



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Fifth Session of the Tenth Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

SENATE

Wednesday 8th February, 2022

Senate Meeting
Held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 8th February, 2022

Attendance

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Attendance

PRESENT

Senator the Honourable Chester Humphrey	Mr. President (In the Chair)
Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell	Minister within the Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Climate Resilience and the Environment with responsibility for Climate Resilience and the Environment
Senator the Honourable Judd Cadet	Member
Senator the Honourable Norland Cox	Minister for Infrastructure Development, Public Utilities, Transport and Implementation
Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway	Minister of State with responsibility for Disaster Management
Senator the Honourable Victor Philip	Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Religious Affairs and Information
Senator the Honourable Dr. Tessa Alexander-St.Cyr	Member
Senator the Honourable Matthew Joseph	Member
Senator the Honourable Shirley Mc Queen	Member
Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie	Member
Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis	Member

Absent

Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair	Member (Excuse tendered)
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Prayers
Adjournment
Resumption

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

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Good morning, Mr. President. Good morning Members. May we all 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.

(Gavel sounds)

Mr. President: Good morning to all Honourable Members. The Fifth Session of the Tenth Parliament is now convened. Honourable Members I would wish to take a brief adjournment, yes... I would say maybe between five to ten minutes, hopefully it wouldn't go beyond that. Honourable Members this House now stands adjourned briefly.

(Gavel sounds)

Senate adjourn at 9:01 a.m.

Senate resumes at 9:14 a.m.

(Gavel sounds)

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Minutes
Announcements

Mr. President: Honourable Members, pray be seated. This session now resumes. Leader of Government's Business, Senator Stiell.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 3 - Oath of Allegiance of Affirmation of a New Senator.

Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of a Sitting of the Senate, held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St George's on Monday the 13th, Tuesday the 14th and Wednesday 15th December, 2021, be taken as read.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

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 Monday the 13th, Tuesday the 14th and Wednesday 15th December, 2021 be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

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

Item 6 - Announcement by Mr. President.

(Clerk converse with the President in Private)

Mr. President: Honourable Members, just to inform you that Senator St. Clair would not be here. He was absent from the last occasion for some personal family

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Announcements
Ministerial Statements

matters and that situation continues to be the same. That's the only announcement by the President to date.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 7 - Ministerial Statements.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I stand to offer the House an update as to some of the activities within the Ministry that I oversee; Ministry of Infrastructure Development, Transport, Public Utilities and Implementation. Mr. President, for some time we've been having some challenges with climate change impact with flooding with some respective areas throughout the country notably three main areas; the Morne Rouge, Grand Anse area, the Town of St. George the Tanteen area to be specific and the Town of Grenville. We have been working tirelessly to find ways to address this matter and as such, Mr. President, we just had a contract signed for a consultancy to commence studies for all three areas and that contract was signed about a week ago. So work will soon commence on studies for those three areas after which we should get from that report plans for structural engineering improvements to minimise the impact of climate change. As you know there is great uncertainty with those climate impacts, they continue to change as we move forward and sometimes it is very difficult to pin that down. But we believe with these studies it will help to shape how we can respond to those impacts going forward, Mr. President.

Added to that, just to update that work continues on the St. John's River which is also in response to climate change impacts, increase in rainfall intensity and flooding within the River Road area, that project is moving on. We did have an incident with a breakage in the road. After a careful investigation as to the causes it was found that a culvert under the road broke and water was seeping under, that gave way and was eroding the wall and gave way to the road going down. That culvert will be repaired. Work will soon commence on the other packages, packages one and two which contract was issued to Creative Design. They are currently

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mobilising, getting their office spaces in place so we are happy about the progress on that project.

Also, Mr. President, I just want to inform this Honourable House, we have been working quite for some time on the Simon Cultural Centre and we are happy to inform this Honourable House that contract has been awarded to Kenny's Trucking for the construction of the Simon Cultural Centre. I think this is a significant achievement for the people of St. Andrew's to have the Centre back up and running and what it has meant to us. So we are very happy about that. But I think most importantly, Mr. President, the Moliniere landslip which has caused significant traffic impediments and challenges for mainly persons who convey between the north of the Island and the Town of St. George. The landslip is currently being tendered and we have so far approximately 13 companies expressing interest in tendering for that project both local and regional companies, Mr. President. We should see tenders being returned for that project sometime early March and thereafter we do the evaluation and a suitable contractor will be awarded and we can see work commencing to have that landslip area repaired and traffic restored through that Moliniere area. We are very much looking forward to that, Mr. President, and we are very exciting to have that problem finally resolved. So these are the main updates, Mr. President, I want to bring to this Honourable House at this point in time. Thank you very much.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Cox. Any other Senator on the "Government Side"? Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I just want to spend a couple minutes to update us as it relates to the Ministry of Health and our continued fight to bring under control the COVID-19 situation in the country. From our last dashboard we've realised that our test positivity rate has dropped to 8.14% which means it is moving in the right direction and we are trusting that our people will continue to, one, get tested, that is important but, two, to be vaccinated, the most powerful means towards ending this pandemic. It has been a

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hard two years for all of us and we want to believe we see light at the end of the tunnel but it requires a concerted effort to all of us.

My biggest concern today is that of our students who are not able to be in school on a regular basis as was prior to COVID and all because of the exposure of COVID on the Island. For us to get pass this, there is the need for all hands to be on deck, families, employees, employers everyone to recognise that this is a problem that is staring us and if our students are to get back... one study is saying that they are behind probably by 75% of where they should be at this point. If they have to get back to getting inline, they will have to be back in school and the surest way right now to give some guarantee that we can bring them back is to increase the vaccination rate in the country. I know quite a lot has been said as it relates to conspiracy theories but when we look at what is happening around the world, vaccination do work. And as we have said before when we look back through our history, vaccination works and it assisted us in going to school, being inoculated against childhood diseases and many other problems. And this vaccine that we have right now to help to bring us back to some form of normalcy is what is there and as I have said before in another sitting, unless someone comes with something other than what is available and saying it could work, let's use what is available to us. We have choices, so let's use it. And we have also seen with the Omicron being on Island and we have seen a few people being hospitalised but those breakthrough cases that we have seen with folks who have been fully vaccinated, their symptoms have been mild and probably lasted for one or two days. Unlike those who are not vaccinated who have been struggling and who have endured hardship and the frustration and the stress and the pain that it brought to families and the fear. So the call is made today for our people, for our children sake, let's go out and be vaccinated. All the centres around the country are opened and to make this available to us, let us do what we need to do to continue to secure our country. Thanks, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Garraway.

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Papers / Reports

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

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I beg to move the following Reports and Papers be laid on the Table:

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

Mr. President: Honourable Members, we have Reports from Select Committees, being:

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

Honourable Members, I hereby order these Papers to so lie.

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Papers / Reports
Questions

(Gavel sounds)

Mr. President: And again I come back to inviting Members on the Non-Government Side of the House to reemphasise as I have repeatedly done that these Reports and Papers are exceedingly important, should be studied and should form the basis of questions and engagements. Again, it falls under the provision of the Constitution which sets out that the Executive shall be answerable to Parliament and the Executive has several responsibilities. Several Boards of Statutory Institutions are under the responsibility of the Executive through the Ministries and this is an opportunity for that accountability, having had these Papers professionally prepared and laid to be examined by you. It's a very important component part of your senatorial duties. So I urge Members on the Non-Government Side to pay particular attention to this. Thank you.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 9 - Petitions.
Item 10 - Government Notices.
Item 11 - Unofficial Notices.
Item 12 - Questions.

Mr. President: The Honourable Dr. Tessa St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. The following question is for the Leader of Government's Business.

a). As it relates to the types of employment contract being used by government, can the Leader of Government's Business explain the difference between Contracts of Service and Contracts for Service, including duration/length of contract?

b). What criteria are being used to determine who get Contracts of Service and Contracts for Service?

c). What is the difference in remuneration and benefits of the above-mentioned contracts?

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Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I am awaiting responses for these answers. I am following up with the relevant Ministry and have every intention of providing the responses which are being worked on by the next Sitting.

Mr. President: Ok. Anyone holding council for Senator Roderick? Clerk did you get any instructions from Senator? Ok, so Senator Roderick St. Clair is absent. There is no evidence before me that he has instructed anyone to manage his question, neither has he informed the Clerk so those questions will remain until he returns to the Senate. Senator Lewis.

(Clerk converse with the President)

Mr. President: Oh, sorry. That is Senator whom? I'm not seeing any light. Somebody had a question? Yes Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: I'm sorry, Mr. President. I was drawing it to your attention that in our last sitting there was some questions the answers were not provided and you had instructed the Leader of Government's Business to provide those answers via the Clerk and we have not gotten those responses.

Mr. President: And those were questions for... those were not questions for verbal response? The questions which were unanswered, were they questions for verbal response?

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: Some of them were, yes.

Mr. President: Clerk could you explain what is happening on the Order Paper here? Why these questions are not appearing here?

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(Clerk converse with President in Private)

Mr. President: Senator, I am advised that those questions to which you allude were answered in part...

(Clerk converse with President in Private)

Mr. President: The Clerk is advising me that those questions to which you refer were partially answered but there was lack of clarity of what subsisted from those questions. He said he will communicate with you and you all will sort that out. But I would much prefer these things to happen before the Senate sits because it comes up... I am making a separate point that it will be much cleaner and more professional for the person who ask the question and the Clerk's Office to sort this thing out because it appears as though they are outstanding matters and if they were then the office should follow up with the Senator and if you all determine what is outstanding then the relevant Minister to whom the question was directed can then be advised that these matters are still outstanding. But when you wait for a sitting for this explanation to come then it gives... it can convey a wrong impression and I would wish for us to avoid that in the future.

(Clerk converse with President in private)

Mr. President: Senator, Clerk, can we move on? Senator St. Cyr, so you and the Clerk will liaise and sort this out.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President, but the question I am referring to was not partially answered, it was not answered. I had asked the question for a list of service providers and a number was given. And you had instructed the Leader of Government's Business to provide that answer.

Mr. President: Any explanation Senator?

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: If I can ask... I mean when on "Government Side" when we respond to questions, we respond to them based on the technical guidance that is given within the Ministries and is answered to the best of certainly on "Our Side" in terms of providing thorough answers as possible. The answers that was submitted in the last sitting as far as we're concerned which is why they were submitted were as thorough as could be provided at that time. If the Member has issues with elements of those answers, I believe the cleanest way of dealing with it is for the Member to reissue the questions. If the question was ambiguous and was answered with a particular understanding which does not align with what the Member was requesting, I think for clarity sake the Member reissue those for further clarification, further qualification so that we don't get into this back and forth. What was submitted at the last sitting was certainly to the best of our understanding and the information that was supplied through the relevant Ministry at that time.

I cannot recall unless I go through the Hansard specifically what those points were. We spent a lot of time on both in terms of preparing our answers, a lot of the questions that are asked require detailed analysis and its difficult... it is actually impossible to keep track. We have to work with what is on the Order Paper, our responses and our preparation is specific to what we see on the Order Paper not something that was discussed as if we're in a Committee session in the sitting.

So my suggestion, if the Member requires further clarification on detailed written answers that was provided in a previous sitting or partial clarification for the ease and for clarity that she resubmit for further responses.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell, while what you're saying may have universal application that no one can reasonably argue with, but in the instant case to which our attention is drawn the request was in plain and simple language. There was a request for a list of providers, isn't that correct Dr. St. Cyr?

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: That's correct.

Mr. President: And what we got was a number, whether the number was 26 I can't recall exactly what it was. I don't know how the issue of lack of clarity arises

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there. The request is made for a list of providers which must mean that you will have a list which says Tom Jones Construction Services, Mary Jane Food Supply whatever, Peter Henry Incorporated, suppliers of stationery whatever it is. Certainly, if your response is that there are 26 suppliers, then the answer is not to that question. If the question was, could you say the number of suppliers, then a response of 24, 25, 110, 1000 would be appropriate.

So I just think that in this specific case and here again, here again, and here again, the Office of the Clerk has to be engaged with some more precision because question time in Parliament is a very serious part of Parliamentary activity. And while you may not personally have to go to get the questions, those questions have to come from the Civil Service, but at the same time, we have to treat with these things sensibly. So I'm agreeing with you that there should be some, there needs to be tighter follow up between the Clerk's Office and your Office or the Office of the Government Senators where questions are concerned. Right, because, again, it cannot be that we come here every time and no question is answered, part isn't answered, this one is not relevant, you provide an answer, which is not relevant to the question as in the instant case in which we're talking about. So if this matter could be addressed.

Again, Clerk, it requires the Office of the Clerk to be following up. As soon as the session is finished, then in fairness to the Leader of Government's Business, or any other Minister having responsibility for Government's Business, remember, these are Ministers responsible for Ministries and quite often they are here and questions are put to them, especially the Leader of Government's Business, it may not be his Ministry, but he has the responsibility. If he does not have ministerial responsibility in the Senate, then if you want to inquire into something, you have to put it to him, you can't put it to another Senator who has no ministerial responsibility for it. Then he has to go in pursuit of the answer, not himself, but through the Public Service. So there needs to be an efficient mechanism, which reminds the Leader of Government's Business, which communicates with the Leader of Government's Business, that these are the matters that are pending from the last Sitting. So please, could we try to avoid what obviously appears as an unprofessional approach in conducting the business of Parliament. Yes.

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So I'll make that request. Senator, I think we have to bear some responsibility, right, for this matter, and not the Member from the Executive. Yes. I mean, you can say, well he should be taking notes, but, you see, we have an administrative duty and what has failed here is the Administrative Arm of the Parliament, not connecting up the dots to make sure that there's a degree of efficiency and lively engagement because when you file a question... I remember there were some questions which were really unclear as to precisely what it is one wanted and that clarity was sought. But in the instant case in which you talked about it's a completely different matter, and I think, at the level of the Clerk's Office, we have to take that responsibility. Yes. So, I hope this satisfies you, and I hope going forward, we will be a bit much more efficient in how we do things. Okay, thank you.

So there are matters to be sorted out between yourself and the Clerk. He says he will contact you, but you are free to contact him and you all sort that matter out and then Senator Stiell can be brought into the loop. We don't have to wait until the Senate meets. It can be brought into the loop because the purpose of the questions is to solicit an answer. Yes, an answer that you may think, or may wish to satisfy the query that you have. Okay, so I think we can move on, on questions now. Yes, Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Good morning and thank you, Mr. President. I rise to ask questions standing in my name. Question to the Leader of Government's Business:

Question 1 - Could the Honourable Minister advise the House as to whether the Gravel, Concrete and Emulsion Company has disposed of any of its fixed assets, by way of sale, lease or otherwise, within the last 24 months, and if so:

- a. Which specific asset or assets was or were disposed of?
 - b. What is (or are) the name(s) and nationality (ies) of the entity or (entities) to whom those assets were disposed?
 - c. When did this (or these) transaction(s) occur?
- Should I go on with the different questions or just...?

Mr. President: No, well let's take the answers, one at a time.

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Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Okay.

Mr. President: Your first question has three parts. Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, all of the questions, these and the subsequent questions that Senator Lewis is going to run through are also within the relevant Ministries. This covers two Ministries, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Infrastructure and Development and responses are still being prepared to these answers. So I beg that these be deferred to the next Sitting where we will be able to furnish the required information, the detail that is outlined and these are very lengthy questions.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis, I think you've heard Senator Stiell's response, that the three questions that you have down; he doesn't have the answer at the moment, but that the answers will be provided at the next Sitting of the House.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you, Mr. President, this is noted. And it has also been noted for questions 2, 3...

Mr. President: There were three questions...

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Two and three, yes. But just to note, I have noted this, but just to extend on the points made by my fellow Senator, Tessa St. Cyr, that it is important for us to get these answers on a timely basis. This came to the Senate before and in particular reference... bear with me, Mr. President, because these are matters pertaining to workplaces and not just a report, the workers at that workplace was very much concerned. So I just thought I should bring this point to the "Government Side", letting it be known that the experiences of the workers given the uncertainty that they went through, and bear with me, Mr. President, just to give one particular example, sometime last year, we got a report at the Union's Office, that the workers were locked in, meaning that at the Telescope Quarry, when they were about to come out, the gates were closed, and they did not

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know what was happening and it appeared to them as though ownership may have changed. And subsequently to that, about three or four days after, there appeared to have been a speedy haste to transfer the workers from Telescope to St. George. We could not provide answers, and we still cannot provide the answers, because we do not want to mislead anyone.

