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GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Third Session of the Tenth Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

SENATE

Wednesday 19th August, 2020

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Senate Meeting
Held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 19th August, 2020

Attendance

PRESENT

Mr. President
Senator the Honourable Chester Humphrey
in the Chair

Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell	- Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment, Forestry, Fisheries and Disaster Management
Senator the Honourable Judd Cadet	- Member
Senator the Honourable Norland Cox	- Minister for Youth Development, Sports, Culture and the Arts
Senator the Honourable Dr. Winston Garraway	- Minister of State with responsibility for Disaster Management
Senator the Honourable Cathisha Williams	- Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Senator the Honourable Terry Noel	- Member
Senator the Honourable Tessa Alexander St. Cyr	- Member
Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie	- Deputy President
Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis	- Member
Senator the Honourable Dr. Dunstan Campbell	- Member

ABSENT

Senator the Honourable Kim George	- Member (Excuse tendered)

Prayers
Minutes

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

Sergeant-at-Arms: His Honour the President.

Mr. President: Good morning, Honourable Members. Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Good morning, Mr. President, good morning, Members. Please let us pray.

(Senate Prayer was said)

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

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. President: Honourable Members, pray be seated. ***(Sound of Gavel)***

Mr. President: Honorable Members, this Sitting the Third Session of Parliament, now commences.

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

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt.

Wheldale, St. George's on Friday, 31st July, 2020 and Wednesday the 5th of August 2020, be taken as read.

Question proposed.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St Cyr: Mr. President, I think there is a correction. Senator Kim George was present at the first Sitting, but absent at the second. I think, based on the Minutes she's absent on both occasions.

Mr. President: Okay. We have that. We will take it at corrections, we're just taking that the Minutes have been read. So, thanks for the advice, but it has come a little bit early, but that's alright, it's not a problem.

Question put and agreed to.
Minutes taken as read.

Mr. President: Senator Simon Stiell. Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Friday, 31st July, 2020 and Wednesday the 5th of August 2020 be confirmed.

Mr. President: Okay, so you can either repeat it or we would have taken advance notice that there is a correction in respect of the Register of Attendance with specific reference to Senator George. So, the Clerk will take note and the Hansard Reporters will do the necessary corrections.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Yes, Senator Williams.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President. I just wish to draw the House's attention to another correction in the Minutes.

Mr. President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Mr. President, my title is listed here as "Parliamentary Secretary, Minister of Foreign Affairs," I wish to propose an amendment to "Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

Mr. President: Accepted.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Clerk take note. So those two corrections, the confirmation is based on incorporating the two corrections submitted to the House by the Honourables Tessa St. Cyr and Cathisha Williams. Those amendments that the said minutes be confirmed with the amendments.

Question put and agreed to.
Minutes confirmed as amended.

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

Mr. President: Okay, Honourable Members, just the perfunctionary routine, but very important matter and that is, to explain two things. One, that the first Order Paper sent out and that was the Order Paper, which would have… there were two Order Papers circulated. The first Order Paper would have contained in it Motions and Questions, that Order Paper was sent out, those two items included in the Order Paper

were contrary to the rules set out in the Standing Order. And, I wish to draw your attention and therefore a corrective Order Paper was sent out just amending the parts which offended the rules. And that has, if we take first of all the rule Standing Order No. 17, and we go to Standing Order No. 17, it requires six clear days prior, not a day before six clear days in respect of questions, right. And, in respect of days, days here means "working days." Very few… Parliament don't meet on weekends. And, there are other sections in the… when you come to the issue of questions lower down, you would notice that a Senator who wishes to ask a question can write if the House is Sitting, give notice of that question to the Clerk and if it is not sitting, it has to be six clear days from the giving of the notice and those did not comply with the Standing Orders, so I had to give directions to correct it. So, all questions will be on the Order Paper for the next Sitting.

There is a problem with when one allow violations of the rules that take place and there's a very good reason and just let me explain. When a question is put to a Minister or a Parliamentary Secretary, that individual don't go personally and look for the answers. The questions are normally, there is a standard routine and again for the freshmen. The Minister takes charge of the question, but he directs it to the Permanent Secretary, who then directs it to the relevant Division under that Permanent Secretary's purview and the questions are then supplied, because the Minister is, while generally under the general ambit of a public servant, is not strictly, is not a civil servant in the Constitutional meaning of the term, and the Minister himself, don't do these things, it's public officers. So, the question has to be obtained in that manner. And therefore, in fairness to the person who is asking the question, but the person who asked the question will have a reasonable expectation that, that question will be answered, and then the Minister to whom the question was directed, cannot, if you count the days that are not working days, when public officers are to research and to provide the answers, don't work on those days. So, the reference in Standing Order 17, to notice which talks about **"not being a day not earlier than six clear days from the giving of the notice"** means actually six working days.

Now, we come to the question of Motions, and that takes us on to Standing Order No. 24. So, I wish to draw your attention to Standing Order Number 24. And, Standard Order 24 requires that you're 12 clear days for that Motion. Yes, so, there was an error in placing the Motion on the Order Paper where Standing Order No. 24 (2): **"Except as provided for in Standing Order No. 69"**. And, I just wish to point out for you, to those who have your new thing, that's an error there and the reference should be to Standing Orders 70, and not 69. Reports from Select Committees, **"in notice of a Private Member's Motion"**, which would be a Motion brought by anyone other than on the "Government Side". **"A Private Member's Motion, shall not be entered in the Order Book or placed upon the Order Paper for a day earlier than 12 clear days from the date on which notice was given to the Clerk."** So, I hope this suffices to explain the amendment to the original Order Paper which went out in which both Questions and Motions were contained therein and that an amended Order Paper had to be sent out, because it's my duty to ensure that all that is done is in harmony with the rules. And, Honourable Members, I thank you.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 7 - Ministerial Statements.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give an update on …

Mr. President: Let me just indicate that in the Standing Orders it says 15 minutes, but given the extent of matters that you have to cover, I am going to extend that to an additional 10 minutes and this is simply because consistent with the Constitution, the Executive is answerable, and Ministers in particular, to the Parliament. And, these are Ministerial Statements reporting on the work of the Executive in Parliament, the people need to know, the people's Representatives in this Chamber needs to know. So, I would exercise my discretion as I have been in earlier times because it's essentially 10 minutes per person, but there are only three Ministers here

and one Parliamentary Secretary and that 10 minutes will be very insufficient. And, I think it will do a significant injustice to the population, to the citizenry, not being aware as to what it is the Executive is doing. So, this is why I am exercising my discretion on the rules. So, just to remind Members and again by way of explanation on this issue. So, Senator, you have 20 minutes.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, as I was saying before, I rise to give some update on some of the Ministries I'm required to cover in this Honourable House. And, I want to start by saying we are entering into the most active part of the 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season. And, for the third time this year, the Colorado State University has increased their forecasts for the season. Now the forecast reads that we are likely to see a maximum of 24 named storms, 12 of which will develop into hurricanes and within three to six major hurricanes and we're talking about categories three, four, and five. And, we remember just a few years ago, category five sweeping through Dominica, and other Islands within the region, and the mass devastation that we have seen. So, we understand the dangers that those cyclonic systems poses on Small Island Developing States. And, as part of Government's Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy, we have deployed our Environmental Wardens very early to ensure that one, they clear the overhangings, those branches and limbs that is likely, that could fall in the event of an impact and damaging our utility wires. So, they have been out there skilfully trimming those overhanging, and also clearing the waterways, the drains, the culverts and gullies, and so forth to ensure that we do not have any obstruction in the event that we have heavy downpours, like we're having at this point in time.

It is important to note, Mr. President, that we as a Government takes this thing very seriously because we have seen the impact that those systems have had on our own economy and the countries around us. Last year we remember Dorian in the Bahamas, basically, was stationary for a pretty long time and the mass havoc and devastation that it brought on the countries, is a stark reminder that as a nation we all have to do our part to ensure that we reduce the possibility of destruction. So, it's

something that is not only the responsibility of Governments, but every Member of the country, every citizen should be aware. And, NaDMA has been constantly providing those updates to remind persons of the need to ensure that, you trim those overhangings to your homes, have your waterways cleared and so forth.

Also, in this vein, last Monday, the annual Debushing Programme commenced. As you know, there are a number of persons in the country who look forward to this. This sort of opportunity to raise much needed income to take care of family needs and given that we're likely to see the reopening of school, it is always positioned and targeted around this time to give persons that extra lift, so that they can provide or purchase those items that is not given on those sort of vouchers that they usually receive. So, we had some 380 crews around the country out doing this debushing. So, the areas that the Environmental Wardens didn't tackle, they are now tackling them. And, as I said, it's all part of our Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and, of course, going to enhance the aesthetics of the various communities. But, it's important to note, as well, Mr. President, that this gives a wide cross section of citizens throughout the length and breadth of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, from both genders, male and female, an opportunity to contribute to the development of this country, in this regard being part of the our Risk Reduction Strategy. So, this programme will run for four consecutive fortnights, commenced on the 17th of August, and will conclude on the 9th of October. And, the value for this program is some $5.4 million. It is significant as well, this is a significant amount, given the season that we are in, the period that we are in, COVID-19. And, the Government has been called upon to make payments, that it didn't budget for as part of a Stimulus Package to ensure that workers who have lost their entire income got something, 40% of what their last income was. So, having to spend now $5.4 million in this program, as I said is significant, knowing what Government would have just done and is continuing to do as part of a stimulus package. This, we believe, is timely and is necessary and it speaks to the forward planning of this Administration.

One would remember in 2013, when we were elected into Office, you met an economy that was basically broken, was in freefall. The Government was raising

revenue around $37/38 million per month, but your expenditure was some 54 million. There was a difference or a fiscal gap of some $18 million monthly. Basically, we were broke and we couldn't pay, take care of our basic needs. And this Administration decided on a Homegrown Structural Adjustment Programme to realign the economy. And today we are seeing the benefit of this. We're seeing the benefits of one, astute leadership and forward thinking. And, I think with all the noise we're hearing out there, people should remember and give credit to this Administration for making this bold move. **(Applause)**

Mr. President, we as a people must be happy that this Administration is in office at this time to take us through from an economy in freefall now to COVID-19. And I kind of shudder to think of what is likely to happen down the road, because all the major economies in the world are reeling under the pressures of COVID. And, it is often said when the bigger nation sneezes, we pick up whatever virus and it's true. My brother there, they gave us some COVID, we have to deal with it. They are reeling under it; with all the resources that they have, they're not able to do that. And, as a Government, we have been able to do a number of things.

I'm branching into the Ministry of Health now, we have been able to do a number of things to ensure that we stem the tide. Yes, we would have locked the door to the borders and we didn't allow people to come in, so, those few cases that were imported, we were able to deal with it. But, as it is known, you cannot keep your borders closed indefinitely. Based on small States, how the economies are being constructed, you need that lift from the trade tourism and other commerce. So, you have to open and now that we are open, that's a different ball game. This is a different ball game and we, as a nation must look at our own circumstances and peculiarities and then look on the outside to our neighbours who have bigger economies than us and the pressures that they're under. So, every move that the Ministry of Health advocates at this time towards protecting the nation should be seen as being wise. And, I want to link it as it relates to the decisions we made in 2013 to restructure this economy. Some said it was not necessary and some cursed the Administration for making the move, but today we are seeing the benefits. Now we've asked to, and we've asked our people by putting in

place laws to govern the state of play in the country to avert possible fallouts in terms of COVID-19. And persons, not with a vision, decided to curse and talking about being draconian and dictatorial and so forth. You heard some of those terms when in 2013 when we decided to restructure the economy. So, it speaks now to what I've said before, astute leadership and leadership with a vision. So, to stand and to curse your Government for trying to impose measures to protect the entire nation, or the nation's health, to curse and to come up against that is unwise, because any fall out or any spread of COVID-19 within the communities will be devastating for a small economy. We are seeing it in other small States around the world. It will be devastating, our neighbours to our south, we're seeing that they had to go back on a new lock down and we've seen the measures that has been instituted. And, they have not done that because they don't like the citizens, but they've done it to ensure that it contain whatever spread there is.

I trust God that we will not see in the next week or so any escalation to indicate that we have some spread within our communities. But, I want to give kudos to the Ministry of Health for the outstanding work that they have been doing and the COVID, the Cabinet subcommittee on COVID, whose term of engagement has ended. But, I want to commend them for the astute leadership that they have given to the nation during that period of lock down and the succeeding weeks after the lockdown to ensure that the nation, not only was informed, but guidance was given to dictate how we move. Some didn't follow it, but, as I said before, we trust God that there is no big fallout. But, as it is right now, the Ministry reminded us that, yes, we do not have any known COVID case in the country. We've had a number of flights coming in. To date, there was one scare, that person has been cleared, with two negative PCR tests, so we are free of any COVID. But, the beauty of this method that has been established, Mr. President, is that we're asking our citizens, yes, you want to come home, but be honest with the information that you provide to the Immigration Department because falsifying information not only jeopardises or has the ability to compromise the health of the entire nation, but it also puts you at risk of being prosecuted and heavily prosecuted. So we're asking our citizens who are looking to return, provide the correct information and let's do

it right. In this time, we have to do as the Bible said, be your brother's keeper, and of course, your sister's keeper. Ensure that the decision you make will be, will add value and benefit to the rest of the nation, not just looking at your own circumstances or your own pleasure or desire, but the entire nation. So, with a system that has been established, we are likely to track on the Ports, persons who might be infected. And, with that being the case, we'll be able to avert spread within our communities.

I want to move quickly on to another area, the Solid Waste Management Unit. Mr. President, it is common knowledge that Grenada has been and continues to be one of the leading voices in terms of small state around the world re, environmental matters. Yes, we have chaired OASIS for a number of years and we continue to be a pivotal voice in the discussions and fora around the world as it relates to climate change and climate change related issues. And in this vein, the Government of Grenada has embarked on an Integrated Solid Waste Management Project. It's an initiative of the Government with funding from the CDB, as well as funding from Government. The total value of the project is some 15.172 million US dollars, equivalent to around 41 million EC. 10.7 million is a loan from the Caribbean Development Bank, 300,000 is grant and the remaining 4.172 million is counterpart funding from the Government of Grenada. It's important to note, Mr. President, that critical on this whole Integrated Solid Waste Management Project is the Perseverance Land Fill Project itself. We have embarked on a design consultants for a new facility, completed designs for what will become the final cell for waste disposal at the Perseverance Land Fill and it's important to note closure rehabilitation plans for the old landfill cells. The authorised approved plans also saw agreement for the closure of the 50 year old Perseverance dump.

So, Mr. President, yes, at this point in time, we have some some smoldering fires on 7.1 acres of land on the old dump. We are working assiduously to extinguish it but this Project, the Integrated Solid Waste Management Project, in its inception and its design is to ensure that we close this old dump and I will speak to that a little later. The company N Vision 7000 got the contract to undertake the task of doing construction of the Perseverance land fill project. The entire project entails amongst other things; construction of the final cell for waste disposal; construction of an access road on the

site to allow for movement within the facility, some 1200 feet of concrete road; construction of polishing ponds for leached and storm water treatment as well as wetland water treatment system. And this is extremely important, this treatment pond that will be developed. I had a tour of the facility and I must say, Mr. President, I'm extremely impressed with the work that has been done to date towards developing this Leaching Pond.

The desire here is to ensure that storm water or whatever water that will seep from the landfill itself will be conducted through pipes and entered into this leaching area and through sedimentation and of course evaporation, we will be able to fill… to this water to remove whatever sort of pollutant. So the water that will be reentered into the environment will be very safe and that is in keeping with the environmental agreements that we have signed as it relates to Grenada. And as you know, Grenada is working assiduously towards becoming the first Climate Smart City in the Caribbean. So all this is in keeping with the pronouncements that we have made to ensure that our practices are environmentally sound. Also we will be doing construction of a change and washroom facility for waste pickers and construction of site infrastructure for landfill operation. The Project which involves the landfill cell development and site preparation for construction of the waste water leach treatment pond and wetland treatment system, these components of the Project though delayed in commencement due to the limited state of emergency early this year is progressing on schedule as the construction consultants doubled up equipment deployment and manpower on the start of work.

So we're back on schedule even though we would have lost some time to commence but this is too important a project for us to waste any time and we continue **(time bell ring)** to work to make sure it happens. I know I have 5 more minutes yes.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

(Clerk converse with the President in private)

Mr. President: I am told that your 20 minutes has expired. You seem to have been placed at a disadvantage because you should have been given a sort of warning on the limited amount of time you have.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I thought the bell usually gives us a 5 minute warning.

Mr. President: So in which case could you wrap up. I'll give you an additional minute.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes, I'll wrap up, thanks. I'm almost there. So, Mr. President, we are working towards ensuring that not only the land fill itself is being constructed towards maintaining our environmental agreements but also to have a new strategy as it relates to Waste Management in the country. And also capacity-building within the management of solid waste. So it's a paradigm shift as it relates to Waste Management in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique and I'm extremely happy to say that the team of professionals at Solid Waste Management, Mr. Robinson and his team and the PRO and her staff, Ms. Julien and so forth, they have been doing an excellent work, excellent job in ensuring that this project, or I should say Mr. Neptune is the one, who is the Cordinator of the whole landfill rehabilitation project. They have been doing exceptional work to make sure it happens and at the same time, the State of Grenada is protected environmentally and that acclaim that we proudly boast of, of being a leading voice in terms of environmental issues in the country, we maintain that.

And, Mr. President, I am happy to say that we are pretty close towards working towards ensuring that the smoldering of the last set of fires on the old dump is being extinguished but as I have said before the intention is… and we are not using it right now but the intention is to cap this within the Integrated Solid Waste Management Project, cap that old dump and to totally disband it. So I want to say to the residence of the areas that have been affected with the smoke and so forth, I want to apologise

again for it but we have been working towards ensuring that the fire has been extinguished. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Mr. President: …in 5 minute time so that he is aware that he has 5 minutes more. And then when the second bell goes I will expect the Senator to complete and take his seat. So there is a 20 minute, first bell at 15 minutes and the second bell at time up. Ok. Senator Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Questions.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis, sorry.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I understand, so I will keep

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Mr. President: Sorry, I apologise.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: That's quite understandable. Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thanks to Senator Garraway for the presentation. Because the presentation was a bit generalised and that's quite understandable, I want to start with asking a question on the last thing first; that's the Solid Waste. And you yourself has recognised the importance of bringing the smouldering under control. TAWU has members working there, we represent the workers at Solid Waste. The mitigating factor for us is that we have workers in the Collective Agreement who have access through the company to do health check up, but the community is not so

fortunate. Is there a time frame through the Ministry that you are working towards getting the smouldering controlled? That's one question, so if we could be told what time frame you have in mind, if it's next month, next 2 months.

