 28 again of the Public Finance Management Act.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, supplemental information produced using the new vote 27 for this new Ministry does not provide enough details as to what is expected to be appropriated before the House. So therefore to avoid any legal challenges or complications, we encourage that this be evaluated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Motions

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable MP for St. Andrew North-East. Honourable Modeste-Curwen.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too rise to make a few comments on the Supplementary Budget that has been presented. Mr. Speaker, we are all well aware that this is common practice and that this is allowed by Law but I just wanted to make a couple comments. I want to thank the Prime Minister for being more detailed or the Member for St. David, being more detailed in terms of what some of the monies are going to be used for. Members would recall that during the Finance Committee Meeting, we did ask on our side for some more details and some of them were very broad and didn't give us enough of an understanding of where the monies were going to be used. So for example we had concerns about the infrastructural works, the roads in particular. There are a number of roads that have been started and in the interest of the nation, we were inquiring about some of the roads and I think we were promised, the Minutes should show that we were promised some more details but I am well aware that the time is short and we hope that soon we will get some more details. Maybe some of what the Member related here this morning could be sent to us so that we can digest a little bit.

But in the meantime I just want to raise a couple comments in terms of infrastructural roads in particular and being from the western side and those of my colleagues, I have none on "This Side" who use the western road frequently but I do have colleagues on the "Other Side" and I am sure they can tell you the horror of passing... well I certainly, I had to drive myself this morning and it was a horror story. Thank God I do have a driver but this morning I had to do it. In terms of the Molinere area, the diversion it is very difficult for all who use the road. I know some drivers are much better than others but I am sure all of us look forward to the time when that would be a thing of the past and we would be able to use the established main road that we all know in Molinere area.

Mr. Speaker, my understanding is from the then Minister for Infrastructure in the prior administration in the New National Party administration, we were assured that the contract had been signed with a company because this project was advertised nationally and regionally and my understanding is that a company from

Motions

St. Lucia won the bid or the tender and that company had mobilised into Grenada, they had set up office, they had contracted workers from Grenada as well as had brought over and that is a few months ago. That is prior to the elections and work was supposed to start with a sense of urgency given the situation and the inconvenience which I must add is not only for the persons who travel on this road but it is obvious that the Mt. Moritz road was not built for that kind of frequent or heavy traffic and so it is showing the negative impact of that frequent traffic. And I know it is an inconvenience to the people of Mt. Moritz so it is a national problem and it is also a local problem in the area. Since that contract has been signed and the company had already taken up office in Grenada, my understanding is and we do have legal minds in this Honourable House, my understanding is that there is a running cost... a cost is being accumulated without the necessary work being done or achieved. And therefore I would beg the Government in office to look into the matter to resolve the situation to save the haemorrhaging that we would be experiencing for payment for work that is not done and also to ease the difficulty of navigation I would say or road navigation manoeuvring on the western course.

Mr. Speaker, also there are a number of roads that we would like to know what is happening with. The Leader of the Opposition is not here today, he is unavoidably absent because of an absolute necessity that was scheduled a long time ago and he could not make it. Also Honourable Emmalin Pierre is unavoidably absent, so I just want to mention on the part of the Leader of the Opposition but on behalf of the people who use the Fontenoy farm road that had already been started and I know the Government has said that they are going to continue the farm roads but I have been asked to mention that road which was started and work has stopped on that road and we are asking that, that road continue. So there are many other infrastructural works and I am happy to hear about the schools and so on and I look forward through you, Mr. Speaker, to have "Our Side" to have a detailed list of all of the areas where expenditures are going to be effected.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to raise a few issues. I look at the Supplementary Budget and it is around \$194 million I think exactly \$194,720,991 and this can be broken down by way of \$77 million increase in recurrent expenditure and \$117 million additional capital spending and I note with pride that a number of the projects was started under the New National Party and that they are very necessary projects

Motions

for our country. Now looking at the expenditure, the \$77 million that is sought for and I am no great economist but my understanding by looking at the document, the Midterm Review, is that a good portion of it is for our new Ministry of Mobilisation and therefore it begs the question because I noticed and my understanding again is that there will be increased contracts within that Ministry and I am baffled. I am a little bit confused because I know the Honourable Member for St. David and the Prime Minister had promised in his campaign and I note he is concerned about fulfilling the promises of the campaign and kudos to him for that but that was one of the promises in campaign that the contract workers will no longer be contracted, that they will be permanently employed and now we're implementing a new Ministry which could have given the opportunity to start that new way of dealing with workers making them permanent but we still see increased contracts under that Ministry. So it just begs the question, what is the plan going forward for the promises of removing contracted workers and making them permanent employees.

Mr. Speaker, under the recurrent expenditure there is an anticipated saving in excess of over \$29 million. There are areas... and I am looking at the document, there are areas under goods and services, interest payments and so on that would show you that the estimated amount exceeds the projected outturn for 2022 which means that if the budget gives an expected expenditure and if the outturn is less, then there should be a savings. What I do not see, Mr. Speaker, is a prudent management of those savings, where is it going to be utilised and it seems to me that maybe we need to have another look at it again because out of those areas where there would be savings as I mentioned before, goods and services, interest payments, etc., it may be that we might be looking at more like a need for \$48 million rather than \$77 million but that needs to be looked at. I cannot say for sure since we did not have a list of all the expenses, I am not sure.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to mention under the capital budget. If we look again at the document under capital budget, the budget was for capital about \$333.8 million but the expected outturn now in terms of what we're going to be spending for the year because we're just a few months till the next budget if we follow the schedule that was given to us, it's \$300 million. And therefore it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that there would be some monies that would not be spent and therefore I recognise and we recognise that there are some programmes that were not

Motions

budgeted for and that these need to be addressed. And so monies needs to be allocated but I also want to suggest that maybe the amount that is proposed may not be necessary if we do a reallocation of the amounts that we project will not be spent. There is a reallocation warrant provision in the Public Finance Management Act that allows the Government of the day to reallocate funds from other areas. So maybe we need to revisit that in another Finance Committee meeting or the Government needs to do it by whatever means and maybe to get back to us... not just us on "This Side" but the nation as a whole to let us know what the real supplementary would be and where we can recognise savings to do what has been proposed to do.