So on the "Government Side", it is important through you, Mr. President, that these matters be given the urgency and the attention that is required, because we need to provide answers. And we do not wish to just get involved in speculations and because we have access through the Senate, where questions can be asked and official answers be given, it is extremely important to have these matters addressed. So I thought I should just bring that to the attention of the Senate, so that the "Government Side" will appreciate to provide those answers on a timely basis for us. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Lewis.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 13 - Personal Explanations.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to inform the House that I have been selected as a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Gender Champion. And I would just like to highlight here the purpose of the Gender Champions. The purpose is to represent and advocate for CPA UK gender priorities within their Legislature by championing and advocating for gender sensitive spaces for women to enhance their leadership skills by supporting Parliaments to implement gender sensitive approaches and by supporting the strengthening of Gender-based Violence Legislation. I just thought it necessary to say this, this morning. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Well, I wish on behalf of the Senators to congratulate you and I look forward to your activism in that area. And I think you're quite capable of keeping Grenada's place on the map. In a lot of the Parliamentary business,

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whether it's the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association or ParlAmericas, the Grenada Parliament has the singular distinction of being reliable, always involved, lots of ideas, alright.

Quietly, where I think we fall down is implementation. So you need to look at that component part of whatever work you do. It is one thing to give a beautiful speech, to formulate a good Resolution, to talk on a subject matter, but all talk without action really just leads us to naught. So, if you can pay particular attention to the implementation component, which may require follow up in our Parliament, getting Committees, the women's parliamentary group, which needs to be revived. I think COVID has thrown a lot of our initiatives into inactivity and I think now, we're beginning to understand that COVID is now going to be endemic. It's going to be here, isn't going any places, not a virus that will disappear, we have to start back normalising things. So, congratulations once again.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 14 - Motions.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell.

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

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

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

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

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AND WHEREAS the Saint George's University (Amendment) Order, 2022 was laid in and approved by the House of Representatives on the 1st day of February, 2022;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate that the Saint George's University (Amendment) Order, 2022 which is attached as a Schedule to this Resolution be now laid and approved.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Stiehl.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiehl: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, the relationship between St. George's University and the Government of Grenada, as outlined in that Resolution are reflected in the Charter, and the Agreement, which is articulated in the St. George's University Limited Act. The Charter is set out in the First Schedule and the Agreement is set out in the Second Schedule of that Act. And the Agreement outlines the conditions in which St. George's University operates here in Grenada, and includes the incentives that are extended by the Government of Grenada to St. George's University, and St. George's University's obligations to the Government and the people of Grenada.

The St. George's University Limited (Amendment) Order 2022, which is before us, seeks to amend the Agreement, which was last revised in 2014, and set out in the 2014 Order. This new Order, the 2022 Order changes several aspects of the Agreement between the University and the Government of Grenada, but it builds on all that has gone before. Before I get into the details of the Agreement and the Order that is put before us, I think it's important, just to outline to set a context as to this very long relationship between the Government and the People of Grenada and St. George's University, which give a sense of the importance of the changes that are placed before us.

So, Mr. President, since the establishment of St. George's University, back in 1976, St. George's University has and continues to make a significant contribution to the development of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. And, Mr. President,

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this contribution, significant contribution is a result of the joint vision between the Prime Minister of that day, Sir Eric Matthew Gairy, and the founder and current Chancellor of St. George's University, Dr. Charles Modica. And this is a vision that has been supported by successive Administrations since 1976. Some Administrations have been far more progressive and the support provided and the Agreements drafted and executed were more impactful than others. But speaking of impact and progressive changes, that's certainly what we're seeing before us in the amendments to the Agreement, which is of mutual benefit to St. George's University, and ensuring their on-going success, which is in our interest, but also to the benefit of the Government and the People of Grenada through significant economic, educational and healthcare developments.

Mr. President, the journey St. George's University and the Government of Grenada has travelled since 1976 leads us to where we are now with St. George's University established as the leading offshore medical school here within the region, and one of the top medical schools outside of the United States, where St. George's University right here in Grenada trains doctors that return to the United States and one in every 100 qualified doctor in the United States today, is a former student of St. George's University. And that's quite incredible when you wrap your head around that. And in terms of the value of the business that this private entity has established over these years, St. George's University today is valued at over 1 billion, 1 billion US dollars. So there is a long history between the Government and the People of Grenada and St. George's University and a history that I think we can all be very, very proud of.

So economically, St. George's University contributes in ordinary times, and we're in some extraordinary times right now, but contribute approximately 25% of our Gross Domestic Product, our GDP, our economy, it's a significant economic partner. And this is through both direct and indirect activities through their operations here.

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

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: So, Mr. Deputy President, St. George's University today, in terms of some of their direct benefits, employs hundreds of local

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Grenadians as faculty members, as support staff. And indirectly, all of the goods and services that are applied and are associated with the University employ thousands of Grenadians indirectly. There's also significant local investment, both off campus in terms of the private student accommodation, the dozens, dozens of properties that have been developed, constructed, operated by Grenadians, the tens of millions of private investment by local Grenadians. And then there is the on campus construction, so local Grenadian construction firms that have built that impressive campus that we see there today. And then at the bars, the restaurants, the entertainment venues that are frequented by the thousands of foreign students, and local students who attend the University, and the business ecosystem that has developed around that and the economic, significant economic benefits that spill off from that and then other local service providers who engage with the University on a daily basis. So that economic value is tremendous.

Then educationally, the thousands of scholarships that have been provided to Grenadian students over the years, which is contributing directly to our human capital and our nation building. The benefits of having a University on Islands as we see with University of the West Indies, in Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, and having that local access to a world class educational facility is of incredible value and to have an institution such as St. George's University, which is providing us with scholarship opportunities in health care, through medical scholarships, whether it is through Public Health Scholarships, Nursing, Veterinary Sciences, and in the Arts and Sciences, ICT, Business, other programs that speak directly to our knowledge needs, our human capital needs right here on our doorstep, providing world class educational services and opportunities for our young men and women. And I want to take this opportunity and this goes beyond just St. George's University, but what this New National Party Government Administration has done since coming into office in 2013, providing over 1800 scholarships to our young men and women. **(Applause)** Never before in our history, have we been able to provide such educational opportunities for our people. And the value of these scholarships runs into... an average scholarship for a Bachelor's Programme runs in the region of US\$100,000 dollars. For a medical scholarship, that runs into half a million US dollars. So when we start looking at the cumulative value, since coming into office in 2023, over half a

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billion, over half a billion, \$500,000,000 has been invested by this New National Party Administration in the development of our young men and women and this is quite a remarkable feat. **(Applause)**

In addition to that, coming back to St. George's University, its collaboration with TAMCC, our premier tertiary education institution, and that relationship is being deepened even further, academically, administratively in terms of technical, physical support.

And then, Mr. Deputy President, the development of our healthcare system, having a world class medical teaching facility here, how we can draw on that capacity in terms of enhancing our own local healthcare services. So whether it's providing support, medical support at our General Hospital, the establishment of a Bachelor's Degree Programme in Nursing, whether it's providing personnel, equipment, this pandemic, this period we are still going through. The amount of support that the Ministry of Health has received from St. George's University, whether that is in technical guidance, medical guidance in terms of managing a pandemic, whether it is in equipment, the provision of ventilators, monitors, mobile x-ray machines, ultrasound equipment, other equipment that has helped us expand our ICU ward at the General Hospital. Whether it is establishing our own local PCR testing laboratory; Grenada was one of the first within the region to have its own independent testing PCR testing facility, which has been such a critical tool in our fight against the COVID virus and the support that SGU has provided us in establishing that laboratory.

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

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, the supply of other equipment, PPE, which we know at the beginning of the pandemic was in such short supply globally, and the amount of assistance that we received from SGU in sourcing the equipment that will keep our health care professionals and frontline workers safe. Other technical support provided, the alumni, the thousands of SGU trained medical professionals who left Grenada, returned to the United States, Europe and other parts of the world who returned to Grenada as part of SGU's alumni on a regular

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basis holding clinics providing services within our communities and at the General Hospital. All of these things, Mr. President, are of high value and a reflection of that rich relationship with St. George's University. And there are other elements of technical support that has been deepened which I'll go through shortly in the amendments and the Order that is before us.

So, Mr. President, every improvement, every investment, every development in the operations of St. George's University has had both direct and indirect benefit to the country but conversely every negative impact to their operations has a corresponding negative effect on Grenada. And this is something that was clearly demonstrated during this pandemic, so whether it was the departure of thousands of students and faculty at the start of the pandemic and the migration of classes from physical in person classes to online distance learning programmes. All of those locally owned businesses I mentioned earlier, the accommodation sector; the bars, the restaurants, the service providers who were dependent on the operations of the University in order to sustain their businesses and the losses that were incurred there. Whether it's a loss of taxable revenues that's coming out of this economic activity to Government, the impact this had on the nation as a whole was quite significant. But fortunately we are seeing now the return of most of those students and we're seeing and feeling the rebound that, that is having on our economy both on a local level and nationally. And we will see those improvements accelerate as from August of this year the commitment by St. George's University to hold all of their programmes, certainly most of their programmes as in person programmes for the return of all of their students and faculty.

Mr. President, it is important and I wish to take the opportunity to recognise what one of the key enabling element to this safe return of students, of faculty, of Grenadian workers at the St. George's University Campus and the necessary steps the University has taken in ensuring that all of their workers, students, faculty, everyone associated with that site are kept safe at this time and it is having a forward leaning science-based policy of vaccinating all who are involved on-site within the University. And there can be no clearer correlation between the relationship, between vaccinating your workers, vaccinating students, vaccinating those within that economic bubble and the vibrancy and the sustainability of economic activity.

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And if other employers were to take that lesson and apply that to their places of employment, we will see a much faster acceleration in the economic recovery of our country as we are seeing with this one component of our economy.

So, Mr. President, I will now move on to the specific elements of the agreement that is before us and the first area is financial. And as part of its transaction relating to changes in its equity shareholding, this is the ownership of St. George's University, there will be a US\$20m dollar grant that is payable to the Government of Grenada which will be used for the benefit and development of the country that is associated with that equity change. In addition to that, an additional US\$10m as an advanced payment on future grants will also be paid. So the total sum that will be coming to the Government of Grenada for the benefit of the people at this time on the completion of this transaction will be US\$30m which is in excess of EC\$80m. **(Applause)**

Mr. President, again within the agreement for the first time there is a mechanism for this financial benefit to Grenada for future equity stake transfers. And within the agreement that sum is 3% of that transaction value will come to Grenada. So it's part of this first transaction the agreement is over a 10-year period so for this first transaction, then the minimum guaranteed grant payment to Grenada is that US\$30m or 3% of the value of that transaction whichever is the greater and then any subsequent transactions over that 10-year period will be that 3% of that transaction value. Currently as the agreement stands there are... St. George's University is exempt from various taxes that may be applied to smaller businesses and with this arrangement, it ensures that outside of any tax regime, financial contributions will be made on those transactions and the Government and people of Grenada, the Grenadian economy will benefit from that.

I'm moving on to scholarships within the amended agreement, the number of medical scholarships has been increased to 22 per year. And as I said in my introduction the value of each of those scholarships exceeds half a million US dollars, so 22 Grenadians being trained in the Medical Profession each year. And then for undergraduate scholarships that number has increased to 100 scholarships and again this will create significantly more opportunities for our young men and women. **(Applause)** In terms of medical support, St. George's University will now

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pay for two full-time experienced clinical members of the Government's Hospital staff and one experienced Public Health Professional member of staff which will complement the medical services already offered... **(applause)** (Thank you Senator St. Cyr) ...offered at our local hospitals. And then there is an arrangement for... it's a voluntary scheme wherein doctors on the St. George's University staff, those with clinical training and experience will provide time any given week, any given month in terms of providing service to our public healthcare system. So again bolstering the support and drawing on that skillset competency-based that exists, practical competencies that exist at the university and drawing that into our public healthcare system. And there are a couple of other...

Mr. President: I didn't want to stop you but I think on the trend that you're on, there was a vaccination clinic in the Food Fair Complex and the majority of the persons there were St. George's University personnel. They were either medical professionals of one sort or the other together with... and there was a good collaboration with component parts of the Cuban Medical Brigade. So just to reinforce what you're saying there the engagement in an activity in the area of public health is really phenomenal. So I just thought... sorry for breaking your trend of thought but I just wanted to reinforce in a very practical way the way in which this institution is playing a critical role in the development of our country.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. So two other areas I wish to highlight that are reflected on the agreement before us which was not reflected in previous agreements is a 'non-compete clause', that SGU cannot establish another medical school within the region be that US, French or Dutch Islands without Government's prior approval. So this ensures that the investors behind St. George's University are focused in channelling their resources to maximising the opportunities that Grenada offers as a medical educational destination. So that provides us with a level of security looking into the future.

The second area I wish to highlight is a commitment by St. George's University in terms of maintaining and how they maintain their operations here in Grenada in the event of an emergency. For example the pandemic that we're

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currently experiencing and a mechanism of dialogue well in advance of any decision to leave which would be if it's deemed in the best interest of the students and the faculty based on the threat that is posed. But there will be a formal mechanism and dialogue in terms of determining the scale of that risk and the escalation process managed in the event of having to leave. So again, that creates a level of order, a level of certainty in uncertain times.

So, Mr. President, what has been articulated in the changes reflected in the order, reflected in the agreement which would be signed between the Government of Grenada and St. George's University or has been signed is reflective of progressive thinking, identifying those key areas to the relationship that can be strengthened to the benefit of both St. George's University and the Government and the people of Grenada. And I think it's also a credit to the St. George's University team who have been demonstrable partners since their establishment in 1976. But also the quality of that relationship... a relationship takes two hands to clap, on "Government Side" led by the Prime Minister supported by the Minister for Education, the Minister for Health in ensuring that the interest of Grenadians is truly reflected in this very important and strategic arrangement. So it's for these reasons, Mr. President, that I commend this resolution to the House. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Stiell. Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Good morning, Mr. President, and good morning to colleague Senators. Mr. President, I rise to make a few comments on this particular resolution and to first of all say that from where I sit we support this and we support it from the standpoint that it has been an excellent agreement that has been negotiated. I commend the Government for that. **(Applause)** I don't think we have ever had an agreement of this nature coming forward with S.G.U and I think that the country is seeing tangible benefits both financially and otherwise through scholarships and other aspects of this agreement that we have negotiated.

I want to point out one area I didn't quite understand when we talk about future change in the definition in the agreement. It reads "**means any transaction**

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that is not a future charge of control.” I don't know if charge there means change or charge. Charge doesn't sound right there to me in terms of the reading and understanding of what it means. So we may want to consider it in Committee to see if that is really what it's meant to be or not.

Mr. President, we cannot say enough about what is here in terms of hospital assistance and so on but two areas I want to highlight and is this. I don't think the Nurses Programme have ever really worked as it ought to since it was transferred or SGU was brought in the mix. The Nurses Programme just to give a quick historical context was based with TAMCC and part of the programme when we had it in TAMCC was that the practical aspect of the Nurses Programme was done with training through the hospital, through the Nurses Association at the time up there. The SGU Programme on the other hand, yes, you will get the academic aspect of it but the practical aspect was lacking in its superiority and what was needed and that programme as a result never saw the level of quality that it ought to. So I am hoping in this particular agreement and it talks about the Nurses Programme, that aspect of it can be sorted out. And I hear about extra work wanting to be done with our hospital and so on and I am hoping that that aspect of the Nurses Programme could be properly facilitated so that our nurses are trained to the quality and level that is required. So that is one thing I want to put on the Table for consideration to the "Other Side".

The other aspect I would have liked to hear the Leader of Government's... who is moving this resolution talk about, is possible uses of that US\$30m that he have indicated that we would receive in the treasury. I would have liked to hear something like a certain percentage going to the Health Sector and not go into the black hole of the Consolidated Fund because you know what happens, Mr. President, when monies reach there. I would have liked to hear some going to TAMCC for example. In the past years TAMCC used to get I think a grant of \$1m from SGU earlier up, and that was removed and as you know, that institution continues to have serious funding issues. I know there is a lot of talk about reviewing and looking at the Act and looking at efficiencies and so on but I think some percentage of some of that should go to help with TAMCC's administrative

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cost and development. For example creating bigger labs for electrical and so on and see what can be done on the Capital Side.