And under the question of flooding as we head into the Hurricane Season and it was a generalised statement again as to the cleaning of drains. So permit to ask some specific questions as it relates to Morne Rouge, places that we normally have those problems, Morne Rouge, St. George town for instance, Grenville and the Grenville Bus terminus and the Vendors' Market in the Stadium and any other place that we normally have these sort of flooding, but these are the areas that stood out to me. Has things been done to mitigate these repeated problems? Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thanks. Let me start with the first, and the first is the smouldering of the last remaining fires on the whole landfill. Mr. President, it is difficult to say that we will be able to totally extinguish it in one month or two months. But what I can say is we spare no effort to ensure that it is extinguished. The difficulty that we have at this point in time, the fires are are burning somewhere between 20 to 30 feet beneath the surface and that in itself has posed a serious stabilisation problem for the extinguishers in that the adequate material to extinguish the fire is dirt. So you will have to use a heavy equipment to go in and to compress. But because the area is unstable, it is extremely dangerous to deploy the heavy equipment. So what we have been doing so far is the creation of an access road to the Halifax Bay, an access road around the burning site. The purchase of equipment and installation of a network of pipes from the Halifax Bay water source and creation of access points around the burning site with the assistance of the technical team from NAWASA. We also would have employed two additional temporary staff specifically for the purpose of firefighting to work along with the regular Solid Waste Management Landfill staff as well as the deployment of heavy equipment with specialised staff for effecting an aggressive fire fighting plan on the periphery. So we have been doing this and we also would have beefed up on our security in the area to ensure that there is no illegal entry or reoccurence of any smouldering fire in the area.

Mr. President, this has cost us to date over $204,000 EC dollars towards fighting this fire. Yes it was over 11 acres that was burning, now it is 7.1 but as I said it is smouldering. So it's smouldering, not the big open flame and a lot of smoke as you've seen. But with the pumping of water from the Halifax Bay and the rain that we're getting, that is helping in some form. We will spare no effort to ensure that this burning is extinguished. And we must be happy in the sense that the Integrated Solid Waste Management Project will alleviate this. Because one of the reason for this fire is the methane gas that have been built up within the Dump itself and methane mixed with oxygen create combustion and that's what we are seeing. But with the new Integrated Solid Waste Management Project, there are cells built and pipes conducted to ensure that the methane gas which is a greenhouse gas and is responsible for destroying the ozon layer is reduced. So the occasion or the possibility of fire would be reduced significantly in this new project. So we will continue to ensure that our staff are provided with the protective materials and equipment so that yes they are employed in this but they have some level of protection from the smouldering smoke that they have to deal with. Mr. President, when I visited the compound, yes you had to wear a mask because of the COVID but there was no smoke bothering you within the period and I'm saying we're getting there and we're working towards getting it all under control.

The other issue as it relates to those areas so prone to flooding in the country; the Morne Rouge, the town of Grenville, the Vendors' Market in Queens Park. Those are chronic issues that we have had over the years and the Morne Rouge issue is a preculiar one and it will call for a greater development which I know studies have been ongoing at this point in time towards addressing permanently. And the problem here, Mr. President, is this you have a number of outlets in terms of drains to wash the water out to the sea, but what we find happening, the volume of water receding from the land to the sea is reduced because the mouth, the channel with the rise in tide block the channel. So what you find, what should have been an escape route now become a door block and it takes a longer time for the water to escape and that cause a backup. But as I said the studies have started towards having a permanent fix to this Morne Rouge issue. The River Road area is just the same, the St. John's river has been a

serious problem, and I have said, we have seen tons of water flowing down the St. John's River, very fast and very powerful and you have one drain that will send the water from the land into the river. But because of a fast flowing water in the river itself, it becomes a bridge. So that water from the land that is less velocity than that which is in the river cannot penetrate, so the water in the river become a bridge again and that cause the back up of the water in the Queens Park area.

The Member may have seen that the dredging continues in the Great River Project and Government has been working on this Disaster Risk Vulnerability Project within the River Road area as one component to ensure that we are able to minimise or reduce all together that set of flooding issue in the Queens Park area. It's a work in progress, yesterday when I passed, I looked at the area, the river would have been dredged from the bridge up. It is wider and it's flatter so we're hoping with this the water exiting from the land will be able to penetrate even if the river will be flowing heavy because of the dreding that was done. So I trust that there would not be much of a hindrance to the vendors who utilise the Stadium at this point in time.

But let me quickly add in this, as you know, Mr. President, we are working assiduously towards the sanitisation and the recommission of the St. George's Market Square so vendors will get back into there. And I think the forecast is probably by the end of this month we should be able to give a definitive word as to when the vendors will get back in. So I trust by that time there wouldn't be a problem if there was the occasion of flooding in the Queens Park area, or the Stadium area, the vendors would have been back into the market.

I want to commend the Member, yes these are issues that we have seen historically and Grenville is one as you know which is under sea level, the Grenville area itself. And you would remember a number of years ago there was a project started CDB Finance Project; the Greater Grenville Project and it was designed towards doing a number of things and would have eliminate some of the flooding that we are seeing. Because from the study, I was told there are four rivers that enters into the Grenville area and thinking about it, the area where it enters into the Grenville, it is not able to accommodate the volume of water. But the Greater Grenville Project that was designed

between 2006 - 2008 should have addressed this problem. But as you know there was a change of Government and a change of plans and this didn't happen, but this is something that we need to go back to and the people of St. Andrews probably should revisit it and ask those who stopped the project, why? Because this is a serious concern and a concern that we have to fix and that is flooding in Grenville and this is something that this Government is working towards again because all lives matters. And to ensure that how we work in St George's, St. Andrew's gets the same level of attention and development. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Thank you Senator Garraway for that Report. I share the concerns with Senator Lewis, I'm a Grenville girl born and raised in Grenville so I know the trials of having the flooding in Grenville. Unfortunately you did not address the flooding at the Bus Terminal which is a relatively new project, so I'm hoping maybe you can give some information about what plans are being made to address that issue because this is a current thing, this is not down the road and who would have been in leadership or whatever. We do have some pressing concerns in Grenville at it relates to flooding, now that we've seen it at the Bus Terminal, so we would need to have some answers on that.

I was particularly interested in your Report as it relates to the Integrated Solid Waste Management Project, and I am anticipating to see how that turns out because again I'm in public health and environmental health is a big part of public health. My question, Mr. President, is, in the Integrated Solid Waste Management Project that you spoke about, is the reimplementation of Telescope as a landfill, a dump site going to be coming back on stream? Is that going to happen? Because I've seen a notice from the Granada Solid Waste Management which encourages people limited amount of garbage come and at the end of the day that would be removed. So I'm asking the question directly will the Telescope site become again a site for dumping?

Statements

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President for the questions and I am also from St. Andrew's so I know the problems of St. Andrew's. And the four rivers that enters into St. Andrew's enters the whole St. Andrew's market area. So the problems that we are having at the Bus Terminal is not new in that it's the same water that we are talking about that floods the entire area. This is something that will be addressed and is being addressed at this point in time to ensure that we protect the entire land space. As I said, there has been a set back because the project in 2008 was stopped and that would have ensured that this that we're having right now should not have been.

From my knowledge we have not decided to move Perseverance into Telescope. No. So if there is word to that, that has not been a final decision or anything of the sort so rest assured, the work that is being done right now with the Integrated Solid Waste Management Unit is to ensure that we have a condsusive place of waste disposal and there are only two legal dumping sites in Grenada. So we have the Dumfries in Cariacou and the Perseverance in St. George.

Mr. President: St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. Unfortunately, my question was not asking if Perseverance will be relocated to Telescope, I'm asking if there is a new dump, if the site will be reused? So based on what you're saying, because I would like the people of Telescope to hear this, Telescope will not be reused as far as you know, as a dump site, that's what you saying?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you.

Statements

Mr. President: As a point of interest, there was a time not too long ago when I was still in the Union and I had a discussion with a gentleman who came to Grenada and was flying back. We were both flying out of Grenada but he came her in order to do some initial investigation into the flooding situation. And we just happened to meet one another and was discussing and he was indicating to me that, that problem is not a very complex one to solve and that most of the time the flooding takes place is when there's a lot of rain and at the same time high tide. And he was suggesting, part of the area where the Bus Terminus now was, he was suggesting before the Bus Terminus was reclaimed, reclaiming a significant part of that and creating what we call a "dam", I think was the word he used or some other term. But essentially it was to create a dam and to drain all of the runoff coming from the land into that dam and then to have a massive pump which would be regulated on the basis of tide and the amount of water into that dam, and to just pump it out to sea.

And he indicated to me, he said, Guyana has a very simple way and it's nonmechanised. Men go around and turn a thing and it blocks the tide from coming in and when the tide is low enough, they hook up and the water goes out and he was saying that will solve the problem in the town of Grenville but unfortunately when they did the reclamation to the building of the Bus terminus that was not to be. I still do verily believe, with lack of any engineering experience or training, that, that looks simply still very relevant. So it is maybe something that you may wish to consider.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, you are so correct. The Greater Grenville study and it's there for the people of Grenville to investigate and see what was proposed towards ensuring that. A terminus was built and you have that one little system to protect the people, as I said the project was interfered with and that's…

(Inaudible comments by, Mr. President)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: …that's what we have now. So it's a question of, we looking now towards ensuring that it is being fixed and this is something

under consideration, to make sure that the people of Grenville have that. And of course, we all are St. Andrew's people, we want to make sure our people are protected. Thanks.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. I'm not sure if it's appropriate to add to the discussion based on another Member's presentation. The discussion is very, very relevant and to add a broader context to the issue of flooding, whether it's in Morne Rouge, whether it's Grenville, wherever it may be. With climate change, Mr. President, we are going to find increased situations of flooding, extreme flooding due to climate change and especially within our coastal cities where we have infrastructure close to the shoreline, whether it's a Bus Terminal, whether it's buildings, hotels, other infrastructure and the Carenage is a perfect example of that. The Carenage is actually a floodplain and the work that is taking place right now with the Green Climate Fund with New York University and the Climate Smart Cities Programme, which also looks at Grenville, recognising the extreme climate vulnerabilities that exist there and some of the chronic issues in addition to the St George's area. It's what at they call a bathtub effect where you have instances of high tides and extreme flooding from our watersheds. So you have water coming down, you have water coming in with nowhere to go and extreme flooding, which we are seeing over and over. And it is only going to get worse. The Climate Smart Cities Project is looking… a part of it is looking at addressing some of these critical areas. The solution that was proposed, Mr. President, is the principle of that, is what New York University have been looking at, certainly in the areas within the St. George's especially around the Carenage. And the submission of their prelminary concepts to the Government of Grenada and then on to the GCF looking at the financing and additional technical support that is required for this, is scheduled at anytime now.

But what we have been seeing the costs, some of the solutions sounds very simple but they're certainly not cheap and expensive engineering and studies have been done, will continue to be done to address exactly what has been suggested. But, a capital cost to do this on a comprehensive basis is significant. But, that is what this

Government is pushing forward, difficult problems to solve, holistically, nationally, expensive problems to solve, but through our relationships with the international community, bringing in the technical expertise, identifying these core vulnerabilities, and looking at long term solutions, not solutions that's just going to fix the problem for today, recognising that climate change is here to stay, is coming up with solutions that will last 50/80 years from now. So, all of that work is taking place, but these fixes aren't straightforward, there are some simple solutions to specific problems, but the issue that we're facing is far more systemic than that, Mr. President. We recognise that and we are looking to address it, but it isn't, it isn't a quick fix.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St Cyr: Mr. President, with your permission, I hear all of what is being said in the House this morning. But, I think there are some things that we're not taking a closer look at. The flooding is one issue. The Bus Terminal is one issue in Grenville, then the streets are another issue and then there is Telescope Beach. Mr. President, I think you know, what has happened with the building of the Port in Grenville, where the land was claimed, and all that water, the beach has now basically disappeared. And, over the years, persons in Telescope have been asking for assistance from Government because the land has eroded in such a way that their houses are right on the shoreline because the waters have been coming in. I don't know if the Members in the House would have heard the news item where there is a young man in Telescope, a gentleman I grew up with actually, taking the initiative to assist the people in Telescope because the water is coming in there. And that is, again, as you correctly said, and as the Honourable Member correctly said, climate change is here, and it's not going anywhere, it's staying. But what do we do in the meantime, because we cannot wait on these, you know, long term projects, projects that are going to take some time, while there are person's lives and houses and, you know, investments as small as they may be in jeopardy? So, maybe the Honourable Members

can speak to that as well because this is an easy fix. The gentleman has found a very easy way of helping hold back the water at least for some time.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I don't think we need to prolong this, particularly because it's a deep and lengthy discussion. And, the points that the Member on the "Other Side" is raising, all valid. There is remedial work that is taking place in the Telescope area, in the St. Andrew's area now. There's a TNC Project, which is building an artificial roof outside to protect that entire coastal area. A pilot was completed, that's now been extended. So, it's looking at how to protect the coastline immediately. There are other initiatives that are underway. But, these, Mr. President, are just scratching the surface, so, we could sit here, we can come up with dozens and dozens of specific environmental challenges that we face due to climate change, Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, we're seeing the destruction of our coastal communities and our coastline, up and down the country due to climate change. There are projects, multiple projects that are addressing some of these specific issues. But, this is an overwhelming issue.

So, the point the Member is making is, there are interventions that can be done now on a localised area, which are being done. Can more be done? Absolutely. But, the fundamental issues behind this are existential. And, we're going to continue to face it as all Small Island Developing States are facing, which is why we're taking two approaches, looking at what we can do at a local level, at a community level. And the gentleman that you mentioned just now, phenomenal, and initiatives like that could be supported. But, that is just scratching the surface, support should be given where support is required, but there are initiatives that have already been undertaken and are being undertaken by Government. But, then there is the wider issue, the long term issue on how we're going to resolve some of these chronic issues more systematically. So, we're trying to work on all levels. But, what we are facing with climate change, whether it is through extreme flooding, whether it's extreme drought, and the project that is currently under way, the G Cruise Project, $125 million dollar project, which I've started the implementation for, is managing some of that extreme flooding that we see

in the north of the country and we can capture that water, dams, etc. other infrastructure, how that can be channeled. So, it's protecting those areas from flooding, but capturing the water which is a valuable resource, and how that can then be distributed to the south, while servicing the northern areas, but bringing that water to the south, which is drought prone, flooding prone up in the north, drought prone in the south and that is a significant investment by Government, by our international partners.

So, I just want to make it clear to the Member on the "Other Side", we're not sitting on our hands waiting. There is a lot happening, the Climate Smart Cities Programme, which will address many of the issues that she's raised, we're looking at close to a billion dollars worth of investment over the next 15 years. These aren't simple problems, but we are making those hard decisions, being extremely proactive, taking a scientific approach, identifying the vulnerabilities, both infrastructurally and within our vulnerable communities and how we can address these issues. Included within that programme is a substantial urban planning piece, because some of the flooding that we are seeing is due to the urbanisation of our areas and shifts in the watershed. So, all of these things that the Member is alluding to, we are looking at, as climate change is biting at our heels.

Mr. President: There's a very simple mechanism too, that can be interjected into the now and that is most strict land use, stopping people from establishing communities in places which are known to be vulnerable. I mean, there are dry watercourses in the dry season that you can go and play cricket, but come the rains these things turn into torrents and Jamaica has a particular experience with these huge gullies that are just coming and people are building and people are very industrious. I have heard of instances, and I am actually seeing in the Soubise, Marquis area where people have been told that this is highly vulnerable. Modern homes have been built for them, they received the homes, went there temporarily, went back and built back in the vulnerable place and rented out their home to make an income.

So, I'm saying that we have to have stricter, people are building on hillsides, where it is very obvious that a slide will take place when there's a heavy down pour of

rain and they build there and then their homes start to turn and then the State has to get involved and this is all over the place. So, one of the do now's, that you don't have to wait to have some finance programme overseas, is that your Division of Physical Planning, which I must admit is one of the weakest Divisions in the State, must get more active in preventing people from establishing communities and homes in places which are naturally vulnerable to become disaster areas, especially when the rain starts. So, it is something I just wish the Government Side to pay attention to. Senator Noel.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Yes, Mr. President. Mr. President, I just…

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Yes, Mr. President. I just want to add to this, the whole issue of the flooding especially in regards to the Grenville area and so on. In my view, I understand what the Honourable Senator Simon Stiell is saying, as far as they're trying to deal with the situation and Climate Change, and so on. But, in my view, I just think that Grenville has been a totally neglected town or parish. And, it's a bit shameful because we have four Ministers in this area. And, over the years, we have seen some efforts, though, because look, we have seen in St. Patrick, Sauteurs Town, where they had the Breakwater million dollar Project that went on there. And, although a proper study probably wasn't done, maybe created some other problems elsewhere. But, efforts were made in other places. But, in terms of Grenville, I haven't seen any efforts over the years being made in terms of to alleviate the whole flooding issue there. Whereas I've seen in other parishes, like I just said, the Breakwater Project in St. Patrick, and other projects, in St. David and so on. Nothing have really happened over the years in Grenville over the last maybe 10 years. I just had to add that. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Again, I don't want to protract this, but the Member's comments, St. Andrew's is our largest parish. And, if we look at efforts that have been made, whether it is infrastructurally, whether it's agriculturally, socially, business wise, providing services for the people, not just in Grenville, but the whole of that parish, I just want to put on record significant effort has been placed. There are unique challenges because of the size of the parish. But, I'll certainly challenge the Member on the "Other Side" in terms of efforts to develop that parish.

Mr. President: Senator Williams.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Mr. President, this is not a, I'm not rising to make a Ministerial Statement, but rather on a Point-of-Order, or perhaps to seek clarity from you, Mr. President. While I certainly will not want in any way discourage discussions on topics of importance in this House, I am a bit lost in relation to the Standing Orders and the procedure of debate. Because what I've been seeing thus far is that the Ministerial Statements have become subjects of debates in the House, but according to the Standing Orders, during a statement, persons, Members may only rise on Points-of-Clarity or Points-of-Order during the presentations, and the speaker may choose to give way to the person interjecting. And apart from that, if there are any questions that Members choose to ask, they may do so by giving prior notice of those questions to the Clerk of the House. And, if they require an oral answer at that time, they indicate that on the Order Paper using an asterix. I understand the discretion of the President to allow discussion, but I've been seeing the Ministerial Statements devolving into debates where Members are freely giving their opinions on matters and asking questions which do not seek to clarify any particular issue, and those questions are not being asked during the presentations. So, Mr. President, I wanted to seek your guidance on that, because I think the procedure, thus far, has deviated quite a bit from what is prescribed in the Standing Orders. Thank you, Mr. President.

Statements

Mr. President: Senator Williams, the Ministerial Statements, which have been made, all of the questions that have come seeks a clarity or an explanation coming out of the statement. Yes, I have allowed some latitude because in the rough and tumble of Parliamentary discourse there is not a very rigid guardian line as to how things are done. And, as I say, section 59 of the Constitution, subsection three is what guides me, in the sense that the Constitution lays out and that's in Section 59 (3), that **"the Cabinet shall be collectively responsible to Parliament,"** and that collective responsibility find the expression in the report by people with Ministerial responsibility, speaking on behalf of Cabinet for things that either they would have done or if they are speaking on behalf of another Ministry, which is the case here, to answer questions.

Now, if it becomes obvious to me, that a Minister is asked a question and he could not have anticipated that there is an answer, and specifically is not his Ministry, I would then direct that, that question be put in the form of a question because it would require research. But, to ask a question on a statement where the issue is being discussed about flooding in St. Andrews and what is actually happening there, what plans the Government have and so on, I don't see that as being either a breach of the rule or puts the person to whom the question is put at a severe disadvantage.