Mr. Speaker, also, I noticed in terms of the revenue, we must talk about revenues; if we're going to talk about expenditure, we have to talk about revenues. But I noticed under grants again, Mr. Speaker, that there is a significant increase, as different to what I said before, a significant increase from what was budgeted for 2022 as compared to the estimated outturn now, what we're going to be having, what we can to spend. So it goes from \$175.4 million to \$259.8 million and I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that some of this... to speak to the source of some of that we know on "This Side from us being in Government. So it must be noted that over \$80 million were negotiated by the New National Party Administration with St. George's University and that forms part of that estimated outturn or the monies for that outturn. And also another major source for increase of revenue is a \$28.4 million increase in non-tax revenues.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to ask about two points. One point is that the revenues; the grant from SGU is a one off and therefore if we're looking at a new Ministry that would have recurrent expenditures then we also have to project for 2023 where these monies are going to come from because the grants may be affected, it may be more, it may be less but certainly we would not have some of the non-tax revenues and we would not have the eighty plus million dollars from St. George's University. So I know the Member for St. David and our Prime Minister has been very happy with what he met at the Treasury but we have to ensure that whatever measures we take are sustainable. And it would be useful to know what would comprise non-tax revenues, what fees would be added because we know that there is a decrease in what Customs... because of the Cap in Imports at Customs that there would be a decrease in revenue so how does Government or the Ministry

Motions

of Finance plan to juggle those figures to ensure that we cover all of those schools, all of those major projects that we are going to have and that they are covered for the next few months.

Mr. Speaker, mention was made by my colleague about the new ministry and we on “This Side” we look forward for information on that and some more detailed information as to where these monies would be spent but very importantly I just want to urge that we look back again at the savings that could be realised based on the midterm document page 19 table 4 of the midterm document and we may find that we may have some savings and it would be wonderful if we could achieve all of what is projected to be done for 2022. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, Honourable MP for the Constituency of St. Mark. Honourable Dennis Cornwall.

Hon. Dennis Cornwall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to make a few comments as Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Physical Development, Public Utilities, Civil Aviation and Transportation. I also want to express my support to the Prime Minister for the Supplementary Estimates that was presented to the House today and given the fact that my Ministry appears to be one of the Ministries that has the lion share in this appropriation here, I think it is worthy to basically provide some answers to some of the issues that was raised by the Member for St. Mark. I’ll begin by saying that more than likely all the projects that were presented here for additional resources to be provided for started prior to the elections or during the former administration and therefore when I hear about we want a list of all those projects and so on and we have doubts as to what those projects are, it amazes me what four months can do. You were in administration, those projects were started and now after four months you indicating that you don’t have an idea what those details are.

I want to also talk about the Molinere landslip project and I am raising it specifically...

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Modeste-Curwen.

Motions

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order. Since I am the one who spoke about the projects primarily I need to clarify that it's not that I do not know what were the projects under the New National Party administration. But this is a new Government, Government with a new persuasion and we didn't have a Ministry of Mobilisation before and therefore I think it is incumbent on the Government to inform us on "This Side" and the nation what exactly are the projects that are going to be undertaken. I am very clear on the projects that were scheduled under the New National Party Government. I thank you.

Hon. Dennis Cornwall: Mr. Speaker, while I believe that the projects...

Mr. Speaker: Go ahead Honourable.

Hon. Dennis Cornwall: ...that are earmarked under the Ministry of Infrastructure has nothing to do with the Ministry of Implementation and therefore I wish to continue in my line of agreement on the issue that was raised. The Molinere project has been one of those projects that were cited as being delayed by this current administration. They said that all things were in place to have that project start swiftly. I wish to bring to the attention of the Parliament that whereas there were initiatives taken to basically award a contract for the start of the Molinere project, the fact remains that there were a number of outstanding issues that had to be resolved. And even today as I speak we have now come to the conclusion that this project will commence on October 10, notwithstanding there were issues of compensation for the lands that were owned by people who lived in that particular location. There were matters of actually accepting the contractor's equipment on Island and they probably needed to get concession for those as well as other matters that had to be resolved. So I therefore believe to state that this administration unnecessarily delayed the start of that project is incorrect and we need to set that record straight.

I also want to mention briefly about the over 280 concrete type projects that are listed here with sums of over \$20 million being appropriated for this. The fact remains, when we got into office, most of those projects were either started, in progress but not completed and so on. Contractors were working, they were not paid and therefore we had to make provisions so that these contractors can get their

Motions

monies at the end of the day and we save our country the waste of having to spend some monies and some of the projects were incomplete.

I also want to talk about the Feeder Road Project. And one of those roads under that Feeder Road Projects includes the La Borie project. Now you may hear from the people in the St. George South-East complaining bitterly about the conditions of the road. The question is, prior to our administration coming into office, there was outstanding monies owed to the contractor and therefore we had to basically sit down and deal with that particular matter. Up until today we have not yet been able to pay that contractor for work done because the former administration didn't address it and we are faced with a situation now that the road was practically stopped and we have to find monies to pay the contractor for that work. So the La Borie people who have had months of pain and they still continue to suffer on that road, we as an administration could not have done anything until that Supplementary Appropriation was made for that particular project. We have other roads, for example, the Mt. Cuma road that is basically a road that was built to allow for the middle trucks and larger vehicles and so on to be able to move from St. George's to the west coast. That road also has been delayed for a number of reasons, there are cost overruns on this road and we also have to make sure that this road is completed. Because if we start that Molinere project right now, it would show that there isn't an alternative road for those trucks to take material to the site and therefore it is keen of my Government to ensure that, that particular project in Mt. Cuma be completed to facilitate the movement of trucks and material from the east to the west and to ensure that, that Molinere project is built and built within the timeframe that we have agreed upon.