And, Mr. President, I would probably like to see a certain percentage go to NIS and we understand that is happening what our national security and securities that is happening at NIS and probably the Government could probably look and see how some amount of monies can go there to help with NIS continuity and strengthening as we move forward. So I just throw these out for consideration but I would have liked to see that some aspect of that \$80m plus transmitted to organisations that could ensure that we have a security and social standing. And we have NHI, I believe is coming up through NIS, I don't know what could be done there. So I give these few comments, Mr. President, because again I want to commend the Government for doing this. Because you know transferring of shares and equity and the change in ownership of equity is something that eludes us as a country and generally in terms of how we get some benefit from that. And as the Leader of Government's Business rightfully stated, that organisation is given considerable duty free concessions, so it costs the country on one side. And not that we don't welcome all the benefits it has brought directly and indirectly, we welcome that and we state that openly and we're happy from a Private Sector, all the accommodation sectors, all the entertainment sectors, all the different sectors that contribute to the GDP of the country.

I mean it is said now that the GDP that SGU contributes is twenty-five plus percentage, significant, a quarter of our entire GDP is dedicated to this one institution and education services. We cannot underestimate the value and that is something that has to be said in terms of foresight and we need to encourage it and we need to ensure that it's properly done and properly... I don't know if exploited is the right word but properly managed so that the country benefits as a whole and I commend again the Government for this agreement. I think it's excellent in terms of the crafting and whoever have come up with these ideas have done well and I commend them. So, Mr. President, those are my few comments on this resolution and I really hope the "Other Side" take some of them in terms of how we allocate some of that \$80m. I know there is great need for monies now but at least if we can

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give a per cent or a two or three to these various institutions, I think it will greatly assist. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, pleasant good morning to you. My colleagues, pleasant good morning to you also. I stand to make my contribution in relation to the Motion tabled. Mr. President, this Motion deals with future change of control so I want to establish that. It also deals with shift in shares or equity, changing of shares, movement of shares. This University, Mr. President, is worth over \$1b. The assets and the financial status are very, very important to this economy. I thought also and similar to what Senator De Allie said that this document was very well crafted. However there are some issues inside there that I would just raise a little later. I think it is very tight, the document is very tight and there is something in there for both the country and for SGU, so it's a win, win document. What I do hope, Mr. President, is that in the execution of that document if it is passed by both Houses that the execution is seamless, because if it is not seamless we can run into some problems.

Now, Mr. President, this document covers a period of 10 years, its life is 10 years. The question is why 10 years? I really don't know the answer but there is something in Law I think that is referred to as reasonable time so I want to think that the people who drafted this document saw 10 years as reasonable time but I must say that a number of things can happen within 10 years and a number of shifts can take place. Now, Mr. President, what if for some reason, Mr. President, there is a change of control and the new controllers decide that I am not too satisfied with something that is within the amendments, I am not satisfied with a particular article. Now we might be saying, ok we are gentlemen and this is a document that we should respect but things do happen, Mr. President. Mr. President, SGU is not a village shop, it is not a rum shop, it is a serious business, it is a business that contributes over 25% of the GDP. So if for some reason SGU says, I am not in agreement with for example the process of resolving dispute, what do we do? What can we do? And I just thought it important to throw that into the mix because we

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cannot say to them well just close up and leave, no, we cannot say that. So I am saying this for us to understand that a number of things can happen and how important it is for us to understand all the elements and all the possibilities that are around us.

Mr. President, a bit was said this morning about scholarships and I am very, very happy in relation to the scholarships. Mr. President, I went to the original document, that is 2014 document and what I found is that SGU has been very, very generous with us over the years. Based on the agreement and the revised one, SGU will provide to the Government move from 15 medical to 22 medical; pre-med scholarships, five; veterinary scholarships one; Master's in Public Health, two, Master's in Business Administration, two; Master's In International Business, two and Undergraduate moved from 60 to 100. Mr. President, when I totalled this I found that the country would receive 144 scholarships from SGU, this is a lot of scholarships. Now my question to "This Side", Mr. President, is there a plan for these scholarships? Or are there plans for these scholarships? What is going to happen after these persons have graduated from SGU? As the old people say sometimes, Mr. President, we don't want to throw good money behind bad money. And right now in this country there are a number of folks walking around with degrees and can't find employment. We need as a country and as a Government to establish a plan, you know in seven years' time SGU will be producing 22 new doctors, let us look at our needs and do a needs analysis and see exactly where we are going to put them.

You see I mention this, Mr. President, for a reason. Some years ago, Mr. President, and I am tying this thing in, I am not irrelevant. Some young person's went to Cuba to do Nursing, they went to Cuba and the Cubans gave us scholarships based on what we said we need but what happened, Mr. President, is that these young people after graduating they went to Matanzas and they went to another city. After graduating they came to Grenada and was told, there were no jobs for them. Some of them ended up on contract in Trinidad so we have devise and develop a plan for our students especially those on Government scholarship. We don't want them to go and then come back and end up being frustrated and so on. We must work with a plan. Now these are just the students on Government

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scholarships but the University have something that they call, I think is charter they call it, where the University itself gives additional scholarships. So SGU is extremely, extremely important to us. This is why I am saying again what if something goes wrong and SGU don't decide to go along with everything.

Now, Mr. President, in relation to the \$30m, last night I was going through this document and I thought and I thought and I thought about this money. And there are some politicians when they hear money they're smiling and they're in a nice way. We speak about money but we have to be careful. An old man said "when you don't have money, you have to be very, very careful and when you have plenty money you have to be very, very careful". If we see \$30m as being a lot... EC\$80m, why not take that money, Mr. President, and I'm going to defer with Senator De Allie here, just a little bit, and start the process of building a hospital. Something was in train already, in relation to a teaching hospital with SGU, why not engage with SGU, engage with them now, so that we can start that process. Mr. President, we all know the situation with the hospital, the hospital is in the wrong location, we have to make it do, because that's what we have, but can we do better? Now we have an opportunity to engage with SGU now to see what can happen. It doesn't mean that SGU is going to agree, but that same \$30m could go into something and I want to use the word "transformational fund", not the normal transformational fund, but something that will transform that \$30m, something that would transform the Health Sector. So, Mr. President, I think it's very important that, that kind of engagement takes place, and let's see what happens. We cannot predict the outcome, but the outcome could be very, very, very good for the nation.

Mr. President, we cannot overemphasise the importance of SGU to this country, the spill off effect and everything. SGU has a Vet School, Mr. President. In fact the vet school start spreading its wings. I met a young lady around Christmas, came in from the United States to attend Vet School here. Now most of us would know where the vet department is located at SGU. Again I am saying that the Government could engage with the SGU, engage with them in relation to expanding the Vet School. The Vet School needs land because the practical aspect deals with large animals, and small animals, so they need space. Engage with SGU, see what SGU intentions are, what their plans are and help to facilitate them. It if means

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giving them Mt. Hartman for example, I'm just using it just as a place, Mt. Hartman, for example to establish something there, because what we see in SGU is growth, growth and growth. So let us help them to facilitate that growth and once that happens then the country would continue to benefit.

Mr. President, I just want to move on to this article here, I think is section 17 (6), right, section 17 (6), I thought it interesting; maybe I mentioned it a little bit earlier. It deals with dispute resolution. Now that section lays out a process for dispute resolution and the jurisdiction is the Grenadian Court System, which means the Grenadian Court System goes as far up as the Privy Council. But, Mr. President, there are some countries in the world that don't respect any jurisdiction. We have to be guarded, look for example at the World Court, International Court of Justice, some people just decide they are not interested in that, that's not for them. What if someone says if there is a dispute but they're not recognising that? These are issues we need to look at. These are issues because these are out there. We know the attitude of some powers; we know the attitudes of some powers. Now, Mr. President, let me just move on to my next page here... Yes so, Mr. President, I'm saying this, that SGU is critical to our economy and probably too critical, probably too critical. We saw what happened in the COVID time. We need to continue to assist and facilitate SGU, at the same time we need to grow the economy too.

Mr. President, when SGU started, I think it was just about 20 students in 1976, '77 and look at where they are now, into the billion dollar range. When they started maybe their input in relation to GDP was point something of a per cent. Now they grew to over 25% of GDP and the other sectors of our economy continue to lag. Now what happens if SGU becomes 50% of GDP? Mr. President, we know what happens when you hire the piper, who pays him calls the tune. I hope we are understanding. So we have to look at the other sectors and beef it up, build it up. But as I said the government seems to have a degree of myopia, they just don't seem to be seeing certain things. Certain things, but I do hope that they can wake up. It's nice that SGU grows, but let the economy grow also.

So, Mr. President, I support the amendments, I support the amendments. There are just some questions I thought very critical that I should raise. If the execution and the application is seamless then it will be a win, win for us. The

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monies that the Government is going to receive for the change must be put into proper use, must be put into proper use. I'm using the word proper deliberately so that the nation will see the benefit of that agreement. Mr. President, thank you very much.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much.

Mr. President: Senator Joseph could you take off your light please.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I stand to give my full support towards the Motion before this Honourable House. I must commend the leader of the Motion, the Leader of Government's Business for doing such an excellent job in giving details and context to how it has originated and where we are today. And it doesn't leave much for me to be said, to contribute to this, but to stand in support and to recognise the relationship that is current between the people and Government of Grenada and the St. George's University. I think it is important for us as citizens to recognise that. But I also want to single out the support and the impact that it's having in two critical areas in terms of youth development and how that is complimented through the support in the Health Sector. While they are centred around purely as a primary focus looking at doctors and the medical area, even Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine, but the impact of the University is basically channelled through our youths who are the ones who are actually benefitting from this initiative really and truly in a meaningful way. And I think sometimes that is underscored and a lot of attention is placed on the economic outturn and not so much on the social impact in terms of persons having an opportunity to get first class university education right at their doorstep. So I think that is something that we need to pay attention to and to commend. I also want to recognise the comments and suggestions from the representative from the business community, in terms of how we treat with the use and implementation of the funds that are generated through this grant support. I think that is something that we can

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contend with and of course as a responsible government we will do so, likewise which we have and always seek to do in the interest of the people.

As it relates to Senator Joseph and some of his comments, I really don't want to speak too much on all, but just one I just wanted to single out and to kind of help the Senator to understand, in terms of economic context, in terms of growth. The growth of the University cannot and would not happen independently on its own. There are a number of other critical sectors that support the operations at the University and so once the University grows, they are also going to grow. In some cases there is a direct correlation between those sectors. So don't believe that one sector would just grow and isolate. Once you have more students, there are going to be demand for more services, which means the services sector is going to grow likewise, which means that more demand for goods, agricultural produce, more request for space, more electricity is going to be utilised. So there is a direct correlation between those sectors and the growth of the University. So his cry to iterate that the sector will grow and others will dwindle, that is not likely to happen because there is a direct correlation for such to happen. I just wanted to kind of clarify that, to bring that clarity to show the relationship and how it's important for all the other sectors. If we are unable to provide those services in a meaningful way that in turn can impact the growth and progress and operations of the University.

But all in all, Mr. President, I think where we are now and other Members would have said that, this is an excellent agreement that we have before us. As in everything else, there are always going to be areas where there might be work for improvement and so be it. And hence the reason why we are having these amendments after how much years from when it started, and we'll continue to improve it as we go forward, but I think this is an excellent time for our country and an excellent time for the relationship that we have with the University and the people of this country, and I think we should recognise that and celebrate that and be grateful, and for us to extract all the benefits that we can from this for our own development and for our future, for our kids who are up and coming. So with these comments, Mr. President, I again reiterate my full resounding support to this initiative on where we are on the Motion before us. Thank you very much.

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Mr. President: Thank you Senator Cox. Senator Stiehl you wish to... Oh Senator Lewis. Sorry I don't...

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. President, and I identify with almost everything that has been said by the different sides here. However in relation to some of the points raised by the Leader of Government's Business, there is an element that is missing. In all of the progress that has been made, even in relation as we continue to fight against COVID, one of the points that have not been highlighted is that in this fight against COVID there are a number of workers at SGU who have not been allowed to report to their work, to perform their jobs and as such they are home without any income. We see that \$30m is made available and I agree that it is important for these things to be accounted for, and along some of the lines has been suggested. I did a quick calculation and it will not cost the University as much as EC\$2m, much less than that to pay off the workers for their years of service.

Because as the Leader of Government's Business has indicated, SGU in its fight to keep its place safe and that's their contention, they have indicated that the workers will not be allowed to come to the compound, the workers are saying pay me for my years of service. These workers have been out since June, July and they continue to lavish, psychologically emotionally it is troubling, and it is through no fault of theirs, and therefore we are demanding, the Labour Movement is demanding that the workers be paid for their years of service. And not only SGU but any workplaces that have sent workers home. It is also important to note, because we must deal with all the positives and negatives. As we speak, these workers who have not been allowed to come to the compound to perform their jobs have not been paid for their annual vacation leave and that is all part of the fight that the Leader of Government's Business has indicated in the struggle.

So we are bringing this to the attention that we must look at both sides of the coin, because as we praise the University and they must be praised. The Labour Movement praise the University for the tremendous contribution that it has made and continues to make to the people of Grenada, not just the people of Grenada generally, even the workers of SGU, because the workers of SGU were paid while

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they were at home during the period of lockdown. So this is not a contention here. We are saying that we must look at both sides of the coin and therefore the workers who are at home must be paid. They must be paid...

Mr. President: Senator Lewis I don't want to really stop you, but I want to draw your attention to Standing Order 37 of the Rules. What is before us is a Resolution to deal with making certain amendments to the Charter and the Act. I don't know that this, what is before us is an issue touching and concerning Industrial Relations. I think quite appropriately that could be dealt with by a Motion brought by your good self to that effect. So I just want to draw that to your attention. Right! What is before us is a Motion to amend the Schedule and in effect to give amendment to the Act changes which would create certain benefits. There are more scholarship benefits; there are some taxation issues in relation to the share ownership and changes in that ownership. That's what is before us. What is before us is not a Motion dealing with Industrial Relations Matters. So with that said I draw your attention once again to Standing Order 37. You have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am guided by yourself but I was addressing the point raised by the Leader of Government's Business when he was speaking about the success of the vaccination programme at SGU. It was in this context I was responding. All I'm saying was that there are two sides to the coin. In advancing the Motion, the Leader of Government's Business said that SGU took a number of steps as part of their programme, and it was the Leader of Government's Business who praised the vaccination programme. And I'm saying that one of the hallmark of the vaccination programme that the Leader of Government's Business did not highlight and I am highlighting, is the impact on the workers who have not taken the vaccine. I'm not addressing an industrial matter. I'm referring to a point raised by the Leader of Government's Business. There are a minimum of two sides to every issue. So through you, Mr. President, I wish to state that I'm not addressing an industrial matter, I'm addressing the issue of the impact of the vaccination programme, as highlighted by the Leader of Government's Business. And I thought it is only

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important to highlight, yes, I am not negating what has been raised by the Minister and the Leader of Government's Business, but I'm highlighting the other implications of that programme. And that's what I was doing, and I will move on, Mr. President.

In relation to the document before us, under dispute resolution I just had some, not necessarily concerns, but I probably may seek some guidance here. When we look under resolution number, dispute resolution procedures number 3, it says that, it addresses that number 3, **"If the University and the Government cannot agree by the end of the Consultation Period, the parties shall designate a mutually acceptable mediator to work with the parties to try to come to agreement on such Government Action, which mediation process shall extend no further than sixty (60) business days after the end of the Consultation Period, unless the University and the Government agree otherwise."** So here we have a process set up by mutual agreement. It can only take place as it says by mutual agreement. So we have gone to the stage where it is mutually agreed, so the parties that are identified, the parties that are identified to do that mediation, mutually agreed by the parties. Let us go to number 4, **"If, after such mediation the written consent of the University Parties is not obtained..."**, in other words, here we have, from the onset, we are indicating that the parties will go to mediation by a mutually convened body. So it can only take place if we agree mutually as to the composition, but immediately thereafter, it is saying that if we do not, coming out of the mediation, the body that we have set up to find a resolution, if that body makes a recommendation, the University is saying up front, that's my understanding and I can be guided accordingly. It is already saying that I do not have to give you a written consent. It says here, it says here **"If, after such mediation, the written consent of the University Parties is not obtained..."**, and when you go under definition, under University Parties, the definition of University parties speaks about the University and the people associated with the University. So it is saying here, the University Party, already it is saying in the document, already it is saying in the document notwithstanding, whatever the mediation that we agree to collectively, that recognised body, **"If, after such mediation the written consent of the University Parties is not obtained, such Government Action shall not be applicable to the University Parties and the Government shall not take or seek to enforce any**

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government action against the University Parties.” But I'm going further and I'm seeking clarity and I'm raising these things because I'm trying to get the spirit, the intention and there are legal minds here that can guide us.

