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GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Fourth Session of the Tenth Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

SENATE

Wednesday 2nd and Tuesday 8th June, 2021

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Senate Meeting
Held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday, 2nd & Tuesday, 8th June, 2021.

Attendance

PRESENT

Mr. President
Senator the Honourable Chester Humphrey
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 Roland Bhola		Member
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 Cathisha Williams	-	Parliamentary Secretary – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Senator the Honourable Tessa Alexander St Cyr	-	Member
Senator the Honourable Matthew Joseph		Member
Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis	-	Member
Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie	-	Deputy President
Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair	-	Member

Prayers
Minutes

The Sitting of the Senate began at 9:05 a.m.

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

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Good morning, Mr. President and Members. Let us pray.

(Senate Prayer were said)

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

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. President: Pray be seated.

(Sound of Gavel)

Mr. President: Honourable Members, the business of this House now commences.

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

Mr. President: Just one second, Senator Stiell. We can proceed. Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, before I start, I would like to move a Motion that we bring Government's Business to the fore on the Order Paper. The agenda that we have before us is a very long and extensive one so ensuring

that the critical areas of Government's Business are concluded as efficiently as possible, I beg to move that we move those forward. The intention is that we will get through all of the items today, it is going to be a long sitting but I think if we take this approach and we are efficient in how we deal with matters, we can get through all items today.

Mr. President, Confirmation of Minutes. Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Wednesday, 27th January, 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 a Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Wednesday, 27th January, 2021 be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.
Minutes confirmed.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Joint Sitting of both Houses of Parliament to pay tribute to the Honourable Elvin Nimrod, on his passing, held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Tuesday, 16th February, 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 a Joint Sitting of both Houses of Parliament to pay tribute to the Honourable Elvin Nimrod on his passing held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Tuesday 16th February, 2021 be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

Mr. President: I am having a little challenge here, again, with this computer here, just give me a second.

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

Mr. President: Good morning, once again, Honourable Members. I wish to announce that on May 17th, 2021, I was in receipt of a letter of resignation from the then Honourable Terry Noel, and for purposes of the record and for your own knowledge, I would read the letter of resignation in its entirety. Dated Monday May 17th instant to the President of the House of Senate, **"Dear, Mr. President, with reference to resignation of Senator Terry Noel from the Upper House of Parliament. With sincerity and humility I express my gratitude for the opportunity which was granted to me to serve as an Opposition Senator in the Grenada House of Senate. Undoubtedly my stint in the Senate has contributed to my political growth and I sincerely hope that my service advanced the Parliamentary development of our democracy.**

My time in the Senate since July 31st, 2020 afforded me the opportunity to participate in the process of governance in our beloved country and has, in no small measure imbued me with an appreciation of the challenges that lie before us, if we are to see Grenada take her rightful place as a regional leader unbeaten to the world.

I wish to place on record my appreciation to Her Excellency Dame Cecile La Grenade, the Honourable Tobias Clement, Leader of the Opposition, for the confidence reposed in me when I was chosen as one of the three Senators who were tasked with serving this Honourable Chamber. To all my Senatorial colleagues, it was an honour serving with you. I wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to you, Mr. President, for your kind courtesies

extended to me during my tenure as a Senator of the Upper House of the Senate. I also express my appreciation to the Clerk and his staff for their assistance in ensuring a comfortable and smooth entry into the Senate.

At this moment, I am at a transitional stage in my political life which requires a formal and immediate break of my current senatorial ties without disconnecting from the political life of my country. My sense of patriotism demands now more than ever that I continue to serve my country and actively participate in its social and political evolution. In that regard I formerly submit my resignation from the Senate with immediate effect this 17th day of May, 2021. Yours truly, Terry Noel." And of course the Governor General was written too, this is just a letter to the President of the Senate.

Honourable Members, I want to take the opportunity and extend it to you if you may so wish to engage, to convey to the now Mr. Noel (before the letter he was the Honourable Senator Noel), my own deep appreciation for the contributions he made while in the Senate. I had with great anticipation looked forward for a longer sojourn but of course in this life, things come to an end sometimes quite abruptly and unexpectedly. I think for the time that he was here I believe that his contributions were very worthwhile. He had knowledge of history, I think he had a very strong inclination towards the historical issues and his attempts to connect them to the present and as his own letter expresses, makes his contributions to the development of our country. As he has indicated, he is going to continue in the political realm and I can take this opportunity to wish him every success in whatever and however he chooses and endeavours to serve this country which I believe is a secret duty of everyone who bears the title of a citizen and particularly so one that is a born and bred citizen. So Senator Noel, again I repeat my very best regards to you, sad to see you go but as you would know and understand and appreciate, whatever our destiny or wherever our destiny may lie, life continues. In the most complicated and difficult of circumstances to the individual, life continues. So with these few words, I bid Mr. Noel all the best. Any Senator who may wish to add a compliment is free to do so, if not we will then move on. Thank you Honourable Members. Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell.

Announcements

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, on behalf of the Senators on the Government Side, we too wish to join you in recognising the former Senator's contribution during the short time he has spent in this House. Clearly he felt his contribution could be expressed in a more amplified way based on the journey he is about to venture on outside of this Chamber and we look forward to seeing how those contributions unfold. Once again we thank him for his contribution here.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Stiell. Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Good morning, good morning Members, good morning President. I feel obliged to make some comments on the departure of Senator Noel. I came and I met him, he was I would say a compadré you know we chatted a lot to discuss a lot of ways that we can better represent the different constituents that we were here to do. We learned from each other, so on a personal note, I would miss him, he also is an avid farmer in the farming community and so that also is a voice that, one voice less but as he said, he knows his path and we wish him all the best both in his life forward and also in his regular life as a citizen in this country. Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator St. Cyr. Senator St. Clair now. Sorry, St. Cyr. I always get my Clair's and Cyr's tied up a bit.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. I too wish to join you, Mr. President, in expressing best wishes to Mr. Noel. I enjoyed working with him, we had open and frank conversations on different issues of national interest. There may be some chatter out there about some discord in the Opposition's team but that is not the case. We actually had some very good relationships going there and we anticipate that those will continue. Senator Noel has decided to use his freedom of choice to contribute in a different way and so we appreciate that, we understand that and we wish him all the best.

Announcements

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, colleagues, good morning. I just want to wish Mr. Noel all the best as he moves forward in his life and also in his political life because it appears that he has taken a path that leads probably back into this House. I never knew the gentleman before I got into this House and my regret is that we never got the chance to sit together and serve as the Opposition team, that is my regret. However, Mr. Noel based on my conversations with him, I think we have quite a number of things in common and I'm speaking here about philosophical and political and I think that based on the relationship we developed over the past few weeks and few months, our bond will continue, we will continue to share and I know as a fact that, Mr. Noel is willing if I call him at any time on any issue as it is related to this House, he would be willing to share. Mr. President, I just want to reiterate that I will like to wish Mr. Noel all the best and hope that whatever he decides to undertake going forward would be in the interest of himself and more so in the interest of this country. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Joseph. Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and good morning. I too want to join in wishing Mr. Noel all the very best on his new endeavours. Our short stint in this House were very rewarding. As a matter of fact, I was looking forward eagerly to his engagement in this Sitting based on some of the issues that he wanted to address, some of them having to do along the line with support for workers etc. But as he indicated he has made his decision and I remember standing here sometime last year and my very good friend on the "Other Side" who is in another place now, my name sake Lewis, then Senator Kate Lewis, I wished her all the best in all her future endeavours and now she is in the "Other Place" and I am wondering if by wishing Mr. Noel all the very best in his future endeavours based on where he is going, if he will end up in that "Other Place". Whatever he does, I look forward to his continued contribution to Grenada and I wish him all the very best. Thank you very much.

Papers and Reports

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 7 - Ministerial Statements.
Item 8 - Presentation of Papers and Reports from Select Committees.

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

(i). Grenada Authority for the Regulations and Financial Institutions (GARFIN) Annual Report and Accounts 2019;

(ii). Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Fiscal Statements of the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF), Grenada, for the period, 1st January, 2019 – 31st December, 2019;

(iii). Grenada Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training/National Training Agency (GTVET/NTA) 2019 Annual Report;

(iv). 10th Annual Report of the Office of the Ombudsman for the period 1st January - 31st December, 2019;

(v). Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Climate Smart Agriculture and Rural Enterprise Project (SAEP) for the period ending 31st December, 2019;

(vi). Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Resources Managed for the period from the 1st January, 2019 - 31st December, 2019 by the Project Accounting Unit in the Ministry of Finance for the OECS Regional Agriculture Competitiveness Programme (AGRICOM) and the Income and Expenditure for the accounting period ending 31st December, 2019;

(vii). Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Resources Managed for the period 1st January, 2019 to 31st December, 2019 by the Project Accounting Unit within the Ministry of Finance, Energy, Planning, Economic Development for the Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure Programme (CARCIP) and the Income and Expenditure for the accounting period ending 31st December, 2019;

(viii). Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Resources Managed for the period 1st January - 31st December, 2019 by the Project Accounting

Unit within the Ministry of Finance, Planning, Economic Development and Physical Development OECS Regional Tourism Competitiveness Project and the Income and Expenditure for the accounting period ending 31st December, 2019;

(ix). Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Resources Managed for the period 1st January, 2019 - 31st December, 2019 by the Project Accounting Unit within the Ministry of Finance, Energy, Planning, Economic Development, Physical Development, Regional Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project (RDVRP);

(x). The Annual Report, Financial Statement and Audit Report thereon of the Grenada Investment Development Corporation (GIDC) for the period ended 31st December, 2108; and finally

(xi). Fiscal Responsibility Oversight Committee 2020 Annual Report on the Status of Implementation of the Fiscal Responsibility Act No. 29 of 2015.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, there are a total of eleven (11) Papers and Reports from Select Committees are, as follows:

(i). Grenada Authority for the Regulations and Financial Institutions (GARFIN) Annual Report and Accounts 2019;

(ii). Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Fiscal Statements of the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF), Grenada, for the period, 1st January, 2019 - 31st December, 2019;

(iii). Grenada Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training/National Training Agency (GTVET/NTA) 2019 Annual Report;

(iv). 10th Annual Report of the Office of the Ombudsman for the period 1st January - 31st December, 2019;

(v). Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Climate Smart Agriculture and Rural Enterprise Project (SAEP) for the period ending 31st December, 2019;

(vi). Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Resources Managed for the period from the 1st January, 2019 - 31st December, 2019 by the

Project Accounting Unit in the Ministry of Finance for the OECS Regional Agriculture Competitiveness Programme (AGRICOM) and the Income and Expenditure for the accounting period ending 31st December, 2019;

(vii). Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Resources Managed for the period 1st January, 2019 to 31st December, 2019 by the Project Accounting Unit within the Ministry of Finance, Energy, Planning, Economic Development for the Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure Programme (CARCIP) and the Income and Expenditure for the accounting period ending 31st December, 2019;

(viii). Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Resources Managed for the period 1st January - 31st December, 2019 by the Project Accounting Unit within the Ministry of Finance, Planning, Economic Development and Physical Development OECS Regional Tourism Competitiveness Project and the Income and Expenditure for the accounting period ending 31st December, 2019;

(ix). Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Resources Managed for the period 1st January, 2019 - 31st December, 2019 by the Project Accounting Unit within the Ministry of Finance, Energy, Planning, Economic Development, Physical Development, Regional Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project (RDVRP);

(x). The Annual Report, Financial Statement and Audit Report thereon of the Grenada Investment Development Corporation (GIDC) for the period ended 31st December, 2108; and

(xi). Fiscal Responsibility Oversight Committee 2020 Annual Report on the Status of Implementation of the Fiscal Responsibility Act No. 29 of 2015.

Honourable Members, these Papers and Reports are so ordered to lie on the Table.

(Sound of Gavel)

Petitions

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 9 - Petitions.

Mr. President: Senator St. Clair, in addition to the Petition, there is an extension by way of a Motion. We can do this procedurally, one of two ways, you can present the petition, give all the explanations and the arguments in support of the petition etc., or you can state the petition and when you come to presenting the Motion which is an extension of the petition, then you can deal with all the arguments that way. It's a matter for you but given the efficiency and the long agenda of time, I would suggest the latter. You don't necessarily have to follow it because it's a matter for you to decide upon on how you would handle it, but I don't know if you want to have a duplicitous stuff. So it's a matter for you.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President, for your guidance. The thought process as you suggested rightfully so is to read and table this part and then at the Motion…

Mr. President: …right, because if you brought just the petition alone then this would have been the opportunity for you to give a fullness of the petition and pray that the House adopts the petition and will action it accordingly. But as you have a Motion with it, which is sometimes it is done that way to give more effect because the petition is the appeal of the citizens to the Parliament, whereas the Motion although brought in your name, you are speaking on their behalf and you have a wider latitude in terms of what you may wish to engage. So, the floor is yours.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. Before I go to read the Petition, I want to offer an amendment to the wording of the first line, it says: "the State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique" and of course that is not correct in its truest sense. So the State is "the State of Grenada". So that is an omission on my end and I would want to offer the amendment to delete "Carriacou", the word "and" and also the words "Petite Martinique". As I know in some decisions, Carriacou and Petite Martinique like to always know that their name is called

whenever you say Grenada. But officially when you say the State it is Grenada and it is understood.

Mr. President: I would accept it without prejudice because your petition is supported by signatures. If you were to execute an amendment which was going to change the essence then you would have to withdraw it and come back all over again because the petitioners has scribed their signatures to a petition. This is a sort of perfunctionary adjustment; it does not interfere with the essence, so I would allow without prejudice that amendment and would allow the petition to stand and for you to proceed.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Senator Cox, and you are drawing my attention to?

Sen. the Hon. Norlan Cox: Mr. President, thank you. I just for some correction if I may add…

Mr. President: Correction?

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President…

Mr. President: If it's a point of correction, are you giving way Senator St. Clair?

Sen. the Hon Roderick St. Clair: Yes I would… I want to say though before he goes that there was…

Mr. President: No, you can't have it one way. There is just one question. Are you giving way to him, yes or no?

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: I would give way to him.

Mr. President: Senator Cox proceed.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much my fellow colleague Senator. Mr. President, I do not oppose the amendment but based on my understanding and it is accepted that the pronouncement of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique is more of a definition of what the State represents. So when you say Grenada, you're not just speaking about Mainland Grenada but you're speaking about both Carriacou and Petite Martinique as well. So in that context I do not see saying Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique as being incorrect. I just wanted to offer that.