There are several other projects within here for example the schools that we have had to rehabilitate because we want to make sure that the schools were in good conditions for the reopening of school. Thankfully we were able to achieve that in a timely fashion although there are one or two schools that are still not yet in condition for schools to be functioning there. I want to say also that the de-bushing programme that we have had to basically undertake because we are in the rainy season and the roadways were affected by the growing grass throughout the country. So we had to basically find monies to basically allow our roadways to be cleaned, we have instituted one such programme so far, we started on August 22

Motions

and culminated on September 16. There is another period when we are going to continue that de-bushing beginning in November into December and again provision is made in the Supplementary to allow that to happen. There are other projects in here which I am not going to go through the list because the Honourable Prime Minister would have gone through most of them but I am saying that all that is provided for under the Ministry of Infrastructure is valid because we need to basically bring to conclusion all these projects in a timely manner.

In addition to this I wish to mention one thing, that whereas some of the contracts would have been approved prior to our administration coming into office, we all know that raw material, steel, asphalt, everything has gone up because of what is happening in the world market today with things like oil and other things and therefore a contract that was signed let's say seven months back, the price that was used for coming up with the contract sum is no longer applicable so you find a situation where there will be increase in cost for several of the on-going projects that we have to undertake in this country. And I therefore want to basically posit here in this House that unless we are being realistic about what is happening we would not see the merit in some of the provisions that we are requesting here. I thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much Honourable MP for St. Patrick-East.

Hon. Andy Williams: Mr. Speaker, let me just add to what my brother Cornwall just stated. Mr. Speaker, at times when a contract is signed there is a notion that means that work is ready to start but in the case of the Molinere and we have heard it over and over again and which to the notion indicate that we have stopped work there or stopped the process to continue the work. Let me just say that this may be misleading. Number one, a contract was signed, Mr. Speaker, but were the work permit ready? No. A contract was signed but was the concessions and so that was given to the St. Lucian Company ready? The answer is no. A contract was signed but was negotiation completed with the land owners at Molinere? No. A contract was signed but was any consideration taken for the houses on top that could be affected at the start of construction? No. As a responsible Government we find it necessary to do due diligence before we start this project.

Motions

(Applause) We wanted to start and yes we could have gone ahead and start without the consent of the people there but we thought that is not the way we do things as a Government. We have respect, we have honour, we have dignity and we decided to get the people involved and to enter into negotiations with them before we actually touch anything there on the property in Molinere.

So we are working speedily, the Ministry of Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation may be misinterpreted by some Members. And let me just say that this Ministry is not just limited to infrastructure projects, this Ministry revolve at the centre of government and we are here to ensure that all projects and programmes are implemented on time because we have seen from the past that Grenada has suffered from a low implementation rate when it comes to projects and programmes.

(Applause) And by that we were losing grants and so in the process, grants which was approved and at the end is there to alleviate poverty and so, at the end of the day. And our Government, our Prime Minister thought that it was necessary to create such a Ministry to ensure that we do not lose these grants and to ensure that Grenada increases the implementation rate so that things can be done more efficiently and effectively.

So the Ministry of Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation, is just not limited to infrastructure, but we are there to ensure that projects and programmes are implemented in a speedy manner. And we were instrumental together with the Ministry of Infrastructure to ensure that the Molinere Project would be started in the fastest possible manner and also in a responsible way.

So let me just say this, the Ministry of Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation, and I'm just saying this, Mr. Speaker, for knowledge, this Government gave its word to the people of Grenada that we are going to do things in a transformative way. And we pride ourselves on having a Transformative Agenda, and we cannot be talking the talk and not decide to walk the walk, and we have put resources behind this Ministry to ensure that things is not continued the same old way. It is time we as a country elevate our level and this Ministry will ensure that our level will be elevated and respect once again can come to the country of Petite Martinique, Carriacou and Grenada. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Motions

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable MP for South St. George. The Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, if there are no other contributions from any Member of this House, I'd probably just want to summarise and respond to a couple of the comments raised by the Honourable MP for St. Mark.

Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying we certainly appreciate that it's incumbent upon us, to just not pay attention to expenditure, but also to pay attention to revenue collection. The fact is, as I think the Honourable Member recognised, we can't spend without authorisation, so we are in fact here because the Law requires us to be here. And so the proposed expenditures have to be authorised. We certainly will be fiscally prudent to ensure that we in fact keep the expenditure beneath proposed, our budgeted expenditure set out in the Appropriation Bill.

And, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that the Permanent Secretary and his hard working staff at the Ministry of Finance would have done everything possible to ensure that savings were realised and if funds could be reallocated from current expenditures to reallocate same within the capital budget to also reallocate same.

Well I'll give an example of why we're here and we can take the Mt. Cuma road. The Supplementary Appropriation explanatory note clearly indicates that the sum that was budgeted for this road was \$3 million. To date, \$11 million has been spent to construct this road and it is not completed. So let me repeat that. Three million dollars was budgeted for the Mt. Cuma road, to date, excluding what we are here seeking, an additional eight million dollars has been spent on constructing this road and it is not complete. And the \$8 million was reallocated within the capital budget to take it to \$11 million. The reality is an additional sum is required to get this road completed, and as the Honourable Member for St. Patrick East indicated, and as the Minister for Infrastructure, this road is required to be completed if we are going to build the Moliniere road, because that road is required so that the trucks can bring the material to the Moliniere road. So in effect, even if the contract was signed, even if the lands surrounding the Moliniere area were acquired, even if the concessions were granted and even if the equipment is on Island, if you do not have that bypass road completed, we will not be able to do the Moliniere road unless we

Motions

carry materials all the way round the East Coast and all the way down the West Coast.