I mean, if a question is put to you and you simply don't know it, you just say, simply, unfortunately, I don't have the answer, but if you frame it in a question, and give me the time, I'll come back with an answer. As I said, I don't want us to be so strictured and to be so clinical, as if we were on a surgeon table. The back and forth is good. It gives the public an opportunity and it gives the Executive an opportunity to explain the work that is being done and it give those who are represent the public, to seek to get information. Well, you guys are there, what are you doing on my behalf? I have a problem in my community, I have a problem affecting the workers. What is happening, what is the policy issue here? And, that to me, I find, is really fair game. I take the general point and I am very much aware of that. And, I pay particular attention to that because my role here is a guardian of the rules. But, if you have an opportunity to look at what happens in the British House of Commons, and in some other Parliaments, you would think that our decorum and other things here are quite in order.

So, I take your point, I'm not discarding it in any way. But, I think that we must allow and then again, remember we don't meet very often. Right, we don't meet very often. I mean, some Houses meet once a week, we don't. And, there's a lot happening on the "Government Side," which gives the Government an opportunity to explain what it's doing. And, we have representatives who have to report to their constituents. Well, you're in Parliament and you didn't ask anything about me? What is happening? I have a problem abcdefg. So, I think it's a healthy discourse, and I don't see them. But, if the rule is breached, you could rest assured that I will intervene to put things back in order.

And, although it was not a report from Senator Stiell, but because of the area that he has responsibility for, and I know a lot of work has been done by him in sourcing money from the Green Climate Fund. I saw his answer as complimentary to what the substantive report, which generated the question. I thought that it was fair and helpful and healthy, to allow that interjection and that explanation to arise.

So, I take note, but I am not too worried. I don't think that there's any unwholesome breach of the rules in my opinion and the rules does allow my discretion. So, yeah. Okay. Thank you. I think Senator Cox, I believe you were next in line. Senator Cox you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give a report on the stewardship in terms of the Ministry that I'm responsible for, and also some other Ministries of Government.

Mr. President, in recent conversations, I believe that there is no conversation that we can have today without having or speaking about COVID. And, everything that we do right now is either we're working to combat the effects of COVID or trying to curtail it whichever way. And in so saying, Mr. President, the Ministry continues to be challenged in every way, in every aspect as we try to navigate this new waters.

Mr. President, I want to start with the Ministry of Sports. We've been having some challenges with our student athletes overseas who have been also been challenged and impacted by COVID in a number of ways. Some of them, they have lost a significant portion of their scholarship, because their scholarship, it was initially

applied for them to be in school in person and now, some of them, they have to go online. So, those scholarships have been severed. And so, there comes a challenge for some of those persons on how they're going to continue. Some of them had to move away from the dormitory because the schools are closed and they had to be placed with other persons, friends of other persons or friends of family. And so, it has been a difficult time for them. We have been keeping in close contact with them just to see how they are going through this process. Today, Mr. President, four of those students are returning on a flight today from the US. They have not finished, but they have to return home. That is the best outcome for them at this point in time. And, so we…

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Mr. President: There were no flights, they couldn't go on to the street, so they had to rent an apartment to put them up. It's serious, serious, serious challenges.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Serious challenges, serious challenges.

Mr. President: I am deeply empathetic to those students in particular and to their parents and to you who's trying to coordinate to see how best with limited resources that you can help.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: It's been pretty tough with everything taking place in terms of the financial situation in the country. We now have to see how we can find resources foregoing some other things to provide some support for them. But so far, we have been able to do some, give some assistance to keep them at least comfortable. We want to also thank the persons who would have opened their doors to accept those students on short notice and to look after them. In some cases, one student indicated to me that he took up because he had an opportunity to learn from his parents how to cook and to clean and stuff, so, in a way of giving back to the owner of the home,

persons who opened the door for him, he was handling all the chores, cooking meals and everything like that. So, it's some pretty good stories, testimonies from what has happened. But, we definitely, Mr. President, want to empathise with the parents, and of course, the students for what they have experienced, what they are experiencing right now due to the impact of COVID. But, I just wanted to, think it was important that I just inform this House and the nation of course, what is taking place and to let them know that we are in contact with them.

Added to that, despite that, Mr. President, we have, opportunities are still being realised for students for scholarships to go. And so, there comes another challenge, again. We have students who it is a dream to go out there, they want to aspire to go out to improve on their athletic ability and also together to benefit from tertiary education and getting them out there now is also a challenge. So, we are tasked with working with the stakeholders, working with the coaches to see what best we can do to facilitate that. At the same time, we have to proceed. But, I just wanted to update the House on that and to let them know that we will continue to work with the students to see that they are best comfortable throughout this process.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, I just wanted to, just to give a report on two matters here. Just to say that you know we have opened up our borders officially, the Airport in particular, and we are receiving flights. We are scheduled to receive flights normally from the yellow and green zones, of course, and the red zones is only via charter in the meantime. And, just two Mondays ago, we had our first commercial flight resumption, flight from Canada with Air Canada. And, I think that is a good step in the right direction. So, it kind of helps us to get ourselves acclimatised with the new operations, new procedures, the monitoring at the airport, the testing, all that is being done. And so, we just thought it important to inform the House that it has started and Air Canada has given a commitment to a flight once a week, on Mondays for now, in the first instance and we do hope that will increase going forward for obvious reasons, in terms of creating that economic activity and commerce through airlift.

As you know, Mr. President, it's always a challenge to get people to fly to your shores, and so much discussions and negotiations to achieve those agreements. Just imagine now persons are not coming as willingly because they have challenges themselves, the cost of operations, we see even our regional, one of our regional carrier have not resurfaced as yet, because of COVID, and that lends itself to let you understand the challenge that, that sector is having. And so, we are monitoring and we are working with all our stakeholders to ensure that we get flights resumption back to some sort of normalcy, so that we all can benefit from that sector, Mr. President.

Mr. President, admist those news, we do have some good news. The World Travel and Tourism Association have recognised this country and gave it a safety stamp, safety stamp to travel. And, so we welcome this safety stamp by the World Travel and Tourism Association. We think that is good and it speak well for our country and what we are doing here in terms of COVID, in terms of our response to COVID. I think that is very, very good. **(Applause)**

At the same time, it is important that we continue to be vigilant. As we have seen, one of the top countries in the world in terms of performance for COVID response, which is New Zealand after 102 days, today, they are currently struggling with an outbreak. So, while we are good now, it doesn't mean that it is always going to be like that. So, we ought to be vigilant in that regard. Mr. President, I just wanted to make mention of that.

Mr. President, I also want to report a little bit on agriculture, what we have been doing with agriculture. What we see currently, Mr. President, is a direct correlation to the impacts of COVID on all the sectors that are important for agriculture to thrive successfully in this country. So, we see that our University who have closed its doors, students went out in batches. That is a significant area where more agricultural produce ends up either indirectly through the restaurants or directly to the University. Also the hotels that are basically closed right now, well some of them, that in itself would have affected the demand for agricultural produce. So, Mr. President, it's an intricate problem that we have that stem from the impact of COVID. So, this requires the Ministry to take a new approach in terms of looking at alternative ways and new approaches in terms of

moving the sector, moving the Agricultural Sector forward in this difficult time. It has not been easy for the farmers. It has been a difficult time for them and we understand.

The Ministry and the Government took some specific initiatives to see how we can curb that challenge, and through the formation of a Special Task Force, a special committee to look at some short-term, medium-term actions that can take place to drive the sector. And, the Ministry is looking at those recommendations and working on moving them forward.

The Government in its effort to working with Marketing Board as one of our key stakeholders, did of course, I think pledged a million dollars. I'm not sure if those monies are transferred already in part or in full thereof, but I know that some pledge was given for those funds to support Marketing Board in terms of their challenges with marketing distribution. So those are things that we have to address going forward.

Also, the Ministry in looking at the response, the Government has through the Ministry has pledged a 2.5 million dollars to support a response package for the sector as a first intitiative. I know that, that is small based on what is required to really drive the sector, a first initiative of 2.5 million dollars has been allocated. Support, I think one million of those…

Sergeant-at-Arms: Deputy President in the Chair.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy President. One of the initiates through the response is the Farm Labour Programme, it's a very important programme. I know a lot of key farmers look forward to that assistance in terms of getting the necessary work done. The crops that are basically targeted through the Farm Labour Programme is the nutmeg, cocoa and of course soursop, which is our key crop right now and other economic tree crops. Also 200 acres is carded in terms of production for food crops or staples and 200 acres for the tree crop which is the cocoa, nutmeg and soursop. Mr. Deputy President, over 600 farmers are engaged through the Farm Labour Programme and there are a number of other details on the programme which I will endeavor to give maybe at another Sitting in terms of the areas that impact

and how long it is intended to go for, currently where they are and things like that. So as the programme continues, I think it is important for us to give updates as we move forward with that important programme, Mr. President.

Mr. President, there is also support for going through a programme that we have right now which is the Home Garden Project targeting women in our communities so they can have their backyard gardening. So a number of inputs have been provided through that project in terms of planting material, in terms of tools for persons to do their backyard gardening, working with Social Development and targeting those families especially women in our communities to be part of this important project.

Mr. Deputy President, also some support has been given in terms of the vendors, because as you because of COVID, a number of relocations, tents had to be provided. So those are some of the areas that Government has been spending over the past few months in terms of providing the support to vendors, keeping the area clean and tidy and things like that, just to keep them safe so that they can continue to ply their livelihood in the area of vending. Mr. Deputy President, these are the main points I just want to report to the House this morning for the Ministries that I indicated. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Mr. Deputy President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. Mr Deputy President, I rise to give an update on the Ministry of Finance on the current economic and financial outlook and then also from the Ministry of Education in terms of the plans for the reopening of our schools. Mr. Deputy President, before I start, I just wish to extend my condolences to the family of Crafton Isaac, retired Chief Fisheries Officer who passed away recently and to recognise the significant contributions he made, not only to the Fisheries Sector here in Grenada but his reputation, his contribution as a builder of cooperation amongst countries within the Caribbean within the sector. And although he had retired, up to the time of his passing, he was still actively involved in

supporting the work of the sector. So I wish to extend my thoughts or our thoughts and prayers to his family at this difficult time.

So, Mr. Deputy President, moving on to the economic outlook just to give a broader context and again it's COVID that is setting the perspective that we are working within. The primary focus of Government has been and continues to be to ensure the safety and health of our nation as we face this global pandemic. Although some of us, we're seeing signs of complacency and those who are flouting or defying the protocols and regulations that are in place to protect all of us. Let us be reminded, Mr. Deputy President, that the worst is still ahead of us. We haven't reached a point where we can let down our guard and if we again just examine what is happening globally to date, there is no sign of this virus slowing down. To date 22 million infections, that's 5 million more than the last time we sat in this Chamber just a few days ago, less than 2 weeks ago. 775,000 deaths, that's over 100,000 more deaths than there were just two weeks ago. So if we look at what's happening in Trinidad, they're on full lock down, Bahamas looking on full lock down, that was announced a couple of weeks ago. Senator Cox mentioned New Zealand, New Zealand has been presented as the poster child of how to manage during these difficult times and as they celebrated the 100th day anniversary of being COVID free, they had a mass outbreak and had to shut down their largest city, Auckland. So even those with significant resources and doing all of the right things, an outbreak can happen unexpectedly at any time and cause significant disruption to the way of life of those people.

So, Mr. Deputy President, to those of us who want to play bad, those of us who want to play politics, I think it's important that we remind ourselves that we're putting the lives of those that we love most at risk when we drop our guard and do not comply with the protocols and the regulations that have been put in for our very own safety. But, Mr. Deputy President, the focus on safety is even more critical at this time as we open up our borders to International traffic. And that is critical in terms of trying to stimulate our economy, the best we can and responsibly at this time and like all of our neighbours within the region, we're heavily dependent on Tourism. And the needs to reactivate that sector responsibly is a critical priority at this time. And just because there is a focus on

agriculture, that does not mean to say there isn't a focus on other sectors, whether it's Agriculture, whether it's the digital economy, whether it's small businesses, all of these areas have an important role to play in that in stimulating economic activity. So, Mr. Deputy President, we cannot remain shut indefinitely. So far we have managed this crisis well from both a health perspective and also from a physical perspective. Grenada has been better positioned than many of its neighbours. We've been able to meet our financial obligations including, paying public officers on time, providing a comprehensive stimulus package to support those sectors in greatest need and support for the most vulnerable. But based on the enormity of this global crisis and the impact it is having on the economy globally and nationaly, Government cannot continue to provide this level of support indefinitely. Which is why we need to take this responsible approach in how do we best stimulate or reactivate our economy and look at all of the other physical measures we need to put in place to manage as we move forward.

Mr. Deputy President, this is not about putting livelihoods before lives. Like everywhere else in the world, every other country, we have to do both as challenging as that is. The health pandemic and the economic pandemic that we're seeing are and equally as damaging to our national development. But the economic impacts of COVID-19 have been significant. With our borders closed for so long, our Tourism Sector which we are so dependent on in hibernation, many of our hotels, businesses still either closed or operating at partial capacity, workers sent home during this period, Treasury inflows have been severely impacted. And due to this, the Government has revised downwards its revenue forecast compared to our 2020 Budget. The Ministry of Finance has projected a minimum of a 40% reduction on revenues collected by Inland Revenue, Customs, other revenue generating elements during this pandemic period. And this equates to a reduction of 181 million dollars in revenues as forecasted in our Budget. So, Mr. Deputy President, we have less to spend. And this contrasts to where we were before the crisis, 7 years… consecutive years of economic growth in excess of average in 5%, one of the fastest growing economies within the region. We went from a Budget deficit to a Budget surplus, we were managing our fiscal situation well. Reduction in

debt to GDP Ratio, from 108% down to 57% and employment down from 40% to 15%, this is where we were before this global crises hit.

So in response Government is having to adjust its 2020 expenditures, we can't spend what we are not earning. So this means a Budget of most of our Ministries within Government will be adjusted where discretionary spending, non-critical spending will be curtailed. So there is significant belt tightening that is required and prioritising those programmes that are most relevant at this time. Improved increased working efficiency, how do we as a public service do more with less? We have to find more efficient, more productive ways of working during this time and how do we limit and manage waste. So, Mr. President, we need to focus heavily on both Public and Private Sector investment programmes, so in creating jobs, stimulating the economy, Government will be implementing with aggression, its capital projects that are funded by grants and loans. These are mainly significant infrastructural projects whether it's roads, bridges, land slippery slope, stabilisation programmes, the construction of new schools, the significant upgrading of existing schools, investments in our digital infrastructure, supporting e-Government and our digital economy. These programmes, Mr. Deputy President, are valued at over 250 million dollars and with the creation of somewhere in the region of 800 jobs, and that has to be a critical focus area. Then within the Private Sector, even in these difficult times, those investors that we were engaged with for major projects before the crisis still have an appetite to move forward with their investment. So whether it is the Range Project in La Sagesse, St. David's, a 300 million dollar Project, whether it's the 1 billion dollar Project, The Grenada National Resource Project up in St. Patrick, work is already on the way, which will create significant opportunities but especially within our rural communities, which needs as much support at this time as possible. Then in addition to this, the developers behind Silver Sands Project will be moving forward with their investments at Port Louis, Mt. Cinnamon and other hospitality related projects.

So concluding on this, Mr. Deputy President, these are challenging times. We know what we need to do to address those specific threats from the health and the economic pandemic that we face, however we need the support of all if we are to

weather the storm. So this is our people, every man, woman and child has a role to play in weathering this storm. Our workers, both Public and Private Sector workers, our business community, our Trade Union Movement, our Churches, Civil Society, all political organisations, Mr. President, it requires all of us to work together in order to get through this crisis as best we can.

So moving onto the Ministry of Education and specifically an update on the reopening of schools. Yesterday the Ministry of Education outlined its plans for an expected reopening of all schools on 7th of September. We all know the severe impact that COVID has had on our school system, our school kids with the exception of Form 5 who returned the end of last term for their exams but students have been at home since March receiving significant support through virtual means and I'll come on to that a little later, but it's been highly disruptive. But what was outlined yesterday were the principles for reopening, but there will be a continuous monitoring from a health and safety perspective, locally, regionally and internationally as to the final approach that will be taking place. That approach will have to be very dynamic based on what happens from a health perspective so those plans would be subject to change. And more comprehensive announcements will be made in the coming days in the lead up to schools opening with further details. But the principles that are guiding the reopening are based on the protocols and the guidelines of what was put in place for the return of Form 5 students for their CSEC exams, which was viewed as a success. And this was done in consultation with all stakeholders; principals, teachers, parents, Unions, Ministry officials and it's using those principles to look at the rollout or the return of all schools.

Mr. Deputy President, we are looking at this reopening amidst two significant challenges. First is available classroom space; with the physical distancing that is required, and the space that is required to accommodate the 6 ft separation, means that not all classroom are going to be large enough to accommodate all students. So school by school, class by class, individual by individual, plans are having to be put in place to come up with the optimal arrangements, safe arrangements based on protocols for each of the schools. The first requires significant thought and logistics.

Statements

The second area is the finances, for the sanitising, the supplies etc. the required, just for Form 5, just for that last period in the term to enable students to sit their exams… **(time bell rings)** …(5 minutes), cost in excess of $300,000.00. The estimate for the additional cost of supplies and what is required to facilitate the reopening of all schools for the 4 months of this upcoming term is estimated at 1.9 million dollars. This is significant, Mr. Deputy President, and these aren't monies that have been budgeted, but monies that would be found to enable this to happen. And what we will be asking of those parents who can afford it, to make contributions in terms of providing basic supplies for their children, whether its hand sanitiser, masks, etc to help contribute.

The plan that is being outlined is multiphased, the first phase which is week commencing the 24th of August and entails the completion by caretakers of the preparation for cleaning of all schools for the return of staff and extra cleaners have been provided by the Ministry to assist in this and then the completion of basic repairs; washrooms etc and an extensive communication plan for teachers, for parents, for students as to what is happening. Phase two which is the week commencing the 31st of August which is traditionally planning week, where plans and protocols will be reviewed by school heads and the Ministry. The distribution of E-learning devices to teachers, I'll come on quickly to speak about it and the approach to E-Learning and the distribution of additional supplies and what's required for school reopening.

Phase three, week commencing the 7th of September will be the staggered return of students and the distribution of devices and E-books to parents. There will also be a curriculum refocusing the method of teaching and learning that we'll apply moving forward. It's a blended hybrid approach of physical, in class face-to-face lessons in addition to virtual lessons, so from home from home and a mix of the two. So refocusing of the curriculum to account for that environment, that curriculum assessment will take place during that phase.

The fourth phase which is 4th to the 21st of September, there will be a national academic assessment of students to determine their rediness for the term ahead. As I said many of these student have been working from home since March. So an

assessment of their capabilities and what is going to be required of them academically for the period moving forward.

Phase 5 week commencing the 20th of September is the mass return of students based on the maximum number of students that can be safely accomdated based on physical distancing, based on protocols for each of those schools. So we will see that maximum number that can be accommodated returning and that will continue through to the end of that Michaelmas term to the end of December.