Mr. President: I don't want to have a debate on it but Senator St. Clair is absolutely correct. This is a Chamber and these Chambers of Parliament are very defined and specific. There is only one State and if you go to the Constitution of Grenada you would see it. With all due respect to your views, there is no State called Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, none. And therefore if you are coming to the House where Laws are made then you have to be consistent, you will see no legal document making reference to the State as a State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. We say that loosely amongst ourselves and so on but when it comes, you will see no Law or any official document strictly written with that in it. So there is no need for a debate, you have the Constitution in front of you. There was an attempt twice before to change the name of the State and both occasions failed. In all international fora, there is only one State and this State has one State flag which we all know. Let's not spend much time on that but for the edification of those who are listening and for some who may wish to be edified who are part of the Chamber, Senator St. Clair is correct. Senator you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President, and I must say that we did have signatories out of Carriacou and Petite Martinique and all parishes, so I would read:

"We the undersigned farmers of the State of Grenada hereby petition for the review of the existing agreement between the Government of Grenada and

the Caribbean Agro Industries Limited so that farmers can have more affordable feed." And it reads further **"we therefore**…" (that's the farmers speaking) **"seek the support of the Legislative in this regards and your petitioners as in duty bound will every pray."** Ends

Mr. President: Thank you. Could I just enquire Clerk, does every Member of the Senate have a copy of those who would have signed the petition? **(Inaudible comments)** Okay. Yes, alright, if everybody has a copy, I mean the usual process is that you call out all the names, but I don't think I'll burden ourselves with that. I think we take it as bona fide here. I don't believe there is anyone challenging the bona fide nature of this petition. It's a petition before us, which seeks the support of the House of Senate, to have what was prayed for before, done. As I indicated before, since there is a resolution, we will then embody this in that and deal with the two things one and at the same time.

Senator Stiell, I'm getting some indication that you wish to draw the Chair's attention to a matter. You have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes, Mr. President, since we've brought this forward, I just want to, and we will not get into the debate now, but I will make the statement and I will clarify it later when we debate the motion that there is actually no need for the petition. What the Senator on the "Other Side" is petitioning us on and asking Government to act on, Government is already doing that, Mr. President. So the actions that have been called on, Government for some time now has been engaging with Caribbean Agro to do exactly what is within that petition. But the sentiment that the Senator is expressing in terms of how important this is to our farmers is understood, but it is not this petition that is motivating Government to take action. Government independently of this, well in advance of this has already started to take that action, but we will get into that in the debate, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Okay. Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, Mr. President, I know the debate will happen later on, however the dates of this petition from the farmers was well in advance of the announcement of the Cabinet's decisions to have a review. In fact, it might have been almost two months after because this petition would have been triggered sometime towards the end of January 2021 and was out, so I'm not too sure if Government was reviewing before January 2021. So this is, I wanted to just for the records, but we'll debate later.

Mr. President: Yes, well, okay, so. We can then proceed; we can proceed. Clerk.

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

Mr. President: Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you again, Mr. President.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, we'll take questions after surely, the next item in terms of Government Business is Motions.

Mr. President: Okay.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: We'll deal with questions after.

Mr. President: We'll come to questions…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, I think we agreed on that earlier.

Mr. President: Government Business, yes.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 13 - Personal Explanations
Item 14 - Motions

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

The Resolution for the purposes of section 17 (5) of the Constitution

WHEREAS there has been a worldwide outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and on the 11th day of March 2020 the World Health Organisation declared the outbreak of a pandemic;

AND WHEREAS on the 22nd day of March 2020 the Ministry of Health of the Government of Grenada confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in the State of Grenada;

AND WHEREAS on the 25th day of March 2020 the Governor-General by Proclamation pursuant to section 17 of the Constitution, declared that a state of emergency existed in the State of Grenada, when Parliament was not sitting;

AND WHEREAS on the 30th day of March 2020 the Governor-General, by a second Proclamation pursuant to section 17 of the Constitution, revoked the first Proclamation and declared that a state of emergency existed in the State of Grenada, when Parliament was not sitting, and on the 17th day of April 2020 that Proclamation was approved by a resolution of both Houses of Parliament;

AND WHEREAS after the expiration of six months the declaration of a state of emergency dated the 30th day of March 2020 lapsed pursuant to section 17 (5) of the Constitution;

AND WHEREAS on the 12th day of December 2020, the Ministry of Health of the Government of Grenada confirmed that a cluster of twenty-six positive cases of COVID-19 was discovered, bringing the total number of active cases of COVID-19 in the State of Grenada to forty-four;

AND WHEREAS on the 21st day of December 2020 the Governor-General, by a third Proclamation pursuant to section 17 of the Constitution, declared that a state of emergency exists in the State of Grenada, when Parliament was not sitting;

Motions

AND WHEREAS on the 11th day of January 2021 the Governor-General, by a fourth Proclamation pursuant to section 17 of the Constitution, revoked the third proclamation and declared that a state of emergency exists in the State of Grenada when Parliament was not sitting;

AND WHEREAS section 17 (2) (b) of the Constitution provides that, where a declaration is made when Parliament is not sitting, a declaration of emergency shall lapse at the expiration of a period of twenty-one days, beginning with the date of the publication of the declaration unless it has in the meantime been approved by a resolution of both Houses of Parliament;

AND WHEREAS section 17 (5) of the Constitution provides that a resolution of the House of Parliament passed for the purposes of section 17 of the Constitution shall remain in force for six months or such shorter period as may be specified therein, provided that any such resolution may be extended from time to time by a further such resolution, each extension not exceeding six months from the date of the resolution affecting the extension;

AND WHEREAS on the 15th day of January 2021 a majority of the House of Representatives passed a resolution that the declaration of emergency by the Governor-General dated the 11th day of January 2021 be approved for the period ending on the 14th day of July 2021;

AND WHEREAS on the 27th day of January 2021 a majority of the Senate passed a resolution that the declaration of emergency by the Governor-General dated the 11th day of January 2021 be approved for the period ending on the 14th day of July 2021;

AND WHEREAS on the 21st day of May 2021 a majority of the House of Representatives passed a resolution such that the declaration of emergency by the Governor-General dated the 11th day of January 2021 is extended for the period ending on the 20th day of November 2021;

AND WHEREAS the Leader of Government's Business proposes that the Senate make a Resolution to extend the resolution of the Senate dated the 27th day of January 2021;

Motions

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by a majority of all the Members of the Senate that the declaration of emergency by the Governor-General dated the 11th day of January 2021 as set out in the Schedule to this Resolution is extended to the period ending on the 20th day of November 2021.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, in response to the continued threat of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to continue to keep our people and our nation safe, the Resolution that is before us seeks to extend by a further period of six months, the existing state of emergency, to the 20th of November, 2021, as provided for within the Constitution. Mr. President, the Resolution before us, this Resolution is no longer a novel concept to this Parliament. What is contained within this Resolution provides the full chronology of the events, from the onset of the pandemic in March of 2020 all the way to the present day, from the first Proclamation which was issued by the Governor-General when Parliament was not sitting, as provided for in the Constitution, through to, the last Proclamation which was issued when Parliament was sitting, which ends on the 14th of July, 2021. So, Mr. President, we're now seeking to come back to Parliament with the request for this further extension to November 2021.

Mr. President, extending the state of emergency is necessary because of the threats that we still face, the very real threats that we face from the pandemic. Although there is hope, with the global and our national rollout of the vaccine, approximately 2 billion doses have been administered worldwide. Here in Grenada approximately 18,000 first doses have been administered; over 8,000 second doses have been administered here at home. But although there is hope, the threat that we face still presents us with a clear and present danger. Global infection cases now exceed 170 million people, with over 3 ½ million deaths from this virus. We're seeing the heart-breaking scenes that we're seeing right now in India, in Brazil with hospital services completely overwhelmed with further outbreaks there. The UK, Mr.

President, is talking about the potential of a third wave, although what is interesting there, are in terms of hospitalised cases, they are seeing very, very few persons who have been vaccinated are actually appearing in hospitals. So it's very clear from their experiences that the protection that is provided through vaccination is extremely high, and that is a message for all of us. And then closer to home, Mr. President, we see what is happening to the South, in Trinidad, with their health care facilities, close to breaking point, and then what we're seeing to the North, to the East of us, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Barbados, Antigua and the challenges they are facing there.

Mr. President, the most developed of nations with abundant resources, infinite resources compared to what we have here, has buckled under the strain. So if there was to be a significant outbreak here in Grenada, we would not have the capacity to cope with that. So, Mr. President, we are at a very, very critical point. Although we have had only 161 cases and 1 death to date, that can change literally overnight, if we were to let our guard down. The health threat still exist, it's very real, and far too many of us are far too complacent, not following the protocols, breaking quarantine and having no good reason not to be vaccinated. The economic situation for us, as with all countries at this time, is extraordinarily challenging. We came out of a period of high growth, with one of the fastest growing economies within the region before the global pandemic and then the pandemic hit, and the economic consequences of that are being hard felt by all. But despite this and the economic impacts, there is the potential for recovery, led by the Construction Industry with the major hotel developments coming on stream and the schedule return at St. George's University. However, we all have to do all that we can to ensure that this recovery happens by remaining safe, following protocols and doing all those things that we know we need to do, including getting vaccinated. These are the things that will get us back or as close back to normal, back to where we were before the pandemic, if we do these, the right things. And this, Mr. President, is why we've brought this Resolution to Parliament to further extend the state of emergency, with the proposed extension of the 20th of November, 2021. And without adopting this Resolution, it will not give the authorities the tools that they need to manage the situation, and we'll open ourselves up to even greater danger.

There are a couple of important points to note there, Mr. President. First is, the Regulations that are associated with this extension remain unchanged from the current period, so the curfew currently between midnight and 4 a.m., the restrictions, limitations on social gatherings, the need for physical distancing, mandatory face coverings in public places, et cetera. All of those Regulations still remain. But the important thing to note also is that these Regulations can be loosened, they can be tightened, they can be removed altogether but only relative to the health threat that we face. And although the state of emergency is for a period of six months, as set out in the Constitution, it can be revoked at any time, again relative to the health threat or we'll come back to Parliament and extend it for a further period when this elapse. It all depends on how we manage, collectively manage the situation here at home and what is happening on our borders and further afield. So, Mr. President, it is for those reasons outlined that we present and we commend this Resolution to this House. I thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Stiell. Honourable Members… Senator Williams.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to give my support to the Resolution and I just wanted to make a very brief point. I think it's very important for us as we slowly approach some form of normalcy, that we're careful not to become complacent too quickly and I would like to draw reference to the small Island nation of the Seychelles, located in the Indian Ocean, east of Africa. Like us, the Seychelles has a small population, only of about 100,000 people or less and to their credit, they recently became the most vaccinated country on earth with over 60% of their population becoming vaccinated, which is clearly not the case here in Grenada. However, despite being the most vaccinated country in the world, it has been suggested that because of the quick relaxation of Regulations, that contributed to that same country having one of the highest infection rates in the world. As I just mentioned the Health Commissioner suggested that, that may have been because of the relaxation of Regulations in the haste to return to normal economic activity. There were also some reference to Easter celebrations that were held in that

country, that may have contributed to the alarming infection rate and currently they have reinstated many of their restrictions and Regulations in an effort to control the spread. So it is very easy for a country as small as ours to have an outbreak. So it's important for us to keep the state of emergency in place, until we are sure or certain that we can operate normally without the threat of a major outbreak. And it's important to note that while that country had one of the highest rates of infections, because 60% of their population or more were vaccinated, there weren't many cases of serious illnesses, and that is the key difference between them and us. So while yes, we are careful to keep our state of emergency in place so that we have the tools to act with alacrity if necessary, it's important that our population becomes vaccinated. Because if there is an outbreak, as there was in the Seychelles, we may not fare as well as they are doing now. So with that, Mr. President, I would like to endorse the Resolution that was made. Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Williams. Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, **(coughs)** excuse me, I stand in support of the Resolution. I think it is very, very important. But, Mr. President, what is the intention of the extension? And the extension, Mr. President, is very simple, to keep COVID out, that's the intention. Mr. President, we all do learn from history, we all do learn from history. Let us look back at the last six months, let us look back at the management of the COVID situation over the last six months. Now, with the extension come Regulations and protocols. The stakeholders, all the stakeholders especially those who are responsible or tasked with the responsibility of seeing that certain protocols are maintained. They play a very, very critical role in terms of keeping COVID out, but what we saw, the Regulations are there, and in a number of instances either the wheel is lacking or if not the wheel is lacking, some people just don't seem to care. We hear of situations, Mr. President, where the curfew starts at 12, but a number of activities go on within curfew hours, as nobody's business.

Mr. President, I am from the Gouyave area. Sometimes the people refer to Gouyave or to St. John as the Republic of St. John and this carry something with it.

It carries something with it, and it's something we need to look at. I don't think there is a curfew in certain parts of Gouyave, I don't think so. So it comes back here to the wheel in terms of the application and the execution of those protocols. Mr. President, there's a conversation going on right now, within certain circles in relation to Carnival and the Carnival period will fall within that curfew, within that extension period. Trinidad, the COVID is crazy in Trinidad, we all know. Sometimes you see for the day twenty-five gone, twenty-three gone and it's frightening. Carnival is synonymous with Trinidad. A number of Trinidadians do come up for Carnival, in fact I manage my steel band and our tuner is a Trinidadian. And some people, Mr. President, when they hear Carnival, they go crazy. I want the nation to tread cautiously in relation to that decision, whether to have or not to have, or whether to have limited or unlimited. People have a way of scheming through, of scheming through and we cannot take chances. Mr. President, I fall within that high risk group and I'm very, very, very cautious. I am not ready to go yet. **(Laughter)** I need some time still, right, so we all have to do what we can to protect ourselves and protect the nation.

Mr. President, in relation to the vaccination which is a critical factor, something seems to have gone wrong. I don't think people just don't want to take vaccination or the vaccine. I think the problem here was the selling of the vaccine, how the authorities went out to sell it and counteract the theories out there, the negative theories out there in relation to the vaccine. So in this new extension, I hope a number of things can be corrected. The Law is the Law, let us execute and implement the Law. We can't be having parties and blockos and people hanging out after 12. In fact it is my personal opinion, Mr. President, that the curfew should start before 12 o'clock, that's my personal opinion. But some people would say, Mr. President, well they need a little night activity and to keep the economy this and the economy that.

I also want to add just one final point. Mr. President, I am a member of the Alcohol Licensing Board in St. John and the license speaks to a particular time when rum shops should be closed. Rum shops are areas where people congregate and it can be a potential centre for the transmission of the disease. I want to suggest also, Mr. President, that we stick to the Regulation in relation to rum shops and if the

Regulation says 10 o'clock, the rum shops should be closed at 10 o'clock. You see when things are allowed to just go haywire, then we run into disorder and that is a problem. So, Mr. President, I thought it was instructive that I make these few points. I stand in support of the extension of the emergency and I do hope that everyone do play their part. Law enforcers, even family members, everyone do play their part during that period, so that the nation can be kept as safe as possible. And I must also say that I think personally we are doing a fairly alright job, but as I said a while ago, there is some room for improvement. Thank you very much, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Joseph. Senator the Honourable Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I feel very compelled to make some remarks on this global issue of COVID and how what we have been doing is a clear representation as to where we are now, and this make sense in every aspect. Mr. President, as you are very much intimately involved in the whole planning and process of how we protect Grenada every single day from this virus, I think sometimes it is very easy to take things for granted and I have a vivid memory of when we had our first case. I remember clearly the feeling of hearing, it was about 11:45 some night back in March in the presence of the Minister for Health, when he received that call from the CARPHA Lab that confirmed Grenada's first case. And so, Mr. President, with the absence of persons not understanding and having the intricacies of what takes place in the background, to ensure Grenada remains safe, I could understand the challenges that presents itself with the compliance issue and I think as leaders in every aspect we just have to continue to reinforce the importance of why we are doing this and why we need to continue to persist and be vigilant in ensuring that we keep persons safe, because of the lack of understanding of what is taking place.