That is the reality that we've met and it is the reality we are dealing with, with a view to getting this bypass road completed, so that work on the Moliniere road can start. And I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Mark, it is a national issue and it is frankly a national embarrassment not to have the main artery that runs up the West Coast traversable. And it has been this way for a long time, and so I too have empathy for the residence of Mt. Moritz who've had to endure the kind of traffic they've had to endure on roads which clearly were built for horse drawn carriage back in the eighteenth century. But I want to make a bigger point, since 1985 frankly we have not planned the development of the infrastructure of Petite Martinique, Carriacou and Grenada.

The Western main road, the Eastern main road still has bridges that cannot accommodate two-way traffic. We have twenty and forty ton cement trucks running up and down like race cars on the roads. We have twenty and forty foot trailers running up and down like race cars on the road. Our infrastructure cannot sustain this and we are slowly and surely crumbling or falling in to the sea or into the rivers. There is an on-going situation in Levera where the sea, if we don't take action quickly is going to eliminate that road. There is an on-going situation in Brizan where again the road may be falling into the sea shortly.

So the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that we have to take a thorough review, rather than piecemeal reactionary approach to Grenada's infrastructure. If there is one thing that needs transformation in Grenada is our infrastructure. **(Applause)** And so this Supplementary Appropriation to address this is really frankly piecemeal, purely to get the Molinere situation under control, so that some level of normalcy could be brought back to the residents of Molinere, to the residents of Mt. Moritz and particularly the residence of St. Mark, St. John and St. Patrick West, who are required every day, particularly those who commute on buses to go through the nightmare of this extensive detour on roads that frankly are driveways in some instances. At a certain point in Mt. Moritz you swear you're driving into somebody's yard when you drive up. **(Laughter)**

So the reality is, Mr. Speaker, certainly the staff at the Ministry of Finance and the staff at the Ministry of Infrastructure have done everything in terms of

Motions

reallocating, realigning the various warrants to address the infrastructure situation, but the truth is and that is the truth, many of these projects were started, the budget was read in November... I remember it distinctly, because I was sitting where, right where some of my colleagues from St. David are sitting. And I recall a distinct line in the budget referring to WRB and GRENLEC's lawyer; I don't know who that is. **(Laughter)** It was read in November, Elections were in June, eight months, Mr. Speaker, and the bulk, if not all of these infrastructure projects were commenced in 2022.

It was an election budget; it was a public sector investment budget. There are Cabinet Submissions authorising concrete works in June. There are Cabinet Conclusions authorising lighting of playing fields in June. We are facing all of that. There are people lighting playing fields all over country, like Christmastime. Somebody has to pay for it. The \$15 million GDB student loan and low income housing loan and Government of workers loan were announced by the then Honourable Minister for Finance and MP and former Leader of Government's Business. There's a trend, Mr. Speaker, you see that the Leader of Government's Business is always coming from St. George South-East. **(Applause/laughter)** These programmes were announced after the budget had been read, so clearly they were not budgeted for.

When we pointed out that employees who were on contract will not be able to get loans, because the bank is going to tell you, 'boss you're working for one year you can't get a loan,' that was the response of the Government. It was to say we will then give you a loan through GDB. So all we are saying, it was not appropriated for, it was not approved by the House and therefore we are now required and according to the Honourable Leader of Opposition, Government is a continuum. We can't say we are not paying the contractors, we can't say we didn't issue the contracts and so we are not paying you. Government is a continuum, they are citizens of Grenada, whether the contracts were well negotiated or not, we're stuck with them, we are required to comply with them and we need the Appropriation Act to ensure as the Honourable MP for St. Patrick East indicated, that these contractors are paid, that the work is completed, so that we don't have the wastage that happens and we can move on. But the larger issue, Mr. Speaker, is the infrastructure of Grenada requires

Motions

significant transformation and we are about to enter the next budget cycle and we will address those issues there.

I also want to raise one other point, Mr. Speaker. The former administration had the fortune or misfortune of being able to call a state of emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. That allowed the former administration to suspend the operation of the Fiscal Responsibility Act and to essentially suspend the operations of what is called the FROC, the Financial Oversight Review Committee. There is no more state of emergency in Grenada, and so when we go into the next budget cycle we will be required to comply with the three rules that are set out under that Act, for prudent fiscal management of the affairs of Grenada. So our expenditure, particularly, must comply with that Legislation. Therefore, the opportunity for instance to pay the pension arises now. So it is not just a question of the campaign promise, the reality is it arises now, and therefore we have the fiscal space to do it now and we must do so, because it may not be permissible under the Fiscal Responsibility rules which will be in place the next budget cycle.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that indeed we are happy that revenue actually collected to July of 2022 is more than the projected revenue. The Mid-Year Review prepared by the Ministry of Finance clearly indicates that for total revenue collection from tax, grant, non-tax revenue, that the actual collections are more than the projected. Now that's a good thing, or someone may say the Ministry of Finance is not aggressive enough in its projections or in its budgeting, but that's something for another debate. But that is reality, so we are mindful and we are happy that the revenue collections are in fact doing better than projected.

And it is because of that, Mr. Speaker, we were in fact able to address and take some of the fiscal measures that we've taken, to ease the burden on the citizens of Grenada as it relates, for example, to removing the cap on gasoline, to eliminating the Petrol Tax up to December. Because essentially it means that no tax revenue from the sale of petrol is being collected, it is recognising that revenue is performing better than projected, that we are able to fiscally and prudently take those measures to help ease the burden on average Grenadians. And so when we took the decision which will be implemented as of October 1, to cap the freight rates back to 2019 levels, to ease the burden on the average citizen, we did so in the context of recognising that revenue collection to date from the Customs Department is more

Motions
Bills

than projected. If it was less, then it would be a far more difficult, if not perhaps impossible decision, but that's not the case. Right! And so, yes over the next four months there will be some likely reduction in Customs Revenue, there will be a reduction in the Petrol Tax, but the other aspects of revenue is performing well.