If we go to resolution, procedure number 7, it says here and I'm seeking clarity here please, **“The Government hereby waives sovereign immunity in respect of litigation and adjudication, save that Government has not waived sovereign immunity with respect to any execution or attachment or process in the nature thereof issued from any Court for enforcing payment by the government of any such money or cost in favour of the University.”** Now that's in favour of the University, right. So where to me, seems as though once it relates to payment to the University, the University is more or less in the clear here, yes, **“and no natural person shall be individually liable under any order for the payment by Government of any such money or...”** yes I understand that, but I'm seeking here the earlier part, the aspect of immunity, the aspect of if we go to mediation we must obtain in order to enforce anything, you must obtain the written consent of University. It begs from my point of view whether or not we are setting up our self from day one to just having no agreements through the process.

And these are just some of my concerns that I raised here, but I want to end by once again reemphasising our recognitions of the importance of SGU, also our recognition that more can be done in making use of the possibilities that SGU presents, even in terms of what one will call medical tourism. To extend the point raised by Senator Joseph. I think that we should look to get some through SGU, the question of specialisation, for instance a cardiovascular specialty. These are areas that we can identify and seek to gain from. This is my contribution and the concerns and query that I had. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Lewis. Senator Cathisha Williams you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to give my full support to the Resolution before the House, and I will also attempt to clarify any misconceptions in relation to the Resolution, Mr. President. First of all I would

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like to commend the St. George's University for the longstanding relationship that they have maintained with the Government of Grenada, and the service that they have provided to Grenada through their operations here. I would also like to highlight that this is not a one sided relationship, this is a symbiotic relationship. We are well aware of the financial benefits that the presence of the University brings to Grenada and the benefits that it brings to our people, the Private Sector and the benefits that University itself is able to acquire specifically in relation to tax exemptions and etc. So it is a mutually beneficial relationship that exists here and the parties, parties being the University and the Government play an equal role of importance in this relationship. I have heard some statements being made here this morning that hint to a sort of imbalance in the power structure, where the University will have a more influential role or a role of more authority in relation to the Government of Grenada and I just wish to clarify that in accordance with the Charter and the Agreement and the St. George's University Act...

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

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. I would just like to clarify here that in relation to the Charter and the Agreement between the parties, and the stipulations of the St. George's University Act, that there is no imbalance of power, that the Government and University have an equal role of power and authority in this Agreement. And I point specifically to section 5 of the Act which outlines the procedure for Amendment of the Act. And it states in subsection (1) that **“where any Amendment of the Charter or the Agreement is accepted by the Government and University, the Minister may by Order amend the First Schedule or the Second Schedule.”** So there has to be a meeting of minds between the Government and the University for any amendment to be effected. And this is not something new, there was a previous amendment to the Act in 2014 by Order of the Minister and this just represents a second further amendment to the Act by the Minister. But what's important here is that it must be pursuant to the concurrence of both the Government and the University, so there is no upper hand here that the University has in relation to this agreement. It's a symbiotic relationship

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of both parties on equal power footing. So I hope that is clear to the Honourable Member who raised that concern. There was also an issue raised of the... or rather a hypothetical statement of what if the University decides to not adhere to the dispute settlement procedures or not adhere to the terms of the agreement. Now this is not only a legal document and I'm referring to the Charter and the Agreement. These are not only legal documents but by virtue of the Act, they are now part of the Laws of Grenada. So they cannot be broken with impunity. If the parties decide to act in contradiction to the provisions of the Charter of the Agreement they would be in essence breaking the Laws of Grenada. So this is not just something that can be done. So the answer to the question is no. The University just cannot decide to act contrary to the rules of dispute settlement as outlined in the Agreement or any of the other terms of the Agreement. The Agreement is legally binding and it is also by virtue of this Act incorporated into the Laws of Grenada. So to act contrary to that would be breaking the Laws of Grenada. So through you, Deputy President to the Honourable Member, no the University cannot just act contrary to the provisions of the agreement. If that is done then the Government will have the usual recourse that it will have to any legal person who breaks the Laws of this country.

Mr. Deputy President, to specifically address some of the concerns raised by the Honourable Senator Lewis, the dispute settlement provisions are not dissimilar to the procedures in the ordinary Courts of dispute settlement in the Courts of Grenada. When two parties go to Court and they refer to mediation both parties have to agree to a mediator, a mutually agreed on mediator who would preside over the matter and help the parties to come to an agreement. And, Mr. Deputy President, will be well acquainted with this procedure as he is an experienced and effective mediator himself who services I was able to use during my time in private practice. So going back to the point, so the parties decide on a mediator and that mediator will attempt to bring the parties to a resolution. So that is not different from what is in the provisions of this Agreement. However this mediation procedure only takes effect after the consultation period of 21 days. So the Agreement allows the parties to try to resolve the matter themselves for 21 days and if they are unable to do so then they agree to a mediator who will try to have the parties resolve the matter.

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Now it's mediation, so the parties can either come to an agreement or they don't come to an agreement and that happens in ordinary everyday mediation. The law cannot compel the parties to agree. It is a voluntary process, they would spend days, hours, discussing the issues with the mediator. If there is an agreement then the parties would produce it in writing and that will become the Law of the land. If there is not an agreement then the parties can return to Court and they will have recourse access to other legal remedies and that is simply what the provisions are saying. It says in section 4 **"If, after such mediation, the written consent of the University Parties is not obtained..."**, "if". So in the event that there is no agreement between the parties, this is the next step. It doesn't give the University the power to do as it likes, that is not the effect of the section. It is saying that where the parties; the Government and the University attempt mediation and there is no agreement then this is the next step. So I hope that that clears up that for the Honourable Member.

And the next step of course can be litigation and the waiver of sovereign immunity is basically Government allowing itself to be sued. So if the University decides that it wants to take Government to Court, it can do so which doesn't mean that the University will win. Of course the Courts will decide that and that in a nutshell is what the provisions are saying, that the parties have an opportunity to settle the dispute themselves for 21 days, if not they can agree to a mediator. If there is an agreement then that ends the dispute, if there is not an agreement then the party have access to other legal remedies and litigation is one of them. So there is no... I don't think from the provisions you can read into this any beneficial position that the University has that is more than the Government or it creates any opportunity for the University to have an upper hand over Government. I believe to read that into the provisions would be a misinterpretation of the provisions. And it is simply a reproduction of the normal procedures for dispute resolution that is used in Court every day in our judicial system. I hope that that would have clarified for the Honourable Member, the provisions of that particular section.

With that, Mr. Deputy President, I would just like to reiterate my support for this Resolution and to point out also that because this is something... the Order of the Minister is something that can just be passed automatically. It is not required for

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it to be brought to this House to be debated but I believe that this Government in the interest of transparency and accountability and informing the public of what is happening with its corporate partners brought this to Parliament today so that our people can be more informed. And I will like to commend the Government for doing this. **(Applause)** With that I support the Resolution. Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): Senator Cadet.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. Mr. Deputy President, I want to add my resounding support to this Resolution. I think this Resolution indicates the Government's commitment to the development of its people especially the young people as well as the St. George's University. Mr. Deputy President, as a graduate of the St. George's University, I commend the University for its significant contribution to this country. In 1977 when the University started, I wonder if they really probably have the idea that it would have grown to make such a significant contribution to the development of the country considering at the time that many people's idea or view of that University was not as great. I am talking about the citizen of the time and it took a very bold leader and he had the vision to agree to have this University here and, Mr. President, looking back 46 years later and it's no coincidence really and truly because just yesterday we would have celebrated our Independence, 48 years. And looking back 46 years later, two years after we would have gained our Independence, this University would have come on. This university would have contributed significantly to the development of this country, Mr. President, this must be commended. **(Applause)**

Mr. President, I am looking at the Agreement as well, this shows the Government's interest in the development of the country and the interest in standing on the side of the people of this country. Mr. President, we have debated Agreements here before. We have seen what happened in 1995 when another Government would have negotiated, well somewhat, we believe should have negotiated in the interest of the people and we saw what happened. Basically our

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birth right was given up and it took this Government to come in to change that Agreement. Mr. President, what I am saying here is simply this, is that this Government has shown to always stand by the side of the Grenadian people.

(Applause)

Mr. President, the Opposition Member said it the number of scholarships, 144 scholarship when he counted. I didn't get the time to go through it one by one but I take his word for it, 144 scholarships. But, Mr. President, that is excluded of what else do we get. Mr. President, normally when a student applies to the St. George's University I know that we get a 90% off our tuition so when you really look at it, technically you're just paying 10% of the tuition. So I know for me when I started my fees per semester was roughly around \$2,000.00 depending on your number of courses that you would select. If you are selecting over 5 courses the possibility exist that you would pay over \$3,000.00. But comparing to what you would have had to pay if wasn't for that 90% would have been significant and so that again, Mr. President, showing that, yes we're getting the scholarship but we also have the average Grenadian applying to the University, you have a 90% that you would naturally get in terms of the reduction in the tuition.

So again, Mr. President, we're getting an additional sum in scholarship. And I want to talk about scholarship because this is an excellent thing again. In that negotiation the Government just did not continue the regular number of scholarship but they advocated and championed for more scholarships and, Mr. President, this is within the Government's vision for this country as relating to developing the human resource of this country. If you look at our successive budgets that we presented last year and in previous years, you will notice, Mr. President, that education continues to be one of our largest allocations and that is because, Mr. President, we realise that educational development is paramount for the growth of this country.

And so, Mr. President, you see more scholarships and not just from the St. George's University. We see more scholarships in other jurisdiction and from other programmes and that again, Mr. President, I want to say that the Government's commitment to developing the young people of this country and Minister Cox said it. Yes we look at the health aspect of it, yes we look at the economic aspect of it but the youth development aspect must be taken into consideration because a number

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of young people is giving serious access to opportunity and when we're talking young people, the youth development, you don't just talk and people tend to do it, just a portion of Government programmes. But we have to look at the holistic vision of the Government and you look at the training of youth, we look at scholarship programmes, we look at skills training and we look at growing the economy to ensure that young people can have access to decent jobs.

I heard the Honourable Member mention about young people, the access of jobs in the economy. But, Mr. President, what we have seen... I am talking about the Honourable Opposition Member... what we have seen, Mr. President, is that under the leadership of this Government, unemployment continues to trend downwards. Even at times, Mr. President, **(applause)** even during the roughest period that we have faced in this country, unemployment moving from 28 to 24 to 16% and is moving downward, Mr. President. **(Applause)** This is a commitment from the Government that it cares for the people, the commitment that they continue to work in the interest of the people.

Mr. President, I also want to highlight the growing programmes at the St. George's University, not just the medical school which is doing a fantastic job and yes we export nutmeg, we export cocoa and we are now exporting doctors across the world. And that's an **(applause)** initiative that we will be recognised and will be identified for. But we are also seeing, Mr. President, the Veterinarian School, it's increasing in its enrolment but also the Marine Department which by the way is the programme that I have graduated from; the Marine Biology Department is a growing programme. In fact when they started I remember there were discussions that it was five students, now in a semester you have over twenty something students being enrolled in that programme. And, Mr. President, again there is no coincidence because if you look at the vision of this Government when we're talking about the launch of the Blue Growth Master Plan and we're talking about the blue economy and Grenada... the ocean is 70 times the size of our land. Mr. President, the blue economy will unleash significant potential opportunities for our young people. I know it is being headed by our Minister for Works assiduously and continue to do an excellent job in championing this initiative. But what is also important, Mr. President, in this discussion is that the Marine Department recently received an accreditation

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from the Royal Society of Biology, Mr. President. Mr. President, that's one of the leading accreditation society and this will strengthen the image of that programme and continues to recruit a number of talent throughout the region and throughout the western hemisphere... throughout the world in ensuring that we have the best brains coming through their programme, continue to do research on the blue sectors in our country. So, Mr. President, we are seeing the significant opportunities that St. George's University continue to provide for our young people and that, Mr. President, I give my full support to.

Mr. President, the resources that we're going to get from this, the \$30m, Mr. President, this is welcome. We know this is a very prudent... a Government that spend resources prudently, there is no debate about that. This Government, we look at how we spend our resources, how we continues to allocate our resources and continues to allocate the resources in the sectors that would be in the best interest of our people. And so, Mr. President, we welcome that \$30m and this Resolution, Mr. President, again kudos to the Government, kudos to the Prime Minister and the team for negotiating and putting forward a Resolution that is in the best interest of the people. And so, Mr. President, I give this Resolution my unwavering support. Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): Senator Philip.

Sen. the Hon. Victor Philip: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. I stand to give support to the Resolution presented to the Senate as presented by the Leader of Government's Business. Mr. Deputy President, I will like to state that this Resolution is a reflection of strong leadership, excellent negotiation and great relationship between the Government and SGU. **(Applause)** I will like to also state that the relationship between Government and SGU continues to bear significant fruit and that would be added value to all Grenadians.

Sergeant-at-Arms: The President in the Chair

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Sen. the Hon. Victor Phillip: Mr. President, I also together with my associate Senator who has just spoken, Senator Judd would also like to congratulate SGU on their recent accreditation from Marine Wildlife and Conservation Degree from the Royal Society of Biology in the UK. And, Mr. President, it must also be noted that this accreditation is the first of its kind in the western hemisphere. And so this again adds to the value with our relationship with SGU and the Government. Again, Mr. President, the SGU remains committed to providing scholarships to the Grenadian people. SGU also has a long standing agreement with T.A. Marryshow Community College and recently SGU has indicated its willingness to revise the Memorandum of Understanding with the College. This I will say, Mr. President, is wonderful news to add with the already initiative taking place at the T.A. Marryshow College to create a more meaningful and relevant College at TAMCC.

Mr. President, the recommendation made by Senator De Allie with respect to getting a more practical aspect added to the training of the nurses at SGU, I will like to tell my Senator here that this is on-going. This is part of the on-going negotiation. We will be having with them to make sure that these trained nurses get proper training added to assistance to the General Hospital and other places. Thank you very much for your input in that and your concern and this will be taken into consideration.

Also, Mr. President, added to that we also have already have initiated with TAMCC a collaboration with the I.T. Department of both SGU and TAMCC with respect to the area of robotic training and this however was held up but again I will like to state here on the record that this will be also an on-going negotiation that will continue with the SGU IT Campus together with TAMCC so that we can collaborate and cooperate with both parties so that we can get meaningful training and access to modern day careers which robotic is one of them. Just to state for instance the importance of robotics is not only in terms of control of things but also in area when you're talking about marine biology, studying the corals and the health of them, robotic could be used and so therefore even in Grenada here the students would be able, once properly trained be able to put together a robot to do the necessary kind of investigation needed and obtain results from that.

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Added to the matter of training more nurses, Mr. President, I will like to say that this would fulfil the needs of our society because we have on-going expression by individuals that we do not have enough nurses in Grenada. But I would also state that with the collaboration with SGU and also with the contribution made by Senator De Allie also to seek that whereas that TAMCC should get a cohort of that same nurses... continue with the same nursing training, I would add my support to that. Because not only we could train nurses, I don't think we should only look at training nurses only for our purpose in this country but I also think we should look beyond that because we have a lot of young people now coming up and more people coming from Secondary Schools and TAMCC and looking for new careers or new avenues for them to get jobs. I think we should look into training extra nurses so that we can export these nurses (**applause**) so that our people would get meaningful jobs.

Again, Mr. President, I would just like to reiterate the fact that I stand here and I therefore would again give my full support to the Resolution as presented to the Senate by the Leader of Government's Business.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give my full support to the Resolution as presented by the Leader of Government's Business in this Honourable House and I want to signal the same sentiment that was raised by my colleague on "This Side" that this Agreement is an indication of, one, astute leadership, excellent negotiation skills and downright love for the people of Grenada to ensure that they get the best out of every transaction that is done on behalf of this country. And when I look at section two of the Agreement, it says "**this Order shall expire ten years after it enters into force**". If we look at the Agreement that was signed in 2011 that came into force in 2014, it was for five years. We've been able to move it with as I said excellent negotiation skills to 10 years. It means therefore that our young people have the guarantee that there will be continued opportunities for them in terms of transformational, educational opportunities within the SGU system, world class training right at home. It is so rewarding when you go to international forums and you say you're from

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Grenada and one or two persons from the conference will say I studied at SGU. You know how rewarding and gratifying that is, that your little country has produced men and women of international renown and repute who are doing great things around the world but they got their education right here. And this is the opportunity that is afforded to our young people by giving Arts and Science Scholarships, up to 100 and medical 22, creating more opportunities for transformation in the lives of our young people.