And, Mr. Deputy President, I just want to finish on the role of E-learning with this. The opportunity if that is an appropriate word to use, the opportunity that's been presented to us through this COVID pandemic is an acceleration of our E-learning agenda. There's been talk for many years now about the move to digital learning and all of the benefits that E-learning can bring. And I see the Clerk there has been intimately involved during his time within the Ministry of Education. I know it was a passion of yours but we're now seeing that come to fruition and an accelerated programme. And there's been a lot of discussion over the years, where are the tablets, where are the devices? Other countries are issuing devices which they are then having to return to the schools because they do not have the E-learning ecosystem in place that supports it. E-learning is far more than just a tablet or a laptop, it's that entire ecosystem, the content, the E-books, it's about the supporting communication tools to enable E-learning, it is the training of staff, of teachers, of parents, of students to be able to use these tools and all of the support functions that are required.

But, Mr. Deputy President, this pandemic has forced us or I will turn it around and say, we have taken advantage of this opportunity to fully embrace this new way of learning which will transform our education system, it will transform the education… **(time bell rings)**… just a couple more seconds, Mr. Deputy President. It will transform the way that our teachers teach and how students learn. We are bringing our education system into the 21st Century and this is the opportunities that have been afforded and the opportunity that has been taken advantage of. All of the devices for Secondary Schools, 24,000 devices are on Island, are being configured and that distribution process, with all of the protocols around that, all of the policies around that, all of the

training around that is being implemented as we speak. So on that note, Mr. Deputy President, I end my Ministerial Statement. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Deputy President: Senator Noel.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Thank you, Mr. Vice President. Just on a Point-of-Clarification, I will just like to know whether the students would be tested randomly during the term and how often that will be happening or the procedures? Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Through you, Mr. Deputy President, yes, there will be random COVID testing, whether it's Rapid testing or PCR testing but there will be testing of students, of teachers, of our support staff. So that will be randomly carried out periodically. I cannot tell you the exact numbers but the idea is that there will be sufficient sample so that we can get a sense from a health perspective of the healthiness of that environment from a COVID perspective.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator Campbell.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Dunstan Campbell: I just want to find out whether or not the students and teachers would be paying for those test or it will be free to them?

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: I don't know the answer to that question, but it is something that I can follow up.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator Lewis, I'm searching.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I understand, thank you very much. If I may just be permitted to, in relation to the reopening of school, we in the Labour Movement and I'm sure the Government and the country on a whole would want to make sure that enough emphasis is being placed on especially the Pre-Primary School,

the younger kids as to how they interact and conduct themselves, a lot of emphasis needs to be placed there. Just as an observation. But I know Minister Stiell, that you most likely may not have a specific answer, but just following up on a comment that you made in terms of where umemployment was pre-COVID and the impact. I'm just asking, is there an estimation currently as to what the current state of unemployment may be? Thank you very much.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. Deputy President, in answer to the last question, traditionally at this time a Labour Force Survey is carried out. I do not have the answer based on the social distancing requirement, this new environment that we are working in, in terms of how that survey would be conducted. But traditionally at this time of the year a Labour Force Survey is carried out, which would give an insight into employment, unemployment at this time. But I am happy to come back more specifically with when that survey, whether it is being carried out, how it will be carried out and I will come back to this House with more specific details. But as I said traditionally at this time such a survey would take place.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. I do have a somewhat difficult question for the Member on the "Other Side". Considering current health trends, emerging and reemerging infectious diseases, is the Ministry of Education currently putting together a Risk Reduction Plan because we talk about risk reduction in isolation as it relates to climate issues, but there are risk reductions for entities or organisations as well. It would be remiss if all this information is just you know, gone and nothing is done with it.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Through you, Mr. Deputy President, all that has been done in this period is based on risk calculations and risk mitigation. So the reopening of schools will be no different. There is a risk assessment that is carried out

and that risk assessment is a dynamic thing. The nature of this virus means that you have to be very proactive. So, whether the risks are very low, increasing activity, increasing engagement at a physical level or as infection rates rise, the need to then pull back on that. But, this is being driven through the Ministry of Health. It isn't each sector trying to figure this thing out themselves. This is a health issue fundamentally. And, we are working with the science, we're working with methodologies, whether it is prescribed by the WHO, whether it's CARPHA, whether it's other health organisations, whether it is within the OECS, whether it's at CARICOM level. I mean, there is an extensive multidiscipline team that has been looking at all aspects, whether it is our reopening of schools, whether it's the reopening of airport, whether it's businesses, everyone, but the core piece that runs through it is that Health Risk Assessment and the mitigating measures that are required to manage those risks.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator Noel.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. Now, since the Honourable Senator have mentioned in terms of following the protocols to restart school and so on, taking into consideration COVID, and the costs to reopen, the fact that school was closed for the most part and in some cases just Form 5 and 4 going to school, any statistics on how much money that was saved during this period, since school is not totally operational?

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: It's not money saved, Senator. It's extra monies that are spent, teachers still need to be paid, staff still need to be paid, school infrastructure needs to be maintained. So, whether there's a reduction in water consumption, electricity consumption, sure, but the functioning of the education system, the Ministry, the schools, and all the supporting elements around it still have to be paid for. What we have had and where there would be extra expense, the traditional summer holiday, if you're looking at teachers and principals where they would normally have had some vacation all paid for, so the national bill is unchanged, but instead of

them having time off over that vacation period many of them have been working very closely with their principals, with the Ministry in terms of putting the preparations in place for the reopening. So, there's actually extra work. And, when we factor in all of the cleaning, sanitising all of the preparations for the reopening, as I said, $1.9 million. What we're finding is the cost of everything as static as the world may seem right now, costs are still mounting. So, we're not looking at the savings that can then be put into extra costs. There are costs throughout and increased costs.

Mr. President: Senator St Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. I do have one last question. As it relates to Bishop's College, what plans are currently in place for that? Because I know the refurbishment of the school is carded to begin. So, what plans have been made for them?

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: On the last report, I think I may have even given the report at the last Sitting, plans are in place in terms of what needs to be done, a contractor had been identified and they're in final stages of contract negotiations for the start of work. So I believe if those contracts have been successfully negotiated, my understanding was work should actually start in the month of August.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: I'm talking about what accommodations have been made for the students and teachers, because school will be reopening. So, what plans are made?

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: I don't know the specific information on that because part of the school had already been, was not used. Temporary accommodation had already been found and they were working, I think for about the last two years. But, I can come back with more specific information as to what's going to happen there.

Papers / Reports
Motions

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

Mr. Deputy President: Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the following Paper/Report be laid on the Table: Report of the Public Accounts Committee for the period March 2020.

Mr. Deputy President: The Report of the Public Accounts Committee for the period March 2020 is now ordered to be laid on the Table.

Clerk Assistant: Item 9 - Petitions.
Item 10 - Government Notices.
Item 11 - Unofficial Notices.
Item 12 - Questions.
Item 13 - Personal Explanations
Item 14 - Motions.

Mr. Deputy President: Leader of Government's Business.

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

WHEREAS debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of this Third Session of the Tenth Parliament on Friday, the 4th of October 2019, was further deferred to a date to be fixed;

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

Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move an amendment to this Motion that would read: **BE IT RESOLVED** that the said Address be accepted.

Mr. Deputy President, the Gracious Address or the Throne Speech that was presented at the Ceremonial State Opening back in October of last year was a precursor for the presentation and debate of the Estimats of Revenue and Expenditure, the Budget for 2020, that's October, we are now in August, we've had few Sittings in this period because of the pandemic. But, it is felt that there has been sufficient time for the content of the Throne Speech to be ventilated, times have actually moved on since the reading of that Throne Speech. So, not only through the debate for the 2020 Budget, but the circumstances around that Budget have also been challenged because of COVID. We came back to this House with the COVID stimulus packages, a budgetary supplemental. We are now as a Government entering the Budget preparation process for 2021. Parliament will shortly be prorogued and at the Ceremonial State Reopening, there will be a new Throne Speech presented, which will outline Government's intentions for the period ahead. So, because of the time that has passed, and all that has happened since then and where we are right now, I believe it's time to remove this Motion from the Order Paper, which is why I propose the amendment that it be resolved that the Address be accepted.

Question proposed.
Question put and agreed to.
Motion approved.

Sergeant-at-Arms: Mr. President, in the Chair.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator De Allie.

Clerk Assistant: Item 15 - Bills.

Mr. President: Just before we get to Bills, I was out under Personal Explanations to announce that Senator the Honourable Kim George did send a note

indicating that she had some urgent legal business to attend to, which did not make it possible for her to attend. So, just to let the Members of the Senate know that she has submitted an excuse of absence and that, that excuse of absence be noted in the record. Thank you. You're now at Item No. 10, sorry, No. 15, Bills. Motions were just completed so who is piloting this Bill? Senator the Honourable Norland Cox you are piloting the Praedial Larceny Bill. You have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Praedial Larceny (Amendment) Bill 2020.

Clerk: An Act to amend the Praedial Larceny Act Cap. 250, shortly entitled, Praedial Larceny (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

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

Question proposed.
Question put and agreed to.
Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Bills

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, the Praedial Larceny (Amendment) Bill, 2020 seeks to amend the Praedial Larceny Act, Cap. 250, (i) to make provision for the classification of soursop, as a specially protected produce; (ii) to create a licence regime under the Act; (iii) to establish a Praedial Larceny Management Unit; and (iv) to make provision for the appointment or delegation of a Praedial Larceny Committee.

Mr. President, this Bill contains 13 Clauses, but before I go into the contents of the Bill, Mr. President, I believe it would be important for me to just give some context, background as to why this amendment is brought before this House toda and for Members to get an understanding of the importance of this important Bill before us.

Mr. President, and we can go back and looking at how agriculture has evolved in Grenada. Some decades ago, persons will grow crops, fruits, vegetables, not with much effort or interest from a commercial standpoint. And so, you find that persons would have good crops just lying around, fruits just lying around not doing anything with it. And sometimes community members will probably go pick up, take what they want, use what they want, but as the time continue to change and the demand for produce continue to increase and they're seeing an opportunity for livelihoods to be generated from agriculture in that sense, then you'll find that the issue of praedial larceny, the pilfering of agricultural produce became a central issue for persons who are now looking at farming as a livelihood initiative. And so, this has a lot of history, it's a major problem, not only in Grenada but throughout region, the Caribbean region in particular, the issue of praedial larceny has been a chronic problem. The Ministry has made a number of efforts, have engaged in a number of initiatives to see how this problem can be eliminated or reduced to some extent.

Mr. President, some of those initiatives that the Ministry would have engaged in to bring some comfort to farmers who are aggrieved by this. With working with the Royal Grenada Police Force, we would have seen that special accommodation have been made for an office for the Praedial Larceny to be established within the Police Stations. Vehicle for doing surveillance, that would have been made available for the police specific for praedial larceny initiatives. An Advisory Body for Praedial Larceny would have been so established as well, Mr. President. Devices, computers, a number

of critical equipments would have been made available for persons working within that Unit. Mr. President, a software, a Case Management Software have also been procured and we will use that to track praedial larceny offences. Also, the procurement of special equipment, clothing for the Praedial Larceny Unit. Procurement or the use of incorporation of technology by way of cameras and special detectors have now been afforded to the farmers. They were made available to them at cost price and so the Ministry, the Government would have taken the initiative to purchase those and the farmer will pay for it but at cost price and so they can pay by instalment.

Mr. President, also the establishment of a hotline for Praedial Larceny Reports, that has also been done. And of course, the campaign, educational campaign in terms of the praedial larceny and the awareness, raising awareness. So, those are some of the primary initiatives that the Ministry would have embarked on to address Praedial Larceny in Grenada.

By way of stats, Mr. President, we see in 2018, we had 403 reported cases of praedial larceny and in 2019, we had an increase in the reported cases to 438. Those increases can either reflect one, that more reporting is being done now, more awareness has been raised, as well as, it can be an increase in actual pilfering. But, Mr. President, we believe that the initiatives that have been put in place in terms of the awareness, the education, and of course, more too, for persons to report more easily and quickly, I think that in itself would have lend itself to more reporting and persons know that they can get redress in that regard. So, Mr. President, this is very important for us to understand what is taking place in the sector.

Mr. President, it is also believed that praedial larceny is one of the most significant contributor to persons being not interested in investing in agriculture. Mr. President, one of the worst experience you could ever have is to go to bed in the night, and then you wake up in the morning and a significant portion of your produce have already been harvested without your knowledge, and in some cases sold, and you have somebody benefiting from your labour. I think that is one of the, anything second to that is from a Carriacou standpoint is your crops being destroyed by animals, while you're assleep and you wake in the morning. That could be very, very, very, very difficult to

deal with. I have seen persons found themselves in a lot of trouble responding violently to praedial larceny, Mr. President. It is something that we have to try and fix. We have to continue to work because what we understand is that and one of the reasons why it is very difficult to manage, is that persons, it is so easy for somebody to just go and pick your produce and go with it and the challenge with it, is that it is difficult for the farmer to identify to say that mango is mine. What is on the mango for you to say that, that is your mango and that is where the challenge is. And, the whole idea of this Bill is to put structures in place, measures in place to see how we can tighten that aspect of it, so persons cannot easily get away with stealing somebody's produce and selling it on the market. So that, is one of the inherent weaknesses that is there, is how can a farmer identify whatever produce that he has for him to see that look, this is mine. Where is the evidence? How can I do that? And, that's one of the challenge, cantaloupe, watermelon, how do you say that? How do you say that it came from your garden, Mr. President, as against come from mine? That is where the challenges is. And so, we are looking at ways how to address that through this Bill, Mr. President. And, as we go forward, there are always going to be avenues for improving this legislation, so that we can work with our farmers to ensure that they get money for the efforts that they put in.

Mr. President, one of the things that we recognise, even from the region standpoint, more than 98% of all farmers are affected by praedial larceny. So, this is something that is very, very dear to farmers and we have to find a way to address this as we move forward, Mr. President,

Mr. President, it is within this context, that we present this amendment, this Praedial Larceny (Amendment) Bill, and as we go through, you'll recognise some of the changes that we are advocating and a lot of this, what is here, also, Mr. President, is part in consultation with the Praedial Larceny Unit. They are the ones who are actually working with farmers and have an understanding and appreciation for what is taking place on the ground. And so, they too were critical in terms of the contents of this Bill before us.

Mr. President, if I should go now to the Bill in question, and we can look at first Clause 2, which speaks to the definitions in terms of a Committee, licence. And, if you

notice, Mr. President, that soursop, soursop for the first time, we have created a facility where we have put in crops as a specially protected produce. And, the first time that is being done is through this amendment, Mr. President, by placing soursop on that list. And for obvious reasons soursop; Grenada is the only country that can export fresh produce, while other countries are only allowed pulp, Grenada is one that is allowed to do fresh produce, fresh fruit of soursop export to the United States. Mr. President, that's a significant important commodity for us right now and as such, we believe that this amendment is one that is showing, is reflecting how serious that this is to us. So, we are putting it under special protection in this regard, Mr. President.

Mr. President, Clause 3, this speaks to the insertion of new sections, sections 2A to 2M of the principal Act. Mr. President, I will take some time and go through, touch on some of the Clauses that I think is critical to highlight in terms of the integrity of this Bill.

Mr. President, under Clause 3, 2C Praedial Larceny Management Committee; Mr. President, this Clause in looking at subsection (a), indicate that **"the Minister shall appoint a Praedial Larceny Management Committee in the accordance of Schedule 3"** and (b) **"to delegate an existing Committee or Body as a Praedial Larceny Management Committee."** Mr. President, this is critical because this make allowance for existing Committees. So, what the Bill is saying is that, if there are Committees that currently exist, that have the capacity to function as the Praedial Larceny Management Committee, this Bill so allows for that to happen. So, you don't destroy something that may be working, but you put into context of the law and giving that Committee now the legal authority to operate, which wasn't there before, previously, Mr. President. I think this is significant.

Mr. President, in looking at 2D under Clause 3, Mr. President, which speak to the licencing, mandatory licencing, **"no person shall carry on the trade or business of buying, selling, exporting, conveying or otherwise dealing in specially protected produce of a weight of 15 pounds or more without first obtaining a licence granted by the Minister."** So this is new, Mr. President, for persons now to engage in the selling, exporting, buying of soursop, they will have to get a licence. This never existed before and we believe that doing this will allow for tightening in terms of being

able to cut out persons, just go in and pick up somebody soursop and go and pass it off as theirs.

Mr. President, what is important to note under 2E, the licencing is on the three separate categories. And, the first licence 2E, subsection (1) (a) speaks to a trader's license. And, if I should read, Mr. President, **"a trader's licence to authorise a person to carry on the trade of business of buying and selling or buying and exporting specially protected produce for use on specified premises."** So, this licence basically speaks to somebody buying and selling taking place, for example the case of Marketing Board, they will have a license to buy and sell on their premises so this licence speaks to premises.

Subsection (1) (b), Mr. President, **"a travellers licence to authorise a person to buy any specially protected produce at any place other than the premises for which that person holds a licence."** So somebody cannot just go and say look I'm coming to buy on behalf of a person or buy on behalf of that person. They too must have a licence to go and buy on behalf of that premise, that is another important category in terms of licencing.

Mr President, (1) (c) speaks to a **"carriers licence to authorise a person or his or her servant or agent to convey any specially protected produce in the vehicle along a public road."** For example if the police were to stop somebody who have soursop on their vehicle, they must have a license. So nobody just can't say, well I am going to take your soursop into town for you, they in effect will be committing an offence if they do not have the license to carry that soursop from one farm or either to the airport for export. So that is in which the nature in which the licence regime is set up, Mr. President, to try to carve a section or to ensure that we check everything. So nobody cannot go and buy on behalf of somebody unless they have that licence, nobody cannot carry the produce unless you have a licence to carry it as well. So, Mr. President, I think this is a significant amendment to the Act that will help tighten the issue of praedial larceny. Mr. President, I think that while this speaks specifically to soursop, there might be an avenue, an opportunity going forward for us to apply a number of other produce under this regime, Mr. President.

Bills

Mr. President, the application 2F, the application for licence, Mr. President, this allows that a person can make applications for a licence. 2F (1), **"a person may apply to the Minister through the Praedial Larceny Management Unit for a licence under section 2E to authorise a person to carry on the trade or business of buying or selling, exporting or conveying specially protected produce."** Mr. President, there is also an avenue for this, so that persons who are involved in the soursop production and trade can apply for a licence, Mr. President.

Mr. President, another critical area in terms of monitoring is to eliminate the issue of fraud and doing things in an illegal way. Under the same Clause, section 2J, subsection (1), change of circumstance, this, Mr. President, is a very critical amendment and it reads **"where the Minister has granted a licence and there has been a change with respect to any information provided for the purposes of the grant of a licence, the licensee shall no later than 7 days following the occurrence of the change, notify the Praedial Larceny Management Unit of the change of circumstance in the prescribed form."**

Part 2, **"a person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable to a fine of $20,000.00."** Mr. President, I think this significant, this is critical in the sense that somebody may try to vary the information, maybe voluntary or involuntarily, there might be a change in address, a change in premises, maybe the vehicle that you put up for the licence to carry the produce, they may have changed a vehicle. Whatever information that speaks to the licence that you receive, any change in those information, you must notify the Praedial Larceny Management Unit within 7 days of that change so that your licence information can be updated. And failure to do such is considered a breach and an offence and you are liable to summary conviction to a fine of $20,000.00. Mr. President, I think this is very critical in terms of making sure that persons understand the seriousness of this licence under this Act, Mr. President.