And so for example, when we talk about non-tax revenue, Members of this Honourable House are well aware that Grenada has a Citizenship by Investment Programme, it's not tax-revenue, it is non-tax revenue. It is a service that is being sold, Grenada citizenship and persons obviously contribute either directly to the National Transformation Fund or to Government revenues by investing in an approved CBI Project. I will also indicate that we too are robustly pursuing grant funding in every way we can and I want to take the opportunity to inform this Honourable House, and I will give credit where credit is due, the former administration had begun discussions with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to receive some grant funding. We have continued those discussions and I'm happy to report that \$10 million US dollars in fact has been made available by the Saudi Arabian Government towards the people and Government of Grenada as grant funding. And so as I **(applause)** started this morning by saying I take no credit where no credit is due. **(Laughter)** I'm happy, Mr. Speaker, to indicate that the credit is due to the prior administration for initiating those discussions. And so, Mr. Speaker, I certainly would like of course to urge you all, our Members to support the passing of the Appropriation Bill as we continue in this morning's proceedings. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for Finance. Members we have had the delivery from Minister for Finance, we also had his final comments, what I call summary comments. We've listened to the inputs from both sides, and we must now move to the area of voting.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 15 - Bills.

Bills

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I beg to introduce for the first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, the Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2022.

Clerk: A Bill to make provisions for the Appropriation of an additional sum of one hundred and ninety four million, seven hundred and two thousand nine hundred and ninety one dollars Eastern Caribbean currency to service the State of Grenada for the fiscal year 1st January to 31st December, 2022 shortly entitled Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2022.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the House be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all its stages at this Sitting.

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Prime Minister.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I don't have any further to add, in terms of the presentation of the Bill. I suspect that the other Honourable Members of the House do not wish to engage in any further debate, but I'm subject to them indicating otherwise.

Mr. Speaker: Alright, if that be the case.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Bills
Adjournment

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: 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.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and that the Bill was passed without amendment.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I now move again (**laughter**) to beg that the Bill be read a third time.

Question proposed.

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.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Prime Minister.

Adjournment

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the adjournment of the House sine die.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Sorry. I acknowledge Honourable MP for St. Andrew North-West.

Hon. Delma Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it will be remiss of me not to stand here in this Honourable House, to express my deepest gratitude to the Constituency of St. Andrew North West, for electing me a third consecutive time, in this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, I do not take this lightly, at a period when there's an 11% swing against the party I represent, I stand tall as the Member for the Constituency of St. Andrew North West, a historic event Mr. Speaker, because no other representative was elected three consecutive times. My brother Alleyne Walker has been elected twice, lost once, then go to a next constituency, came back and maybe once or twice again, but never three consecutive times, and for that I am grateful (**applause**), for that I appreciate the trust of the people of St. Andrew North-West.

And I stand here today to say, Mr. Speaker, when I got involved in representational politics twelve years ago, I ran in 2008, lost, went to work in St. George's University and decided that I wanted to serve the people of St. Andrew's North-West and by extension Grenada, it was never service to myself and my family. It was never a decision to enrich myself and to enrich my family and I stand here in this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, with my character intact, that for the two terms that I've served as the Minister of Government, as a Parliamentary Representative before, I have always thrived to serve the people of St. Andrew North-West, despite of political affiliation. I've strived to work with all people despite their religious and other belief.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it was never a time when I thought that it was a time to enrich my bank account, or to form any form of other means of income from Government. I've never used my power being in Government to get any additional revenue. And I think I need to make that clear here, Mr. Speaker. You know leading

Adjournment

up after the election, I remember speaking to some other on the “Other Side” and say, you know sometimes there’s the perception and sometimes some people make it a fact, a reality, that all politicians are corrupt, and so whenever you hear something negative about a politician, you tend to run with it and say well it’s factual, and they are involved in corruption. They have companies, they have whatever, but I can stand strong here this afternoon, this morning, Mr. Speaker, to say that I Delma Thomas of Mt. Horne, the daughter of the late Fitzroy Charles, who may be smiling because he had taught me well. I’ve grown up with my step-mother Sherma Charles who’s a lecturer at TAMCC, who took me in from a really poor family and took me in to make sure I go to school and get a proper education. I know that they are proud of me, because they have taught me well.

And so I say to the people of St. Andrew North-West, I will never betray your trust, never did and I’ll continue to serve you with dignity in this Honourable House. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you to Honourable MP for St. Andrew North-West. Do I see the... yes Honourable MP for St. Andrew North-East.

Hon. Kate Lewis-Peters: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just as my colleague here, I rise to express my deepest gratitude to the people, the constituents of St. Andrew North-East for once again putting their trust and confidence in me, re-electing me as the Member of Parliament. Just as I did in the past term, I will continue to serve them with honour and dignity. I will continue to be their voice, their advocate and to ensure that they too receive their fair share of Government assistance and Government resources. We have formed a great partnership, Mr. Speaker, and I want to assure them that this partnership will continue for the next term and beyond. As indicated, I will be their voice and their advocate and many of them has already come to me and they are seeking clarification as to where they can access government assistance, government resources. I myself, I want to find out. Some have indicated that they were asked to go to a party office, how unethical. I am not sure, I was not given that information but I am here seeking clarity on behalf of the people of St. Andrew North-East as I represent them in this House and to

Adjournment

ensure that they can benefit from Government assistance in the way they should just as every elected Member of Parliament, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to thank all my colleagues for the guidance, the support, my family members who continue to be there with me through thick and thin, the members of St. Andrew's North-East Constituency branch for their hard work and commitment through the years and even during this election campaign. And though we did not get the overall results that we were looking for, we are comforted by the fact that we stand undefeated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable MP for St. Andrew North-East for your contribution. And then I see the Honourable MP for the town of St. George.