Let me go down to 4, it says, Mr. President, **“in article 4, by numbering the paragraph as paragraph (1) and inserting thereafter the following new paragraph...”** and I want to get leave to read it, Mr. President. It says **“the University shall not acquire or establish a School of Medicine in the Caribbean region (which includes but is not limited to our CARICOM countries and then we have Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Sint Marteen, the Netherland Antilles, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, British Virgin Islands) that competes directly with the University without the consent of the Government.”** You know how powerful this is, Mr. President? It is saying that we have been able to secure the future of the University in Grenada and if there is to be any change or alteration to this relationship, the Government must give consent to it. So you cannot go elsewhere and establish another University and go down further, it says, in (b), **“shall not be permitted to use the name “St. George’s University” or “SGU” for another School of Medicine without the consent of the Government.”** This is saying, you got a trademark and it’s trademarked to Grenada and that will not be altered. The brand SGU is synonymous with Grenada and will remain. **(Applause)** This means therefore, Mr. President, that Grenada has been able to do something that others haven’t been able to do.

And as I’m on this, Senator Joseph, on the “Other Side,” speak of an Agreement of 2011 and claimed in that Agreement, SGU was to build a Teaching Hospital. My brother, this is false. It is false. It is false. Go and interrogate the Agreement and you will see references to a Clinical Teaching Programme within the General Hospital. And throughout the Agreement it spoke to that, not building a new hospital. And I don’t know, it is wrong again, when he said that the hospital is in a

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wrong location. You know, you're not, you don't have the competence to make that sort of determination. PAHO never said so, the report that was done never said so. So it is not right to come, and let me tell you, there are implications for SGU when you say things like that, and we should not just come and just say things widely within this Honourable Chamber.

SGU as we do agree, as we do agree, is a world renowned University, Medical University, and they have invested significant resources within the State of Grenada and within the General Hospital at its current location. And for you to say the hospital is at a wrong location is saying that SGU is involved in something that is not sound. I could say other things, but it is not right and it is not fair to all of us as Grenadians when you do that, because you're affecting the brand SGU. So, sometimes, I think, Mr. President, we get the feeling that if we could beat on an Agreement because of the Government in office at the time, you more or less will be embarrassing the Government, but really and truly is the people, the Government is the people, the people you are embarrassing, the people you're attacking. Just so, when the Agreement was signed by the former Prime Minister, Sir Eric Matthew Gairy, to have SGU in Grenada in 1976, a number of our citizens didn't agree to SGU coming, you know, and not, well, let me rephrase it. I wouldn't say they didn't agree, they wanted SGU, but not under uncle Gairy. Just as we wanted Independence, but not under uncle Gairy and we demonised the investment and tried to stop it from happening. It is not right, because you attack your own country. And sometime I always question, you have a beautiful Agreement that would provide more resources for the people of Grenada in terms of the grants, but more opportunities for training of our young people, and you attack it. But you know, Mr. President, I want to liken this Agreement, and the opportunities for transformational learning of our young people within SGU to what the Government just did recently, when it said, it will establish a programme, a concessionary loan programme that will provide economic benefit for our young people, so that they can invest in the single largest investment any family could get into building a home. I likened this Agreement to that announcement and pronouncement by the Government to aid in the development of our young people. At this time, Mr. President, what we are about

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is to ensure that the country advance and as the country advance, its people, they are the ones that is given the hand up to move forward.

So this Agreement with SGU is doing that. And we have to be thankful that in the midst of a pandemic, we are able to carve out such a wonderful Agreement for the people of Grenada, Carriacou, and Petite Martinique. And we ought to be thankful that we have a leader in Dr. Mitchell and a Government, the NNP Administration leading this country at this point in time, to ensure that we get the best out of every investment that is made in this country.

I want to end by saying, when Senator Judd referenced what Government had to do recently to get back the birthright that was given away, virtually given away to an entity who controlled the electric power in the country, and saddled development in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique for several years. And we had to come and to fix that and make it right. It cost some money to do it, but as Government always says, an investment in the development of the people is worth it, even though it costs. When our people will get the benefit of it, that is what is important. And with these words, Mr. President, I want to say, I give my full support to the Resolution that is presented by the Leader of Government's Business. Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Garraway. Senator Stiell, I think you would wind up the debate.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, in terms of wrapping up this debate, I wish to thank all Members for their contributions. And what we've heard on "Both Sides" of the aisle is resounding support for the approach taken by this Administration and the negotiating team on both sides, "Government Side" and "SGU Side" in terms of crafting an Agreement that serves the interests of both parties, which is at the heart of any Agreement and ensures the on-going success of the University here in Grenada and the demonstrable benefits that are derived from that, that best serve the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

In answering just a few of the points raised, I'm starting with Senator De Allie. I agree for US \$30, eighty plus million EC dollars, it's a windfall, it has the potential to

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be channelled into areas of strategic value to us. You mentioned some, whether it's bolstering the Nursing Programme at TAMCC, so it is complementary to what is being offered at SGU. Whether it is into the healthcare system, that is a very obvious place, especially with NHI, National Health Insurance just around the corner, there are many areas. I think we can throw a stone in many different places and will hit areas where those additional resources could add significant value. I'm not in a position to speak to the current work that has been done in terms of identifying those opportunities, but there is absolutely no shortage of such areas. And it is one that this Administration will take full advantage of.

With respect to the word "change" "charge", I think it was, where was that? It is a typo. It is a typo. It should be "change" rather than "charge" and we can address it when we enter the Committee stage.

Senator Joseph, yes, a good point, in terms of going beyond the scholarships, in terms of how we find valued job opportunities for those graduating students, but this does not take away for a moment, the significant achievements that have been made in terms of creating those educational opportunities. Yes, educational opportunities and employment opportunities must go hand in hand, there are gaps within that, but that does not stop us, should not stop us from affording as many young men and women here in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite, Martinique the opportunity of accessing high value, world class educational institutions, and attaining qualifications that will serve them, not only in the short run, but also the long run for the rest of their lives. And as we find time or create that space to align the flow of graduating students with opening of quality job opportunities that work is going on and there are countless examples of young men and women being able to put their high qualifications to good use and contributing to our national development. But that does not mean there is not still work to be done or as was said, devaluing the efforts and the achievements made in terms of scholarship opportunities.

Dispute resolution, we went round, there were a number of areas where that was mentioned, Senator Lewis and Senator Joseph in terms... I think Senator Williams addressed the points, the concerns that you raised. St. George's University is a professional, credible institution, a long standing partner of Grenada and have

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certainly no, there is no question in our minds that they would disregard what is enshrined in law. So the concerns that you raised, certainly we do not share those and the terms that are laid out in the Dispute Resolution Clauses within the Agreements provide sufficient comfort that there are remedies and approaches, legal approaches that are well established, not just in this relationship, not just in Grenada, but in terms of International Law.

Senator Lewis, you did deviate. The President provided some focus to your contribution in terms of speaking to the amendments to the Order that is before us. I would have liked to have heard you speak more on the benefits and the opportunities that these amendments afford our students, workers, the economy, your constituents. I would have welcomed your thoughts there. In terms of the handful of your members who it's their choice, it is their right not to be vaccinated, not to follow the vast majority of persons associated with the University, and the University demonstrating that they take their responsibilities with regard to due care and providing a safe working environment for their employees, you know, which is something to be applauded. To get into a conversation as to how a private institution should treat those one or two members who are exercising their rights not to follow suit. But what I would like to hear from you, as their Labour Representative is what are you doing to provide support for your members who find themselves in this unfortunate position, and showing your solidarity to those members through your pocket, rather than suggesting how other institutions should take on that financial responsibility. But as I said, this is a private entity and it's not for us to speak to that. But you certainly have a voice in terms of how you provide support for your members who take particular positions that are contrary to what is actually in the best interest of an employer of that institution of an area of such important economic value to us.

So I think that covers, Mr. President, many of the points or the critical points that were raised. I simply want to reiterate support on "Government Side", and the resounding support that we've heard through the contributions here today, of the amendments that are before us, and the reflection of that deep and rich relationship between St. George's University, and the Government and People of Grenada, and a platform that will carry us through for the next period or term of this Agreement.

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And it's for those reasons, Mr. President, that I commend this Resolution to the floor.
I thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Stiell.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 15 - Bills.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading, a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Income Tax (Public Service 2021 Bonus Income) Bill, 2022.

Clerk: A Bill to stipulate the personal income tax payable by individuals employed by or providing services to the Government of Grenada, in respect of a bonus income received from the Government of Grenada, shortly entitled, Income Tax (Public Service 2021 Bonus Income) Bill, 2022.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. Mr. President, as this is a Money Bill, I wish to indicate to this Honourable House that I have the Speaker's Certificate permitting me to proceed.

Mr. President, we all recall the bonus payment paid to our frontline workers and other Public Service workers in December of 2021. And this was in recognition of their patriotic service to this Nation in this battle against the COVID-19 virus and the pandemic, which has taken the lives of so many and threaten the lives and livelihoods of so many more.

Mr. President, these bonuses were paid as either the equivalent of a full month's salary for those public workers on the frontlines, those putting their health and lives at risk in carrying out their duties in these extraordinary times. And those frontline workers include our medical personnel, our doctors, our nurses, the ancillary workers within the Ministry of Health, our police officers, and other workers and categories of workers who physically performed and continue to perform and by virtue of their duties were exposed to the COVID-19 virus, or Mr. President, a bonus equivalent to a half month salary, recognising the hard work and dedication of many other public officers. And as such, all other workers in the Public Sector who consistently performed duties from the onset of the pandemic to date received an additional half month's pay in the month of December.

Mr. President, although the Income Tax Law still apply to these incomes earned, as expressed in last year's Budget Presentation, it was Government's intention to treat this bonus payment, whether as a full month's salary equivalent or a half month equivalent, from a taxation standpoint, the same way as if it was a standalone payment received in any other month. This is meaning, if a worker's monthly salary ordinarily did not reach a taxable threshold, then no taxes would be deducted or if a worker's monthly salary ordinarily hit one or more of the prescribed thresholds and that is whether it's 10% of income above \$3,000, up to \$5,000 and 28% thereafter, then the same would apply to the bonus payment as a standalone sum. Therefore, no additional taxes would be payable by a worker on the bonus payment received, than would have ordinarily been paid on that individual sum in a given month. So, Mr. President, this was intended to minimise the taxes payable on the bonuses paid and put in as much money back in the pockets of the workers.

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However, the existing tax regime as outlined in the Income Tax Act does not allow for this. The existing tax regime would combine in the month of December's assessable taxable contribution as the worker's monthly salary, plus the bonus payment, which in most cases would take the worker beyond the original tax threshold and more taxes paid.

So to address this, Mr. President, this Bill sets out a formula for the calculation of Personal Income Tax on the bonus income of qualifying public workers, which results in lower taxes being paid on the bonus income, than had the bonus been included in the annual assessable income for the 2021 assessment period. And this is achieved Mr. President, by effectively creating this 13th month in the tax year, whereby the bonus payment can be treated as a standalone payment, resulting in a lower tax liability in all cases. This is a one-off piece of Legislation, Mr. President, limited to this specific bonus payment at this specific time, and is yet another concrete action, example taken by this Government in recognition of the support and contribution of public workers and especially in these most challenging of times.

So, Mr. President, to the Bill itself, the Bill contains six Clauses. Clause 2 provides for the interpretation of the terms used within the Bill. And specific attention to the term "**public worker**", which is defined as "*solely for the purposes of this Act, any individual employed by or providing services to the Government of Grenada.*" Also the term "bonus income", which is defined as the bonus income received by a public worker in respect of services provided to the Government during the COVID-19 pandemic, between March 2020 and December 2021, whether paid in December 2021 or such other time as the case may be. Therefore, Mr. President, some very, very, specific terminology with respect to whom this applies to and the specific period in which it is applied.

Clause 3 seeks to set out the formula for the calculation of Personal Income Tax on the bonus income of a public worker, as previously defined in Clause 2. The formula results in lower taxes being paid on the bonus income than had the bonus been included in the annual assessable income of the 2021 assessment period. So no tax would be chargeable on the bonus income of an individual whose total gross assessable income received from the Government would not have exceeded \$3,000 had the bonus income not been received.

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So for individuals whose gross monthly salary from the Government ordinarily exceeds \$3,000, tax on the bonus income will be calculated as firstly 10% on the sums of the bonus income exceeding \$3,000.00 but not exceeding \$5,000.00 and 28% on sums of the bonus income exceeding \$5,000.00. So to give some practical examples, for those public workers who would have received a half month bonus under the existing tax law, if their monthly salary was \$3,000.00, so at that \$3,000.00 threshold then under the existing tax regime that 10% taxable rate would have meant that worker would have paid \$150.00 in tax on that half month bonus payment. But under the new regime that is presented, no tax would be payable on that some. So that is the lower end. If we take at the higher end an example, a worker whose monthly salary is \$6,000.00 in that month, the tax payable on a half monthly bonus under the existing tax regime will be \$840.00. However on the proposed tax regime that is being presented no taxes will be paid. So the worker is \$840.00 better off. With an example of the full month bonus for those identified as frontline workers taking those two same examples, so at the lower end, a worker receiving a monthly salary of \$3,000.00 then under the existing regime they would have had to pay \$300.00 on that additional income. Under the new regime as proposed, no taxes will be paid. The example of the higher end of that salary bracket, so a worker earning \$6,000.00 under the existing tax regime will be paying at a tax rate of 28% on that, would have to pay \$1,680.00 on that but under the tax regime proposed only \$480.00 is payable. So a saving for that worker of \$1,200.00 in taxes which goes back into their pockets.

So, Mr. President, this tax relief was already applied in December 2021 when the bonus income was paid to various public workers. Most public workers received a net bonus income; therefore no further deductions are required. However those public workers who received a gross bonus income will be required to pay the appropriate tax using the formula of Clause 3 that I just outlined with a tax on their ordinary salary for December 2021 calculated using that existing formula. In cases where both formulas apply within that same assessment period, the bonus income will be declared then accounted for using a separate form and that is what is included in the schedule that is attached to this Bill.

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“Clause 4 and the Schedule seek to establish a bonus declaration form that performs the same function as the annual return...” as it relates to the calculation of the tax on the bonus income while the calculation of the tax on the ordinary December '21 salary would remain under the annual return of income. The bonus declaration form and the taxes on the bonus income are due on or before as per our tax declaration cycle before the 31st of March, 2022.

“Clause 5 seeks to expressly provide that the bonus income is not subject to the specified provisions of the Income Tax CAP. 149”, i.e., the more favourable calculation would be applied resulting in lower tax payment to the worker. **“Clause 6 provides for the temporary tax regime established under the Act for which this is the Bill to be subject to the provisions as laid out in the Tax Administration Act of 2016.”**

“Clause 1 provides for the short title and commencement.” Clause 1 of the Bill seeks to give the tax relief retroactive, effective from December 31, 2021 in light that some payments are anticipated in 2022. There are still frontline workers, other workers who meet the criteria who are being identified and their arrangements are being finalised for inclusion under this bonus scheme.

So, Mr. President, in conclusion, this Bill seeks to address Government's intention that public workers receiving this bonus payment which is in recognition of their sterling service that has being given during this difficult period, the sacrifices they have made and ensuring that they are relieved of any extra tax burden on this gratuitous payment. And it's for these reasons, Mr. President, that I commend this Bill for its second reading. I thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Stiell.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senators it don't seem like there would be any debate so... sorry. Senator Lewis.

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Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President and I rise in principle to acknowledge and give support to the Bill as advanced. The Leader of Government's Business has indicated that this is recognition for the services provided and we applaud that. However we would have liked to see some further recognition. We will like to see this become an annual payment to the workers, as part of the recognition... because it is under the theme of recognition. So let it be clearly understood that we support any form of recognition, that the workers deserve to receive for all the contributions that they have made during the fight against COVID and continuing. And one of the best forms of recognition that we are seriously asking the Government to consider that will demonstrate in a more significant and permanent way that recognition is the question of permanency of workers. So we accept the theme of recognition and I want to commend the Government for starting that theme but to also call on the Government to go further than that and make the workers permanent, establish the workers, regularise the workers. There is no doubt, for instance we have heard the concerns that yes we are looking at recognition but it is wide ranging, things can be approached in different forms. So for instance the Nurses and Doctors, rather than just the bonus, Nurses and Doctors, Orderlies, the whole Public Service but we can do it in phases, can be addressed, so we are advancing this.