Mr. President, section 2L speaks of lapse of licence and just to indicate that someone's licence may be considered lapsed if the individual dies or if the individual is adjudged bankrupt or gone out of business or so, Mr. President, so that allows for that

in that case in terms of a license being lapsed. If someone goes into liquidation, whichever way, Mr. President, this Bill speaks to that as well.

Mr. President, another critical amendment under Clause 5, amendment to section 6 of the principal Act and this is basically **"repealing the entire section of the principal Act and substituting therefore for the following new section"** and which heads **"dishonestly receiving and disposing of praedial larceny produce."** Mr. President, this is a very critical amendment to sustain the integrity of what we're trying to do with this praedial larceny response in Grenada. Mr. President, if I can read section 6 (1) **"whoever dishonestly receive or unlawfully obtained any tree, plant, root, fruit, vegetable, or other produce which is used, or is capable of being used whether after treatment or otherwise, as food or as an ingredient in food for man or beast knowing, or in circumstances in which he/she ought to know the same to have been stolen or unlawfully obtained shall be guilty of an offence in this Act."** Mr. President, so that speaks to persons who knowingly will take a produce, you know that the guy doesn't have a farm, he ain't have an ounce of land nowhere but he bringing soursop for you, that is what we are talking about. So you go and you take this produce from him and you're going and sell it, definitely, Mr. President, we cannot allow that, because you're basically aiding and abetting a crime in that regard, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I want to move on to another important section which deals with restitution because you know the person who is aggrieved in this process, the farmer has lost his produce, I think some redress must be afforded to him or her in this regard, Mr. President, and this section, restitution speaks to that. And if I should read section 10B subsection (1), **"notwithstanding subsection 10A where any person is convicted of an offence pursuant to this Act, the court may order the delivery of any agricultural produce or vehicle or other conveyance seized in relation to the offence to the person who appears to be entitled to the same."** So this basically affords an opportunity for the court to direct back what was stolen to those persons once that can be can be proven, Mr. President. Mr. President, so I think this is critical.

Mr. President, this Act also, I just want to also just touch on two more sections, 10C, Mr. President, which speaks to **"the sale or disposal of and compensation for**

perishable agriculture produce." Mr. President, this is a very important section and this speaks to how produce should be treated in terms of what is seized and how it should be disposed of. Mr. President, 10C (1) **"notwithstanding section 10A, where agricultural produce is seized, the Member of the Police Force, Rural Constable or person designated making the arrest shall deliver the agricultural produce to the Commander of the Police Station who shall, subject to subsection (2), preserve the agricultural produce for the purposes of trial of an offence and where the agricultural produce is likely to perish before trial of the offence, the Commander of the Police Station shall sell it or if a sale cannot be conducted, shall dispose of it in any manner as he or she sees it fit."** Mr. President, this is a very important amendment. Mr. President, it is important to note that in section 2, makes reference to **"where the section referred to in subsection (1) is to be tried, the Commander of the Police Station shall deliver to the Clerk of Court, the certificate court containing the information, the quantity of produce, where it is sold, the amount realised from the sale,"** all that should be disclosed thereof to the Court. So in this case, Mr. President, while the law allows for the police to dispose of the produce, clear, precise and true records must be submitted to the court as to the contents of the produce, what was sold, such evidence, who it was sold to and how much it was sold for, Mr. President. So this in a sense, the Court is basically full in part with this section in terms of ensuring that the produce is disposed of but ensuring records of that disposal of the produce is true and proper in the eyes of the Court and of course the persons who are before the Court for such judgement.

Mr. President, I want to speak to the last amendment, amendment to the principal Act section 12A of the principal Act. It's an important amendment as well, basically looking at the issue of registration identification card. The previous principal Act did not have sufficient coverage in this regard and this amendment speaks to identification, person having identification card to present to the police and things like that. If you don't have that card with you when you are stopped, the police may, (it's just like a driver's licence) it is constituted to be an offence, that you should carry that with you once you are carrying the produce, that specially protected produce.

So, Mr. President, if I can just quickly look at, just mention the compensation under Schedule 3. Basically it covers the composition with the Praedial Larceny Management Unit and if you notice, Mr. President, we can go through the various sectors who are part and parcel of that Praedial Larceny Unit, I think that this augurs good and well in terms of the integrity of this Unit. You have the **"Coordinator of the Unit who shall be a Senior Extension Officer within the Ministry of Agriculture; a Praedial Larceny Liaison Officer who shall be a Senior Police Officer assigned from the Royal Grenada Police Force; a Farmer Registration Officer within the Ministry; a Public Relations Officer within the Ministry; a Pest Management Officer who shall be a Senior Plant Quarantine Officer within the Ministry,"** Mr. President. So those are the areas in which persons for the Unit… when it comes to the composition of the Committee, the Management Committee, Mr. President, the Permament Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, his or her nominee shall be the Chairperson of that Management Committee. A representative from Farmers Association will be on that Management Committee as well; a representative from the Bereau of Standards, there shall be a Senior Member of Staff on that Committee; a Plant Quarantine Officer from the Ministry of Agriculture; a representative from the Ministry of Trade, a Senior Trade Officer shall be on that Committee; the Chief Extension Officer shall be on that Committee and the Praedial Larceny Officer who shall be a Senior Police Officer will be on that Management Committee.

Mr. President, this Committee seems very sound, and I just want to make mention that this Bill provides a very good platform for going forward in terms of the management and the curtailing of praedial larceny within the context of agriculture in Grenada. Mr. President, with this presentation I want to commend the Praedial Larceny (Amendment) Bill, 2020 for its second reading. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator Campbell.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Dunstan Campbell: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I rise to support the Bill which is late in coming I should say but it is here and we will deal

with it. This Bill has very important parts that I will like to address individually. Before going into that I will just like to make some preliminary statements with regards to praedial larceny. Praedial larceny has always been a threat to the livelihood of farmers and the industry itself. We have seen for example in this COVID period, it presents an opportunity for people to get into agriculture and what we are seeing and it's very important here, what we are seeing is the type of persons that are being attracted to agriculture now are different to those who have been there all the time. Those who are coming into agriculture now are risk takers, they are aggressive persons, they have the knowledge, the connection for financing and those things like that. Whereas those who have been there all the time, they avert risk, they try to be careful because they don't have the sort of resources to keep them going. But what is happing in the industry right now with regards to praedial larceny and soursop in particular, soursop offers the opportunity to earn a substantial amount of money if it is done properly but it also, as a result of predial larceny, to have tremendous losses. And that is causing a push, it is pushing away our potential investors. Although the value or the potential to make money is pulling them into it, but when they hear the stories of what is happening with praedial larceny, it is pushing them out. So this Bill, Mr. President, is to me, an opportunity to have more investors coming in because they are protected, they know that their investment are protected.

I listened to the presentation in the Lower House and I heard that a farmer had to sleep in his field in his van as a result to protect his crops. Mr. President, can you imagine, you work all day and then in the night you have to sleep in your vehicle to protect your crop. So these are the difficulties that the farmers have to face and in fact I was reading recently a document and it said **"sleep is a nonnegotiable biological activity"**, non negotiable, you can't say you don't want to sleep, and if you say you don't want to sleep and so on, it will affect you and in fact that particular bit of information was linked to, it says that if you don't sleep at least 6 hours, and when you look at the literature, you would see 6 hours, 8 hours those different hours. But what happens is that if you don't sleep for a particular amount of hours, it will affect you and give you dementia and alzheimer's. So you have these, the lack of sleep is associated

with this. So, Mr. President, can you imagine you're asking or encouraging young people or not only young people but people who have gone through their cycle and decide to be investors in Agriculture because a significant amount of persons today are entering into agriculture because they see agriculture as an opportunity. Here we are talking about soursop but we can also talk about poultry and other things like that and we have to protect these investors from tremendous losses. So I see this Bill playing a role in attracting or providing that coverage for new investors to enter into the sector.

The Bill provides the framework for a Management System that I think is laudable. The Management Unit, the Management Committee which is well staffed and in fact you see people like the Permanent Secretary, a Senior Police Officer and those persons like that who would be there to provide leadership for this Bill. But, Mr. President, I have some concerns, yes you're putting in the Chief Extension Officer, the Pest Management Unit, it calls for these people to be in that meeting at least two or three times per month and the same people would have to be on the docks twice per week and when you look at the manpower in the Ministry and you say, well where will all these people come from? So yes it looks good on paper but my question is, do you have the resources, manpower resources to make those management structure workable? So I have my doubts and I am going to go to still err on the fact that it will work because I really, really want it to work for our farming community. And there are some other things that I haven't seen in the amendment, well I guess it can be developed later on; it's the surveillance. I would like to see or hear something about surveillance, we talk about cameras we talk about what's it, a software, Case Management Software and all these things, this high-tech. But to me and my experience, Mr. President, nothing works better than boots on the ground and I see that, I've seen it. The St. John's Parish Praedial Larceny team was lauded as the best because they had the vehicle, they had Rural Constables and you know sometimes I'm in my field doing something and then two, three persons behind my back just sneak up on me and you know… that's what is needed; in the day and in the night.

Of course all the other things like the licensing regime is one, well obviously it's good. The trainers, the transporters that's extremely important, the power to stop, the

power to search and the power to demand those licence would obviously make for an efficient system of monitoring praedial larceny.

Mr. President, I also want to address as one of the things that I will like to hear a little bit more of is the Praedial Larceny Court. My predecessor has always asked for that, to have a Praedial Larceny Court because it is a deterrent. The Senator who presented, Senator Cox who presented the document said that 98% of all farmers are affected with praedial larceny, that's a significant amount. It means that everybody out there is affected by praedial larceny and it can be a few pounds or it can be hundred of pounds. Once that farmer is affected and he says, ok I will pursue this person in Court and you go to court the first day, it's called off, the second day it's called off. I'm speaking about myself, the third day it's called off, the fourth day when I went, I said well listen just drop the charges. So you find that a number of farmers are now dropping the charges because of the inefficiency of the system to respond to the charges. It is not that you are not identifying the persons but getting redress for the crime is a problem and you give up. So you see you are giving up on all these things, you are giving up on your sleep, on your produce and it becomes more and more difficult for you to engage in your business.

Mr. President, once we can address these little things and I have the confidence that we can, this Bill can make a significant difference in the status of agriculture because when we look at the figures for soursop exportation, the value, it is significant. And if you have soursop as a protected commodity that is again protected by this law here, we can do a significant amount. So, Mr. President, as a result of this, I stand here to support the Bill and to hope that these little nuts will be put in place and to get this system going. So I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity, Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Dr. Campbell. Senator Noel.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Thank you, Mr. President. I too want to support, share the same sentiments like Senator Campbell in supporting the Bill. I myself is a registered farmer and I'm always in the land when I am not here. The only thing in

comparison with Senator Campbell, being in the lands all the time, I haven't seen the praedial larceny guys coming on my back. So I'm hoping that the powers may take this into consideration because I live in a highly agricultural area in St. Andrew's, Mirabeau and these areas and so on. To an extent, the whole of St. Andrew's is agricultural belt with nutmegs and all different types of crops.

So I support the Bill and as a farmer myself I know all the troubles that go into it because not just talking about the manpower but the expenses. Because farming is an expensive thing and there are times, in some cases depending on the variety of plants you may want to plant, the seeds alone sometimes cost over $500.00 a tin. So it is an expensive venture, trees again, buying couple trees, one tree depending on if you're planting tomato and so on, minimum might be $45 per tray of tomato and these are…

Mr. President: You mean the plastic trays?

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Plastic trays.

Mr. President: $45.00?

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Yes with 128 plants in that tray and then you have farmers who are planting about 20 trays and in some cases 30 trays. So if they loose all of that, that is just to tell you the expenses and so on in how much they are loosing as far as the expenses goes. And then the labour and so on, they themselves would have to do some of the work and in some cases they will hire people as well because the farmer is an economically independent individual that employs people which is a good thing, which the Government doesn't have to worry about and the physical labour that has to go into it. So all these… because of the fact that I'm a farmer myself, I understand all the difficulties in losing and so on. And having to deal with the harsh conditions and so on, imagine you are in the hot sun everyday and so on and in some cases in the rain and exposure to the different elements and so on. So I understand

how difficult it is and so on, hence the reason why I'm glad to support a Bill such as this one.

But the only thing is you have people coming into your property and stealing but what is even worst, Mr. President, is when you employ people and sometime it doesn't necessarily have to be the permanent workers that work with you but you may see a guy that's begging for a little job now and again and sometime you have to hesitiate whether you should or not but at times you try to help people out. So in the event of helping people out and you give them a day or two days' work, sometimes the same people go back in the land and steal from you and so on. And these are things that I think, some of these things are happening too on a regular basis. I, in my view, I think people like that should feel the full brunt of the law, especially when you try to help somebody out and then they come back and steal from you again. So, the fact that I'm a musician myself that, every time I think about praedial larceny and stealing and so on, it make me think about one of my favourite Jamaican artists, Anthony B, which has a song, the chorus goes like "Nobody wannu plant the corn; everybody want to raid the barn; who yuh a guh blame it on; when is a next man yuh a depend pon; well you wrong." Well, of course, that is the Jamaican dialect, but it's actually speaking about people taking advantage or exploiting your labour and expenses and all the work that you put into this thing. So, I understand the pain myself like I said.

I looked at Clause 4, which provides for amendment to section 5 of the principal Act to increase the penalty for the offence of damage to produce. And, I'm happy to see that the penalty is increased there because there are a lot of times I have a noticed, I've seen on television as well, on the news, there are some people that just go in your plantation for just mischief and spiteful, the fact that you have been successful and doing well, and some people just want to upset your operation and they're not trying to steal, but they just go and cut up your melons, I've seen it lately, for no reason at all. Yes, serious thing. So, and because of jealousy, jealousy, or success, or whatever the case is, but imagine you're working hard and trying to make ends meet, progressing, trying to progress and people just come in and destroy your thing, not even stealing, but just destroying. So, I'm happy to see Clause 4 with the penalties increased there.

Clause 5 provides for the amendment to section 6 of the principal Act to increase the penalty for the offence of dishonestly receiving praedial larceny produce there. Again, that is a good thing. The fact, because I believe there are some people who actually survive or live on acquiring stolen goods, and they make it almost like a livelihood. And, when they do that, things like that, that's contributing significantly to praedial larceny. So, I'm happy to see that dishonestly receiving praedial larceny produce, that this thing is increased as well. Such people encourage praedial larceny significantly. This would actually discourage people from stealing, I believe. It reminds me like the same saying that they say **"the upholder is worse that the thief."** And, it reminds me of living in the United States for a little while. The system there is different, the Police System, where the Police Officers would dress in plain clothes, and even entice you to buy stolen goods, but letting you know that it's a cheaper deal and it's less money and some people go ahead and take the chance. But in these cases, these things actually are preventative methods to prevent people because you're knowing that you will get caught. There are people who went along and got involved with it and you got caught right away under pretence. They let you know, well, listen, this is stolen and so on, but they're working undercover. In our Police System, I think the system is different, so this doesn't apply here, but this is a good thing, preventative measures.

(The President made inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Entrapment, Mr. President. Yes, I believe that's what the Senator was describing.

(The President made inaudible comments)

Mr. President: Be dishonest and to steal.

(The President made inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Because I think it's a good deterrent, you know, in United States that happens. It doesn't happen in our society. So, people knowing that you see somebody on the street and selling something, they just go ahead and buy it knowing that they wouldn't get caught or anything like that. And in our society, this doesn't really happen.

Again, it provides for amendment to section 8 of the principal Act to increase the penalty for the offence of vagrancy in respect to praedial larceny, that, again, people coming around your property with the intention and so on, to steal your produce and so on, is a serious issue.

But, all in all, Mr. President, if this Bill is intended to boost the increase of the production of soursop, I don't think it will do that much, people will still continue to steal and so on and that type of thing. So, I believe that the Government need to come up with and formulate some policy in order to increase the production, whether by planting, allocating special lands and so on for that reason, subsidies and so on, for farmers so that farmers could get involved in the production of soursop, but not only soursop, also things like carrots and so on because as far as I understand it, there are millions of dollars that are spent on an annual basis, importing things like carrots as well. So, this is something to be considered, the majority of carrots that we consume here is imported where farmers here, it could be grown here locally and encouraged where we could save millions of dollars, especially in this time now where COVID is concerned.

Also, it was made available to me that once upon a time there was a Praedial Larceny Fund available. I understand the Senator spoke about compensation and so on in some areas, but in regards to when the produce is destroyed and so on, when the produce is destroyed the farmer gets nothing back. I'm seeing that $1.3 million investment for agriculture of late, and I'm hoping that some of these monies may go towards a Praedial Larceny Fund in the case where the produce is destroyed, that the farmer could be compensated because like as I mentioned earlier on, in some cases, the expense is very great, the labour put into it and so on, and the time and effort. So, these are some of the thing and again, I would like to see probably nutmeg, the production of nutmeg itself be included in this special, especially where the penalties is

concerned because we're talking about green gold. Now because of the fact this is a new thing with the soursop, but traditionally we know that nutmeg, what we call it now, we consider it our black gold and, I would like to see some protection towards the nutmeg or similar to what I'm seeing here towards the soursop and so on.

And, the only other issue that I have, Mr. President, in terms of this, in most cases, I saw the Minister. I would probably prefer, in some cases to see the Chief Agricultural Officer, being responsible, in some cases. I kind of don't like to see too much politics involved. We live in a highly politicised society; one side here and one side there, in order for transparency and so on, I would prefer that a public servant, take the lead in some of these roles, and so on, so that, you know, not much politics is involved and so on, and people would feel better about it, that type of thing.

So, this is all I have to say on the Bill, and I support it. And, I hope that we are not just talking, but that we go ahead and implement these things because of the fact that we understand COVID now and agriculture is of importance right now. And, we're not just talking about a Praedial Larceny Bill to make people feel that we are taking agriculture serious, but I hope that we go along and implement this thing with haste because people are losing and farmers get great loss, suffering great loss and so on, like they mentioned 98% or something of the sort. So, I just hope that this Bill would expedite it and pass a Bill to protect the farmers. Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Terry Noel and you have a duty there as well, meaning you can monitor the implementation, there are Committees to be formed, there are management groups to be formed. So, you can see questions and you don't have to wait until the Sitting of the Senate, you can simply write the Minister for Agriculture and say well, in accordance with this Bill which was approved in the Senate and these things were supposed to be done, could you give an indication of, has a Committee being formed; who sits on the Committee; when is it due to meet; is there going to be a public hearing? So, there's work for you there to do too, alright. So, as I said, being in the Senate is really just not a pleasure craft. If you take it seriously, you can get a lot done. And, it's your self interest, after all, you're a farmer. And, maybe

you may discover the fellahs would be behind your back when you're next in the field because you have your sights on them for performance. So, they may show up in your field. So, think about it. Senator Judd.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to support the amendment to the Bill. I believe and I'm very sure that many will agree with me that some of these amendments are long overdue. Nevertheless, this Bill and its amendments are welcomed and I'm certain that the farmers will be extremely happy.