Hon. Peter David: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to everybody. Mr. Speaker, let me start by thanking you. Mr. Speaker, I hadn't known you for many years and I only got to know you when I became the Minister for Agriculture and we sat on committees together, we worked together on some difficult projects, some easy projects and I have always known you to be a fair man. We did speak some politics, I did give you some advice, I'm not sure if you took it but here you are today, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to have you here today adjudicating as it were between the party.

And speaking about adjudication, I want to congratulate all of the Members here. Some of you I have known for year, some of you I've known your parents for years and some of you I practiced Law with and became very good friends. So we know each other, we are colleagues. Some of you I went to school with, I see my brother Lennox Andrews, a distinguished colleague from the GBSS. I want to say this, somebody called me a couple of weeks ago and I made a promise to that person, it's not a politician. He said Peter promise me and I said I will keep that promise and the promise is this, that in this Parliament I will continue to do what I believe is good for Grenada. When we come here, we come here to do the people's business. We come here to ensure that when we leave we can look back and say yes because we all will serve terms and we all will leave. We can look back at our tenure and say yes we did what was good for country. Now I promised as I said to him that I will make constructive criticism, that I will support what I think should be

Adjournment

supported, I will criticise what I think should be criticised, I will oppose what I think should be opposed, for example the Supplemental Bill that was just passed, we support it of course. Questions will be asked; that is your job to answer it, so we have to ask. And I think my friend from St. Patrick West made the point that we would ask questions, we will drill you, we will interrogate the issues but that is our job. That is what the system of Government that we have inherited has put us here to do.

We are colleagues here; our people put us here, not our parties, our people. Of course we ran as members of a party but the people in our constituencies are who we serve here and as the Prime Minister said and Prime Minister let me congratulate you as I turn to you. We've had a history together, practicing Law, as friends, I am truly happy to see you in that position and I do hope you all the best in that role. But we would disagree but always be as my colleague said, respectful and that is what we have to be, respectful. I have served in this House twice in opposition, twice in Government, twice in Opposition, once in Opposition with NDC and once in Opposition now with the NNP. Once in Government with the NDC and once in Government with the NNP and I do believe that I have learnt something in that process. The continuum in all of that is that I represent the same people.

The issues confronting the people of the Town of St. George do not change from year to year or from Government to Government, they are the same. And when I stood here representing them as a Member of the NDC before I was... some people said I left, but before I was expelled, **(laughter)** I represented the people for the Town of St. George calling for the same things as when I represent the people as a Member of the NNP. And I want to say this, that I have found over the years for the most part "Both Sides" carry on well, we do well. Our political parties are merely vehicles through which we get here, the Constitution does not recognise your party. The Constitution says you come here to represent the people of St. George South-East, the people of St. John, people for the Town of St. George, that is what we do here. So let us disagree, let us argue, let us sometimes appear to be fighting our issues but let us always be respectful. There is always a temptation to believe that because we criticise, we are opposing. I saw it a minute ago, my colleague here did not oppose the Supplemental Bill, she did not. She supports it, she was just inquiring, that's all she was doing. We support it, we know that in Government when

Adjournment

you budget... my brother Lennox Andrews, he was in the Ministry of Finance, that you budget but you always come back with Supplementary Bills because you have to adjust when you hear things come up that you don't expect but we learn as we go along.

Our country brothers and sisters is already and my colleague used the word tribalised enough, let us not further tribalise it. So when we sit here let people say you see we can work together and maybe when we do that and maybe we can find constructive ways to do things here maybe our communities may look at it and say maybe we need to come together too and fix this and fix that. Maybe our communities will see us as a reflection of what they can be. So let's do our best to serve our people.

Sometime in the future there will be a next election and we can go back to the tribal war out there. Our Westminster that we inherited causes us, I say unfortunately sometimes, we too tribal, that is just my personal view that the system itself forces us to be tribal. I saw it happen in the Referendum where things the "Other Side" agreed with they opposed, but that is the nature of the tribal system that we have inherited. I know one of these days I know we would make efforts to change some aspects. I am not seeing a nod anywhere over there but I expect to see a nod **(laughter)** because sometimes the system is a little bit too tribal. We would not agree on everything but let us be respectful and on the other thing, the Prime Minister did it towards the end, let us give credit where credit is due. Every single Government that has governed this country has done good things, not everything that has done by a Government is bad and not everything that is done is good. Recognise when something good is done, the Molinere Project it started, now you have some issues of how it was done but it was started by the previous Government and you recognise that the Saudi money that was indicated and I really commend the Prime Minister for saying yes, that was done by the previous Government not... listen, if we begin to do that, we begin to demonise, then we begin on a slippery slide down the hill and I'm not the grandfather of the House but in the absence of the father **(laughter)** I may be giving too much advice but here I am. My sister here has been much longer than I am. So let us not have the arrogant view that we alone can do it. Somebody said that and I am not saying anybody disagrees, that was said by Members on the "Other Side" the Grenada you see today has advanced many years.

Adjournment

I see my good friend the President of the Senate in the room, the President of the Senate knows that this struggle for Grenada has been going on for decades and we have made progress but there is a lot more progress. You know there is never an end to the struggle for development, there's not an end. Every time you develop there's further development, so let's give credit to our ancestors and our forefathers and previous politicians who have done well and when you believe they have done not well, criticise; that is part of the cause.

So my brothers and sisters, coming together is not a political tool, it's a development imperative. We have too little resources in this country to further divide it, "This Side and "That Side", let us come together to build. Of course we belong to different sides but we work together. So I just want to leave that short piece of advice.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my constituents. The people of the Town of St. George, they have elected me 4 times, twice with NNP, twice with NDC, I think that's an indication of me having a little bit of juice in the Town of St. George, my record is there. I want to commend some of the achievements over the last years, we have the river project. I know my friend from St. Patrick West is continuing to ensure that, that project proceeds. There are a lot of other projects, roads, there are a lot of roads in Town, we will talk about that eventually. There are a whole lot of achievements that we have in the Town of St. George. I don't have the time today, maybe at some other time I will discuss it.