Just seeking clarity and the answer can be given after or so. We recognise that a lot of emphasis is placed on the monthly exemption which we commend. So we agree and we accept that there should be no additional taxes paid by the workers along the lines that the Government has advanced but I am a bit not clear how will that apply to the annual income side. I hear the aspect of the \$3,000.00 being used and over \$3,000 to \$5,000 and above \$5,000 which is okay but taking into account let's say for instance, $\$3,000 \times 12$ is \$36,000. So for the year there is an exemption of \$36,000. How does that apply and I am just seeking clarity here through you, Mr. President. How does that apply when one fills out the annual form that says \$36,000.00 exempted. Remember we are all on the same page here... \$36,000.00 exempted, would one be expected to add, let us say you get \$2,500.00 because that will be \$36,000... if you make, no that's a wrong example. If you make 2,900.00 a month that bring you just under the 36,000 but the additional let's say 2,900 will bring

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you above the 36,000, I am just seeking clarity on this. I know the intention, I am of the view without the explanation that the Government is not seeking for the individuals to pay more, that's the view I hold. But because there will be administrative issues I am seeking the clarity. So I am coming here with the clear understanding that based on the explanation given by the Leader of Government's Business, the intention is not to have anyone who under normal circumstances will not pay or will not pay, having them pay and even if you pay, if you will pay let us say on \$100.00 because you fall in the category of \$36,100.00 for the year, that the three thousand that is exempted for December must not be added for the year. I understand this is what you are saying but because it was given on a monthly basis, in terms of the explanation advanced by the Leader of Government's Business we will like to hear an annualised explanation along that scenario given so that our Members will be clear when they are filling out that form and also the people at the Inland Revenue who makes that application will be clear. We understand the principle but I will like to see an example along that line.

As we said that anything that goes into the pocket of our members is highly appreciated. It will go back into the economy, so that's a win, win because our members do not have monies to save... so not only will it go back, it has already gone back because we are now speaking after the fact. But it will do a lot for the morale of our workers and this is what the Government is seeking to achieve. The Government is seeking to achieve to get our workers to continue producing especially in this period. To rise to the occasion, to continue rising to the occasion and the question that one must ask, what could we do further or what can we do in a meaningful way, what can we do in a permanent way, what can we do in such a manner that will keep our workers motivated, that keep us getting up every day and looking forward to going to work, looking forward to facing the challenges which is still unknown? This recognition is not saying that your task is done. This recognition is saying we applaud you for what you have done and we are asking you to continue your work in the event that there are further challenges and there will be further challenges but what can be significantly done here is the aspect of permanency, job security for our members and at the same time as is done in many Private Sector

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entities as so eloquently advanced by the Leader of Government's Business that which is called the 13 month salary.

So we are requesting that this 13 month salary become a permanent fixture. We are requesting that we do what is right to be quite frank through you, Mr. President, what is right under the Law, section 29 (5) and make the workers permanent because they do work that is continuous. Section 29 (5) recognises three types of contract. It is all within the theme of motivating because the Government is doing this not because they just want to pay money but it is doing this in the form of recognition to motivate.

In other words it is emulation and we support this. Let it be clear that the Labour Movement support this action. We are saying however it falls a bit short but you are thankful for what you get. But we are saying notwithstanding the fact that you are making amendment to the Income Tax Act to facilitate this payment without additional payment from the workers pocket, there's a Law that you do not need to amend to make the workers permanent, not make them permanent but to recognise the permanency, section 29 (5). So there will be no need to come to Parliament to seek to make an amendment for a one-off but just to enforce and give application to the Laws that has been passed. And we give our support but we ask for further recognition by the very fact that a number of these workers have been working 10, 15, 20, years, 10 years and it is an injustice that is crying out to be resolved.

And the highest form and bear with me, Mr. President, and the Leader of Government's Business if I keep repeating, it is something that requires this attention. It is something that requires us to do what is right to our fellow country people, to our fellow patriots. It is an injustice that keeps crying out to be solved and the best form of recognition. So there was already a form of recognition, there was the blowing of horns; there was the lighting of street, ringing of bells. We said that this was not enough and the Government has gone further by making one month payment or half month payment accordingly but that which means a lot, that which is significant for the peace of mind. It is not just about the financing, it is not just about the access to finance but it is about that peace of mind, that recognition that says that we value you as an employee, we value you as someone rather than going to work just in the Private Sector but you come to work in the Public Service by proving

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a public service to our country and the Law. We are not asking for a Law to be passed, we are asking for the State... I could say demand, but these things sometimes carry across contentious atmospheres. And in the spirit of recognition, section 29 (5) which is absolutely clear of the Employment Act speaks about the three types contracts; contract for a specified job for a specified time and...

Mr. President: (Inaudible comments) The point has been made over and over again so I draw your attention to those two things, right. Section 37 and the repetitive rule; for the last three minutes that you were on your feet you have not introduced a new point, it is just the same point made over and over again and the Standing Orders have a way of dealing with that so I draw that to your attention. You have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am guided by you and I said for emphasis purpose given its importance. That's why I repeated it but I am guided by this. The point is being made and it's an emotional time, passionate for the thousands of workers and therefore I crave your indulgence from time to time and it may happen in the future and I crave your indulgence. It is not intentional to violate the Standing Order rules. There is a violation of the Employment Act and through this House I call for this and I take my seat in making this point. We give our commitment to the workers to keep perusing your cause.

Mr. President: The Standing Orders governs the conduct in the House. The Law governs the conduct of the whole society. It is my duty by way of oath to enforce the Standing Orders. There is a mechanism set out in the Constitution to enforce Laws, yes? I thought that I would have made myself clear. Honourable Members it is now 12:33, lunch is available so if there are no other contributions on this, Senator Stiell you have the floor and we can take lunch. Oh Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, it will be remise of me not to stand to give my support to the Bill that was brought before the House this morning as it relates to income tax. When we look back at the period over two years

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ago when Grenada was first impacted by COVID and the fear and the taboo that permeated the society and our frontline workers had to be in the frontline of this fight and this response to COVID. We were happy in the sense that these folks who took an oath to be there and to assist when there are medical emergencies and the frightening part of it for some of them and they look at it and they said it, is to go out and interface with people who have contracted the disease and then have to get back into the home and you don't know and some of them came down with the infection. That act of kindness and the sacrifices that was made by our frontline workers is enormous. Some succumbed to the virus and it was painful. A one month salary is a token and that could never repay the sacrifice that they have made to keep this country safe but it's a token. And given that the country has been going through this rough time and hardship and so forth and we're able to meet that. And you know what is most gratifying here, Mr. President, when the frontline workers were interfaced with and you were looking to provide some tangible benefits they asked for one month salary, they did. And I want to thank the Government for going the extra mile and to make that desire a reality by paying them that one month salary. And for those of us who received the half month I mean we have to be thankful. I look at what happened in the country around the Christmas time and people spend because they have an extra dollar and it provided that rippling effect within the economy. But the point I want to leave with us, Mr. President, it is not just giving a month salary, it's more than that. It's the love and the care and because of the sacrifices that were made a few years before to bring us to this place where we can do this, is what is important and everyone contributed. So by everyone benefitting from this we have to be thankful. And we have to be thankful in light of the administration that is in office to take care of this but I also see in the future greater things happening for this country, greater things happening for our workers, greater things happening for the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, this is just the start. And as this administration continues to work, we will continue to provide the benefit that will continue to develop our people in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Senator Joseph.

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Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, I make just a couple comments in relation to the Bill. And, Mr. President, I support the substantive issues within the Bill, the bonus, we have no issue with that. The formula for calculating, I think it's a reasonable formula and I have no issue with that also.

My concern is process. It appears to me, Mr. President, that this Bill was an afterthought. It appears that after the payments were done and I could be wrong. This payment creates a circumstance and as a result of that circumstance we are here now putting a Bill together to... I don't want to use the word legitimise but to regularise sort of the payment. Now why I say it appears to me to be an afterthought is that this Bill if passed would go into effect in a retroactive way, 31st December. Now, Mr. President, I think this is very risky business, this Bill is not an emergency Bill where something pops up and you have to deal with it. What if and I am not hypothetical this time but what if the Bill fails in this House and there is difficulty in passing it. What happens to the bonus that was already paid out, what happens? So I think bearing in mind that this approach is risky, I do hope that as we go forward we try to avoid these situations where these Bills have to be passed retroactively and this is just by comment, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Senator Stiell. Senator Judd.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President I'll be very short but I just want to give my resounding support to this Bill. Mr. President, our workers of our country has given considerable amount of service and has made significant sacrifice in this difficult period that we are faced and currently facing. And the Government thought it was important that we recognise their effort by ensuring that many of them would have gotten an additional sum of the salary and some got 50% of that. And, Mr. President, the workers of this country welcome this. When many others who have not gone through the fire consider this to be tokenism, this Government ensured that it stood on the side of the workers and ensured that it rewarded them for the effort in protecting and keeping this country safe. But to others it was a time when they seem to gain cheap political points, cheap political points, Mr. President, and call it tokenism. Well let it be known, Mr. President, that

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this Bill here today is in the benefit and in the interest of the workers of this country. This Bill, Mr. President, will naturally ensure that our workers pay less in taxes. And, Mr. President, what is important to note as well, is that the Government in a time where you'll need much needed resources, because Government is taking a blow, the Government is giving up the resources that basically would have collected through the taxes and ensuring that the workers have more in their pockets so that they can benefit themselves and their families and continue to help and encourage them to continue to give more for this country.

Mr. President, it is also important to note that even from last month I believe, Mr. President, that a 4% increase was issued to our workers. I hope I'm right on that. And my brother I didn't hear that from you. I heard so much, through you, Mr. President, our dear Labour Senator, through you, I didn't hear you speak about that. Yes, we have to do more for our workers and we continue to do more for our workers and I'm sure that you will agree that this Government has done a lot for the workers. But it's time, it is all... there comes a time as well that you need to give credit where credit is due and this Government ensured that our workers is going to pay less, we ensured in taxes, because with this sum there would have been paying a significant sum. The Government ensured that they got their increase on time, and you won't be having to do things out of the ordinary, that what you would have done last year for your 4% increase we did so, and we did so on time.

And so, Mr. President, I want to commend this Government for continuing its service to the workers of this country, and will continue to see so, as we see that even our contract workers have their special facility where they can get mortgage to own assets at reasonable interest rates. We continue to ensure that our workers of this country continue to do well and progress under a government that cares for them. And so, Mr. President, I give my resounding support to this Bill and I look forward to supporting many more initiatives that we continue to bring through this House for our workers. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Cadet. Senator Stiell.

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. And once again thank Members for their contributions. I'll start with Senator Lewis asking for more, more, more, more, more. So applauding us for this amendment to the Income Tax Law which puts money back in workers pockets, the creation of this 13th month, recognition of the intent behind what we have done, but calling that this should be now a regular annual thing, calling for the regularisation of all workers and that's despite the hundreds of Teachers, Nurses who have already been going through a very extensive period. I never hear of recognition of the work that has already taken place within the service to find ways in which we can, with all of the rationale and justification that's required, based on our fiscal constraints, the needs to be able to balance so many fiscal challenges, but the significant work that this Government has already done, in terms of regularising many workers within the system. But then calls for regularising all, disregarding the financial consequences and implications of that, calls for increased pay, the 4% now and what will follow. And then the call for reducing taxes and I asked the question, Mr. President, with all of this, these things on his wish list, and we all want more. But the question is how do we pay for this, how do we do this in a responsible manner with those constraints that we're all aware of and all of the other things that we need to be doing in Government, all of the other stakeholders, all of the other vulnerable parties that make up our society, and what we have to do for them? The support this Government is giving to the business community in these very difficult times.

So in addition to this bonus payment in recognition of the sacrifices made by public workers, in addition to the tax concession, the tax break that we're effectively providing, revenues that could be well spent within Government but putting back in the hands of workers, the two COVID Stimulus Packages valued at somewhere in the region of \$100m over the course of the pandemic, providing income support for workers, providing unemployment benefits, providing support for our business communities, for our young entrepreneurs, but I hear from the Member that's not enough, it's more, it's more, it's more. The support that was announced just a few weeks ago for contract workers and the credit facility, yes it's credit but on highly preferential terms to support and reflect that we are listening to the calls from contract workers.

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And Government's commitments as outlined in the budget last year in terms of developing a framework where we can start addressing some of those contract issues. All of these things, Mr. President, that we are doing and leaning forward, extraordinarily difficult times and I hear nothing from Member on the "Other Side" in terms of recognising those significant strides that are being made but a simplistic call for more, more, more. And this is the burden of responsibility that we on "This Side" have to shoulder every single day, trying to balance the needs of an entire nation in difficult times. And if the Member stepped across for one moment on "This Side", which he may have ambition to do one of these days, will get a sense of how heavy a burden that is. So I would like to hear from the Member on the "Other Side" on one of his interventions someday, and to give recognition for those strides that have been made, significant strides.

Senator Joseph talked about afterthought and legitimising, coming to Parliament to legitimise. Mr. President, this is just codifying what was stated when this bonus payment and the approach that Government was seeking to take was announced in the budget last year. We knew that there was this anomaly and we knew we would have to come back to Parliament or give thought as to how we would address this. But the intent was clearly stated and recognition that there would be need for some form of codifying this to make this work. But the focus of this administration, Mr. President, was how do we make this thing that will provide significant benefit to public workers, at the most needy period over the Christmas period where all of our pockets are stressed? How we can bring that additional relief quickly. So I make no apology, Mr. President, on behalf of Government's Side in the approach that was taken. And I would challenge any Member on the "Other Side" to vote no to this. So this is simply a case, Mr. President, of codifying something and addressing an anomaly that was recognised, how we were going to do that, is what is being presented to this Honourable House now.

And then come back to Senator Cadet, and again this thing about tokenism, boy these tokens certainly add up. When does a token become something of real substance, Mr. President? One hundred million spent on providing support and stimulating the economy, bonuses paid, tax breaks on those bonuses received, other support facilities, when the tokens become something of greater substance. And I

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would put it to this Honourable House, those significant efforts made by Government recognising the difficulties ordinary people are facing goes far, far beyond tokenism. And I believe that many in office up and down the region would like to be in a position that Grenada is in, through its prudent management and taking its fiscal responsibilities seriously to be able to provide such support.

So, Mr. President, it is for all of the reasons that I have outlined and I don't hear any objections to parties on the "Other Side" in support of Government's intention and codifying those, so that it is in keeping with the legal framework and the tax framework that exist in the country that needs to be followed. So it's for those reasons, Mr. President, I commend this Bill for its second reading. I thank you.

Question put.

Mr. President: It's kind of challenging for me to decide whether the nays or the ayes have it.

(Inaudible comments by Members)

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

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

Mr. President: Just to remind Members, this is a money Bill so we don't go to Committee. Right. **(Inaudible comments)** Hello. What he said?

Question put and agreed to.

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Mr. President: Honourable Members, lunch is ready. I think I made that announcement somewhat earlier on and to preserve its warmth and so on, I would want to take the adjournment now, and we resume in an hour's time. It is now 12:56, call it one o'clock, so we would resume at 2. At that point Senator De Allie, I think you sent me a note. Yes. De Allie has some other engagements so he'll be leaving us. Right, so at this stage, sorry, yes.

(Clerk conversed with Mr. President privately)

Mr. President: We have to read it a third time. Sorry, we skipped a small step.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Mr. President: Honourable Members this House now stands adjourned until 2 o'clock.

(Gavel sounds)

Senate adjourns for lunch at 12:57 p.m.

Senate resumes at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. President: Good afternoon Senators. Pray be seated. This session now resumes.

(Gavel sounds)

(The Clerk converse with the President)

Mr. President: Senator Stiell. Senator Garraway.

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Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I think it's Simon. I'm waiting on Simon for that. Yes.