Mr. President, the biggest challenge that we have right now and why other countries, we're seeing a resurgence, is because of the varying strains. This virus is very smart and very adaptive, and like in some cases like the virus listens to our

conversation **(laughter)** and mutates in such a way to be evasive and at the same time becoming more and more, very dangerous and that is what is taking place right now, it's the strain, the different strain and hence the reason why as a Government, we have been pushing the issue of vaccinations, because that is our main source of protection at this point in time. And, Mr. President, I said this a few days ago, I got this from a friend, you know, and we were talking about the whole issue of vaccines and the deliberations and the conversations and the hesitancy and I say this. Mr. President, what we have is a number of Facebook and social media mafia's who are basically interfering and giving fake and false information that is really creating that distortion in how people think. What we have to do, we have to continue to encourage persons to listen to the correct source for information to guide their decisions.

I say this, Mr. President, because I have family members who are very close members of my family who have significant and serious underlying conditions, and from medical consultation they are safe to take the vaccine and they have done so, so, I don't understand. Sometime you see strong and healthy person, they don't want to take a vaccine to protect themselves, but to no offence to a few colleagues of mine, they might quicker take a Rivers, Mr. President, you know, which may even create more, a level of unsteadiness in their thinking. So we have to continue and be forceful in what we do, and to ensure that we continue to keep Grenada safe. I mean, we see what is taking place with our neighbours. I mean, we don't even want to imagine that happening here in any instance, not even a small percentage of what is taking place in other countries, we do not want that at all, at all. So I'm very happy that my colleague on the "Other Side" has shared his strong support and even stronger that we are proposing. I think this is welcoming news and I think we need to continue as leaders to ensure that we keep the people of this country safe at all times. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Cox. Senator, oh sorry, the Honourable Roland Bhola.

Sen. the Hon. Roland Bhola: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I just wanted to join in on the conversation as it relates to the extension and just to add really a few more facts because I believe from what I've heard so far on Both Sides of the House and from the facial expression of most people, I believe or I want to believe that we are all in support of the extension. But, someone mentioned about strains, I think it was my dear Senator here, although he said something that I take offense to, which I will speak to him quietly about. **(Laughter)** I think I think he just stepped a little too far out of line, but you know I would leave that matter for another place, yes.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Roland Bhola: I've lost you with…

Mr. President: I said you were leaving me out of the discourse. I can't follow you.

Sen. the Hon. Roland Bhola: Oh, I mean… And it's not only me that believe that a little Rivers can build your immunity eh. There are other people who have made jingles and other things that speak about ginger and lime, and Rivers and what, that can help your immunity so. **(Laughter)** And I know my good Senator who represents the workforce and, as well as the farmers would also agree with me, because you're attacking an industry. But now that you are up to date, Mr. President, I just wanted really to draw home the point that, as it relates to new strains. Recently looking at some of the news in India in particular where they are under serious, still serious and I mean, they were happy a couple days ago when the amount of infected cases for a day fell just under three thousand. They were so happy that they have now hit a mark under three thousand because daily it's been three thousand and up, five and six seven thousand. But the important point I want to bring here is that they're saying, the experts are saying that India is in line for a 3rd wave, but what is interesting about that 3rd wave which has already started is that it will be affecting children. Children, whereas before, we saw mass infection of adults,

now children are included. In fact there is one State where they have found almost nine thousand, nine hundred plus children that are already positive with the virus. It's a different kind of strain, some of them have to be or most of them were hospitalised and so they are working feverishly to see what can they do in terms of whether or not, and some countries have started already allowing children from as early as, I think as twelve, yes to start taking the vaccine. They want to see what they can do in order to do that.

So I'm saying that in context of what we are doing here, we should take particular interest, because the way sometimes the public and my fellow Senator on the "Other Side" says well, maybe it's how we sell the information and who is selling it. I've heard that too and I take offense to that. The Government, this is a public health issue and if the Government does not take a frontline role in selling what it has to do, who else? I mean there are a number of other people who can and they have been. There are several other people, institutions, individuals have come out in support of vaccines and what have you, but I think that is a role principally that the Government must take. I'm not saying that other people cannot and should not, I'm not saying that everything Government did or said or the Ministry did or said was in the best place or the best way, but if they did not come forward in the first place to encourage, I think they would have been lapsing on their responsibility. So I support the Motion fully, Mr. President and I really do hope that for those who are out there doubting the effectiveness of what we do… And sometimes some people make the point because I've heard it already and seen it on social media, that you are only trying to make the State a police State and give the police more powers, I really don't believe so. From what was read here, from the time we have seen the state of emergency in place, there may have been a few isolated cases where people can or have brought complaints about not being treated fairly or where they believe that the police has been excessive in the way in which they dealt with them. But I don't think that we have had many of those instances and any real serious cases. And even when we do, I think there are procedures in place as to how we can follow up and what can be done. I think from what I have heard and seen that the Commissioner of Police has a pretty open door policy and things can be done.

But interestingly also, Mr. President, while some of us continue to affirm ourselves and think that we are in a place of safety because at present we have no active cases, we continue to say it takes only one person, we don't know where, we don't know when. And it was earlier this week I believe that the same police apprehended a gentleman from the Parish of St. George from one of the remote villages that left Trinidad based on the information that we have heard via a speedboat and got as far as either Petite Martinique or Carriacou one of those… and traversed to Grenada via the Osprey Lines. So again entering the country illegally, not through the normal ports of entry, not reporting, not being tested and he is now in police custody as far as I understand it and we don't know because he has not been tested, we don't know what his status is or may have been. And in such cases, if you don't have the tools to work with, this is one of the ways in which we can easily see the spread. So outside of the Administration and those in authority doing their part, every single one of us as a citizen has a responsibility to ensure that we follow the protocols. Sometimes it is a little uncomfortable to be wearing a mask all day and if you are not in the public and of course you are home well you don't have to because all the protocol is saying "while you are in public".

Too many of us take for granted that as we say here, God is a Grenadian so we don't have nothing to worry about, he's going to look after us. **(Inaudible comments by the President/Laughter)** I don't believe that is the case and I am really appealing to my brother and sister out there who seem to take this issue of COVID-19 as just a joking issue, who seem to believe that the successes that we have made thus far is all we need to do to be safe, I think you are joking, I think we are… I am not a medical expert, I am not a scientist but when you look at what happen to several other countries, I think Grenada at this point in time is in a place where if we are not careful, if we continue to relax and we do not take the necessary positive steps and continue along the lines that has brought us success so far, we can see before we know it an outbreak that will be too much for us to handle. I really hope that doesn't happen and I really hope with this passage, I am hopeful that this resolution will pass in the Senate and that people hearing our voices will recognise that it is important, one, to follow the protocols but secondly as our sister said there, see the examples of the Seychelles where if we get more people taking up the

vaccine even if we should have an outbreak, more of us would be safer, less of us will have to be hospitalised and the real illness that COVID can really bring, we would be spared of it because our system has been built up enough because of the vaccine. I do want to say, Mr. President, that I support the resolution. Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Bhola. Any other Member wish to… Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you so much, Mr. President. I stand on behalf of my constituents to support this Motion because we have seen the results through the months and we know what happens when we go through this lockdown and all of these things and so that will affect the livelihoods, the fisher folks, the farmers and others and so whatever we need to do from our end to abide as much as possible within all possibilities of course and my dear brother Joseph say, people do crazy things at time and of course the Law and other means will take action. However, we are not out of the woods, we have our own bubble I would say in Grenada and we have to maintain our own bubble and we have that do all that it takes. Because as we maintain this current status, you can see there is some life of economic activities trying to take place and it's good but at the same time we must not only be chasing the money and forget the health because the money is coming now. Because without health, we have no way to enjoy the monies, so we must keep going there.

My comment I want to make though which is more on a format issue is and I will say it has nothing to do with my… it is not a signal that I don't support this in its fullest but I would show you the rationale. I believe that rather than having an extension for six months, I believe we should look at six months and then six months. Because you see, Mr. President, sometimes if you're making lime juice for example and you put some water and you take the whole pound of sugar and pour into it then it gets too sweet and you cannot… then you have to put water and then you end up not enough lime and it becomes a management problem. So sometimes if we set goals and set activities for too extended a period, we have challenges for monitoring and reinforcing and improving. As the Japanese would say "Kaizen"

which is a step wise process and so I want to humbly suggest that we should relook this six months duration and look at three months so it gives us time to improve and to modify. I'm not saying six months would not give us but six months man, I have time. It has a little procrastination here and there, in six months and then we wait for another six months. We have had many six months before and so I want to humbly suggest that and this wouldn't to me in any way materially interfere with the intent, the content or the execution of this Motion. I fully support it but from an implementation stand point sometimes kicking the ball to where you can reach with full speed and you can take it and manoeuvre it again is better than kicking it so far that by the time you reach to the ball you're so tired you cannot do anything with the ball. I rest my case.

Mr. President: The Motion…

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Mr. President…

Mr. President: Senator De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: My apologies for being absent for a little while but **(inaudible comments by the President)** I wanted to place on record the Private Sector's… **(inaudible comments by Mr. President)** …I was looking to see if there was anyone, of course, I don't know how many Members have spoken already but thank you, Mr. President, and good morning to our colleagues. The Private Sector wants to fully support the resolution as laid by the Leader of Government's Business for the extension of the SOE for six months and we do it from the perspective of understanding that Grenada has been fortunate through its various management initiatives and various protocols put in place and decisions taken, it would appear now, in a timely sense to control our state of affairs and a good state that is, to the point whereby we could see livelihoods coming back to a point where people can feel assured that restaurants can happen, entertainment will happen. We have now gotten the greenlight to have cricket matches here, football matches and so on. The only restraint is that our vaccination uptake is not fast

enough to give us more surety to give us a situation of herd immunity. And I heard the Seychelles example was mentioned and even with the Seychelles example where they got to herd immunity they still have situations with COVID interfering with people who are not fully vaccinated and the stress it is putting on the economy as well. So even though we were to get to herd immunity and we were to get our nation vaccinated to seventy thousand plus people, we still would have the risk of the unvaccinated and the possibility of various variants coming in.

Mr. President, we have to all remember that this is a public health situation. It is not an isolated thing with cancer or something else, not that I am demeaning the others but public health takes on a different context and a different understanding and when we say public health, it is something that relates to every person regardless of their economic status, ethnicity, race whatever and that is why the people in public health would tell you, they need support of policy that would give them the ability to flexibly apply situations and management controls to control the public health crisis. It is a crisis of public health, it is not a crisis of we have an isolated case in this sickness or that sickness, this is something that could affect all of us and our children included. And we just heard about what is happening with children in India, we know we don't have vaccines fully ready for children yet, so there is so much more in the whole issue of COVID and the pandemic that is still evolving.

We were told in Trinidad, I am just reading that they have two variants now in Trinidad, the Indian and the Brazilian and there may possibly be the third one, the English variant there as well. So we are under constant attack from our borders and who is coming in. The recent example with the gentleman that is Grenadian that came from Trinidad. Could you imagine if this gentleman is tested positive for P1 and he was let loose in our society for two, three days, what can happen? And all that we enjoy now would suddenly disappear; suddenly disappear because the P1 variant has been cited as being very much more infectious in terms of people contacting the virus through it. So it is not a situation where we have to be comfortable and be relaxed in our situation. Grenada has been fortunate but we need to keep certain policies in place that would ensure that businesses continue.

All of us and I know my friend in the Labour Movement would support the fact that the more workers get out to work, the more we could have things established and it becomes easier. He would have less people turning up at his doorstep for help; that is the reality of where we're faced because when we have to shut down businesses, shut down construction, shut down sectors… tourism still can't recover after a whole year going on eighteen months. So we need to keep that in mind, keep that in the back of the mind, so we fully support the Government's move to extend this SOE for another six months.

And I hear my friend about three months, but I believe the paper work to come back every three months doesn't make sense. As a matter of fact if we could have gotten it for a year I would have taken it for a year, quite frankly. Because it gives us more flexibility to do what we have to do and to control what we have to control. The environment is not one that is known, we don't know what is going to happen in the next six months much less a month from now, things could change in the snap of a finger. And that is why we need to give the policy makers and the administrators the ability to implement and to do things to protect us all as a country and as a people. So, Mr. President, with those few words I am fully in support of the extension.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator De Allie. Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. I was going to sit this one out but I had to rise since I am actually in academic public health and I hear lots of things being mentioned about public health and all of that. And so I hear what the Honourable Senator on the "Other Side" says about Government is in the best place to do this and there is a principle that speaks to that in public health, the Governmental presence at all levels when we're talking public health. However, we have to think about who; the face. There is a health promotion and health education aspect of public health and we must let people do their jobs. If they are trained, if they are qualified, if they're in the position where they can do this then they should be allowed to do this because there are specific strategies that needs to be employed. You cannot always come to the public with a heavy hand and expect

people to react as you want them to, there are principles that must be taken into consideration.

And so I want to speak to some of the comments I heard about vaccination and the low uptake in vaccination. There is a reason for that, there is a theory behind that and again I know some of the persons who are at the forefront have public health education. So I sit back sometimes and I watch and I listen and I'm trying to figure out why aren't they using these skills, knowledge, attitudes that they actually know. Yes we understand it's an emergency, yes we know that this is there, it could become a crisis for us even worse than it is at the moment but remember everybody does not react at the same time and at the same pace, there is a reason for that. Some people are still at the pre contemplation stage of the vaccination and so we have to kind of massage it into them, there is a strategy to do that, some people are already contemplating, some people have taken action. I hear the Honourable Leader of Government's Business says you know 18,000 persons have already taken the first dose and 8,000 persons have taken the second dose that is because they have reached the point of taking action. But then there are some who are at the denial stage and this is a self-determination theory that is active in public health, and if this isn't understood and used to inform strategies then we will continue to have the low uptake. So the health promotion and education people must be allowed to do their jobs.

Having said that though, I do stand in support of the Resolution, I think it has good intentions, I think it actually will help us to manage the situation. I will want to throw my support behind the Resolution. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator St. Cyr. Senator the Honourable Judd Cadet.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, like the others I want to add my support to this Resolution. I think it is absolutely important, the extension is actually necessary at this point in time. We are not out of the woods and I know many people especially young people in their conversations they are basically asking why is it that we still have curfew? And in fact when I was

on my way down this morning I was reading a Facebook posting where one young person was saying that they just cannot understand, we have no active case here in Grenada and we have a curfew and it's limiting the social aspect of their life. And while this may be somewhat true, in terms of limiting the social aspect, we must understand that it is absolutely necessary. We don't want a situation like Trinidad or India or what has happened in other countries and, Mr. President, what is important to note as well is that over the last year, we've seen that different countries have become the hotspot and it just… at one point in time you thought New York was the hotspot, you had one point in time you thought Italy was the hotspot, another point in time, we heard of Brazil, we thought London was the hotspot, now it's closer to home, we're hearing now about Trinidad.