Mr. President, this Bill is a clear indication of the Government's continued effort to curb praedial larceny and to protect our farmers. Earlier this year, as explained by the Honourable Senator Noland Cox, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands together with the Royal Grenada Police Force launched the 24-hour Praedial Larceny Hotline to serve our local farmers.

Mr. President, praedial larceny is one of the great plague that is affecting our farmers. It is no longer viewed as a petty crime but one of the most pervasive and entrenched crime affecting business, livelihood, and, Mr. President, according to FAO, the only crime in the region that are consistently noticed to have an upward trend. If you look at Grenada's statistics, it was also quoted by the Honourable Senator in 2018, you had 403 reported cases and in 2019, you had 438 reported cases, an increase of 8.7%. This practice is negatively affecting or negatively impacting the development of the Agriculture Sector as farmers are losing thousands of dollars in produce. The crime has the potential of high cost to welfare in farming communities, livelihood, household, food security, thus, making praedial larceny, the single greatest disincentive to investment in the sector.

Mr. President, I've heard so much talk over the last couple of days, especially maybe Monday night and Tuesday, of not much is being done for the Agricultural Sector. But, Mr. President, I'm hoping that after today that some people would notice some of the effort that we are making to protect farmers, to protect their livelihood and also contribute to the larger picture of food security.

So, in looking at the Bill, the insertion of the new section of 2A to 2M to the principal Act is very critical in counteracting praedial larceny. The Special Unit, established to design and review policies to address the plague in crime; usually, Mr. President, I know of situations that we usually make policies, but sometimes, we don't seriously do an assessment on the effectiveness of these policies and giving the Unit that sort of responsibility to ensure that they can make that sort of assessment and effectiveness of those policies that we passed or that we implemented to protect farmers. I think this is commendable, Mr. President, because we need to ensure that our policies that we are implementing are very effective and giving that Unit that power, and also the power to also make the recommendations, so that, to ensure that we continue to have a very effective system in solving the problem.

Mr. President, the collection of data, another responsibility that the Unit has, this is very much important. I think one of the fundamental problem that we have here in, especially a Small Island Developing State, is that there is sometimes very little data to be found on things. I think, the scientific approach in sometimes guiding the response is sometimes, it's a bit not there because you do not have that data. So, it's important to collect the data to understand, one, maybe the type of produce that is highly affected through the praedial larceny where it's most likely occurring. I mean, I think this data should be readily available now. And, what this will do, Mr. President, is also help with your response plan and your responsiveness to the issues.

2B (e) in the, as well dealing with the functions of that Unit, Mr. President, the developing of an anti-praedial larceny programme geared towards public awareness and education, another important function. Mr. President, I believe, it's not just about this piece of legislation, but it's also about the wider community, understanding the fundamental role that they have in ensuring that this does not happen and education and awareness plays a critical role in doing that. I don't think people may understand the great amount or loss probably as a country that we probably are losing through praedial larceny and how it's affecting food security. And, I think it's important that, that information be compiled and put together and be disseminated to the public and let people have a much more involved rolled in mitigating this. This will also lessen the

amount of work on the Task Force and the police and have people feel a sense of involvement in the process. So, I think the public education process, Mr. President, is a very important process because usually you pass legislation or you have Unit established and people don't know anything about it. Today, you pass this, and maybe a few farmers may hear about it, but it's important that we have a proper educational system using not just the traditional medium, but the Facebook or the trending mediums and also to reach younger farmers as well. So, I think, and as I mentioned to engage the larger community.

Mr. President, on this note, I also have a recommendation. I also believe while we do that, and with great intent to mitigate against praedial larceny and to protect our farmers and their produce, Mr. President, we have to ensure that the Unit has the resources as is necessary to do their work, or else, Mr. President, what will happen, it will just seems as a great idea on paper, and you will not have the desired results. So, it's important that we, whether it be budgetary support, whether it be the human capital, we have to ensure that the resources is there, so that they can do their duties.

Mr. President, the addition of soursop as a specially protected produce is also highly welcomed and again, long overdue. Grenada is the only country that can export soursop in the fresh form to the US market. Mr. President, that's a growing marke and you're seeing more and more people getting involved in the sector and that is good. And as more and more people get involved in the sector, there's more reasons that you need to protect it because, Mr. President, you don't want a situation… and I think we need to speak about the standards, the quality standards of those produce that is being exported, because it could be a simple situation that you could lose the market and you don't want that. So, yes, we are ensuring that we protect against the praedial larceny, but we have to ensure that we protect the market, and that as well is very important. So, I commend the fact that we added soursop as a specially protected produce.

I just have one other concern, which I think was highlighted by the Honourable Senator, who represent these constituents, the agriculture, the farmers, the appeal process, Mr. President, in case that someone may be unfairly dealt with in the issuance of the licence. Mr. President, I know this situation with the Appeal Court. Mr. President,

I would like to see a swifter process. I mean, we don't want a situation that, I know these court systems, sometimes take long, months, years. And, if I feel that I'm unfairly dealt with and I depend on this for my livelihood, and I have to wait months or years for a response, Mr. President, that can severely impact me economically. So, I'm hoping maybe, whether it be through the Court system, that maybe there could be some special process how people deal with this, to get redress in the event that they feel that they've been unfairly dealt with.

But, all in all, Mr. President, the Bill is a great Bill and, I'm happy that we are making this sort of advancement in the Agricultural Sector. I know farmers who welcome this Bill and, I know a lot of young farmers who will definitely welcome because it's very frustrating knowing that you put so much emphasis, so much time and effort, and then you cannot sometime benefit from the reward of your labour. And, you know, sometimes you're having the discussions with farmers and sometime you hear those frustration to the point that some people literally want to commit the act of violence, if they get to hold any of these individuals that is stealing their produce.

In fact, my father is a farmer and I remember him losing hundreds of pounds of soursop and sometimes I mean, I have to say **"daddy don't do this"**, because in his thinking, is what he will want to do, if he caught one of those thieves. So, Mr. President, I'm happy that we're putting stronger, we are having stricter penalties and, I'm happy that we are putting the measures and structures in place to ensure that we have a very efficient process and that we will represent and serve the farmers in the fullest capacity and protect the industry. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you. In making his contribution something came across my mind and that has to do with his concern about the efficiency with which the Court can deal with appeal matters if someone believes that an application for a licence was not fairly dealt with. Senator Williams, you may be able to say something about this. In the Trade Union field to which I'm most familiar, there are two parts that one can go, one can go, the Act allows for the setting up of a tribunal which resolves disputes. So, you can go by way of a tribunal or you can go by way of wrongful dismissal, which then

is based a lot on common law and all of those principles. And, if you go by way of the unfair dismissal route then you go to a tribunal which does not take you, I mean, the Court at some point can still intervene and to review the conduct of any quasi-judicial, so, I'm thinking just as the Senator spoke, whether or not some provision subsequently could be made for a special Tribunal to be set up and you can name the sources from which the persons can come. You could say, well one must be a lawyer, another must be an outstanding farmer, well established, another may be an agricultural economist, that can be put together very quickly, so that an appeal can be heard, rather than… because our Court system is already so overwhelmed and flooded with so many matters of litigation and the process is so slow, you know.

So, I would like to hear your thoughts or maybe you could discuss this matter with the Leader of Government's Business. And maybe you can pull in a couple of Senators from the "Other Side." Dr. Campbell has a tremendous amount of experience in that and those ideas… so that maybe a subsequent amendment can be made, where, rather than have to go all the way to the Court, and then you have to hire a lawyer. You know, you can set up a Tribunal where the person who feels aggrieved can come before the Tribunal, make a presentation, the Tribunal can consider the matter and then you set out the guidelines there and can pronounce on whether or not the denial of your application was a fair and valid one. And then, if not, you still have a right to go, well, you can't stop the Court from intervening where an issue of justice arises. So, you can still have the Court to review. But, some system which doesn't get tied in into the legal mechanism that is already so overwhelmed and move so slowly. Just my idea based on what Senator Cadet was saying. Yes. I miss the floor, you know, so I take the privilege to intervene sometimes in this quarter. Yes. Senator Cathisha Williams.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President. I took your comments as my cue to make my presentation. So, I rise to lend my support to the passage of the Praedial Larceny (Amendment) Bill.

Mr. President, with regard to your suggestion, I must say that it is one that has some merit. And I assume that what this Act contemplates with regard to appeals is the filing of a judicial review claim to review the decision of the Committee to refuse a licence. And, I agree with you that going through the Court system can be quite an arduous and time consuming process and one that may not produce the redress or the results that the claimant may wish to have in a timely period. So, a model similar to that of the Tribunal that deals with employment disputes is a very good suggestion and may be able to dispose of these matters in a much quicker time. So, Mr. President, I endorse that suggestion, and I hope that the Government policymakers and Senators will take the opportunity to discuss this further and perhaps propose further amendments to the Bill to accommodate that suggestion, but that is one that I will support, Mr. President.

And, just to make some general remarks now on the Bill, I think we all agree that praedial larceny is a hazard to economic sustainability and food security. And, this awareness is even more acute in times like these, of crisis, where the focus of feeding your country and securing the livelihood of your people, especially your farmers becomes a priority but this is an ongoing problem. And, in the last 20 years, it has evolved in terms of the frequency of cases, and in terms of the volume of produce that is being stolen. Before, praedial larceny largely used to be petty theft to satisfy household food insecurity, but now it has turned into a business enterprise for many people. Many people make their livelihoods preying and benefiting from the hard work of these farmers. And, it's even more heartbreaking when you consider that a lot of these farmers are mature individuals, our older citizens and, the time and effort and labour would take even more effort on their part because of their age. So, this relief that we are trying to provide through this Bill, I believe will be greatly appreciated by those farmers and it will serve as an incentive for our younger farmers. Our younger farmers who have had to see their parents and grandparents struggle and deal with those problems, and which would have discouraged them from entering into the farming profession. But, with this Bill, perhaps they can see a ray of hope and a way for them to

make a sustainable livelihood without the scourge of praedial larceny or the lessening of it to a certain degree.

Mr. President, but this problem is not only on the micro level, yes, it affects our families and our households, but, nationally statistics from 2015/2016 shows that 20 to 25% of national production is siphoned off by praedial activities, 20 to 25%, Mr. President, that's a lot of productivity, that's a lot of earnings down the drain. So, what we need is a concerted, focused approach to dealing with this problem. And, a Management Unit that is proposed, guided by a Praedial Larceny Management Committee, I believe, is the most appropriate structure to address this problem head on, Mr. President.

In relation to the point of the macro effects on praedial larceny, I would just like to highlight this one statistic from a regional study that shows that 321 million dollars annually is lost to praedial larceny; that's an estimated 18% of regional export. So this is a huge pervasive problem and its high time that we take the measures to address this problem directly, Mr. President. And that is why I applaud this amendment Bill.

I just want to touch briefly on the importance of sentencing as a deterrent to crime. Now there are many objectives for sentencing, one of them is well in terms of criminal activity, we have litation but another important objective of sentencing is deterring crime. And I think increasing the penalties for praedial larceny will do just that, Mr. President. We have seen the sentencing increase from 3 to 5 years, we've seen the fines also increased and I hope this sends a clear message to those persons who are making a business out of robbing others that we are serious about curtailing the activities, we are serious about bringing justice to our hard working farmers and we are serious about harnessing the maximum potential of the economic benefits that agriculture brings to our nation.

Lastly, Mr. President, this approach comprises different facets, so on one side, we have the strengthening of our security forces. We have a Police Unit that has been equipped, we have a special hotline that has been set-up but the legislative and policy framework is crucial. And that is where we, the Members of Parliament come in, so we are doing a very important job here today, Mr. President, because yes we have policies,

yes we have procedures but if there is no basis in the law then those measures have no teeth. So what we are doing now is arming these institutions, arming these organisations, arming our Police Force and giving them the legitimacy and the legislative backing to perform their functions effectively.

I know I probably said lastly twice, but lastly, I would just like to address one thing that was raised by a Member of the House in relation to compensation to the aggrieved. Now the Act specifically provides for that under sections 10B and 10C. Section 10B speaks to restitution so where are person, where a culprit has been convicted of an offence under the Act, the Court is empowered to make an order that the stolen produce or the stolen equipment be restored to the aggrieved farmer. And notwithstanding that power of the Court, the aggrieved person also has the ability to make a claim in the Court for restitution of the produce and equipment to him or her. Further if the produce was disposed of or sold, then that person may also be compensated from the proceeds of that sale or they can make a claim in court for compensation. So these things are all provided for in this very comprehensive Act, Mr. President. And with that again, I will just like to say that this is a very pertinent and relevant Act and I will like to proffer my support for its passage. Thank you, Mr. President.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I too want to join my voice in giving full support to the passage of the Praedial Larceny (Amendment) Bill. And to say that the scourge of praedial larceny has been a threat to the sustainability of the Agriculture Sector in Grenada and as a matter of fact around the world because some farmers as a result of this scourge react in ways that sometimes could be very dangerous. Some reduce on the acreage so that they will be able to just provide security for the small plot that they cultivate, some do undergo or involve themselves in certain practices that could be very dangerous. But this Bill here

today, Mr. President, is a ray of hope, as one Member would have said before, and is a response by Government to say to farmers, enough is enough, we have to fix this once and for all. And coming from a farming background, an agricultural background, I know what this is. You go to pick up your nutmeg and only to realise fresh pods that you're seeing on the ground and you're wondering. And I had to endure this for all my growing up life because the nutmeg played a major role in sending us to school and taking care of us. But only to get there and realise someone would have passed before you, how disappointing you would have feel but I just think of my parents and what it meant to them.

But, Mr. President, I want to believe that this is coming at the right time to address the scourge and to let farmers know that you don't have to take it into your own hands anymore to involve in practices that could come back to haunt you. I remember one farmer whom I know very well, you lose your crops and the Police Officers will say to you well you need to have evidence that this is your crop that has been stolen and that is your crop here. And he said ok, he took it into his own hands and insert instruments within the produce and mind you, yes he was able to identify his produce because he said, look and you're going to find this and they found it. And lo and behold he was then charged because the measures he took to have the evidence could have resulted in the death of others, so it didn't help. But I am happy to say that in the end and that's where I saw the collaboration of other farmers who stood up and said, no. Yes it was a wrong method, but we found the culprit but we should not penalise the gentleman. So there will be no need now to put instruments in produce or as the people say poison produce because you know if your produce is being stolen, there is redress. And through this Bill, there will be redress and we can deal with this.

But I want to move a little further into sugesting, Mr. President, to effectively tackle the scourge of praedial larceny, there must be collaboration between farmers, retailers, and consumers. Let me say here, the worst part of praedial larceny is when you have farmers preying on their fellow farmer's crops because in so doing, it's sometimes hard to detect because he is a farmer or she is a farmer and you may think that it came from their field. So we have to deal with that, but retailers always look for a

deal and why not? The last time we were here, we were talking about the… you have those little corners and tables in the supermarket where you have special deals and by nature if you're getting something cheaper you want to go for it but I agree, it depends. But when someone come with agricultural produce and want to give you a deal, sell it to you at a deal, the retailers sometimes are tempted to go for it. And I think here, Mr. President, if we can identify retailers purchasing from suppliers who are not farmers, they should be penalised heavily because we have to break the neck of the market. If there is no market, well then we may reduce on people going to prey on other crops, so we have to deal with that and consumers. Not everything cheap might be good for you. But my biggest concern here, Mr. President, is for us, the Ministry of Agriculture to examine the possibility of producing special receipts or receipt books with security features for traceability at all stages along the value chain to help the Praedial Larceny Task Force to verify whether or not the produce in transit is stolen or legally produced. That's something I think the Ministry of Agriculture could look at. So they develop these receipt books and we ask farmers to purchase them at a special fee of course. But the point here, if you are to sell, the Task Force could examine your receipt to know that you got it from a legitimate source. We have to find ways to reduce the possibility for the transaction of praedial stuff, we have to. And when we do such, it will of course encourage our young people to wanting to go into this noble field.

You know as a young man growing up, I often used to think back of all those snacks and so forth we purchased, be it the potato chips and so on. And I said somewhere in Idaho or some place in the United States is a farmer who produced the potatoes and the potatoes are being used to make the chips and we bought it down here. And I was using this, playing it over in my mind to say, sometimes we see farming as a dirty job, but if those farmers didn't do that, we won't have the chips that we enjoy. And think of the other produce, they all came from the field. Mind you, yesterday I read an article that kind of frightens me, that over in Helsinki, there is this lab that is using water and bacteria to produce flour and other crops that there will be no need to use the soil again. And the reporter as the first one being given that opportunity to look at the operation, he said he saw this froth, what we call water, when the water with whatever

pollution or so normally will make as we say, a froth in it, and he say he saw this froth and this froth is being pushed through whatever processing and this bacteria came out as flour. And he said, well make me a pancake and he said yes they used the engineered flour and made him a pancake and he said it taste just like the regular flour pancake. That's where we are going but in the meantime, let us ensure that we protect this industry that we have, if that's what's going to happen in the next 50 years or so, so be it.

But for now the industry we have, this is a noble industry and I want young people to recognise that this is noble and if we are not able to provide food to feed our people we will go starving. So it is important, a very important industry. And I remember as a young man growing up 4-Hers, a big part of it was the backyard gardening and so forth, we need to continue to push this. And my pet subject in this area is and I have constantly said it, why you find that children just very small and they know everything about the KFC and so forth and they know everything about the fries, you know what would have happened? Let's look at some of those formulas that we are seeing in those tins, Gerber and so forth; made mashed potato, be it apple and so on and we feed this to our children and what we have done is developed a taste for those sort of foods. So it's no surprise that they don't like our local golden apples but they want the American apple. That taste was developed by feeding them those sort of formulas. I remember as a young man too, seeing my grandmother crushing the bluggo with the yellow butter and feeding the child and I thought it was inhumane. Well how you could give the child this hard food and not knowing what they were actually doing is developing a taste for our local foods. And I want us in our School Feeding Programmes to ensure that we go back to this and develop the taste for our own local stuff.

Sometime ago, Mr. President, I went to the Marketing Board and there was a lot of what we call sweet yam spoiling and nobody seems to be buying it, you know why, because nobody has the taste for the sweet yam. The older folks maybe have it but our young people, that wasn't given to us. We have to find a way to ensure our produce is fed to our children so that they would develop the taste for it and they will want it, we

have to. Remember those days when our coconut oil was considered to be dangerous because somebody wanted to market something else. What happened, today they realised coconut oil is a miracle crop, a miracle food. So the point I'm making, Mr. President, is, our local stuff is very healthy and we will do far better than how we are doing, of course we are going to reduce the import bill by having people to eat more of our local stuff but we will be healthier, much healthier when we consume more of our local produce.

So I welcome this Bill because I am seeing this thing going to expand our Agriculture Sector in the country because farmers know when they produce, they will be able to go and harvest and sell and raise income to take care of their family. So I give my full support to the second reading of this Bill and the passage of this Bill.

Mr. President: Lunch is here, I am proposing that we go through rather than take a break and then resume. So in as much as we are providing an incentive to farmers by this Bill, I'm providing an incentive to the Senators that lunch is here and it ought to be eaten. So, there is an incentive.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: My suggestion, Mr. President, I think there are still some contributions that have to be made from the "Other Side". We still have the adjournment to go through, my suggestion will be we complete this Bill... the adjournment.