Mr. President, I... Yes I got it, Exchange of Information. Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled Exchange of Information (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

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

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: 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 put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. Mr. President, before us today I would like to just give a little bit of background as it relates to the Bill that is before us. Late last year Grenada welcomed the AML, Anti-Money Laundering Commission in one of its reviews. It was a face to face review and during this review gaps were identified in this Bill, and in the subsequent one that I'll present later, and as a result of this, we're here today primarily to fill those gaps, and to ensure that the Bill is tightly knitted and will continue to protect the State. We have a responsibility as a State to, to follow the guidelines of the Caribbean Financial Task Force who receive information and guidance from the Financial Action Task Force, and they have provided guidance through jurisdictions or States to ensure that your Legislations are in keeping with all the necessary safety mechanism and protection that can reduce or eliminate money laundering, terrorists financing, combating crimes and the likes. The Exchange of Information Bill contains three Clauses. **“One provides for the short title and Clause 2 provides for the insertion of a new section 4A to the principal Act, to empower a regulatory authority to voluntarily furnish to a foreign competent**

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authority, information relating to a person's engagement or involvement in money laundering." And as I've been saying before, primarily the Bill is to ensure that Grenada continue to comply with all the international regulations that is out there.

It's a simple amendment and Clause 3 speaks to exactly what this amendment is all about. **"Clause 3 provides for the amendment of the Schedule to the principal Act, to include in the definition of regulatory authority the following three entities:**

- **the Anti-money Laundering and Combating Terrorism Financial Commission,**
- **the Financial Intelligence Unit; and**
- **the Royal Grenada Police Force."**

These three entities will join the existing seven entities that are currently listed as regulatory authority. And we are talking about the Attorney General, the Registrar of Companies, the Grenada International Financial Services Authority, the Supervisor of Insurances, the Department of Co-operatives, the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank and the Supervisory Authority. So these three regulatory authorities have now been included in the list of regulatory authorities for Grenada. And what this says, each authority is equipped, are given the power to provide necessary information on any transaction that speaks to illegal activities. And it says, a regulatory authority has the power conferred under section 4 of the principal Act, to facilitate request made by foreign counterparts for information for the purposes under section 3 (2) of the principal Act, which includes: (i) it is necessary for the purpose of enabling or assisting a foreign regulatory authority in the exercise of its regulatory functions; (ii) an agreement to which Grenada and foreign state requesting authority are parties. So there must be, before that request will be honoured, there must be some relationship between the two states. So if example, Barbados is to request information on individuals or a company, as it relates to money laundering, there must be that sort of relationship between both parties. Additionally, the foreign regulatory authority requesting the assistance has given a written undertaking to provide corresponding assistance.

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So, if the need arise where Grenada needs assistance in obtaining information on a company or individual or so forth in that particular jurisdiction, there must be correspondence indicating that there will be reciprocal provision of information. If I ask of you, you will be prepared to provide the information I requested and just same, you ask of me, I will be obliging or given under the circumstance provide the information that you requested, and the relevant country authority which has enacted similar Laws with relation to the exchange of information. That's another critical point, there must be Laws in that jurisdiction that covers the same anti-money laundering or exchange of information that is requesting. Mr. President, given the circumstances that we are faced with at this point in time, there are much more that I wanted to say, but I will want to offer the Bill for its second reading at this point in time.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Sorry. Excuse me Senator, I think I got my procedures wrong. I'm just waiting, I should wait a little bit more to see if there are any contributions to the debate. Sorry. **(Inaudible comments)** Well you know I indicated earlier that I'm in a... Senator Mc Queen has departed for the same purpose and has advised the Chair. For the same reason actually, and has advised the Chair.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: **(Inaudible comments)** ...any other contributions, Mr. President. I will definitely would like to wrap up the...

Mr. President: Yes, that the Bill...

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: ...debate.

Mr. President: ...now be read a second time. Yes.

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Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: And ask for the Bill to be read a second time.

Bill read a second time.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I beg that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate in Committee.

Senate resumes.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, I have to report that a Committee of the whole Senate met and considered the Bill Clause by Clause and approved without amendment. Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

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Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

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

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I bet to move that the Senate resolve its...

Mr. President: Standing Orders.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Sorry, 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 put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. President: Senator Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. As stated earlier, Mr. President, at the piloting of the first Bill, during the anti-money laundering review of Grenada, this Bill came under scrutiny and a number of areas were deemed inadequate to basically cover the extent of illegal activities that is out in the world. So the amendments here today is to bring the Bill at a place where it can capture all illegal activities related to proceeds of crimes.

The Bill seeks to amend the Proceeds of the Crime Act No. 6 of 2012 and seeks to implement several recommendations from the Caribbean Financial Action Taskforce to combat money laundering, terrorism financing and proliferation. This

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Bill contains 9 Clauses. Clause one provides for the short title and Clause 2 provides for amendment to section 2 of the principal Act to revise the definition of relevant offence under subsection (1) and to amend subsection (6) to expand the application of the principal act to all criminal offenses. The existing definition of relevant offence is restricted to the offenses set out in Schedule 1 and expressly excludes drug trafficking offenses which have adversely limited scope for the principal Act. So the definition of relevant offence under section 2 (1) currently provides for:

- a. **“relevant offence means any indictable offence or offence triable both summarily or indictment in Grenada from which a person has benefitted as defined in section 6 (9) and 10 of this Act other than a drug trafficking offence.**
- b. **any act or omission which occurred in Grenada would have constituted an offence as defined in subsection (a);**
- c. **any offence falling within the “designated category of offences”, outlined under the Financial Action Task Force Recommendations and contained in the Schedule; and**
- d. **any offence under the Terrorism Act.”**

The revised definition, Mr. President, look to amend the principal Act and what it says here, **““relevant offence” means any offence from which a person has benefitted from the purpose of sections 6 and 9.”**

I want to move to Clause 2, it also provides for the insertion of a definition of “Commission” into section 2 (1) of the principal Act and **““Commission” means the Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Terrorism Financing “Commission” established under section 63.”** It is important for us just to have an idea as to what section 63 says. So section 63 “there shall be established a Commission to be known as the Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Terrorism Financial Commission for the purpose of:

- a. **“advising the Minister in relation to the detection and prevention of money laundering in Grenada;**
- b. **issuing from time to time guidance as to compliance with this Act and regulations made under this Act;**

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- c. advising the Minister as to the participation of Grenada in the international effort against money laundering;**
- d. examining any financial institution that is regulated under any other enactment; and**
- e. regulating anti-money laundering activities.”**

So the Minister here by virtue of this Act is the Minister for Finance and the Commission is being established and set up to provide the necessary guidance because you would have technical people who function within the Commission and they from time to time will provide the necessary update or report to the Minister as to what is happening and the Minister in Cabinet would of course provide the necessary information as to the final decision that should be taken.

“Clause 3 provides for an amendment to section 32 (4) of the principal Act to create an offence for making false statement or providing false information relating to requirements and request under the guidelines. The penalty is consistent with the penalty non-compliance with the Guidelines, a fine not exceeding \$250,000.00 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding four years or to both.” It is important to note, Mr. President, that falsifying information is a grave offence and this amendment seeks to, one, create a deterrent by obviously a fine of \$250,000.00 or a term of imprisonment of four years or to be both fined and confined.

“Clause 4 provides for an amendment to section 39A of the principal Act in the definition of “regulated entity” to remove specific reference to paragraphs (a) to (m) in the definition of “relevant business” under section 2 of the Proceeds of Crime (Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Regulations.”

The definition of regulated entities should be linked to all businesses listed under the definition of relevant business. So before when we had a confined number of businesses listed, this amendment is having this thing open and to capture every possible business out there and there could be no restriction with ‘all’.

I just want to jump to Clause 5 and we will close with this, **“provides for an amendment of section 39C of the principal Act to insert a new subsection to empower the Minister to waive the yearly registration fee. If the Minister is**

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satisfied that the entity is unable to pay the fee in a specified year or by virtue of the nature of the entity in considering the matter, the Minister would act on the advice of the Commission.” And here is the reason why I went into section 63 because the Commission is the one who would guide the Minister in this regard as to the activities of the business and if they're going to make recommendation to waive the fee, he will go according to the recommendation made by them.

Mr. President, to close I will look at Clause 9, and “seeks to amend Schedule V to the principal Act to increase the registration fee for insurance companies and to insert registration fees as follows... So we have existing fees and new fees. Banks registration fee would be \$1,500.00; virtual asset providers, the fee will be \$1,500.00; insurance businesses and that is different to insurance companies as was advised, we would talk about brokers, agents and the likes. Their registration fee would be \$300.00 and that is for business less than EC \$25m and \$500.00 for businesses \$25m and above. Gaming businesses, \$500.00 is the licensing fee; Casino gaming businesses \$2,000.00; an increase for insurance companies from \$300.00 for business or the value of the company is less than \$25m and where... so it moved from \$300.00 to \$500.00 and for companies over \$25m, their registration fee would move from \$500.00 to \$1,000.00.

Mr. President, as I have said in opening, these amendments are done to ensure that Grenada complies with the regulations or the guidance provided by the Caribbean Financial Action Taskforce. If we choose not to do it the country stands the risk of being blacklisted and we do know the problems of a country being blacklisted what it would pose to anyone's economy. We would want to ensure that we continue to remain compliant and we would seek support to passing this amendment here today. With these words, Mr. President, I ask for the Bill to be read a second time.

Question put and agreed to.

Bills read a second time.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

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Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

House resumes.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole Senate Clause by Clause and passed without amendment. Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bills read a third time and passed.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled Casino Gaming (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

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

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.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. Mr. President, the Bill before this Honourable House, the Casino Gaming (Amendment) Bill, 2022 is a very simple and straight forward amendment but yet very important. This Bill contains three Clauses, Mr. President. What this Bill seeks to do is to create an offence under section 4 for operating a casino without a licence, that is the first thing this amendment seeks to do. The second thing that this amendment seeks to do is to provide for under section 12 for the disqualification of a casino for a licence which a beneficial owner has who have been convicted of an offense involving fraud, dishonesty, grievous violence, that is the second objective of this amendment. And the third objective of the amendment is more to correct in reference to section 3 of the Gambling, Lotteries and Betting Act Cap. 120 and the National Lotteries Act Cap. 205A with reference to the Gaming Act.

I think what would have happened here with respect to the third objective, this has to do with a previous Law that repealed those Acts, so it is just a matter of having them removed. Mr. President, I will just speak mainly on Clauses 3 and 4 which I believe is more substantive in the whole context of what the amendment is seeking to do.

Clause 3 speaks to the implementation of a summary maximum of \$100,000.00 for somebody who contravenes the Act by operating a casino without having the requisite licence. So this is simply straight forward, it is more to capture

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that and to keep it more concrete so as to deter persons from engaging in such an act without the requisite licence.

Clause 4, Mr. President, basically is widening the gap in terms of persons who operate such an entity and in this case what will be used as a requisite action for disqualifying somebody who already has a licence and in this sense we're trying to widen the scope by speaking of the beneficial owner and widen that definition to include more persons and in this regard somebody may have an interest in a Casino Gambling company and in turn through a business or through a friend or through some other partner might escape such an offence. So by widening this net in terms of the definition of a beneficial owner, it captures every single person who may have some tie to the principal person who might be operating such an entity for their own benefit but not definitively having themselves at the fore of the operations of the entity. Mr President, we know in these days there are always loopholes that persons are trying to find to contravene the Law and at the same time benefit for themselves personally. So this is basically trying to capture that and to ensure that persons fall in line and not benefit in any illegal way. So these are the core contents of this amendment, Mr. President, and I just want to ask your support for the reading of this Bill a second time. Thank you very much.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Cox, I haven't seen any lights on. Senator Cox.

Bills read a second time.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

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House resumes.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, I am pleased to report that a Committee of the whole Senate considered the Bill Clause by Clause without amendment and it was successfully passed. Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bills read a third time and passed.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 16 - Public Business.

Item 17 - Adjournment.

Mr. President: Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, I just want to make a few comments on a couple issues here this evening. First of all in relation to the Simon Cultural Complex, it was mentioned this morning. It is something that is long in coming and I am very happy it is here but what I would like to also suggest is that the structures are put in place so that when this infrastructure is laid and it is ready, the

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infrastructure as such... that the activities taking place within that building. I would not like and none of us here will like to see a white elephant being laid up at Simon.

Now, Mr. President, culturally over the years we have gone into decline. Folk songs are almost gone. In my day we used to be doing square dancing, a number of cultural activities; it seems to be on the down. So we have to ensure that the structures are in place to justify so to speak the construction of this building. In relation to the layout, I guess the plan is already done and it cannot be changed but I do hope that the architects or the designers of that building they had in mind the steel band movement and there is sufficient room on that stage to accommodate a steel band because steel band is something that is very key to our cultural development and our cultural heritage.

Mr. President, this morning I was a little... I wouldn't say upset because mature people shouldn't be upset but I was not very happy in relation to the question asked by Senator Dr. St. Cyr and the response. Now, as a school teacher sometimes we say to students we don't want a response, we want an answer. But there is a difference between a response and an answer and what we got this morning and even the last session was a response. And when a question is asked, I think it is the responsibility of "This Side" within reasonable time to do the research and make the necessary contacts to get the answer, not a response. And I think we can do a little better than that. If I ask you what is the colour of my jacket? The answer is the colour of the jacket is black, that's the answer full stop. I got the impression and I really hope I am wrong this morning that the Leader of Government's Business was literally ducking and avoiding and trying to escape what was asked but it is going to come back. So the quicker we resolve it, it is better for all of us and I want this to be a general comment. Questions need to be answered, because the public is listening, and they expect better of us, Mr. President.

This morning, I mentioned about the hospital and the Honourable Senator on the "Other Side" said there is nothing wrong with the location. Maybe 100 years ago nothing was wrong because the colonial people had a reason for placing the Hospital where they placed it because communicable disease was a problem so they tried to move it away from populated areas and placed it in that corner of St. George's before it was on hospital hill. Things have changed, the dynamics have changed.

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Now, let's look at this hospital, traffic is a problem. I got stuck in traffic this morning coming up Cemetery Hill, there was traffic on Lucas Street and that whole area there was crowded. St. George's is just not the ideal place to have a hospital. In case of an emergency we know what can happen, there is no helicopter landing path there and this is a key in relation to hospital. So my suggestion this morning is that we look at relocating the hospital. I think it is totally justified and something that the nation would welcome.

I think I have 10 minutes but I really don't want to rush but I have a couple of other things, Mr. President. This morning I put on my tie, my green, red and yellow, national colours. My wife said to me this morning that colour doesn't match my shirt, I said no, I am going to keep it on but I kept it on for a reason. Mr. President, many folks have been saying to me "Happy Independence" and I have not responded to one. If they said to me "Happy Flag Day" maybe I would have responded, Mr. President. I am a bit sick as a national when we have to come here as Parliamentarians and take oath and pledge to a foreign entity, here it is that's the Constitution, so what we're doing is right. It say "I do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to her Majesty and all her heirs and successors. Are we Independent? We are pledging allegiance to a foreign entity in England. This is something we need to look closely at as a nation. Mia Mottley took a step and we need to look closely. Mr. President...

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Mr. President: ...and I'm just taking the liberty of the Chair.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Yeah.

Mr. President: Could I ask if you were present in Grenada for the last Referendum to change the Constitution, because part of the question in that Referendum was for Grenada to become a Republic. And the principal, from my recollection, the principal Opposition in the country's position on these issues was the call and the people to vote "No".

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So, I hear what you're saying, but in the context of our history, I'm agreeing with you in one sense, but in the context, because remember we were a Colony and in many respects, we're still a Colony, although we have what is called Political Independence. But the construct of the order, which has been built on the enslavement of our fore parents and the wanton genocidal disappearance of our aboriginal forefathers, right, has led us into a construct in which even though we have declared Independence, we are still caught within the matrix of an international system which is unfair, leads to persistent poverty of us as a people, and in some respects, it may be adequate to describe it as a perpetuation. In fact, the CARICOM Heads of Government have set up a Reparations Movement and that is simply in order to find the necessary justice.

So I just thought I should make those comments as an adjunct, not as a challenge, but as an adjunct to your statement, because I think contextually, when we raise these things, we must be conscious of what that context was. Because people went, were given an opportunity to amend this provision, right and one of the leading sections of the body politic, namely the Opposition, called on the people to Vote, "No" and the Referendum failed. So we're still bearing allegiance. And by the way, when you came into the Senate, you had an option, you didn't have to come here, if you felt so strongly about bearing your allegiance, you didn't have to say it. So you of your own free will came into this House, and in my presence and hearing, swore that you will do exactly what you find detestable at the moment. I just thought I should, just a little bit provocative. I don't have any...