The fact is any day, any time it could be us and therefore we need to take the necessary actions to ensure that we safeguard our people and we have vaccination going at this point in time. The vaccines are available and we need to continue to encourage people to take the vaccine, that's the only way at this point in time unless someone could probably put forward another safe alternative way in which we can get back to our normal lives. I'm not sure what will be that other alternative but the fact is the vaccine has proven to be safe, the vaccine has proven to be effective and we must continue to encourage others to take it because that is the only way for Small Island States like Grenada. We do not have the resources; we do not have the capacity to respond to a significant outbreak. And if this happen at this point in time in Grenada, some of the gains that we have made over the past couple months will disappear in no time. I know my friend over there, Labour Senator is asking about their increases, if we do not safeguard this country, Mr. President, then that might have to… the discussion may not be even able to have at this point in time. So it is important that we understand that all of us have a role in this process, we need to safeguard this country, we need to protect our people and we need to encourage others to play their part by getting vaccinated.

And I want to encourage our young people, yes I understand that while you may be restricted in some way, I mean we still have some level of leverage; we have up to, well 11 o'clock, I wouldn't say 12 o'clock because you need to give them time to get home so let's say 11 o'clock to have some level of social interaction. And the

12 to 4 you're home, sleep, enjoy yourself. So we still have some level of leverage and I think we should utilise that and operate in that space. I also understand that people in the Creative Arts Industry like the artistes some of them are hurting because there may not be as much events happening at this point in time that will… some will especially depend solely on these activities to generate some level of income. Mr. President, I understand that, I know Government is currently looking at ways in which we can have some level of activities so that they can be part of that process as well in terms of getting some level of livelihood. But, Mr. President, we cannot sacrifice our health just for a few minutes or hours of pleasure and we must understand that this is a critical… We have never been faced with a situation like this before, this has been a crisis that… we are learning as we go along and we are still looking at the best possible way but at this point in time, Mr. President, it is critical that we all play our part in the process and understand that this extension is absolutely necessary to safeguard the health of this country. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Judd. Senator André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and allow me to say from the offset that I stand to give support to the Resolution. There are just some things that I…. when we last met on the 27th I think it was of January, there was an issue that I raised and through you, Mr. President, I had asked in relation to the Governor-General's Proclamation on the 21st of December and then on the 11th day of January and where the Constitution speaks about the need for the Parliament to meet to give authorisation in terms of extension. And I was asked, what happens in the case as what happened then that the Parliament was not meeting or even if Parliament is dissolved and I remember I didn't respond correctly because I was on the run etc. But if you would just permit me just for future references, section 17 (8) addresses that issue and with your permission, can I just read it because it came up and it's an important matter in my view. It says **"The Governor…" (inaudible comments by Mr. President)** 17 (8) because the question came up in terms of the order and I supported it even if I had a different view and I

still maintain my support but the explanation on what can be done. 8, it says **"The Governor-General may summon the Houses of Parliament to meet for the purposes of subsection (2)…"** and subsection (2) is where Parliament is expected to meet to extend it beyond twenty-one days for six months... **"of this section notwithstanding that Parliament then stands dissolved…"**, so even if Parliament is dissolved the Governor-General has the power to call.

Mr. President: (Inaudible comments) How is that relevant to the current Motion before us?

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Only that the current Motion addresses the issue of the date setting. The current Motion has the dates here that those matters here were dealt with. I'm just pointing out that although it is mentioned here but procedurally I think that there may have been a misstep. And I'm just relying on the Constitution but I would not pursue it.

Mr. President: So are you offering an amendment to the Motion?

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: No, I'm not offering an amendment, I will not pursue it. I will not come now…

Mr. President: I am lost.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: What I was seeking to do with your leave, because this Motion is extending the state of emergency and when we met on the 27th of January I had raised a particular matter to which the President had asked me a question in relation to my comment on the 27th and I said that the answer to the question that was raised in section 17 (8) that even if Parliament is not meeting or Parliament is dissolved, the Governor General has the authority to call the Houses of Parliament.

Mr. President: Yes I understand that, but my question to you is, what is the relevance of all of that to the current Motion before the House?

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I was just seeking to explain that which was asked of me before and as I say, I am going to leave this now and come to the issue here.

Mr. President: Ok.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I'm ok. As I said I give support to the matter and the six months that has been existing, I know causes some concerns to people and the reason for that is what is seen sometimes as the uneven application of some of those measures. As Senator St. Cyr has indicated, many times is not a matter that people are opposed or against but it's how they perceive that which is being done. So for instance, the experience, we have to be guarded, the experience with the Union Leader that were called in on the grounds that he was not following protocols; that's Jude of the Grenada Union of Teachers, these are some of the things that are causing some of the concerns among workers outside there. When for instance even around that time we had events at the South of the Island in one of the major hotels on Mother's Day night, that had a massive activity and there were no masks etc., while at the same time coming out of an issue of probably about three (3) days before at a workplace that is unionised and represented by the Technical and Allied Workers' Union and the workers raised that with us that when for instance they were closed because they did not follow protocol and that's ok. But they are seeing on the other hand in terms of that major activity on the night of Mother's Day night and nothing took place, they are asking for more consistency. So as we extend the state of emergency which is important and we support, application is extremely important.

In relation to the vaccination and I am piggybacking on Senator St. Cyr's issue, we have to find ways and means of encouraging people to take the vaccine but we have to understand that people are at different stages and at different phases. So for instance, there are workers who are asking what happens if they

have not taken the vaccine, they're already working, should they lose their job? While at the same time, these are the workers for instance in the hotels and a worker throw that to us last week. We have not yet been vaccinated, we are considering the vaccination, our employer is telling us that you must take the vaccine otherwise you cannot come to work. But for the past six months or ten months that hotel and other hotels were operating because remember even through Sandals there were people coming into the Island and even attending to people who are in quarantine. And some of these workers are not vaccinated but yet still in terms of following the protocol, testing, and the sanitising etc., the employers allowed them to be exposed. So they work every day, they work every day for the past x amount of months without the vaccine but because we need to get work done and we understand that, it's called mitigating risk, minimising risk, following x and y protocol and now to be told that if you do not take that vaccine you would not be allowed to work, they find it very difficult to accept.

And therefore we're asking for these discussions to continue to be taking place so that workers can be given the time. While we encourage them with the relevant information, we must recognise that in this day and age social media, everyone, this here gives us connection to the world and you are hearing all different people speak, sometimes they are qualified. There are people in authority because they have a PHD behind their name or a MD behind their name and people are bombarded with information. At the same time, if we want to have an uptake in the vaccination which we support, I support, there are certain guarantees that the employer ought to be given to the worker and therefore where an employer is advancing that the vaccination ought to be considered as a part of employment for people who are already employed…

Mr. President: Again Senator Lewis, let me draw your attention to Standing Orders 37, so if you could refer to 37. We are now into a debate on vaccinations, the Motion before us don't specifically speak of vaccinations. The Motion before us is a state of emergency…

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes I'm listening.

Mr. President: I am drawing your attention to 37 which talks about… it's the relevance rule so I'm drawing your attention to that because again I am trying to see the link between vaccination and the state of emergency. The state of emergency is not dependent upon vaccinations and vice versa. They are two separate and distinct things, so I'm trying to see the connection between the two. There is nothing in the recital in the resolution dealing with the state of emergency which makes reference to people having to have vaccines or not having vaccines. So how does this… how is this relevant to the Motion that is before us? And I wish you could help me because I'm not seeing, because these are two distinct businesses altogether.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I will try.

Mr. President: In fact there was a state of emergency long before there was even a vaccine present. Long before a vaccine came on the scene there was a state of emergency and for several months there was no vaccine at all but there was a state of emergency. So let's not mix the two things up. I draw that to your attention to stick to the Resolution before us.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Mr. President, thank you but I crave your indulgence on the following as the Senator representing Labour, most of the other speakers even on the Government Side spoke about workers and vaccines and hesitancy and I am craving your indulgence, Mr. President, the fact that almost all the Senators spoke on vaccination and people…

Mr. President: They said so *en passant*, that's not a problem. But you're taking the debate now down a road which is essentially on vaccine and people are saying look, we need the state of emergency because there are protocols in place that we need to ensure that they are followed, we need the state of emergency to limit people's activities because there is a curfew that's on and they are saying, we need both things, we need to be disciplined, we need to follow the protocols, including taking vaccines. You are now debating the issue of whether a vaccine should be mandatory or not mandatory, that's not a reference to vaccines *en*

passant, that's a reference to a substantial debate on vaccines. So all I'm asking you to do is the relevancy rule. I have no difficulty at all in passing you make a reference to anything and that's the normal course of stuff. But if I allow this, what happens when the next person rises up and starts to debate on the issue of whether or not an employer has a right to impose a request for a vaccine and a worker has a right not to comply.

You see we're taking the discussion down a path which is not the direct purview of the scope of the debate, it is going outside of the scope of the debate and that is why I am drawing that to your attention. *En passant*, you are making reference to something in passing, no problem. We were not discussing the benefits or otherwise of drinking Rivers. But in a facetious way and to be light hearted, a passing reference was made but if a debate started on the merits of alcohol, obviously the Presiding Officer will have to pull it back on track on the basis of the relevancy rule which sets out the scope of the debate. So please be guided accordingly.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, I will be so guided. In contributing to the… it is important that all the stakeholders to ensure that the state of emergency meets its obligations that there should be continuous dialogues. As a matter of fact, I was tempted to in passing to agree with Senator St. Clair on the three months or probably even one month when I recognised that the last time that we met in the Senate was to discuss the state of emergency and the next time that we are meeting almost 5 months after is to discuss the extension of the state of emergency and I was wondering that if we have the state of emergency for one month or two months if we would not be meeting a bit more regular. **(Laughter/Inaudible comments by Mr. President)**

Mr. President: …plethora of Bills that are down for discussion and when we began this morning's engagement, the Leader of Government's Business prevailed upon the Senate to adjust the order in the Order Paper so as to deal with all the Government Bills first. So to suggest that we are meeting almost exclusively because of the state of emergency is manifestly inaccurate and not true. You have

the Order Paper before you and there are how many Bills there, could somebody help me? Clerk; there are several Bills down of which one Resolution dealing with the state of emergency, it's the only matter dealing with the state of emergency. So again I am coming back, we have to be responsible when we say things and we can't, because the public listens. The public ought not to be allowed to go away with the idea that we are meeting only because there is a state of emergency, that is incorrect. So without more, again I draw that to your attention.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Ok, Mr. President. Thank you, Mr. President, I am so guided and I will wrap up now just to end by restating our support for the state of emergency and to call upon all of our citizens to respect the state of emergency, so that our law enforcement officers and the other people who are tasked with managing this deadly threat that we face. Life would be a bit easier for them and all of us. And therefore I end by restating my support for the state of emergency extension. Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Lewis. Senator Garraway, is your light on? Yes, Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give my support to the Resolution that is being presented by the Leader of Government's Business in the Senate, and to say profoundly that what we are doing at this point in time is no different to what we've done from the onset of COVID-19 entering the shores of Grenada. Government was asked to respond and to respond swiftly, to put systems and mechanisms in place to, one, curb the spread of COVID and two, to secure our borders. And largely we have been successful. We have been successful because we stayed the course. The state of emergency provided the ambit and the environment for the various bodies, the law enforcement, the Ministry of Health, Public Health to do what they had to do to keep this country safe. So I often repeat this quote ***"If it isn't broken, don't try to fix it".*** Six months has given us and that's the extent of the legal Constitution, or the Constitution has given us six months span in which you can exercise the state of emergency and then

you come back to Parliament for another extension. So we've been doing this, and it has been working, but let us go back to the two points that was said.

When the state of emergency was first instituted at this onset of the COVID, was to curb the spread of the virus. I know one might be saying, well there is no case, known case in this country for the longest while. And that's true, there are no known cases and we have to be proud of that. The measures that we have implemented, they are working, but the second measure was to protect our borders and a few days ago, we heard of an entry out of a hotspot Trinidad. We don't know the extent yet, if the gentleman is positive, but there was a breach in our borders and again, we have to be reminded that the RGPF would have reported in the first few months of this year, we have apprehended fifteen persons coming illegally into our borders, into the State of Grenada. Yes, thank God they have been tested and none were positive, but they came from hot beds as well. So, extending the state of emergency is to ensure that we keep the borders closed, or keep the borders secure. Why are we doing this, to ensure that we protect this country, to ensure that we protect the people of this country. There is this old saying "***If your neighbour house is on fire, you wet yours"***. Our closest neighbour to the south Trinidad, who we have tremendous cultural and economic ties to are overflowing with infection of COVID. The mere fact that this is happening should be the impetus for us as a nation to protect our borders and to keep this country safe. Trinidad is flowing with resources, but having the resources is one, but to protect your people from COVID is another, and despite the fact, with all the resources they are not able to do it. We don't want to get into this case.

My colleague would have spoken a lot about the Seychelles, but I just want to bring one point from the Seychelles because I would have done some research with what they have been going through. Yes, they would have had around 61% vaccination rate in the country, closest to herd immunity when it was first said 70% of the population, and the state of complacency stepped in because Small Islands Developing States are pressured to keep the economies going. So Seychelles opened and you could return to the place and no need for quarantine and so on, because we have a high rate of vaccination.

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

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: So, Mr. Deputy President, with this state of complacency we have seen the rise in infection. But as my colleague Senator Williams would have said, though you've had that rise, the effects of having deaths and hospitalisation was very minimal, because of the same vaccination rate that they have had. Let's turn this to Grenada. We've heard it; the uptake in vaccination in the country is very low. So, if we do not protect the borders and if one person slips through and get the opportunity to move around, mingle around and infect this place, our situation would be totally different to what it is today. So there is the need for us to constantly be on the watch or constantly protecting, constantly observing and putting the necessary mechanisms in place to keep this country safe. Because if we don't, Mr. Deputy President, you can't blame the people who are coming from England or America you know, you blame your State. What did you do you to protect the citizens of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique? The Administration will be blamed. So by all means the onus is on the Administration, on us here to give support to making sure that we do what needs to be done, to keep this country safe.

Mr. Deputy President, I want to end by saying, yesterday or day before, I got the stats coming out of London, or yesterday, and it was very worrisome to me. They are in the midst of a third wave, but you know what is very frightening? The third wave is among people 30 and under, young people and that age group were not vaccinated, because England like every other place have had their own challenge to vaccinate the entire population, so they vaccinate them in bands and they have not yet reached to those 30 and under. And now that you have the third wave among that grouping and they are not vaccinated, they are very concerned.

Let's flip this to Grenada from a Public Health standpoint. If, and going back to vaccine uptake is very low, if there is any one person being infected among our population and mind you, it is so critical because, we are looking forward to and the Hotel Industry is looking forward to welcoming the British citizens again, because they have consistently been the people who would come in and stay for long periods in our hotels. And let's look at how dangerous we are positioned at this point in time.

You're looking forward for them to return, but, Mr. Deputy President, if they are to return and our service providers, our hotel staff are not adequately vaccinated or protected, we are exposing ourselves. You remember what happened in December, and my fellow Senator from Labour on the "Other Side", he remembered well. In December we had one cluster from one establishment and before too long we jumped in infection and we had to move with alacrity to curb the situation, shut down, do the necessaries and we were able to bring it under control. So it is very dangerous, while we want to open up, while we want to ensure our workers are employed and they're able to meet their monthly or daily commitment, they must do this in a safe environment. So it is important for labour to encourage our members to do what is right. Get the jab, protect yourself, because you are in the most vulnerable place, you're exposed, they are coming in. The scientist saying that is what's going to protect you, so go ahead and get it done, but don't come and provide information that will create, cause confusion in the minds of our workers. They want to know how much you're doing to protect their income as well as their family, the health of their family. They want to know that you're supporting that and when you speak to it, you speak to it with honesty.