Mr. President: I am proposing that we go through without… and finish, bring the session to a close and then have lunch. The incentive is, if we are doing that, then we will speed up the process, that's the incentive. So not only are the farmers being incentivised but the Senators are being incentivised to finish the days proceedings. Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I really appreciate that, I like the incentive that you just gave so I am going to be very short. I

rise to give my support to the Bill. I feel as if Senator Cadet would have read all my thoughts so I am not going to labour on those. I would just want to highlight in supporting the Bill the need for visibility of the Praedial Larceny Officers. I have said before I live in Pearls and just down from my house there is a farm there. And so I would have also heard the cries of all the farmers in that area because Pearls is a farming community. Persons would have personally approached me to speak of the issues that they would have had with persons coming on to their farms and stealing and when you're farming in proximity with others and you cannot identify your produces and so on. So all of those issues, while I am not a farmer I would have heard of them directly from the farmers. So I believe the visibility of the Praedial Larceny Officers would be a key component in ensuring that this Bill actually, the intentions of this Bill actually would be achieved effectively.

I also want to point out that there are instances where persons do not actually steal the produce themselves but they will knowingly, intentionally tie their animals in persons' farms or fields and so the animals would be the ones doing the destruction to the produce, and again I think something has to be done about that because I cannot imagine why as a farmer you would see another farmer's hard work, hard labour coming up and just tie your animal in that field.

From my expertise, Mr. President, and I think Senator Cadet would have touched on that, resources are very important for anything to work. And we are not talking necessarily here financial resources but we're talking also human resources, a functioning space for the Praedial Larceny Unit to operate from and so on. All of these would come together to make sure that the intentions of this Bill are achieved and so I would just want to impress on the Ministers on the "Other Side", the Senators on the "Other Side" and of course the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure that all of the resources that are needed for this are available. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator St. Cyr. Senator DeAllie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President. I can't guarantee I'll be as short as Senator St. Cyr but I will try my best seeing that we have to eat.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: So, Mr. President, I too rise to lend my support to this Bill because I believe it is critical that we try to do something that for sure could send the message that we are going to deal with this scourge of Praedial Larceny in an effective manner.

So the Bill tries in my view to attack it from two levels which I believe is important, to attack it from the point of view of the people who steal and sell, so the seller and of course the people who purchase, the buyers, whether it be business people or whether it be individuals. So I believe if we attack it and as Senator Garraway indicated, if we attack it in such a way, we probably could break the back of this thing to some degree. You will always have people who are just worthless, to put it in local parlance and just want to go into people's field and destroy and do all these kind of nonsense and we have to deal with that too significantly, so I have no issues with that. But if we attack it like that I believe it will send the message that we are not prepared to encourage anybody who is going to steal as well as anybody who is going to buy from those persons who steal and that must be done effectively. I wouldn't bother to mention about operationalising, St. Cyr spoke about it and Senator Judd spoke about it and having the necessary resources in the Department that is responsible for that to have an effective functioning of it. It's one thing to have a Committee and a Unit, it's the other thing to get people out in the field to deal with it effectively and come back and have issues dealt with.

Senator Campbell indicated about the Court, I believe that is a critical part of this because we can't have the police going out and doing their work or whoever we put to do this, Constables or whoever and then they bring cases and it takes an inordinate long time to get the case heard. So I believe that is an area that we have to do. A Night

Court could work, Mr. President, what's wrong with a Night Court. We can set up a Night Court, on the current Court system we have, yes we may have to get a Judge or a Master, whoever, but we could do it in the night, what's stopping us from working at 4:00 or 4:30, we could do a Night Court as other teritiories have done. So I believe those are areas that we need to look at and consideration for the "Other Side."

Now, I'm going to put on my other hat which is the hat of Marketing Board and talk about the issues with soursop and how important it is for us to put soursop as a protected commodity. But I want to hasten to add, Mr. President, that the special preference we have for soursop is going to be quickly eroded as other countries in the region are also applying to the US for special preference, Central and South America. So we are actually late in doing this and nonetheless it is done, but we now have to move properly to organise or reorganise this industry as it relates to Grenada benefitting. Because right now, there are probably one or two people benefiting from this export and what is done with soursop and the critical thing for us is, we don't have a control on what is exported. So for example, there is no centralised place that the soursop comes to, to check to see phytosanitary, what is being met, what standards are expected and how we package and how we ship. There is no standardisation for that and there is no central place. Marketing Board is supposed to be an organisation that can deal with that, so we have everybody buying from everybody and you know you were talking about liberalisation for nutmeg, that is a liberalised product. We're buying from anywhere and anybody buying from outside at any price and we don't think about putting protections for these important commodities as this one.

So I believe that we need to seriously look, now that we have put it under protection to some degree, have that kind of level of communication and coordination between Agriculture and businesses like Marketing Board to see how we can first of all set the standards and then centralise it to see how it can be done. So that we have an idea on control on what goes out there and it can protect the preferential condition that we have now for this fresh produce that we seem to be into. And we have a lot of farmers that invested in soursop production, quite a number of acreage is under soursop production. So it is something that we really have to pay attention to in order to

give farmers relief because it is a relatively short gestation crop, Senator Campbell, within, I think it's 3 to 4 months, you could have production from the tree and then the tree gives you a few cycles in a year based on the amount of irrigation that you give it. So, there is a lot of benefits that can arise from doing something like soursop and doing it how we do it.

I fully support the education and information to farmers on this particular Bill and what it is we're coming to propose here and how it may or may not affect what they do. The licensing regime is an excellent move. I believe under the licensing regime there's room for if you don't get a licence you could appeal and do all of that. But, the licensing regime brings order especially on the seller's side and on the buyer's side. Everybody has to show some form of licence and they could buy and purchase accordingly under their licence depending on the particular type of licence they have.

The only difficulty I have is the fines. You know, I don't understand how you could charge a $20,000 fine for a variance in licence, but when a man come dishonestly to sell and you buy, you're only charging him 10,000, I think it should be reversed. A variation in licence should be less, but the fine for the man who dishonestly purchases the stuff, he can't be paying less than a man who have a variation in licence, come on, on the "Other Side". If that's an error, we need to change it, one time, the 20,000 must go for the man who dishonestly purchase, because we have to send the message that we are not accepting that kind of behavior, Mr. President, that is how the message has to be sent. As a matter of fact, it should be more. I find it should be more, 20 small. I would suggest that we look at increasing it because this is about sending the message. The Court, normally what we do is a maximum of, the Judge, whoever when this matter comes, don't necessarily have to go to the maximum, it could be less. I think we need to switch that one around. I think we made a mistake.

I have a concern about the restitution and the thing with the Police Station and what happens there. And, I'm talking from a practicality standpoint. Our Police Station, some of them are small, they're tight. The way to operate inside there is difficult. We're now going to add something to the Police Station, first of all to say that the produce could be kept and how it's going to be kept. Some produce need to be refrigerated. If

you don't keep it in a certain time, they say you could sell it or destroy it. I mean, I think we're putting extra burdens on the officers in the Police Station and the people who run these stations to have a section cut out for produce that they may seize and how you deal with that. I don't know if that is something that we want to have in the Police Stations or deal with it. I mean, I know it's an evidential issue, and having evidence if you want to bring the case forward and what needs to be done. But, I think putting that in a Police Station with the limited resources and constraints that they have makes it an operational difficulty that we need to reconsider, Mr. President, through you. We probably need to find some else or a centralised place, I don't know. I don't have the answers right here. But I think putting it in the Police Station and the control of it, especially with these perishables, how we deal with that. Yes, a yam may take longer to spoil, but you can't compare the spoilage rate of a yam versus bananas that's ripening or lettuce. So we need to understand the practicalities of that and how we do, whether we take photos of what it is, and we use that as electronic means to provide the evidence later or something like that. But to have it stored for evidence purposes to charge and to move on with a case, I think presents a certain level of difficulty that we may want to reexamine as we go forward on this.

The original Act speaks about the Praedial Larceny Fund and how it can be used and restitution can begin from there for farmers. So, I think that is covered in there. This Act gives us more in terms of the details and what must be done and how farmers can get some restitution based on what comes out from the matter when they seize, and if they sell it and what happens.

So, Mr. President, the last thing, I want to add on this Act is the fact that timeliness of dealing with the issues of praedial larceny is also very critical. And, I think some of the Senators alluded to that, the speed and the response time of the RGPF on complaints that come on praedial larceny is important. And, I know sometimes there's issues with transport and mobility and all of that but a critical thing has to be how quickly we respond to the farmers and the issue that happens there. Ye, we have, we're now putting in, in this Bill and once it's passed, the issue of the framework to deal with the buyer and the seller and the identification cards and the licencing regime, which is all

great. But, at the same time, we need to respond quickly and effectively to complaints that come under praedial larceny and how… because if our farmers don't believe that there is an effective response time and effectively dealt with and quickly get the matter to Court and people are charged, then we're wasting a lot of time. And, I believe that is important to put, because when we go out to farmers and say, listen, we're putting all of this in place but we can't respond and we're not responding effectively, it becomes a joke, and they will say, well we're just joking.

And as previous Senators say to us, agriculture, food security and sustainability in this time is so critical, in a COVID environment, and a lot of money is being purported to be pumped into agriculture as a sector to consider in the 2021 Budget. So, Mr. President, if that is the case, then we have to be serious about this praedial larceny scourge and part of the seriousness have to be, how you respond to it and deal with it. So, in that timeframe, I think the issue of response by the police, the Courts and the Night Court to deal with matters quickly and get results. We can't wait, four/ five years for a matter to be heard. And that would be a travesty to the justice of this particular area and people might feel they could come and steal your stuff and get away because if it's taking five years to throw you in jail or do something with you… I don't believe in this jail thing, Mr. President, I may sound controversial here, but I'll say it. Probably part of the penalties is to bring them back in the people land and tie them and let them work. I say that controversially, but that may be, bring them back and work in the field where they steal from and let them put some labour. You know, in our days, it had a thing called hard labour, Mr. President, I don't know if that still exists now. In the fines now, is just fine and/or prison, probably we need to consider some kind of hard labour because when a farmer back bend and toil and fork and do all that thing and weed and so on and then when he come to reap his carrots all gone and they stick back the little piece in it to make you feel like the carrots still there. That is thing to lie down in your field and do wrong thing. So we need to be effective about that and I understand that scourge and the difficulty farmers face. And as we said here, if we want to encourage farming in young people as a business, which it is, and it ought to be, then we need to deal with

these issues of praedial larceny in a serious and effective manner. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Oh, Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes, thank you very much, more than a number of time, but I know the challenge of seeing up here. So, thank you very much. I just want to identify with most of the presentations made and I think Senator De Allie sort of focused on the aspect of the judiciary because you can do a lot of the work, you can pump resources, and as, through you, Mr. President, as Senator Campbell indicated, he himself, who after going probably on three occasions, on the fourth occasion just gave up. What does that mean for us in the Labour Movement or as Grenadian citizens/workers? I'm aware of a number of people who have gotten so frustrated that they have given up any large scale or medium size farming, where sometimes once a week or twice a week, they would have people come in to give labour on the farm. So, when that happens, there's a rippling impact and effect for some form of income for people, especially in the villages. And, permit me, I know he is very humble, but, I must identify, my dear Comrade and colleague, the acting Clerk as one of the leading farmers in soursop. I mean, he has planted over, I'm aware, these are discussions that we have been having, he had over four acres of soursop planted, probably a few years ago and when faced with the issue of losses, that have contributed to him, (although he's a very deep steeled and committed person), having to review his involvement in that form of agriculture. So, we are aware of this, and I also identify with the concern and would like to hear the thought process behind the severity of penalty in 2J, subsection (2) versus part 5, subsection (3) as identified by Senator De Allie, especially where I became more concerned on the question of a licence and the information that one may provide. If you change your vehicle, based on the example used by, I think it was Senator Cox because the aspect of your vehicle may be information that allow you to qualify for a licence, but you have to change your vehicle and for some reason seven days were to elapse and you did not make that correction,

you will automatically be exposed to a $20,000 fine, not just as a maximum, but 20,000. And, I do not think that we may find that a farmer, a businessman with a licence may be able to say, well, do not fine me as the business persons who would have benefited from the stimulus package and not giving the monies to the workers have been forgiven. We must not use this as a means of people can do things and then be forgiven without penalties, we need to send a very strong message.

Many years ago and I guess here this is the aspect of where centralisation may come in, as Senator De Allie spoke about Marketing Board. But under the GCNA and also under the Cocoa Association, where we grew up calling it, the Nutmeg Book and the Cocoa Book, but the Nutmeg Book and the Cocoa Book, were used not only as a means of recording what you have sold, but it was also used as a means, and I can recollect that many years ago where in that area, the purchaser was able to look at your book, even without your knowledge and form an opinion as to whether or not all the produce that you are selling may have come from your land, because it may be known that is quarter of acre of land you may have, and there is an appreciation of the amount of nutmeg trees or cocoa trees that you may have and over a period of time… So growing up, I'm aware of this, we were able to, just by the observation of people's book or their process to form an impression and then look into it as to whether or not you are going into your friends' land, and pick up nutmeg, or pick cocoa. So, it is along the same line through you, Mr. President, that Senator Garraway spoke about the receipt. I'm saying something many years ago, as simple as the cocoa book or the nutmeg book were used as a means of determining whether or not you were selling more than you were actually expected to produce.

I also heard the concern of a farmer identifying or purporting to identify his produce and been told that you cannot prove that this is your produce because it is not marked. I'm not going the road that, that farmer may have gone and I'm aware of those things. But, I'm wondering whether or not it may be legitimate that if I'm the one accused, I'm sitting somewhere in the market, or at my side of the road selling and Farmer A came and said that look, I'm selling stolen produce, could it mean therefore now, I am expected to prove where I got my produce from? I'm not sure about the

legitimacy of this or about the possibility of this. If we are faced with that, I am producing, I have lost my produce, I have good reasons to believe that Farmer B stole my produce, I reported it to the police, we went to Farmer B and Farmer B is saying well no, this is not your produce, shouldn't it be that for Farmer B to be selling he ought to be able to prove where he got his produce from? So, that was one of the suggestions that I wanted to make and to identify with all of the comments made about the issue of enforcement, the issue of the relevant support because farming in the communities do produce or provide some little panquoi for want of a better word, some little panquoi for quite a number of the villagers from time to time.

So, I give my support to the Bill and ask for the necessary resources to be made available. And, this is a time in the COVID period, for us to give the seriousness and importance to agriculture, not the lip service that we have done in the past, not the lip service that we have done in the past. This is a period when we, even within the period of the scarce resources that we have, given the reduction in revenue, but we can show how important that we take agriculture by ensuring that we do what is necessary to ensure that our farming community is protected, and therefore encourage our people to use local produce. Thank you very much, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. I am going to be very short. I think all that needed to be said has been said. Just a couple of points, I wish to underscore, so firstly, lending my support to the passing of this Bill. I acknowledge the overwhelming support for this Bill from Members of this House. We've gone into great detail over, that praedial larceny is a significant disincentive for investment in our Agriculture Sector. And also, a disincentive for our young farmers, young men and women who may wish to come into this already challenged, but important sector. And what this legislation, what this amendment does, it gives teeth both in terms of institutional strengthening and in terms of the penalties that formed the heart of this amendment. But, the comment and it's a recurring theme is what is going to be critical

to this. It looks great on paper, there are still elements of it that can still be strengthened, and they will be strengthened in time as we move forward, but it is in the implementation and the enforcement and that is traditionally, Mr. President, where we have been weak historically across Administrations. So, I think that will be the true test of this. We have to bring these words, this legislation to life, if we are going to succeed in making this an enabler for a revival or strengthening of the Agriculture Sector, especially at this time, where the issue of food security has never been so apparent to us. The need for us, with borders closed, with challenges in terms of supply, our ability to feed ourselves moving forward, but also and this speaks to the treatment of soursop. But the significant markets that are available to us in Grenada, where we have a comparative advantage, whether it's our cocoa, our nutmeg, now our soursop. So, on those few points, Mr. President, I lend my support, full support to the Bill. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I just want to, just take the opportunity, just to summarise a few things that were mentioned by Members who contributed towards this Bill, and thank them for their support towards this important Bill, the passage of this important Bill. And, just to say, Mr. President, the concerns are all valid and important. The one in particular, that speaks to the Unit and the work that the Unit has before it and under 2B in the bill, Mr. President, you can see the tasks set out for the Unit is one that is pretty robust, which will challenge and take care of some of the issues, like monitoring and surveillance, marketing, a number of things. So, the Committee does have quite a bit of important things to handle, as such, the operationalisation of this Committee and the Unit is very, very important to the success of the implementation of this Bill. So, I just wanted to speak to that.

Mr. President, Senator De Allie did speak about the fine and the disparity on both sides. But, I just speak to say that, the fine for breaking the offence of being caught selling the produce of $5,000 is also accompanied by a four year prison term as well. So, it does lends itself to add some comfort there on the "Other Side," just in case

persons may see that disparity as being one of an error. However, the issue of variance in the information is a tricky one and I think the Unit believes that is an area that a person will try to fraud. And so, hence the reason why the fine is a bit steep in that area as well.

As regards to the disposal, in looking at the Bill, Mr. President, the Bill itself didn't specifically say that the produce ought to be stored at the Police Station, but it must be delivered to the Commander of the Police, so, he has the responsibility for it. So, I am thinking that once the Police Station or whatever area or venue that doesn't have the requisite facility for storage or device, be it refrigerator or chiller, that the police may have to direct for storage to be somewhere else for safekeeping. So I think that in itself will lend some latitude in terms of that.

The issue of the judicial aspect is one that there is limitations here in terms of how far this Bill can go in terms of directing the Court but it allows for the Judge or Magistrate, him or her can in their deliberations and decision, which they normally do, currently with cases where you have disputes., they can direct a Tribunal to be convened for those matters to be done. I speak from experience that having seen that with a matter that came before the Ministry, between a service provider and Government, the Court directed for a Tribunal to meet to discuss and to come to some resolution. So, it is not uncommon that those actions do happen at the Court at the Judicial level. So, maybe that is something that we may need to probably guide, give some guidance in that regard, so that persons can get some speedy resolution to those disputes.

(Mr. President made inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: I'm not sure. I'm not sure, as I say I may be lost there. **(Mr. President made inaudible comments)** I'm not sure, as I said, you might be correct, just for what it's worth. But I understand it's a problem and it's something that is not only with praedial larceny, but with a number of other issues in society. So, it's something that is separate and apart from, not specific to praedial larceny, but it's

something that needs to be addressed. But I agree with you, Mr. President, in that regard.

I just want to say that the issue of the licencing regime is one that is clear that it has some teeth and will help to avert some of the current challenges that we do have with the praedial larceny. And, I think what we can see is that the only how that we can get that improvement is that there must be constant consultations with the farmers, with the Praedial Larceny Unit as we continue to implement this amendment, because they always say the users find fault with the manufacturers. So, it's until we start putting this down on the ground, we'll start to realise really and truly where the challenges are and where further amendments are going to be needed. So, Mr. President, with these few words on the contributions of my fellow colleagues in the House, I commend for a second reading of the passage of the Praedial Larceny (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Mr. President: Senator Cox

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the whole Senate and consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

Question put and agreed to.
Senate in Committee.
Senate resumed.