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, in relation to the Referendum, it's gone, it's gone and we are moving forward. But I think Mr. President...

Mr. President: Well, I was a bit surprised because that was the second one within five years. The first one we failed, we failed the second one and I can almost guarantee you that if a third one is held and the outlooks and the constructs are the same, the results will be no different. Sorry for the interruption.

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Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Yeah, but it is, you know, highly accepted.

Mr. President: So you and I have some work to do.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Yeah, in relation to being here and taking the Oath. Mr. President, I think it's an opportunity for me to be here and take the Oath to say what I'm saying now. If I did not take the Oath and I was not here then I was not going to have the opportunity to say this now. But I think going forward as a Nation, we need to look at where we are at, not where we were, where we are at and plot or chart a way forward in relation to real Independence, so to speak, in relation to real Independence. And I must add, Mr. President, that sometime, I think it was September 2019 at a Town Hall in Gouyave, I asked the Prime Minister that same question in relation to this Oath. And his response is on tape, it's on YouTube. Anyone can check it out because it's something that really bothers me as a person. And I know as a fact, that quite a number of our citizens are not comfortable with our status. Moving forward is critical and not because we failed once or twice, we should just put it to rest and continue with the status quo. I think we need to, we need to look at it. So, thank you very much, Mr. President, for your indulgence.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Joseph. As I said, I didn't want to interrupt your trend of thought but sometimes you know... Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President, and I thank my colleague Senator, Senator Joseph, for raising the issue of question. But I want to be on record, Mr. President, I personally want to be on record as having raised this as well.

Now, Mr. President, I wish to place under scrutiny the "Government's Side" in response to questions. This is a recurring issue. This has not happened once or twice. It's a recurring issue. And I've heard the Honourable Leader of Government's Business explanation and I acknowledge the Standing Order, Standing Order 21 (2) which says that, you know, Government Business shall have precedence on every day. But, Mr. President, I wish to submit that there will be no Government without

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the people and the questions are coming from people. So when a question is raised, or when questions are put forward, we follow the regulations, we submit our questions, we frame them as they should be framed, and we are representing our constituents. The people in the community often walk up to me and they ask me questions and they say to me, you know, Senator St. Cyr, I would like this issue to be raised. And then when it's raised in this Honourable House, it is dealt with in a nonchalant manner. At first, we heard that COVID was the cause that questions could not be answered and now we're hearing that, you know, the relevant Ministries and who has the information, and so much analysis has to go into finding the information and so on. But, Mr. President, this is a recurring issue, and it ought not to happen. So I wish to place this on record.

On another matter, Mr. President, I wish to highlight the absence of the Annual Report, the Education Annual Reports in the list of documents or in the documents that were tabled in the House this morning by the Honourable Leader of Government's Business. Now, Mr. President, the Hansard would show that the Honourable Member had submitted that the Annual Reports from Education would have been tabled at the end of last year. To this point, the Reports have not been tabled. This is not a request coming from Senator St. Cyr. The Education Act stipulates that the Minister for Education is required to submit an Education Annual Report to be tabled in Parliament. It mandates the Minister to do that and the Honourable Member had submitted to us that those Reports would have been put on the table at the end of last year.

I would think that the submission of those records would augur well for, you know, transparency and accountability that we always hear on the "Other Side," Mr. President, we always hear it. But this morning, well, when I looked at the documents that were sent, I realised no Annual Reports again, even though it was said that they would have been tabled. So it is left to me to wonder, you know, to muse as to whether or not the Education Act only applies to some of the stakeholders and not to all because there are sections of the Education Act which speaks to teachers, principals, the Chief Education Officer, the rights and responsibility of parents and it also speaks to the responsibilities of the Minister. And it is the responsibility of the

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Minister to submit an Annual Education Report. So I wish to raise this matter this afternoon as well, Mr. President.

And I also wish to place on record an emerging concern, Mr. President, an emerging concern, one where it appears that certain rights and freedoms as enshrined in the Constitution, the Grenada Constitution Order are being violated. And I'm speaking here specifically to the freedom of expression. I was approached on a number of occasions, Mr. President, where persons have said to me, I was called in, or I was reported for my post, my utterances on social media. Now, Mr. President, I can understand that if someone who holds a certain position in society makes a certain post that brings a profession into disrepute, that incites public disorder, or anything of like manner, that that person would be dealt with appropriately. But to have persons brought into, or been subjected to scrutiny and even chastisement, asked to remove posts that do not incite public disorder, that do not bring their profession into disrepute, I would challenge such a behaviour on the premise of what is stated in the Constitution, which gives everyone the right to a freedom of expression. And so, Mr. President, I would want those who are engaged in such behaviour, because we live in a modern democracy, people have rights and freedoms, people are free to express themselves within a certain framework. And I think we need to be very careful when we start infringing on those rights.

I was parking in the parking lot in St. George's, in a particular parking lot in St. George's and a lady walked up to me, and she said to me, "*Miss, are you the lady that's usually in Parliament?*" And generally, when people approach me like that, I tend to put my head down and smile a little, because I don't like the spotlight, it comes with the position, but I really don't like to be in the spotlight. And I said to her, "*Yes, I am.*" And she said to me, "*Miss, you need to continue speaking, because there are some of us who have no voice.*" And I understand perfectly well what she was saying. I understood perfectly well what she was saying because previously a number of persons will have approached me on the same matter. And so, those of us who are in leadership positions need to be very careful how we interact, how we engage with those who we have power over and we should not abuse our powers, because this is the supreme power of the land. And in saying that, Mr. President, I thank you for your indulgence.

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Mr. President: Honourable Members, as we approach the conclusion of today's... sorry, Senator Lewis, I don't know why, I guess the pitch of my eye sight I seldom look up there, so I miss both, Senator Judd and yourself.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I'm not worried because I know eventually I will be seen and I understand, because it is not normal to have us up here.

Mr. President, I just want to raise two matters. On the question of the NIS, we know that especially going back since 2008, the Actuaries have raised certain concerns about certain amendments, structural adjustments, amendments that ought to be made to the NIS, to ensure that it is sustainable, to ensure that when our people retires, that there will be sufficient funds to be able to provide for their retirement benefits. The Actuaries have cautioned and warned from 2008 to present that unless certain structural adjustments have been made, especially in keeping with the age, that not long from now the NIS may be challenged to meet its commitment. We do not want to find ourselves as what may have happened or what may be happening in one or two other sister Islands where our retirees are unable to receive their pension from the National Insurance Scheme. And therefore, the TUC is once again calling on the relevant authorities, in this case, the Cabinet, the Government, to follow through on the commitments given as was even led by the National Insurance Board when about two years ago extensive consultations were done publicly and commitments were given. It is quite possible that the NIS may be close to, if not as yet having to dip into its reserve to meet some of those commitments. We... **(The President made inaudible comments)** yes, but...

Mr. President: To the best of my knowledge, I believe it has already gotten to that stage, in that it is paying out more money than it is collecting. So, the question is, how long will the bucket keep dripping until it gets to the bottom? Yes. So...

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Mr. President, therein lies our concern. We have clearly stated our position in support for the amendments. It is high time

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that this be done. And, what also brings it to the fore is another proposal and another discussion that we wholeheartedly supports. But, it is a matter of prioritising, the question of the permanent unemployment fund. It is a noble approach. We have had experiences after Hurricane Ivan and we have had experiences in this current period of COVID-19 where monies had to be made, correctly so, available to workers who through no fault of theirs, found themselves unemployed, but this has not been funded. And therefore, given the period that we are in, and given the fact that there can be another pandemic, given the fact that there can be another natural disaster, it is only prudent for us to put a system in place and this has been discussed. But, the challenges that we have, is for this matter to come at the fore as a discussion right now and then at the same time, the very foundation of the NIS, systems have not been put in place to keep it afloat. And if we are dipping into the reserve, and I believe you are correct, if we are dipping into the reserve, it may just be a matter of time, and therefore, the political will must be there to address these issues.

So the TUC, we have written to the Minister for Social Services who is responsible for the fund, we have copied it to the Prime Minister. And I'm using this platform to make that call because it is also linked to the following. Remember, there is the outstanding issue of the public servants pension as guaranteed under the Constitution, which is before the Court, so, I'm not going to go much into this. Although the Constitution was restored after the invasion in 1983, that aspect of the Constitution was not restored, public servants pension under 1958.

Think about it. For a public officer to contemplate that they will go into retirement three years from now, four years from now and the very NIS that is guaranteed to ensure that they can receive something after retirement may be in question because we have not made the structural changes, coupled with the fact that at the moment, they are not receiving a Government/State Pension. So you're adding insult to injury. I know we are waiting on the Court. But in the interim, we have to contemplate these issues and therefore, it is extremely crucial. So it is not just for the Private Sector. In the Private Sector, if the Private Sector companies have insurance, pension, most do not have, then it is the NIS. But in the case of the Government employee, the public servant, who at the moment, whose Constitutional pension as far as we are concerned has not been restored and then to be faced with

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not being sure what will happen to NIS, when we know we can put systems in place to ensure that it survives, it is extremely important and crucial and urgent for this matter to be address. So the TUC/Labour is using this platform to call on the Government, to call on the Cabinet to do what is prudent.

I also wish to take the opportunity on the question of the loan that has been made available to contract workers. While we continue to fight for these contract workers to be given permanent employment, we call upon the workers to make use of the loan where it is available. It does not have to be \$350,000 or \$375,000. It can be \$10,000, you may be able to put on something, you may have a home, a house, and there are some repairs that need to be done, prudential financial management is important. But it is not a substitute, and it cannot be a substitute for the aspect of permanent employment. But it's an opportunity that is there, it is an opportunity that is there and I'm encouraging the workers that while we fight to give you tenure employment, we are encouraging you that once it is feasible, be it \$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000, if you have a need for it, it is a service or a provision that is accessible at 3%, you can't beat that, at 3%.

It is also important in our view that the Government should consider and we should consider discussing with the workers what we call financial management, especially in this period. So, Mr. President, this is what I will, this is what I wish to advance at this moment and to wish everyone all the very best. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: If I may just conjoin a recommendation, while the employer is being called upon to act, I would wish to suggest that the Unions take it on themselves to act as well. There is nothing which stops the Trade Union from educating its members as part of its educational regime in fiscal management.

I mean, you would be aware of the programme we started many years ago, where we were preparing workers for retirement. And you would know that in the Union, which you now lead, we had Retirement Clinics. Every worker who was a member of the Union at age 55 was invited annually to a clinic where that worker was prepared for retirement. You will recall that we had Dr. McBarnette at one stage who has since deceased, as well as, Dr. Lambert, who has deceased also, that they

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were part of that programme and they will come to speak to the workers about old age illness, and how to prepare and what to do with old age illness and that led to a whole programme of Preventative Medicine, where we had scans for diabetes and stuff like that.

The point I'm making here is, it is all well and good to call on the employer, but the Union must have a responsibility in this regard. You can't wait on the employer to do everything. You call on the employer for wages, you call on the employer for holiday pay, but you yourself as the Union, you don't have to wait on the employer, you could provide that fiscal management education, because a lot of the pressure that workers bring on themselves, in some instances has a lot to do with how they manage whatever resources that they have. And I can tell you, in my Trade Union experience, that there are workers whose income was significantly, significantly, well endowed by Trade Unions, and yet those workers in that sector ended up sometimes in the most miserable aspect of their post working life because of bad management of their money. So that the Trade Union Organisation has to give itself a responsibility; it can't detach all responsibility and hang the wagon and somebody else. It has to do its work as well. And what I would recommend is a programme dealing with financial management. The Credit Unions are doing it, I understand and there's absolutely no reason... Most Trade Unions are linked to Credit Unions. So the Unions can start a very vigorous programme amongst its members in conjunction with the Credit Union Movement, to educate the workers on how to manage their finances, fiscally, so that, you know, they could withstand some of the vagaries and things of life.

And this is more necessary now than ever before. All indications are that the price of oil per barrel is going to hit \$100 before this month ends. Right! There are also questions on the table. The former Governor of the Bank of Barbados has been raising issues in the public domain about the desirability of devaluing the dollar. Now that has all kinds of implications for interregional fiscal connections and so on. So, that the Unions have to monitor these things very carefully and to understand how these things will impact on the workers because if we have devaluation now, well, I won't like to see what life is going to be like, yeah. So, I just thought I would make that recommendation for consideration and for whatever it's worth.

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Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Mr. President, it's unusual, but can I say that we are well on your way to doing this as we have started in the past, certainly our Union and that recommendation is very timely. Thank you very much.

Mr. President: Okay, Honourable Members, if I may, I just want to read to you and read into the record one message. I thought the files contained them. Excuse me a second I'm just trying to figure out the documentation here. Does anybody else want to speak on the adjournment? I'm missing a document here which I want to send to get urgently, excuse me please. **(The President communicated with the Parliamentary Orderly)** Okay, I've sent to get the correspondence. This is becoming a little bit untidy.

The Speaker and I a week or so ago sent a message to the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China and since that joint letter was issued we have received today a diplomatic note from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China based here in Grenada and it says...

“The Embassy of the People's Republic of the China in Grenada presents its compliments to the Houses of Parliament of Grenada and has the honour to request the latter to forward the attached congratulatory message from his Excellency Li Zhanshu Chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, to Senator the Honourable Chester Humphrey, President of the Senate and Honourable Michael Pierre, Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Embassy People's Republic of China and Grenada avails itself of the opportunity to renew the Houses of Parliament of Grenada the assurances of its highest consideration.”

And that was in respect of the letter that we wrote here that I would read and then I will read the note that we received today. It is dated January 31, 2022: **“His Excellency, the Honourable Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the People's National Congress, People's Republic of China in care of the People's Republic of China Grenada.**

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Dear most Distinguished Excellency Li Zhanshu, please accept profound fraternal greetings from the President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Chester Arlington Arthur Humphrey and Speaker of the House of Representatives the Honourable Michael Pierre MP, MBE, JP, on occasion of the 24th Historic Winter Games held in Beijing hosted by the People's Republic of China making your capital city the first to host both the Summer and Winter Games. Our fraternal greetings are both in our individual capacities as well as on the behalf of Members of both Houses of Parliament of Grenada.

We salute and recognise the honour with which the Government, party and people who are hosting these games and a celebration of the distinguished principles of peace, international friendship of human kind that the Olympic Games have come to symbolise, captured under the theme "Together for a Shared Future". This symbolism is a natural extension of the foreign policy principles of the People's Republic of China which has selflessly assisted our country, our region and many developing countries in the world with its generosity and its commitment to breaking the chains of under development, human suffering and poverty.

Today, China stands at the cost of many great things and its hosting of the games gives an opportunity to bring the world together for the upliftment and celebration of all mankind, in short together for a shared future.

The Speaker and I take this opportunity to convey our congratulations and best wishes for a successful Winter Olympics and we are confident that the world can look forward to a well-executed, profoundly, friendly and competitive as well, exciting games at a time when the world needs greater cooperation and greater understanding between nations.

Please your Most Exalted Excellency, accept our highest consideration from the Houses of Parliament and our profuse best wishes. Signed President of the Senate, Chester A. A. Humphrey and Speaker of the House of Representatives Michael Pierre."

To that letter we received the following from the Chairman. "Senator Chester Humphrey, President of the Senate, the Honourable Michael Pierre, Speaker of the House of Representatives, excellencies.

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I wish to extend my sincerest appreciations to you for your kind congratulatory letter on occasion of the 24th Winter Olympic Games which is currently being held in Beijing. To present a streamlined, safe, splendid games to the world is China's solemn commitment to the international community. China upheld the principles of holding the green inclusive, open and clean Olympic Games and made utmost efforts in overcoming the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring the timely delivery of the games.

China stands ready to work together with members of the international community, Grenada included to champion the Olympic spirit, jointly meet global challenges, continue to advance the cause of human progress and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Over the past year, China and Grenada have witnessed a sound and stable development in their relationship as a political mutual trust has been strengthened and the practical cooperation has been fruitful.

I wish to join hands with you to enhance the communication and cooperation between the legislative bodies in our two countries and further boost the bilateral relations. May Grenada enjoy prosperity and its people happiness and health. Signed Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China dated 7th February, 2022."

Thank you Honourable Members.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: I beg to move the adjournment sine die.

Senate adjourned at 3:30 p.m. sine die.

PREPARED BY

HANSARD REPORTERS

Mrs. Bernice Horsford- Bridgeman
Miss Janelle Palmer
Miss Shanta Joseph
Miss Akeda David

EDITORS

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