Mr. Deputy President, where we are at, at this point in time, we are at a dangerous place because right around us, right around Grenada we are seeing the fallouts of the infections of COVID. We are grateful to Almighty God for keeping us safe, but I want to thank the Ministry of Health and the entire Administration for what we have been able to do, to keep our people in that line, but we have to go the next step. And we cannot double talk and bramble our way through. We cannot in anyway give our workers this false sense of security, we got to tell them the truth. Tell them the truth, so that they will make the right decision and at the same time we protect this land of ours. I thank you.

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

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. Mr. Deputy President, I just want to, in wrapping up the debate, I first of all want to signal that there are a couple of amendments that are required, as indicated by the drafters.

They are non material and we will go through those shortly, but I just want to pick up and just wrap up on the comments that have been made. First of all, it was I think a statement that you made Senator De Allie, that our situation here can change literally overnight, and I think that provides us with a context as to why we're bringing this Resolution to the House. To provide us, make sure that our health professionals, our security professionals have all access to all of the tools that they need to be able to respond quickly in the event that there is a change, but one in terms of maintaining the current status and to be able to respond in the event that, that status was to change.

And then the comment about complacency, Grenada has done in relative terms, relatively well in terms of managing this crisis. Unfortunately that is playing against us and I am not going to extend the debate on vaccines and vaccine uptake, but I will say that because there is this perception that we are COVID free, there are no active cases then why should there be any urgency in each of us taking the necessary responsibility that we need to take in terms of providing or contributing to the long term solution and the only tool that we really have available to us in terms of getting through this. So that complacency, that comfort that we have is a false one, which comes back to the necessity to have this measure, this state of emergency in place, so that we can respond.

And then the comment about should we reduce it month by month, three, monthly. Mr. Deputy President, the Regulations clearly state, the Constitution clearly states that a state of emergency is up to six months. If the situation was to rapidly improve and this threat that we've been fighting with for over a year were to disappear overnight we can revoke this overnight, but the six months just gives us that window, and again it ensures that all of the tools are in the toolkit to enable us to do what we need to do. And then the final point Senator St. Cyr and the feedback given in terms of giving a context to this being a public health issue, the impression is given as if it's politicians making decisions, but the decisions being made in terms of the actions that are being taken, are from the recommendations, are from medical profession. Its health officials, **(applause)** health advisors, there is a COVID Committee with extensive medical expertise on that committee that provides the advice and the recommendations for consideration by Cabinet. But if Ms. St. Cyr

has some insights, she's returning, if she has some insight she wishes to share then we're happy to receive them, but just to make that point and to put it on record, the advice taken, the guidance given and the actions taken are driven by health professionals.

So, Mr. Deputy President, let me just grab this, to the amendments, so the third paragraph from the end, with the recital starting **"WHEREAS on the 21st day of May, 2021 the majority of the House of Representatives passed a resolution"** and the amendment is to delete **"such that",** and replace it with the word **"extending"** and then it goes on, **"extending the declaration of the emergency by the Governor-General dated the 11th day of January, 2021"** and deleting the word **"is extended for"** and replacing that with the word **"to"**.

Then to the final recital, the final paragraph, **"NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by a majority of all the Members of the Senate"** and it is deleting the word **"that"** and replacing it that with **"the resolution of the Senate dated the 27th day of January, 2021 approving"**, so it's the addition of those words and then the existing sentence continues, **"the declaration of the emergency by the Governor-General dated the 11th day of January, 2021 as set out in the Schedule to this Resolution is"** and then the word added **"hereby**", so **"hereby extended to the period ending on the 20th day of November, 2021"**. So none of these are material changes, Mr. Deputy President, they are stylistic and just the construct of those paragraphs. So we have heard what I have heard, I don't believe we need to go to division on this, but it is clear that there is a unanimous consensus by Members of this House for the passing of this Resolution. I therefore submit this Resolution to this Honourable House. I thank you.

Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): Thank you Leader of Government Business. I too concur that I think we have a majority. I didn't observe any dissenters to the passage of this resolution, so I believe there is no need to go to division. As such, the resolution is passed by the Senate and we move on. And it's passed with the amendments as made, sorry, with the amendments as made, yes.

Motion approved.

Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): So Leader of Government's Business, we're now going to move on to the Bills, because your Motion earlier had indicated that we defer the questions and move it down to get most of this business completed and then we move back to questions.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. Deputy President: Yes.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 15 - Bills

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

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. President: Senator Winston Garraway, are you piloting the first Bill?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes, Mr. President, thanks.

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes. Mr. President, I stand to, I beg to move that the Senate resolve, sorry, wrong page. **(Laughter)** Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, the International Companies (Repeal) (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

Clerk: A Bill to amend the International Companies (Repeal) Act No. 17 of 2018, shortly entitled International Companies (Repeal) (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

Bills

Mr. President: Senator Winston Garraway.

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.

Question proposed.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, this Bill before us today, seeks to amend the International Companies (Repeal) Act 2018, to provide for an amendment of section 3 of the principal Act to insert three new subsections to expand the transitional provisions. Just to go a little further, the principal Act, the International Companies (Repeal) Act of 2018, repealed the International Companies Act Cap. 152 with effect from January 2019. Mr. President, you may recall about three years ago, we came to this Honourable House to repeal the International Companies Act Cap. 152, and this became necessary because the OECD (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) would have sought to blacklist some twenty one (21) countries, most of which was Small Island Developing States, on this theory that the States were involved in harmful tax practices. And they sought to hurt those countries and to get them to, as it were stop the movement in economic development through the use of CBI products, the use of creating an environment where investors will want to invest the monies within those countries, Grenada of course and as a result went about to blacklist those countries. And we came here to repeal the International Companies Act, to ensure that we are removed from this noose which was put around our necks, proverbially speaking by the OECD. And when this was done, Mr. President, the Act came into force on January 1, 2019, and gave a provisional or transitional period of three years to end on the

31st of December, 2021. So companies are given that sort of room to ensure that they put the necessary systems in place.

And to take it further, it said accordingly, **"the Bill seeks to provide a mechanism for International Companies under the Repeal Act that are in good standing as at 31st August to automatically transition into companies incorporated under the Companies Act Cap. 58."** What this basically is saying, Mr. President, and the reason for this is, at the end of June companies, international companies are required to pay their licence, licence fees. But based on the repeal, they're given up to the 31st of December, to finalise and move over, transition into the Companies Incorporated Act. But if this was to happen it means the six months between June and December, there would be a penalty of 10% charge to those companies. What we are doing with this repeal here by moving the date to August 31, is giving these companies primarily two months extension to transition without having to pay the penalty. So companies in good stead, in good standing would have done the necessary licence and follow all the rules that has been established, will automatically transition as of August 31, so long as this is in place.

What we are doing also, Mr. President, is to ensure that we continue to provide the environment for these companies to do business. You want to ensure that you provide a safe environment in your jurisdiction or in your country so people would want to invest and we have been able in recent times, in the last eight years or so to seeing the uptake of investment in this country has been phenomenal. And the reason why companies do this is because they feel welcomed, and the enabling environment that has been created is excellent. So you want to keep, you want to make sure that you continue with that and this Bill here is to ensure that we do this.

So, Mr. President, I am very confident that we are on the right track, but there is something else that I need to point out. It said the three, as I said to you, we're making changes in three areas, section 3 (1), **"notwithstanding section 2, incorporation of an International Company under the International Companies Act, Cap. 152, prior to commencement of this Act shall continue to be valid upon commencement of this Act until the operative date."** And I want to spend just a minute or so on operative date, because this is very important to us, so what does that mean. So **"for the purpose of this section, "the operative date"**

means in the case of an International Company, that is a trust corporation for the purpose of the International Trusts Act Chapter 152C, the date on which the international trust is terminated in accordance with section 9 of the International Trusts Act Cap. 152", so that will be the operative date, the day it was terminated. And **"in any other case, the date on which the International Company has been wound-up or dissolved in accordance with part 8 of the International Companies Act Chapter 152."** 31st December, 2021 as I've said is the final date and in this case as the operative date whichever day is earlier. So if they were to do it prior to August 31, that will be the operative date, but if nothing was done by 31st December that will be the wound-up or the operative date of the closure or termination of that entity.

But I end by saying, we have done a good job in this country in attracting business, in attracting investors, in attracting investments and we'll continue to do what is necessary to ensure that they are one, they follow the laws of this country, they follow the International Laws that has been established, they work within the confines and the ambits of Laws of Grenada and two, we'll continue to ensure that an enabling environment is available, so that they can grow their business. And ultimately if they grow their business here, it means that our people will be employed and that's what you want, to have your people employed. For these few words, Mr. President, I want to commend this Bill for its second reading.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Garraway.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: The Honourable Senator Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give support to the Bill before us, International Companies (Repeal) (Amendment) Bill. Mr. President, this is I believe, something that is of benefit to the companies that exist currently with the international status in Grenada. This Bill is allowing them extra time to have their companies regularised and to fall

under the Companies Act, the current Companies Act that presides in Grenada. So, I think this is a good move and I know that my colleague Senator representing the Business Sector would feel the same way. That it is important that we all fall in line to make sure that we operate within a clear ambit of the Law, so that we do not have any confusion if for any legal or any other purposes.

Mr. President, I believe that this also provides a clarity for persons operating and I know that those procedures sometimes they take some tedious process and I believe the suggestion or the plan to extend the time for those companies are all good and meaning well, and we hope that they would use the time to wrap this process up and to ensure that everything remains in line with the laws before us. So with these few words, Mr. President, I support this amendment for the second reading. Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Cox. Any other Senator? Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. It's a question basically, some thoughts I have in my head. I listened to Senator Garraway speak of this being a very important Bill. I understand the context; my query is how many companies? So are we talking about a dozen, two dozen that are not in line, that we are as Senator Cox say, trying to ensure that they meet this deadline. Are we speaking about significant numbers, are we speaking about 30%, 20% of this, the companies. Because we can agree to this, which I understand the context, but is it we have a set of persons who really not have been doing well? Because you mention very specifically those who are not in compliance currently cannot benefit in any way under this new opportunity. So that has been maybe my main concern in this whole thing. Just so I'm very clear what I'm agreeing to.

Mr. President: You're wrapping up Senator Garraway?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes sir, because there are no more lights. I didn't see no takers, so…

Mr. President: Okay, alright. Well you have the floor then.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes, Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague Senator for his support and by way of the question, thanks to the Member representing farmers, the farming community for this question. At this point it's just about ten to fifteen companies that would be affected by this, and as was said, this came into being from the 1st of January, 2019, so you had a three years window to put your house in order. So those who have not put the house in order, is because they will fold. But the ten to fifteen companies who have done this, so automatically they will be transitioned into the new regime. But what is significant about this, Mr. President, and as I've said before, in terms of ensuring that the companies continue to function, so that our Grenadian people will maintain jobs. So we had to move with alacrity, obviously at 2018 when this thing came up with the blacklisting, to fix this and to find a path to give those international companies the opportunity, so that they can continue to work within our jurisdiction. So with these few words, Mr. President, I want to commend the Bill for its second reading.

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

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 put and agreed to.
Senate in Committee.
Senate resumes.

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

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

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

Question proposed.
Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a third time and passed.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway again.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading of a Bill, shortly entitled Immigration (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

Clerk: A Bill to amend the Immigration Act Cap 145 to increase the maximum penalty for illegal immigration, shortly entitled, Immigration (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

Mr. President: Senator Winston Garraway.

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

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

Bills

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

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, the Bill seeks to amend the Immigration Act, Cap 145, the principal Act to increase the maximum penalty for illegal immigration to a fine of $12,000.00 and to expand the ambits of the offenses. Clause 2 seeks to amend various provisions of Part III to increase the penalty from $10,000.00 to $12,000.00. The affected provisions are section 9B (3) and section 9E (4) to correct a typographical error in section 9B (6). It is important to note, Mr. President, that the Immigration (Amendment) Bill, though it was long in coming or probably it was in train long before this COVID experience, is extremely based on our current situation. We have spoken earlier as it regards to the illegal immigration or illegal entry into the country and the dangers it poses to the State of Grenada albeit due to COVID. What we are seeking to do here with this amendment, one, to move the penalty from $10,000.00 to $12,000.00 hoping that this will become a deterrent and the relevant stakeholders or people who have to provide the information to the competent authority re immigration purposes and the competent authority here is the Chief of Immigration, will comply to those rules. So what is required, amendment to Part III of the principal Act. **"Part III of the principal Act is amended as follows:**

a). **by deleting the words "ten thousand dollars" wherever it appears and substituting therefor the words "twelve thousand"."** So we know that's the first thing, increase the penalty; and

b). **"by repealing subsection (6) of section 9B and substituting therefor the following new subsection"** which is very important:

"(6) Any captain, master, agent or member of crew or passenger who

a). refuses to answer or knowingly gives a false answer to any question put to him by the competent authority which I said is the Chief of Immigration; or

b). fails to comply with any request under subsection (5),

commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of $5,000.00 or to imprisonment for six months or to both fine and imprisonment."

It is important to note, Mr. President, that as it is with immigration today every vessel or aircraft, means of transport, are required to provide an advance passenger information listing and that listing should be provided to, one, the competent authority which is the Chief of Immigration and also to the Implementing Agency For Crime and Security within the region (IMPACS). If a master or whoever, master, agent, captain or a member of crew refuses to provide this information, they commit an offence. Because an advance passenger information system provide information before hand of the would be travelers or the intended passengers to arrive and it gives the competent authority the ability to do the necessary checks, to do the necessary scrutiny of the list and to ensure that those who are coming into the jurisdiction are not on any wanted list or not probably could become an issue, security wise in the country. IMPACS on the other hand, that's a creature of CARICOM and they have that responsibility to do the necessary checks globally, the Joint Regional Communication Centre is an offshoot who works in tandem with IMPACS to do the necessary security checks on people coming within the region. But the important thing here, Mr. President, is for us to ensure that the list is provided and provided accurately.

There could be a situation where for whatever reason somebody might be motivated not to provide the correct information and what we are saying, if that be the case, there is going to be a penalty of $12,000.00 for whoever choose not to provide the accurate information, $5,000.00 sorry. The issue here is ensuring that we get the crews and the master and the captains to follow with this. And if the person who is travelling provide falsified information, they too will be subjected to such a penalty. It is further to note that if a person in Grenada choose to encourage or harbour someone to remain illegally in this country, they too are exposed to that penalty. And as I've said, based on our current situation with COVID-19 it makes it even more important for us to do the necessary policing and to have people following the Laws. One may say probably $5,000.00 is not enough, it could have been a bigger figure to making it probably a deterrent that is going to hurt you more. So

what is before us here is to ensure that the people who are within, be it the boat, be it the captain, be it the aircraft, the pilot or so, they do what is necessary.

And the last point I want to make on this here, Mr. President, is if for some reason the aircraft or the boat is to leave Grenada, they have a responsibility to ensure that an hour after they would have departed, that information is provided as to the list or the API. I do trust that what we are seeing happening with the countries around Grenada, Trinidad, St. Vincent, St. Lucia and so forth with the explosion of COVID will be a big enough motivation for people to follow what is necessary, what is right.