Mr. President: Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you, Mr. President. I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, I have to report that the Committee of the whole House met and the Bill was passed without amendment.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Clerk Assistant: Item 16 - Public Business.
Item 17 - Adjournment.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, before we take the adjournment or get into that item, I just wish to convey a sad note. And that is our Information Technician, that is the gentleman who handles all of the laptops and handles all the IT business of this House, while he was on the job, an hour and a half or two ago got word that his mother was rushed to hospital with a stroke. So, he departed to rush to the hospital to see his mom, and we are just learning momentarily that she has passed. So I will wish to take the opportunity for us, because he's an integral part of Parliament and, we have a modern Parliament building with all of these facilities and he's an important part of our parliamentary staff. So, out of respect as a mark of solidarity, I will just wish us to stand in a Moment of Silence and to have the Clerk convey to him that the House conveys its deepest condolences and sympathies to him.

Moment of Silence
Adjournment

Moment of Silence observed.

Thank you Honourable Members, and the Clerk could you please convey to Mr. Gayvon Mark our most profound condolences. Thank you Honourable Members. Again, I wish to refresh your memory that lunch is here and we are now on the item of the adjournment. Ok could someone move, Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you, Mr. President. Yes, sure I will be short. But as a Trade Unionist, those who know us would know that lunch or eating has never been a factor when we have certain duties or so to perform. As a matter of fact many times at the end of the day we then remember or realise that we didn't eat, I'm not saying that we should follow that. But I just think it's important on the adjournment just to address two matters quickly.

Mr. President: Before you go there, I also don't want us to engage in breaking the law, because the law sets the framework for when workers must eat and you can't work beyond four hours without having a meal break so, and that's in the Labour Code.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: My memory tells me we have gone past the four hours. We took a decision and…

Mr. President: …and that's in the Labour Code.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I am agreeing with this, but if we agree without being enforced, I don't think that that's an issue. And as Leaders **(inaudible comments)**…

Mr. President: Just a the light moment.

Adjournment

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I'm taking it as a light moment too. Just in relation to whatever changes has been made or have been considered in relation to the Annandale Waterfalls, we want to ensure that there should be no unhindered access to the community. It is our tradition in Willis and the sourrounding areas, Boca, Snug Corner and these are places that we go on a Saturday or Sunday, Public Holidays and it is a form of social engagement, community togetherness, etcetera. We agreed that there is work that needs to be done and we want to see the standard, appearances, everything improved and maintained. But the community wants to ensure that there should be no unhindered access, it is important to register this year and in some other Session we may need to go into further discussion.

The Labour Movement watched with bated breath as to what may happen over the next 7 or so days coming out of the activitites that took place probably about a week ago in relation to the Carnival like activities. We called for our Members to report to work. We know it was not the right decision to make to go outside there and engage in different social activities but at the same time we understood what happened, let me make that point. You cannot have double standards, you cannot have and I'm going to speak about it very openly now because it cannot be used as encouragement by fellow workers and villagers to go out and socialize, that's before the activity. But you cannot have mini regattas, you cannot have Government Officials and others taking part in activities that bring people together and then expect as the people in charge of the State to pass decree or to tell people you cannot go out and socialise. It was not the right thing to do, do not get me wrong, you cannot do this. You cannot have business places like night clubs in the south of the Island like the Bananas for instance on a Friday night leading up to the weekend having social activities that is publicised and is known and there is no condemnation, we cannot do these things. So whereas we understand and we called for workers to go to work and people on a whole to avoid socialising together given the threat of COVID-19, we understood what has happened. And it is something that we should learn from, so I wanted to make that disctinction because it has lent itself to the aspect of mistrust, it has lent itself to the aspect of the feeling that certain groups or segments or certain aspects of the culture is being treated differently.

Adjournment

I want to keep repeating, we do not support the mass gathering of people because none of us will know what the spread of COVID may or may not be. But those of us who are placed in leadership positions, all of us included cannot be making demands and at the same time by our very action or inaction, it allow others to do that which we are asking others not to do. And there cannot be no justification, and there cannot be no explanation, private vs public, there can't be, there just cannot be. It was dangerous to do and therefore we ought to have led from the front and by example and it is not fair, it is not fair to set up the revellers who ought not to have been out there, let me make that point, that in the event that there is some reemergence of COVID, it will be blamed on the Jab Jab. It doesn't have to be the Jab Jab, we have reopened our community, we have reopened our borders.

Not only have we reopened our borders, it has been accepted that the principles of the lockdown in terms of quarantine is being broken by some and therefore they can reintroduce COVID into Grenada. It is unfair to set up immediately, to tell workers that you're not getting no stimulus package because all you went out there and do x and y because we as Government say not to go out there and revel, but others, in Carriacou, it was a mini regatta with officials involved. I'm making this plea once again for us to have a level playing field, for us to stop making those or the type of activities in our society that is normally associated with ordinary working class people to be the easy target. We have taken a risk and we understand that risk of reopening the borders, but we're also aware that with that risk comes the possibility or probably the reintroduction of COVID. So it is not just the Carnival like activities because the Carnival like activities was not only in St. Patrick, the Carnival like activity was not only in St. Paul but the Carnival like activities took place in the Stadium on Cyber Monarch night, took place in Carriacou, took place in other places, took place in the Bananas. When for instance other business places that has not been singled out by our leaders, who have not gone after the private places that had more than normal gatherings because of the season that we were in, and therefore it is important for us to bear this in mind, because the Labour Movement is concerned.

Adjournment

We are in this period right now when we have been discussing, how do we manage that risk of COVID and the need for engagement in terms of economic activities and therefore it calls for all of us to unite together. It calls for all of us, the Business Sector, the Government, the NGO's etc., to understand that. But a critical aspect that must be addressed as a matter of urgency through you, Mr. President, all of us included, but the Ministry of Youth has that added responsibility as a matter of urgency to try to find programmes and activities that can bring our youth together to help address that issue of the adrenaline that is flowing. There is this responsibility and just as how we have to prioritise agriculture now coming out of COVID, the adrenaline that is flowing through the youth, say what we want, we can make political statements, we can accuse, we can blame opposition parties, we can blame Labour Movement, we can blame the church, there is a reality outside there. There is a rebelliousness that didn't come about just because of the Jab Jab or the band, it found its expression there by and large. And given the threat that we are facing and that is why for us in the Labour Movement it was so dangerous to go outside there and be involved in the activities that took place over the… well the period that is normally put aside for carnival. It is so risky, because at the end of the day, it is the same ordinary working class man and woman and children that will be impacted significantly. Already, households are stretched because a number of people are without jobs and a reduction in income. But that is not theoretically enough for us to just turn a blind eye and say that we understand, because in order to address the issue colleagues through you, Mr. President, there must be an acceptance of the reality that is taking place and it is not just enough to blame people. It is enough for us to continue the education that is required, for us to accept as the leadership that errors were made and it may not be that those errors were deliberately made that I want to give this class of the society a better opportunity or not.

We are facing a situation that has confronted us for the very first time and the least or the best that we can do as the chart our course going forward is to be open and upfront and indicate yes, errors were made and at the same time to make the request of

all of us to be guided by the necessary protocol, health protocol, whatever behaviour that is required to continue the fight against COVID.

I use this opportunity in closing from the Labour Movement's point of view to once again to call on all of us, all of us to follow the necessary protocols and do not allow leaders, politicians to prevent the necessary protocols from being observed. So whether you are in St. Andrew in Grenville and it is normal for people who lime on the block at location A or in St. George, who limes on location B and we make interventions as politicians to say it is ok for people to gather, even when the health officials and police officers want to do their work, we must allow them to do their work to ensure that we are able to continue along the path that we are doing in this fight against COVID. I wish for everyone all the very best, thank you very much.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I rise to give some closing comments on the adjournment. And firstly, I just want to take the moment to commend the Royal Grenada Police Force for their tenacity and their good spiritedness in this period that we have just experienced. And despite the fact that we have had persons violating the rules and disregarding authority and it was within their powers to apprehend onspot or after and so forth but chose not to and I want to commend them for that set of decision that they would have taken. But at the same time to speak to the exposure and the dangers that we would have seen creeping into the society as a result of persons flaunting laws and deciding to disregard authority. And I listened to my colleague Senator on the "Other Side" and I start questioning why are we giving a handle to persons who decide to defile laws and flaunt authorities? Why are we giving them a handle and commending them and giving them an excuse? If you break the law, you break the law, two wrongs don't make a right. Why are we shifting blame, I consider this to be spineless. If your Members defy the laws, tell him they are wrong and stay there, you don't have to go and make an excuse and say others did it. You are

encouraging them to get into unsavoury acts and they can and who knows if they are infected.

You have to be responsible enough and strong enough as a leader, if you are to say to them, this is wrong and don't make no excuse. It's unfortunate that we're degenerating into this level. As a Leader sir, you have to stand up to your members and tell them, but the posturing and this sort of playing around because it's a vote, come on, if it's wrong, it's wrong and say it. Generally I consider this to not being honest because you're speaking on both sides of your mouth. How can people really follow you when you don't know what exactly you are saying? You're wrong but you're right, come on, be genuine.

And, Mr. President, as it relates to the opening of the borders and we have said it constantly and we've been advised and the world have been seeing it, you cannot indefinitely keep your borders closed and based on the state of small economies like ours, you need your borders to open because Tourism plays a major role. And if I could remember, there was no saying that you go and play, we will not give you stimulus package, there was nothing saying that. This is wrong to sort of insinuate in this Honourable Chamber, Honourable House that the Government made this as a threat to persons, you go and play, if you get this, there is a second wave, there will be no stimulus package, we never said that. There is not an unending resources to continue with stimulus package and that's the point that was made. We aren't able to continue with this but having to ask our creditors to forego the payments, debt payments and so on. There is a critical issue and we have to be man enough to say to the nation as it is, this is a critical period, extremely critical period, Mr. President. And if we do not manage this properly, it's going to be the worse for all of us but we have to say it. There should be no double talking and to have people to believe that there is this unending resource that we'll be able to give stimulus package for a very long time, this is a wrong notion.

The Government or the Ministry of Finance would have said, the deficit right now, we're short by 181 million dollars from what was budgeted. In terms of revenue receiving probably we've lost between 40-50%, so you have that big shortfall. You have

to continue the basic services of Government, of the country. We have to look at this correctly, we cannot be misleading our people and with all this tirade, it's a whole set of misleading the nation to believe that the Government has money and would refuse to give you if there is a second wave with COVID. That is a fallacy and it is wrong.

Mr. President, over four weeks ago, I was attending a regional meeting, as we know all meetings are being done virtually, and one of the Governments had to propose to their public servants, 50% in cash, 50% in bonds. Thankfully because of how we have been able to manage this country or this economy, we are not at that stage yet. But if this continues, who knows, we might get to that stage. So it is wrong to make people believe that there is this unending resource that we could just continue to give stimulus package. We have to be responsible with our comments. I want to say to the nation, this is a most difficult period, we are seeing businesses going under, we are seeing businesses struggling to survive because the resources are not there. Don't believe that Government not being able to receive resources, we will still be able to pay and to give stimulus packages, this is not so.

So at this period, Mr. President, we all have to be responsible, responsible with how we comment to the workers, responsible how we comment to our teachers, responsible how we comment to our students and generally the entire nation. This is a serious period and let us not for once believe it is business as usual, it is not. So Government will have to continue to lead the way we have been and to be very upfront with the nation and tell them as it is. Anything else will be a disservice to the people, and this what I just heard is a disservice to the workers of this country, we have to do better.

I want to apologise on behalf of this Member to the workers of this country, that this is not business as usual, what you have heard is not sound doctrine, it is not sound advice. We have to be measured with everything we do, don't live lavishly, everything you have measure it and let's try to conserve. The next few months could be very rocky, the next 12-months could be very rocky, so let's try to ensure that we conserve at this point in time. Grenada needs it and Grenada needs its true leaders to stand up and say it as it is to our nation. I thank you, Mr. President.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Mr. President: Senator Cadet.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I want to join with you and the Other Members of the House to express my condolences to Mr. Gayvon Mark on the passing of his mom. Mr. President, I know it will be a hard time for the family and I pray that, Mr. President, they'll find some level of comfort at this point in time. Although it's very difficult but I pray that with God's guidance on the family that there will be some level of comfort.

Mr. President, I just want to speak directly to my peers, the young people. Mr. President, I'm extremely concerned with the level of complacency and somewhat irresponsible behaviour by some of my peers. Mr. President, the last time I've checked, in fact a couple minutes ago, the death toll for COVID is 777,000. Two weeks ago when we were here, I mentioned the death toll was 648,000. So within the space of two weeks you noticed an increase of 129,000. Mr. President, this is no joke and when the Prime Minister said that this is no joke, he meant this is no joke. This is a very serious virus that is taking lives and we have a responsibility to ensure that we prevent this virus from getting here and spreading. Mr. President, the World Health Organization is also concerned of the trend that young people are becoming the primary drivers of the spread of the Novel Coronavirus in many countries. So what you're seeing, some of the second, third wave that you're seeing, Mr. President, a lot of it is because young people are the primary drivers of the spread. People in their 20's, 30's and 40's are increasing the drive of the spread, Mr. President.

So, Mr. President, when I'm seeing certain behaviour here in Grenada, I'm truly concerned, Mr. President, because you are seeing the statistics, it's showing you that hey, this sort of behaviour is the reason why many countries cannot get COVID under control. And I think, Mr. President, we have a responsibility as leaders to guide young people and to let them know the stark reality of things. And I really want to, and I hope that many of them are listening, Mr. President, because you know, young people you

know growing up, I'm still a youth, I'm just 26. But you know one of the fundamental questions a young person would ask themself is how can we be apart of what is happening locally, regionally or globally; that's a fundamental question young people always ask. Now I want to be involved, I want to be part. And, Mr. President, the question they'll further ask is, what is our role in national and global or regional development. Mr. President, young people have a great responsibility now to ensure or to contribute to the national agenda, the national goal, the national development but ensuring that they mitigate against the spread of this virus and do not put on the hat of complacency and irresponsibility.

Mr. President, now is the time for us to act as young people, now is the time for us to pool our resources together, to pool our resources together to fight COVID-19, that's the enemy COVID-19. But we are not going to win this fight, Mr. President, if we have misinformation. We are not going to win the fight, Mr. President, if we still continue to believe this is somewhat a conspiracy to keep people under control, to lessen the population. If we're going to judge our premise or action on those sort of misinformation, Mr. President, then we we're not going to get out of this very soon, we're not going to win this fight, Mr. President, if we have hidden political agendas. Mr. President, this is the stark truth. I'm seeing people trying, there are genuine issues, we very well know that but when it has the undertone of politics and people wanting to use that opportunity to gain political support, I mean a time for crises, trying to use the opportunity to get political support. Mr. President, we are not going to win this fight if we want to go down that road, that's the reality. We are only going to win this fight if we pol our resources together and we have to be very genuine in the effort to ensure that this fight is to ensure we mitigate against the spread of COVID-19.

Mr. President, as a young person, one of the mistakes (and I know many of the young persons feel the same way), that you don't want to make is to propel this complacency behaviour and then this mistake haunt us years from now, years from not this mistake haunts us and this mistake can result in us losing our loved ones, totally ravishing this economy and this will not be very good for us. So, Mr. President, I have looked at the United Nation, I saw they did a publication and they highlighted five (5)

things which I fully support that young people can do in the fight against COVID-19. And I want to just go through this five (5) things quickly; one, and I believe we need to be very… that's part of being responsible, finding the right information, so the first thing you have to do is follow simple routine provided by the World Health Organization and here putting it into context locally, the Ministry of Health. Properly wash your hands often, avoid crowded spaces, avoid shaking of hands, the wearing of your mask, seek medical attention regularly.

Point two; educate your families, friends and community. The spread of community awareness online and offline… a lot of us are using the Social Media platform but some of us are not using it to inform our peers about the dangers of the virus. Some of us are not using it to inform our peers about how to mitigate against the spread. It is important for us as well, Mr. President, to verify every news and information before sharing, be a source of calm during the storm. It is important for us to do these things. Verify the information because what you're seeing is that a lot of us just spreading this misinformation and having people have this wrong view of what is currently happening.

Mr. President, I want to also urge young people, point three, provided by the United Nations, volunteer. Find opportunities to volunteer in your communities, if there are older people or people with immunocompromised system, help them out, help out the vulnerable people in the community to pick up the groceries and medicines. Mr. President, I'm just speaking directly what the UN basically provided. Healthcare workers, Mr. President, you know they have sacrificed a lot of their time, some of them, Mr. President, they don't have the time to take care of their kids and as you know, Mr. President, with the fact that we've moved into virtual space for children, we need to find some time as well to contribute to helping a lot of these children online to get better in some of their courses, their subjects. And, Mr. President, even to donate to a lot of charitable cause, to ensure that a lot of organisation reach out more to the vulnerable people. Mr. President, this has affected a lot of people economically. A couple weeks ago I've been doing distribution of hampers, and, Mr. President, to be honest it's still not enough because people are seriously affected. And we can be part of this more and we

can continue to donate and continue to help more people in our community as relates to the difficulty that they are facing.

And, number 5, and I know many of them would like that, hold your Government accountable. Yes. Number 5, hold your government accountable, advocate for free testing, reliable information, paid sick leave, investment in science. Mr. President, these are the five recommendation provided by the United Nation and I am saying this to say, Mr. President, not everything have to be chaotic where some people seems to have the pleasure of liking to see chaos.

Now is a time that we need to work together, now is the time that we need to pool our resources together, now is the time we need to be genuine in our efforts, because the greatest enemy is COVID-19. Mr. President, I would not want to see Grenada turns out to be a place like what happened in Italy or what happened in New York. I would not want to see that and to avoid that from happening we have a responsibility in the process and if we're neglecting that responsibility for some maybe hidden political agendas or maybe to gain something out of this, Mr. President, that will not help in the process and I just hope… And you know the funny thing about this, Mr. President, there are some people that you deem responsible, some people that you probably have greatest respect for, using this opportunity to push more fire into chaos. I'm totally disappointed, Mr. President, because I think this is a time we need to come together. I mean come on, we're not even sure what the end of the year would be like. We're already hearing 40% in the decrease in our resources, $118 million we are already short of that.

Mr. President, this is not ordinary times and extraordinary times do not call for ordinary measures. We have to work together and we have a responsibility, a key role as young people in the process. We always ask ourselves, we want to be part of national development, now is the time to step forward to be part of the national development, now is not the time for politics. I'm very disappointed with people that is using this opportunity for politics. Mr. President, I just thought I should make that point because it's very concerning, and if we continue along this road we might live to regret it. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Adjournment

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President, just before I move for the adjournment, just some brief comments. Mr. President, leadership is about uniting people, not dividing people, especially at this time. **(Applause)** The Member on the "Other Side" needs to stop blowing his dog whistle. There is no class division. There is one protocol, there is one set of regulations, there is one law.

Mr. President, we need to work together. I think it was in the last Sitting, Senator De Allie just summed it up, this is not a time to play politics with people's lives or the economy. Let's take the politics out of this. And, on this note, Mr. President, I beg to move the adjournment ***sine die***.

Mr. President: This House stands adjourn ***sine die***.

Senate adjourned sine die at 2:16 p.m.

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