But there is one thing I want to urge, the Minister for Health is not here but I want to say this that I understand that the Hospital Emergency Wing is going to be opened soon. It was built with the assistance of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and I think there was a Cabinet Conclusion some time ago to name that Wing the Dr. Winston Thomas, after my good friend and a good human being Dr. Winston Thomas. I will urge my friends in the Cabinet to please; I can't demand it but please give Dr. Thomas his recognition. I think I got a date sometime soon that it is going to be reopened. I hope as MP for the Town of St. George I will find an invitation somewhere on my desk but Dr. Winston Thomas is the most important person to be there and he cannot be there because he died some years ago after giving service. He is one doctor who was trained in Cuba, never opened a private practice... you could call him 4:00 in the morning. I used to have some problems once with some

Adjournment

pain, I would call Doctor Thomas three in the morning, I will pick him up, he will go to the Hospital, he will assist me and sit there and he did that not because I am an MP because he did it with every other person in the Town of St. George if the need arises. So I am urging you on behalf of the people of the Town of St. George, let Dr. Thomas name please be emboldened on the Emergency Wing. And he served in the Emergency Room at the Hospital for years, public service, a Cuban trained... he recognised that he got trained because of the sacrifice of the Cuban people and he gave back. I think my friend, the Member for St. Patrick's West will certainly support that. Him and Doctor Thomas I know had a relationship going back not only to Cuba but they were both, I think Members of the MBPM, I think... thinking aloud, Mr. Speaker. **(Laughter)** I do apologise, it's just a thought. As I was looking at him... Anyway, congratulations to everybody who won, congratulations my brother, congratulations.

And to my colleagues on my side, we fought the good fight. As sister Delma said there was a serious swing that some of us were able to withstand. We stand here today representing the people in our constituencies but not only the people in our constituencies, the thousands of people throughout Grenada who need representation of one sort or another to have their voices be heard. I think the key message I want to leave today is let us come together. I know many of you very well, we've had conversations over the years, we would disagree here, sometimes harshly but let the people see us working. People send us here and I say this in closing, sometimes we make mistakes that people send us here to do what we want, people send us here to do what they want us to do for them;, that is why we're here. We are here serving the people. I have done it for the last 20 years here; it's not an easy job to represent people but we do that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again to the Clerk and to all of those who... we look forward to working with you in Parliament and thank you for the service you've been giving since we've been elected. I know it's not easy especially now. And, Mr. Speaker, again I know you would do a wonderful job. I know your personality is one that tries to find common ground. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Adjournment

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, very much Honourable MP for the Town of St. George for your spirited input. And now we would listen to the MP for the Constituency of St. Mark.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, after these very impassioned deliveries by my colleagues, and especially the all-encompassing, touching every area, presentation by my colleague to my immediate left, there is not a whole lot one can say that would make you know, make an impression at this time. And so, next time, I'm definitely going to ask for the floor first, **(laughter)** if there's a next time, make it easier. But I want to join my colleagues in extending congratulations to the team on the "Other Side", to my colleagues on the "Other Side." Some of you, I know, some of you, I don't know well and some of you, we go back a long ways and some of you have used photo with me to make a Facebook, **(laughter)** whatever, but I am, you know, I am here and I am here to serve my people and my country.

I am thankful to the people of St. Mark, of course, for re-electing me for another term, and also the people of Grenada, who have been very warm with me, some of them are from other political persuasions, but they have been, you know, very friendly. And I trust that we can take something that the Member for the Town of St. George said that we are not here as party representative, although in a sense we are, but the Constitution says that we are here to serve the people. And, Mr. Speaker, I know that our role will obviously be different. And it will take a while to adjust from coming 15/15 three times to now be in Opposition. But certainly you know, I am committed, I think we are all committed to carrying out our role and function effectively and with gusto and with the energy that we did when we were in Government.

I trust that in this House, and also in our constituencies, there will be a role for us. The Parliament, the Houses of Parliament has given us offices and I hope that these will be respected and will be used appropriately. And there are other offices in other Ministries, like you have the Ministry of Works and others in different constituencies. And I just would like to urge that the tribalism would abate a bit, to where people are sent to the Parliamentary Office where appropriate, or they are sent to other offices, like the works office where appropriate, and we do not have

Adjournment

lines in people's private property, lines of people going to ask for the bushing or for that sort of thing. I think it is taking the partisan thing a little bit too far. They don't have to come to me in the Parliamentary Office, but certainly we should ensure that there are appropriate offices in each constituency that persons can go to and the questions are asked, where do we go for this? Where do we go for that? Will this happen? And I think it is incumbent upon the Government in office to let people know where they can go because it's not up to us to tell people where they can go because we might be very wrong. But I think that is one of the things that we need to deal with and I'm sure we will bat in our crease as Opposition and we know our role, but I think there is definitely a role for us.

I will be happy to serve with the "Other Side." I have offered with some hesitancy because I don't expect it to be taken up. But I will be happy to serve with the "Other Side," I have offered with some hesitancy because I don't expect it to be taken up. But I will be happy to serve my country, wherever there is a bipartisan opportunity that could redound to the benefit of our people. And I think we have to know the difference, we have to know when to draw the line. And I have learned to a great extent, when to do that. And I think we can still serve our country, and our people and our constituents, while we still observe the functions of the party, because we come... we are here because we represented a Party, and none of us like the role of independent, because an independent person doesn't really work in our setting.