It was about two weeks ago we heard of one gentleman coming from New York and did everything that is expected of him, arrived on the airport and so forth, went into the approved taxi and had a booking at the approved quarantine facility but never showed up. And then you saw on social media a family member was so concerned because that family member understand the public health responsibility that every citizen of this country has, so call into the police and say, but listen the man just came from New York and rather than go into the quarantine came home and drop his stuff and into one of those… I wouldn't say doing what, for lest I would be rebuffed by my colleague. He went around and gallivanted and was having a good time with the boys and that's when he was apprehended and only after investigations we realised the taxi driver was coerced into violating the same protocol that he had to follow. Rather than taking the guy to the quarantine, he took him where he said he wanted to go. We have to make examples of those cases and I think the full pressure of the Law should fall because what we have here we have to guard it seriously and don't allow it to fall. We cannot afford to have people coming in and decide they will violate the rules as it relates to the protocols with COVID and so forth.

I am happy that the investigation has started and court case would be had and I would expect to hear it blown out and people know, if you come to Grenada and you violate our rules, you will face the heavy hand of the Government. Mr. President, with these few words I commend this Bill for its second reading.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Garraway.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Simon Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes, Mr. President. Just to add and it's just a very, very quick word and it's just underscoring the point made by Senator Garraway in terms of the timeliness of this. With the threats that we face on our borders, the challenges that we face in terms of keeping these borders as secure as possible and we know how porous those borders can be. The timing of bringing this legislation to Parliament where we are increasing the penalties and I believe it is from $3,000.00 to $12,000.00 that is a significant increase…

Mr. President: Excuse me, how much? Was it from $10,000.00?

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: 3 to 12 and it's broadening those who will be charged and will be committing offence such as those who are harbouring the captives etc. So I certainly lend my support to the passage of this Bill and the amendments that are laid out before us. The timing of this is absolutely appropriate.

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

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I just want to thank my fellow Member for his support here and just to reiterate this point of harbouring. I'm not sure if the case I cited with the taxi driver taking him to somewhere else, if that could fall under that penalty of harbouring, it may not be but I think…

Mr. President: I think it would be quite a stretch.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: What?

Mr. President: That will be quite a stretch. **(Laughter)** In fact I was wondering why you were meandering away from the Bill.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: He did not follow the protocol.

Mr. President: That's a completely separate…

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I understand, I know but the point I was getting at is he should feel the heavy hand of the Law, not $5,000 but probably $12,000 and the worst part of it is probably imprisonment as well. I am not going to ask for that but you must make an example of those who want to violate the Laws and expose a nation unnecessarily so.

Mr. President: But Senator in this instant case and in this Bill, this individual would not have fallen under the jurisdiction of this Bill. This is a completely separate issue dealing with breach of the protocol, this is an immigration matter.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: We understand that.

Mr. President: Again 37 in the rules.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: The point must be made and I agree, Mr. President. The point must be made that people who violate rules or so would be as it relates to our immigration would be penalised and penalised to the full extent of the law. So with these, Mr. President, I move for the second reading of the Bill.

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

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I beg to move that the

Bills

Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

Question proposed.
Question put and agreed to.
Senate in Committee.
Senate resumes.

Mr. President: Members, I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole Senate and considered Clause by Clause without there being any 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.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

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

Question proposed.
Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a third time and passed.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading, a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Eastern

Bills

Caribbean Securities Regulatory and Commission Agreement Bill, 2021.

Clerk: A Bill to incorporate the agreement establishing the Eastern Caribbean Securities Regulatory Commission, seeking to relocate the agreement to Cap 299A shortly entitled, Eastern Caribbean Securities Regulatory Commission Agreement Bill, 2021.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

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

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

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. Mr. President, before this Honourable House, the Eastern Caribbean Regulatory Commission Bill, 2021 forms part of a suite of Bills that will be presented this evening, not evening as yet, Mr. President, sorry about that, that would be presented today in this Honourable House. This Bill forms part of a harmonised approach by the Eastern Caribbean Securities Commission to improve the regulatory framework of how the security operates within the region. Mr. President, the ECCU is made up of 8 Member States and these Member States are governed and operate under this agreement. Grenada being a Member, Mr. President, we are doing our part in ensuring that this amendment is completed. As I indicated, it's a harmonised legislation where all the other Member States, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Montserrat, Dominica, Antigua, Anguilla and St. Kitts and Nevis all have to participate in this amendment process to ensure that this suite of legislations

are so amended to improve our securities function; the financial activities within the Member States.

Mr. President, this is a very important and significant amendment. These three Bills are quite extensive in their span and also in the context as well. Mr. President, this is so done to ensure that we improve how we operate with finances in the region. Mr. President, by way of background, since 2001, 8 member countries of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU) operates as a single jurisdiction with respect to domestic securities market and of course, currently St. Kitts and Nevis is heading the Monetary Council, they are the Chairman of the Monetary Council and of course our Governor Timothy Antoine who heads the Board of Directors. I think it is important that we make mention of that, he is leading the charge to ensure that we continue to function in that regard. Mr. President, this was accomplished by the passage of Common Securities Legislations. So what we are doing now in the harmonised approach was done previously by all our Member States and so this is a repeat in improving how we operate at the securities market level.

The Eastern Caribbean Securities Regulatory Commission is responsible for regulating and supervising the Regional Securities Market and we have one of our most important companies, GRENLEC, is secured under the Securities Market as well. So, Mr. President, we must understand the importance of this amendment in ensuring that we protect those assets. In April of 2001, the Eastern Caribbean Securities Regulatory Commission submitted a request for consideration for ordinary membership in the International Organization of Securities Commission. Mr. President, this international organisation, that is the organisation that regulates all the other international securities around the world, be it in the United States, Europe wherever. What the Member States are seeking to do is to get membership to that International Commission and that will also help in terms of strengthening the regulatory framework, being able, that we have to meet those requirements for us to be part of that market. It also provides an opportunity, Mr. President, for us to be more competitive, to be open so it allows for other securities or other companies outside of Grenada or outside of the region to participate in our Securities Market and vice versa.

Mr. President, when that request was made and the assessment was done, it

was found that our legislation was lacking to some extent and hence the reason where we are today.

In March 2015, the Commission received assistance from the International Monetary Fund to review the regional legislative framework. The IMF reviewed the consolidated deficiencies identified by the Commission and concerns were reviewed for market participation and other interesting parties. Accordingly, after consultation with the territories, the Commission, the Eastern Caribbean Securities Regulatory Agreement was reviewed and three Bills were proposed for adoption in a harmonised manner. So, Mr. President, after that review was done with support from the International Monetary Fund, it was proposed that instead of having one Bill, one Act, it was stripped into three separate Acts which is the Securities Agreement and you have the Securities Bill and the Investment Bill. Mr. President, this is done in an effort to improve the efficiency of the regulatory framework within the Member States to ensure that whatever transaction that has taken place or plans to take place is done so in a safe manner for persons who are investing and also to ensure that persons do not get defrauded in any way but to protect those investments for persons who put forward in some cases, their life savings. Mr. President, we know of that experience with the CLICO/BAICO investment where a number of persons in some cases I believe have not recovered financially and in some cases mentally from that loss of their investment. Mr. President, the securities structure and regulatory framework was probably non-existent or weak back then and as such we believe that this amendment will go a long way in protecting persons who seek to do investment going forward on the Securities Market.

Mr. President, the Eastern Caribbean Securities Regulatory Commission application for ordinary membership in the International Organisation of Securities Commission remains outstanding until countries implement their revised Eastern Caribbean Securities Commission Agreement. So as it stands right now, none of the Member States can get that approval to be an associate member unless we pass this legislation and enact them and it must be done. So far, Mr. President, Antigua and Barbuda has passed and enacted theirs but it has not been brought into force. Grenada is the second to enact them, once we receive the support of this Honourable House today to pass the suite of Bills going forward, Mr. President. And

once that is done, we will see an application as we was also informed, Mr. President, that the Commission has resubmitted the application to the International Organization of Securities Commission for membership. It is anticipated that the application would be submitted at the Board for approval at the next Board Meeting. However all that would be dependent on each of the Member States doing what is necessary to have those Laws amended or enacted and brought into force.

Mr. President, this Bill contains six Clauses, Clause 3 provides for the acceptance of the agreement, it spells out how the agreement, how one would accept this agreement. Clause 4 provides for being part of the international community where this agreement stands and it will have legal force in the State of Grenada. Clause 5 provides for amendment under article 33 to reflect the Schedule. What this is saying, Mr. President, is that going forward, future amendments to this legislation, we would not have to come back to this Honourable House but it can be done by an Order of the Minister for Finance. So recommendations that may come from the International Securities Commission, those recommendations for amendment, the Minister for Finance can make those changes by an Order and so we do not have to come back to the House to make those changes. Clause 6, Mr. President, the creation of a criminal offence for non-compliance. So with this contribution, Mr. President, I want to offer this Bill, the Eastern Caribbean Securities Regulatory Bill, 2021 for its second reading. Thank you.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give support to the particular Bill, investment funds bill and of course the suite that will follow in subsequent Bills that will be presented. I want to give a general context to this and why the Private Sector supports the passage of this suite of Bills. Because, Mr. President, one of the challenges we face in our region and in particular the OECS is the operation of a securities environment that can offer instruments to our Private Sector and to funds in general. So for example

we have a number of pension funds in our country and in the region that cannot attract the requisite returns on their investment funds because there are limited instruments within the region that they could invest in. So let us compare ourselves to Trinidad for example. Trinidad, for example may have various instruments in the Petro Sector that you can invest in and funds can invest in to gain the returns that the funds would require so that it can help the various people and employees who are part of that pension fund. It could grow at a rate that when they do come to retire they could get the requisite funds to retire comfortably. We have been challenged with that in our region and further in the Grenada's context, we are also bad through various acts that GARFIN has control of and the Minister for Finance, that if a pension fund was to go outside of the region to invest, special permission have to be granted. So it really limits and constricts what we can do.

This suite of Bills that are coming to the House of course offers a couple things in my view. The first one is that, it creates the administrative framework that says to us that the Commission and the various powers that is going to be put within the purview of the Commission ensures that the particular instruments and the environment within which these things are going to operate is going to be following a particular standard to ensure that securities and all the other aspects are properly managed. The people who are offering instruments have to be vetted and so on. So it gives some of us who are interested in the Private Sector who wants to engage in the Securities Market, some degree of confidence that this is being done and administered properly. So that it is important to have that. So it creates that environment in the first instance and of course the second one is the cost.

The cost to attract funds for expansion and development and for investment comes at a high cost for businesses in the region. First of all if we want to expand our businesses traditionally, we have to go to banks or through overdraft type facilities where the interest rate is not really competitive and is usually exceedingly high. The Securities Market would offer various types of instruments at much reduced interest cost and cost of funds that can encourage businesses to look to, so that they can get it at a better rate and be able to consider doing more investments that probably they would not have done because of the cost of attraction of those funds. So it is important from those two angles from where I sit in supporting this

and ensuring that we have a complete regulatory framework. And I know we have other things to come with virtual and other things that is so important based on the change in environment. I was reading just yesterday, Mr. President, with your leave, the Governor of the Central Bank had a document put forward in FROC and he was saying in his speech in the FROC that it was important for businesses to embrace the technological changes, the rapid pace at which it is happening probably because of COVID or not but it is pushing us in a direction where we have to get more with the digital understanding and the digital platforms that is being offered. We have DCash in Grenada now, we have to get ourselves and our businesses aligned to that kind of virtual world and what is happening. And the Securities Market has to get there as well. It is not as tradition and it is important to see that we are taking the move to get ourselves there and to prepare ourselves. I heard the mover of the Bill said Antigua has gone and the intent is to get this done across all the OECS. The quicker we could get this done, Mr. President, the better we will all be. I am fully supportive of supporting this Bill and letting it pass through the Houses and hopefully our colleagues in the rest of the Islands would do so. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator De Allie. Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I will give way to…

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am just asking for consideration under article 12, "Composition of the Commission", not to make any amendments, that when consideration is being given for other professional bodies to nominate people with the necessary qualifications under section 3 that the Labour Movement should be considered to make representation of nominees also, just an observation. Because without pension and workers monies and I'm not trying to stop it but it is not listed here, given an important… remember tripartite, Government, Private Sector and Labour and to me that is a glaring omission, so it is not here. So I am asking for this consideration, not to stop it but as

a commitment to have Labour there. You could have pension, you could speak about CLICO and BAICO, it's workers and… Yes.

(A Member said all of us)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: All of us. Thanks.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I stand to give my full support to the second reading of the Bill that is being presented at this point. Twenty seven (27) years of my life I was employed within the Insurance Sector. When I left, I left at the position of Agency Manager, and I understand the difficulties that a lot of Grenadians would have experienced, myself included as a result of the collapse of CLICO, BAICO, CLICO International Life and so forth within the country, and how difficult it became for these folks. Think of just the Seamen and Waterfront Workers Union and all the pension monies that would have been tied within this investment and in the twinkle of an eye, everything just disappeared.

What I'm excited about with this Commission, Regulatory Commission, Mr. President, is the fact that companies, yes, will be able to invest and to utilise resources but there will be a Regulatory Commission within the jurisdiction to govern the movements of those resources. Prior to that, there was none. So you had CLICO, BAICO and the Head Office in Trinidad and Grenadians invested their monies, pension funds and annuity funds and just name it, and those monies was shipped off to Trinidad, and when they collapsed, you had no assets within the jurisdiction itself that could have sufficed to take care of the liabilities, CLICO International Life. CLICO's growth is so big and then they moved to a headquarters in Barbados to take care of all the… well Barbados and the EC Islands. That's where the Currency Union came into play, and what you find happening from that movement, monies that was invested into the company after 1987, rather than move directly to Trinidad, moved to Barbados and then it became tricky, because monies moved from Barbados into Trinidad. So when you were trying to recoup and to see

how you could build on your asset base to ensure that you secure the investors in Grenada, which I dare say was in high millions, hundreds of millions of dollars, there was nothing. Imagine you had a lot of millions of dollars move from here through CLICO International Life to Barbados and when the company folded, just a few assets you had that couldn't total $50 million. This Securities Commission will put an end to this.

Another significant point, if you have to invest the monies, because we had an annuity or investment portfolio that will offer you 8% interest on your investment. It's obvious you won't be able to raise those monies here to give you that high rate of return. So you're going to invest it outside, that will be governed by the Regulatory Commission to ensure that what you're doing is within the ambits of the Law. So everything that is done now, though late, for those of us who are suffering, it's an extremely good thing now to continue to protect the strength of the EC dollar because the strain here would have been on the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union. This here now and I'm extremely happy that the Central Bank is taking the lead to ensure that this is done and done right. I will trust that those of us who are seeking to recoup something; this will help us to get something. It may not, but the bottom line is for those to come, they would be secured and protected that the ripping off of the dollars of the small States within the Eastern Caribbean Union would be a thing of the past, because everything here would be regulated.

There is one point that came up and I **(laughter)**, I was so happy in, that investment was done in the housing market in United States in Methanol Plants and so forth. When you look and dig deep, what was reported was not really what was happening, so it was basically a shell. What this is proposing, if you have the investment and you have to invest elsewhere, they would do the necessary checks to give you the certificate that they can do it. And if you have an investment and you decide you want to sell it to someone else, you just can't go and offer it up, it has to come through the Commission, so there is protection here for the investment dollars of the citizen, and to ensure that whatever transaction is done is done above board, is transparent. Some of us would have invested also in SGL, lots of, thousands of dollars again was siphoned off from Grenadians, but as it is said, every time there is a problem you build systems to mitigate against it happening again, and this is what

we need, a system that has been created to protect investors within the Currency Union. So with these few words, Mr. President, I want to give my continued support for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Garraway. Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, thank you very much. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues for supporting the Bill before us and for offering further contributions that bring more clarity as to why this Bill is so important for us at this point in time.

Mr. President, I just want to respond directly to Senator Lewis' suggestion or recommendation for consideration for the Union as respect to the composition of the Commission. Mr. President, while such a recommendation may fit within the context of what would have transpired in the past, I believe that the construct of where we are now is more being appealed from an international standpoint and as such, it was done probably to capture all aspects from an international standpoint and not being prejudice to leave out any important sector. Because it is done in the context, investment is done in context from an individual basis, meaning that it's the individual himself have to make that decision to make that investment and so, what would have transpired before, a lot of those investments were done through intermediary organisations or individuals who would have come forward and proposed, look, we can take these monies and as my fellow colleague Senator indicated, we can add 5, 6 or 8% on top of that for you, but what would have happened is that there was no framework, nothing to hold him or her or that institution accountable if that didn't work out, or it fell through, or those monies were lost.

And that is what this Bill is seeking to do, to ensure that it doesn't happen again going forward. But I do understand his concern for his stakeholders in that regard, but I believe that the construct of this suite of Bills, will in a great extent be able to protect and allow for greater transparency, allow for an opportunity for persons to ask questions, to investigate before investing their monies in such securities going forward. So, with these few contributions, Mr. President, I commend the Bill for a second reading.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate 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.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. Chair, I beg to, I think we missed a part…

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

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

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 put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Bills
Adjournment / Resumption
Bills

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes, I suggest we adjourn for lunch based on time and then to the next Bill.

Mr. President: Well it's okay. Yes because if we begin the next Bill now, it's not fourteen minutes, well according to my clock, I carry Greenwich Mean Time **(inaudible comments)**. In any event if we begin now, it will take us into the, beyond the lunch hour. We started at nine, the Law sets out that there ought to be a break, so in compliance with the Regulations, with the Law, of course there are only some aspects of the Law that applies here. Hours are set out in Regulations in accordance with I think it is section 50 of the Constitution. **(Inaudible comments)** Well I'm saying it seems as though the House is concurring and if there is concurrence of the House that we break for lunch, I will so direct and so move.

Honourable Members, this House now stands adjourned for an hour and 15 minutes, so that we get back here at 2 o'clock. Yes? For the luncheon period.

Senate adjourn for lunch at 12:45 p.m.

Senate resumes at 2:23 p.m.

Mr. Deputy President: The Senate now resumes.

(Clerk converse with the Deputy President)

Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): Yes, right. Members welcome back from lunch. I think we were at Bills and we're now… I see Senator Cox, your light is on.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. Deputy President, thank you. Mr. Deputy President, I beg to introduce for first reading, a Bill for an Act shortly entitled Securities Bill, 2021.

Bills

Clerk: A Bill to repeal the Securities Act CAP. 299A and replace it with an enhanced framework that provides for the protection of investors in securities, in and from within the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union, shortly entitled Securities Bill, 2021.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. Deputy President, I beg for 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. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. Mr. President, this Bill, Securities Bill of 2021 as indicated earlier, is a part of the suite of Bills from the previous Bill that was passed just before we break for lunch, Mr. Deputy President. The Securities Bill while a separate component of the Eastern Caribbean Securities Commission Agreement and the Investment Bill, still it cannot function alone, Mr. Deputy President. This Bill works in tandem with the other Bills, hence the reason why all three are recommended to as a suite, and a harmonised Bill for the Union, the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union.

Mr. Deputy President, the previous Bill, a number of discussion and debate would have ensued on that Bill and as such it encapsulates this Securities Bill as well. This is just dealing with the securities aspect of it. This Bill seeks to repeal the current Securities Act Cap 299A and to replace it with an enhanced framework that provides for protection for investors in securities and from within the Currency Union. So because we are moving now, Mr. Deputy President, towards being more open to the international committee and being part of that organisation, what you find happening, this Securities Bill would not be just for securities activities within the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union, but also because we're going in the internationally scene, so international companies wishing to participate in our securities investment within the region will also have to confirm to this as well. So that is what this seeks to do. Previously what was there did not have the capacity to

do that, and as such this is where the improvement is being made. This Bill, Mr. Deputy President, is regulating the securities market exchange and for persons engaged in the securities business, and we have discussed this earlier on, where persons who would have put themselves up as being able or having the competencies to take investment and make the necessary investment on the securities market, now those persons were not regulated, they're probably with another good friend, they probably would have gone to University together and know this person who have the expertise of skill set, or the capacity or certification in some case and those discussions would have ensued and you find when the risk arise there is nothing to protect the persons who invest. So this Bill will take care of that. Also, I am regulating the public issuance of security, so if a company decides to go public to issue securities publicly, this Bill is also there to seek to regulate that as well.

The Bill, Securities Bill, 2021 seeks to remove the regulatory and supervisory hindrances of the Eastern Caribbean Securities Regulatory Commission. So those bottlenecks that were there previously, this Bill seeks to improve that. As I indicated earlier on, it's an enhanced framework that is being done now to ensure that the function of the Securities Market is one that is more efficient and safe for persons that are doing business there.

Mr. Deputy President, this Bill is a very huge Bill. This Bill has 15 Parts and 177 Clauses and 2 Schedules; that alone gives you an indication as what is contained therein. It's a significant Bill that basically peels away at every aspect of that operations of the Securities Market, and so it is a very important thing that I believe that we are doing from the Union standpoint, the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union standpoint, to strengthen our currency, to strengthen how we operate and to bring more confidence so that persons wishing to participate in our financial economy within the region can do so and feel comfortable doing that. So I think this really brings some good clarity for us in that regard, Mr. Deputy President. So, Mr. Deputy President, with this contribution I want to recommend or commend this Bill for a second reading.

Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): It appears that we have no lights. Senator… Before you proceed, I know I'm sitting in the Chair, but I had some comments I want to make…

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Well the Chair always makes comments so you. **(Laughter)**

Mr. Deputy President: Unfortunately I'm sitting in the Chair but I'm going to take some privilege and make some comments **(laughter)**, before you wrap it up.

I too don't object, I think the Private Sector supports that. I said that this morning that we'll support the suite of Bills. I just wanted to comment on a few things that I think is important. Apart from offering the international flavour that will bring a number of different types of instruments to us and possibilities to partake in, with the necessary cost savings and so on that was mentioned earlier this morning, I think the one of the most important thing for us in the region and in Grenada in particular as we pass this, is the education element. And the education element I'm speaking of is, some of us in the Private Sector and company who may want to list on the Securities Exchange Market, different types of securities, what can be listed, what cannot be listed and the Act speaks to it as well. What types and so on? It gives a definition for security that I was trying to bring up a short while ago, which is most interesting. If members had a chance to take a look at it, what is defined as a security, let me see if I can quickly bring it up, to make the point I want to make. Right, security and what comprise a security. It talks about a bond, debenture, note and other evidence of indebtedness, a share, stock, unit, unit certificate, an instrument commonly known as a security, a document, instrument, writing in evidence on option, subscription, investment contract, asset back security, a derivative, but does not include currency, a cheque, bill of exchange, a certificate or document constituting evidence of any interest in a deposit account with a financial institution, a credit union etc. I only speak about that in detail because it is important for the average person to know, when we pass these Bills, what can happen, what are the various things that are offered for us to engage in investment, but more importantly, how are we going to be educated to understand the language? The

language of financial investment and investments across these things are very germane to the particular thing. So for example, computer people when they speak their language if you're not a computer person, you don't have a clue what they're talking about. Similarly in this investment climate with securities, unless you are expert in the business or a broker or somebody offering the services, you really don't have an idea of what is really being said and what are your risks or gains to be thinking about getting into this market.

So, I stress the fact that we need to look at getting a education programme as part of this, and I'm hoping that ECCB will invest in the jurisdictions to lead educations not only for companies in the Private Sector, government as well, because government trades on the Securities Market to get funding at reduced cost. So it is important that we engage in that, and that's the only thing I want to add and I agree Senator Cox that the Act is huge, sections are large. I don't know if we can challenge it in that essence because it has gone through the rigours of the greater legal minds than ours, but for sure I believe there is an issue about how we educate our people. What does the common man see when we pass that, how does this affect their life or not, if they were to buy shares in a company that is listed or a particular security. Can they do that and how do they do that, are there brokers available for us in our country that could guide us and introduce us to these type of securities insurance? So those would be my comments Senator Cox that I hope we could take on board and hope ECCB could help us with the educational aspect of it. Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Deputy Chair, I think your points are well intended and we must commend the Ministry for Legal Affairs, because it came to my understanding that they would have read the Bills in its entirety. So I commend them for that, so that brings some level of comfort for me who may have not been able to touch certain parts. But I think the recommendation, Mr. Deputy President, is one that has strong merit and is definitely needed, and what I do know is that the ECCB do have a structure in place where they have a number of series, televised series, but they also do it on the internet with various programmes touching on different issues, how the Union operate, different

topics, different pertinent topics like for example, I know that they had one recently on the new digital cash, so it, there is an opportunity for dialogue and communication in that regard. So I think it's right and fitting for us as government to make a recommendation that once we get past the stage of enactment, even before enforcement, there is a clear opportunity to do an education. They can just upload it on their regular programming and have expertise there to give guidance and explanation.

As you can see, Mr. Deputy President, this business of securities and investment, financial investment is for persons who you have to have, you got to have the knowledge, if you don't understand pharmacology or even internal medicine you probably have no business trying to do surgery on somebody and this in itself is no different. If you don't understand the market, probably leave your money in the credit union, or get somebody to help you **(laughter)**, get somebody to help you to guide you in your investment, somebody, an institution who knows what this, what the risk are, what needs to happen. At the same time, sometime, in some cases one can even break the Law if you don't understand what you're doing as well. So it is for their reason and for that purpose that persons need to seek guidance in that regard. So, Mr. President, with this further comments I want to commend the Bill for a second reading. Thank you.

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

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

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

Bills

Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole Senate and passed without amendment. Senator Cox.

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

Question put and agreed to.
Chairman's Report adopted.

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

Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a third time and passed.

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

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled Investment Funds Bill, 2021.

Clerk: A Bill to enhance the competitiveness of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union jurisdiction in the international investment funds market, shortly entitled Investment Funds Bill, 2021.

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

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. Deputy President, I beg for move that the relevant Standing Orders of the Senate be so 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. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): Senator Cox.

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

Question proposed.

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

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. Deputy President, as I indicated earlier that this is the last Bill from the suite, and this is the Investment Funds Bill. Mr. Deputy President, at the 59th Meeting of the Commission held on the 23rd of November 2015, the Commission of the Eastern Caribbean Securities Regulatory Commission unanimously agreed to develop new and modern collective Investment Scheme Legislation to govern investment fund businesses in the Eastern Caribbean Securities Market. As such this Bill was enacted on to ensure, to replace the substantive Part, Part 11 of the Securities Act Cap 299A. The objectives of this Investment Funds Bill, 2021, are to bring the Law into harmony with international standards as indicated earlier, with the other two Bills; to give the Eastern Caribbean Securities Regulatory Commission the flexibility to license and register different types of investment funds and set conditions for the operations of these funds, to provide for licensing of three categories of funds and registration of foreign investment funds; to provide the Eastern Caribbean Securities Regulatory Commission with the full range of investigatory inspection and enforcement power to regulate investment funds; to enhance the competitiveness of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union jurisdiction in the investment fund market and to attract foreign investment funds to the region.

So, Mr. Deputy President, if you notice, these are the key objectives that are set out in this Bill, while at the same time trying to encourage investment. There is a framework to ensure those new investment are protected and to ensure that persons

are protected, person's investments of protected, but what it does, it provides for a wider scope. This Bill covers three particular types of funds as referenced: public funds, private and professional funds and foreign funds. So this is the scope, it is a wider scope; it is in line with international standards. As such it will attract investments from outside of the region into the region to create more revenue opportunities for persons on the Securities Market. So, Mr. Deputy President, this Bill is divided into 6 parts and it contains 66 Clauses.

I want to just make mention of one important Clause, that is Clause 34 which basically regulates the aspect of an investment fund administrator. And I think that goes back to the issue that we had with CLICO, BAICO, so that person or persons who was the administrator for that investment would so have to now get a licence and will have to ascribe to certain Regulations, and so can be investigated, can be arrested or whatsoever, funds garnished, assets seized, whatever the case may be, but there is a clear process, not like what transpired in the past, where the persons who will seem to have caused such distress, seem to be the one actually getting away with everything else. Because they normally doesn't lose their investment but they make sure that they recover theirs and everybody else's go under the drain, so we need to fix this. So with these few contributions, Mr. Deputy President, I commend the Bill for its second reading.

Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): There don't seem to be any rebuttals Senator, so we go ahead.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole Senate and passed without amendment.

Question put and agreed to.
Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): Minister Cox.

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

Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a third time and passed.

Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): Virtual Asset? Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes. Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled Virtual Asset Business Bill 2021.

Clerk: A Bill to provide for the registration and supervision of virtual asset business in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union shortly entitled Virtual Asset Business Bill, 2021.

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

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Oder 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.

Deputy President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. Mr. Deputy President, we've just heard my colleague Senator present a suite of Bills which speak to the Regulations, controls that are being put in place, investment for securities for traditional financial instruments. The Bill before us, although not directly part of that suite of Legislation, it comes from the same bowels if you like institutionally through the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank and intended to bring a similar level of rigor, not for traditional investment instruments but this time for virtual asset and the Regulation of virtual asset businesses. So the Bill proposes to introduce a harmonised registration framework that will be overseen by the national regulators in the eight (8) Member States of the Eastern Caribbean Union. This initiative is undertaken by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank response to the emergence of virtual assets and the need for member countries to put the appropriate measures in place to address the risks associated with virtual asset.

So within the Eastern Caribbean Union, Central Banks has decided what other Central Banks have done in other international jurisdictions in terms of the treatment of virtual assets. And a virtual asset is defined as "a digital representation of value that can be digitally traded or transferred and can be used for payment or investment purposes and does not represent fiat currency of securities so this is the fiat currency of security. So this is the differentiation, the fiat currency of security speaks to the investments, the currencies that were treated in the previous three

Bills. The fiat currency is one that is used by a Central Bank and is the official or legal tender of a country or Currency Union and is backed by that country or Currency Union, so for example the Eastern Caribbean dollar, the Trinidad dollar, the US dollar, the Euro, the Pound Sterling. But what we are speaking of are those virtual assets which include and there is a lot of talk about this right now in the media, in the Financial Services Sector, it includes crypto currencies and the most well-known crypto currency is Bitcoin. We have all heard a lot of the hoopla about Bitcoin but there are many others. There is Ethereum, Litecoin, Ripple, there are dozens and dozens of crypto currencies in circulation. These crypt currencies are digitally created in exchange by private individuals and groups and fall outside of the bounds of state monetary policy. So due to this institutional independence and the levels of technical security that is associated with these transactions, these transactions are often anonymous, they cannot be traced. And therefore they can be used for wholly legitimate transactions but they can also be exploited for criminal activities.