So, I want to again, congratulate everybody here. And, to appeal to all, let us work in the interest of our country, and wherever we can do certain things together then we do and whenever we have to draw the line in the appropriate time, we will. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, no, it would be remiss of me, if I didn't say that I thank the House for electing me as Deputy Speaker of the House, and I'd be honoured to work with you and the Clerk and the team to again serve this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen. We have actually come to the end. I just wish to make these... Oh, sorry, I didn't see his light, the head of the Clerk. Mr. Prime Minister.

Adjournment

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought it would be fitting for me to end by coining this phrase “I didn’t drink the blood of tribalism, I drank the blood of patriotism.” And so, I can assure my colleagues and the public that there will in fact be multiple opportunities for bipartisanship in the House, in Government and in Public Service. And I probably want to start since it has been raised on this issue. I hope never again, we don’t confuse the role of Parliament, with the role of Government. **(Applause)** Because unlike some of my colleagues, I am yet to have a Parliamentary Office to serve the people of St David and part of that reason is because we confused intentionally, in my view, the role of Parliament with the role of Government. And so, I too, I’m happy to hear my learned friend from St Mark indicate that in fact, we need to respect the office of the MPs as distinct from what I call Central Government Services, so that we don’t get to a situation where when there is a change in Government, an MP does not have an office to serve him. And so, I’m not in any of the Committees that address our various privileges and so on here. But I will start by saying, if we’re going to strengthen democracy, Parliament and Parliamentary Democracy, and MPs offices need to be given the respect that they are due, so that MPs can in fact properly serve the constituents who have elected them. So as it stands now, yes, I’m operating and I’m saying operating, I have to see my constituents, but there is, as yet it’s work in progress. No office for the MP for St. David. And, worst still I was told it’s only a rental. So if the office itself is not suitable for an office, well, crapaud smoke my pipe because somehow it has to be outfitted as an office. St. David has no urban centre. It has no congregation, no street where everybody limes on either side, where people build offices for rental. So, if you’re going to rent any place, invariably it’s somebody’s house or some other building that was knocked into an office and it has to be retrofitted. It’s being retrofitted, I don’t know who’s paying for it, but it’s being retrofitted. And I’m making that point to say, we have subsumed Parliament to the Government.

The Vote for Parliament was being ran out of the Prime Minister’s office, and then it was contracted out to a private entity. When I became the Prime Minister and I inquired about the state of Parliamentarians offices, because it’s Parliamentarians for “Both Sides,” I was told that there was a contract and that the contract was terminated. So, I’m putting this on record, I didn’t terminate any contract. I was told that the contract was terminated. I’ve heard of complaints by people about not being

Adjournment

paid for services. Well, I can say this, from the 24th of June to now, no one has serviced the people of St. David, by providing Parliamentary services, except persons who have asked frankly to work for free, thus far or who have had to pay because people don't care, once you're MP from the 24th of June, they're coming. And that is what I've had to experience and I suspect some of my colleagues may have had a similar experience. And so, we have to respect the office of MP, the office, not the individual who's holding it, the Office. And we also have to ensure, and I'm going to raise this because I think this is the opportunity for bipartisan, this system that we have, where Members of Parliament, not Ministers of Government, are given no resources whatsoever to address the concerns of their constituents is not going to lead to effective representation in Grenada. **(Applause)**

We are going to become 50 years old, in short order, the idea that you run up and down your constituency, ask people to vote for you, they vote for you, you become an MP, and then you have no resources to do anything, cannot be permitted to continue. So, I'm happy to invite my friends on the "Other Side," now is the time that they have the opportunity to change it because there was no Opposition. **(Applause)** I am happy to invite them to come along with us. We can perhaps start at the Committee stages, to be honest with our people and say to them, that as an MP, I do not have any State-provided resources to help you, even if you're in Government, because as the MP, it doesn't guarantee that you be a Member of the Cabinet. And even if you're a Member of the Cabinet, you're running a Ministry; you're not running your constituency.

So I trust that the various Parliamentary Committees will start by being honest with ourselves and being honest with our constituents by saying this system that we've inherited, and which we've made no attempt to improve, I guess the Revolution just threw everything out. We need to improve it and we need to start by addressing the fact that Parliamentarians must be given some resources. They must be held accountable and then you will know whether you have real representation or not because if my friend from St. George South-East and I are given the same Budget, and he's working miracles in the South-East and I'm not working miracles in St. David, then the people of St. David's will have a comparison to see what true representation is about. But as it stands, simply paying salary for four persons in an office and not giving an MP a Budget to do anything whatsoever is a recipe for

Adjournment

disaster and it's a recipe for corruption. **(Applause)** And so, I trust that as Members of this Honourable House, we will begin to start addressing some of these structural deficits we have. And I will say this and I'm going to say it openly, as an MP or unless the difference is based on size or constituency and so on, whether you're in Government or out of Government, my proposal would be, if the MP for St. Mark is getting \$5, the MP for St. John's should get \$5 regardless of which political organisation they are in. **(Applause)**

So, I just want to end by saying there will be ample opportunities. **(Inaudible comments)** Well I don't think I get that yet, **(laughter)** since June I didn't get anything. Right! So, there will be ample opportunities for by bipartisan work, so that, as I said, you can't improve Grenada by improving half the lot of Grenadians, it's the entire lot. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: I thank you too Honourable Prime Minister for those comments. I sat and observed the House, very cordial, very friendly and this is really the sort of disposition we need to have if we are going to work together to build this country. We have to be able to create the same environment created today, if we want our young ones to come from schools and sit in the Parliament to observe what happens. So, I am very encouraged by this particular Sitting and it is my hope, it is just the start of better Sittings to come. I think a lot has been said, so I now take this to the vote.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

The House adjourned sine die at 12:35 p.m.

PREPARED BY

HANSARD REPORTERS

Ms. Janelle Palmer
Ms. Shanta Joseph
Ms. Akeda David

EDITORS

Mr. Andrew Augustine (Clerk)
Ms. Daniele Blackman (Administrative Secretary)