Mr. President, the whole area of crypto currencies and these virtual assets are also heralded by some as an opportunity, the political term is democratising financial services and this is using technologies such as block chain which illuminate the need for intermediaries and the whole issue of corresponding banking that is such a challenge for us in the Caribbean, other developing nations. There are those that say this could actually revolutionise in developing nations how we transact. And it is a direct threat to the traditional banking system and even though we may think we are a long way away from this, Barbados for example is actually establishing itself as a Fintech Centre, Financial Technologies Centre within the region and they are doing some very, very creative things. They actually have their home grown block chain technology provider Bitt Inc., and they have been consulting across the region, and they are looking to see how they can scale up what they are doing in Barbados.

So there are two elements to this, there is the grey black market elements, the more nefarious criminal activities but there is some real substance to this technology as well. So although it is volatile the virtual asset industry certainly in developed markets is showing significant market growth and a forecast, the projections are for continued significant growth in the future. So the industry is starting to mature and

moving from the fringes of the Financial Services Sector and is being endorsed by some major traditional institutional investors, so there is genuine, legitimate interest in this area. But there are still many players who are still operating outside the existing financial authorities, the systems infrastructures, they're in the market. So it's still operating in a highly unregulated environment which is subject to abuse.

Therefore there is a global move by traditional financial services to start looking at how they can become more regulatory compliant and how they can kind of move toward applying some of the checks and balances that again we heard in the previous presentations, from more traditional investment activities to bring some of that rigor to the virtual world.

So internationally, many of the larger players are working with regulatory authorities to improve areas such as security and most importantly the whole issue of trust and trust is central to any financial transaction. So whether this is through registration and reporting, whether it is following the due diligence processes, the know your customer approach that is used in traditional financial services, whether it is the Anti-Money Laundering Counter Terrorism Financing, Proceeds of Crime, Compliance and Reporting requirements, moving toward regularising in those areas. So however here within the Caribbean region, whatever level of trading activity in virtual asset is low compared to the more developed market, there is a level of virtual asset trading that is taking place. I used Barbados as an example even though that falls outside of the Eastern Caribbean Union and it is expected that here within the region we too at some point in time will follow this global trend that we are seeing. Therefore the Eastern Caribbean Union, through the ECCB has taken that step forward, that visionary step to start putting in place through the Legislation that is before us to start identifying first of all through registration those players that are currently active within the region and to bring some level of control to this market.

So as I said whereas the three Bills that were just presented speak to those controls and that regulatory environment for traditional securities through the Eastern Caribbean Securities Commission, the Bill before us proposes that virtual asset as defined will fall not under the Eastern Caribbean Securities Commission but the National Regulatory Authority of the eight (8) Member States of the ECCU. So for us here in Grenada, that would be GARFIN, other Islands would use their own

indigenous internal regulatory authority.

So with the cross over between the virtual and the real world becoming more common and this growing financial international market providing greater access for us here in the Caribbean to participate and to access those international markets. The framework outline the legislation before us creates an environment where for us here in Grenada and other members of the ECCU can participate in this new area. And that's for allowing for legitimate trades, legitimate transactions to be part of this global virtual financial network but it also puts the necessary checks and balances in place to address any potential criminal activities.

So the Bill before us, I will just run through some of the key Clauses, there are 24 Clauses and 3 Schedules in the Bill. Clauses 3 to 11 speak to the registration process and what is required for registration, so who needs to be registered and what is outlined within the Bill. A person is defined as persons who operate virtual asset businesses, they must be registered and these are persons whether you are a new entrant or you have been operating for a significant period of time in this space, all are required to be registered. So this is a catch all to get a full view. If you want to play in this field you must be registered and the requirements for registration include those operators providing a written policies, rules and procedures which speak to anti money laundering, counter-terrorism measures, data management and security. So you need to provide full disclosure in these security related issues. The criteria that is laid out for registrants who are fit and proper, you must be able to provide your financial status, your level of solvency, your education and your qualifications, your expertise in this area. It speaks of stating your reputation and your financial integrity, whether you have any previous convictions, so these are the different categories that define whether a person or registrant is fit and proper. The requirements of the registrant include placing in escrow the equivalent asset, such assets equivalent to 40% of the total value of client funds held by the registrant. So this is to ensure that there are reasonable levels of liquidity in that institution and that speaks to an institution being able to demonstrate that they are able to manage risk.

Clause 12 provides for the requirements for an external auditor to be appointed and audited financial statements to be provided annually. So again this speaks to accountability, it speaks to transparency, it speaks to proper record

keeping by external auditors. Clauses 13, 14 and 15 speaks to the requirement of registrant when involved in the issue or sale of virtual assets and the requirement for a published prospectus and that prospectus would provide all of the details and all of the information that is required for a client to make a decision with regards to an investment or a purchase. And the client will have the right to withdraw their purchase in the event that there is misrepresentation or false information provided in that prospectus and the registrant is liable to pay compensation to persons who relied on a prospectus containing a misrepresentation or false information. So again this speaks to there being recourse and speaks to the whole issue of governance, of transparency and accountability and again about building that whole critical issue of trust.

Clause 17 provides for the fees payable under the Bill which are laid out in the First Schedule. Clause 19 provides for offences and penalties, so whether these are for false declarations in applications, whether it is providing false or misleading information to retain or gain a client, operating without being registered. So those as I said in one of those earlier Clauses, the intention is whether you've been operating for a significant period or you are a new entrant. Everyone has to be registered and if you are operating without being registered then you are subject to penalties and fines.

Clauses 21, 22 and 23 empower the Minister to amend Schedules and to issue Regulations which speak to the management of this area. As things stand now with the Bill in front of us, there are no Regulations attached but the ECCB are working on harmonised Regulations which are being drafted and which will be issued in due course. Clause 26, the final Clause speaks of consequential amendments to the Proceeds of Crime, the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Regulations and the Proceeds of Crime Act and for those pieces of Legislation to include provisions which speak to virtual asset businesses. So this is bringing this area that was traditionally on the fringes deeply into the securities related reporting and legal framework.

Schedule 1 provides the fees that are prescribed within the Bill. Schedule 2 sets out the forms of the certificate of registration and Schedule 3 provides for the requirements of the prospectus that would be published on the issuing of sale of

virtual asset. So, Mr. Deputy President, the Legislation before us is as comprehensive as it is, it is the start of this new and emerging technology, certainly new for us here within the Caribbean. And what I would anticipate is that this will be a very dynamic piece of Legislation which evolve as this virtual asset market evolves and something tells me it's actually going to evolve far faster, as futuristic as this all may sound to us, I believe the reality is we are going to see very quickly the emergence of this virtual financial services and assets, we will start to see it accelerate within the region. So it's for those reasons, Mr. Deputy President, that I commend this Bill for its second reading. I thank you.

Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie): Senator, who's going? Senator Roderick St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. Just information, questioning to the Leader of Government's Business as presenting this, I will say it's a ground breaking I guess for the sub region but of course for Grenada being involved. Whilst we do this and whilst Senator De Allie sitting as Deputy President welcomed the previous suite of Bills regarding this whole monetary situation and of course just looking at the virtual asset and whilst it might look as good business and ideas for investors and so on, my query in the back of my head is what is Government's policy as it sits right now because we're putting this Bill to us to support. How does Government see itself as a Government utilising these sorts of platforms for its own business transactions? Because Government is perhaps one of the biggest vendors in any part of the world and so you would be interfacing with different service providers doing different types of things. So this is my interest as to how well Government is prepared to pioneer into this new approach, this is just public interest.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator Cadet.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. Mr. Deputy President, I rise to give my steadfast support to this Bill, it is a Bill that I consider to

be very imperative and very timely. Mr. Deputy President, I believe if you… I don't know if you do it by the way but if you trade on the stock market, I believe that one of the things right about now, one asset you will be looking to buy or possibly trade would be crypto currency. Maybe a decade ago, maybe 2010 crypto currency particularly Bitcoin was worth less than 0.10 cents per coin, now to date in 2021 Bitcoin is worth over US $35,000.00 per coin. And it is expected that by 2035 that one coin would be worth $12m. So it is an area with huge interest, it is what we may call hot bread on the stock market. People are trading it, you may see the stocks go up, go down, some are saying that we expect that to sky rocket in the next couple of months, weeks or years, so there are great interest. Bitcoin or crypto currency while it has been existing for a while, the concept really grew or fortified really in 2008 after we would have had the global financial crisis and the financial world reliance on the Central Banks where after the global financial crisis, some people believed that the banks have too many power and wanted to decentralise financial transaction and as a result block chain technology and Bitcoin was created to decentralise financial transactions and since then it has been growing. And, Mr. President, it is important to note that while this will promulgate new technologies, products and financial services, it is also an important interest for terrorist and money launderers, those who use it to do a whole set of illicit activities and particularly because of how this technology is created is that you can be anonymous or create synonyms that you can basically conduct these activities and be basically unknown.

Research is showing also that in 2019 and I am basically putting this historical context because I think it is important why I believe this Legislation needs to be passed. In 2019 they said that $2.8b has been laundered by criminals in 2019, US$2.8b, Mr. Deputy President, that is a significant amount of money. And so how do you stop that and try to mitigate against this continuous laundering of money using this platform and this is what we are trying to do, regulate so that we would be able to know the individuals that is in that space and be able to track their sort of engagement based on their activities.

But in this Bill, while I believe it has significant potential, I just have concerns over certain activities because, even with this $2.8b that criminals have been able to make in 2019 through using crypto currency, what we have found is that even

individuals who have legitimate business, virtual asset business, they are what you call Over-the-Counter Brokers. They are the ones who were involved with those criminals. So while the criminals would get those crypto currencies, they are the ones who would go and trade these virtual coins or crypto currency. So I think what is important about this Legislation, by knowing who is involved in that space and understanding their activities, we will be able to have a better understanding of the individuals, their business and what they are doing and that is why the prospectus is important to know how much they are willing to trade and when they are willing to trade and where those coins are derived from.

But in section 7 (5) when we are talking about fit and proper, I just have one particular concern there when you identify a person's education or other qualification experience regarding the type of virtual asset business the person intends to get involved in. When you look currently it's mainly young people who are involved in that space and as Senator Cox would have mentioned is that most of the older people are leaving their money in the credit union. But the fact is, is that mainly younger people are involved in the virtual asset space. So if we talking about education as a point of being fit and proper, I think we could encounter some level of challenges there because if you look now, even on TikTok or on social media, most of the people selling courses on virtual asset are young people, teenagers who are involved in that space. Some of them make millions of dollars just by trading on the stock market using virtual asset.

Additionally, in section 19 (2), when we're talking about the penalties and offences, I think for me personally, I think it's quite minute, very small. I don't think for the worth of that space, the worth of that industry, **"the person who commits an offence under this Act is liable on summary conviction of $10,000.00 and imprisonment for 2 years."** For one coin that is worth over $35,000.00 and that is just Bitcoin but then we know the potential is there for it to increase and other coins to increase. I just think it's a small amount. As Minister Stiell said it is a working document and maybe we might see that fee increase but I don't think that is serving as a deterrent in some cases for people who are involved in those illicit activities. But all in all, Mr. President, I think this legislation is very critical and very important at this point in time and I give it my full support. Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. Deputy President: Anyone else? Before the Deputy President exercises his privilege of the Chair, yes… **(Inaudible comments)** Thank you, Leader of Government's Business. I too believe that this is an interesting Bill. It speaks to the times, it speaks to giving us a lot of clarity on what is happening. But more importantly I think it really excites young people. I know young people already in this business who are doing trading in the various virtual assets that exist and the problem a lot of the young people have right in Grenada here is how to get the money back to Grenada because our local banks don't support that kind of transfer of monies that's trading on that particular forum in the virtual realm. So it creates blockages for growth of wealth among young people and there are a lot of young people involved in this and I think passing of this Bill under the auspices of ECCB is really going to excite them. What does ECCB bring to the table in being part of this? Of course is giving it the sense of regulation that needs to be put and giving it the sense of acceptance, that is something that can be looked into and can be encouraged. And that is something, I think that is really welcoming to our environment and the young people in the environment.

I believe the fit and proper Clause is important because as Senator Cadet indicated, there is a lot of potential, and the mover of the Bill, for illegal transactions to happen in this particular realm of virtual assets and Bitcoin. Remember you can exchange fiat currency for Bitcoin and then use the Bitcoin to trade or various aspects of things to trade. So there is nothing stopping companies and nothing stopping illegal traders to get in part of this. The advantages and disadvantages of block chain technology is just that, block chain technology gives you the security that it is not easily broken when you get on that platform to do your trades. But when the criminal elements get into it, it also provides serious challenges for law enforcement to really investigate and how you find and track down the people who use that for illicit and criminal activities especially money laundering and those other aspects that exist.

But the other aspect of this type of trading and virtual asset is the ability to reduce cost for us in the financial world, those of us who deal with banks, who have to transfer monies, who have to pay in currencies outside of US and Euros. This type of technology offers you to trade business to business, business to customer

directly without intermediaries. The mover of the Bill alluded to that, it offers businesses to reduce cost through intermediary banking and all that goes with that. So it provides opportunities there for us in the financial world to really look at this and exploit this to the benefit of all. There's the other aspect that it provides opportunity for new business. In the Act, there is a definition for what is new business and how you can get involved in new businesses. So again here is an interesting area for young people and you know we always quarrel that young people don't have anything to do and they're underemployed or they are not employed at all. Here it is, we offer a technology that is going to be run under the auspices of the ECCB to give them opportunities to really explore and see how we can build what we want to build. Of course with this kind of technology comes the whole issue of risk of data management and protection and cyber security measures. The Bill speaks to that but again that is something that continues to evolve and will be a huge risk as we go forward in that but something that needs to be managed going forward.

I also want to believe that the license arrangement, I know the act speaks to it in annual, probably we may want to consider something like every three years in order to save cost because twelve months these years goes around very quickly. So we may want to extend the licensing renewal to a three year cycle and see if that will be better for us to use for people who get into it and want to do business and for their licenses.

A most important part of this Act for me was the escrow and 40% of client funds needed to be held to protect potential investors in this particular field. It follows a very similar construct of the Insurance Act and what insurance companies are expected to do. I think that is a critical part… **(Inaudible comments/someone converse with the Deputy President)** Ok. So I am going to stop here because my President is back so he promises to give me the floor to continue so I give my President back to his chair, so I can go back down on the floor to do my finish up. Mr. President.

(Mr. President assumed the Chair and Senator De Allie returned to his seat)

Mr. President: Good afternoon Senators and let me apologise…

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

Mr. President: Let me apologise most profusely for my absence. You would notice that I didn't have lunch; I had to attend to some urgent personal business. Senator De Allie, I really want to most graciously and profusely thank you for discharging your duty as the Deputy President, always reliable, always efficient. You were taking the opportunity to register some comments and I will allow you to do so from your chair, you can continue.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate the opportunity to continue. I am going to wrap up shortly just a few more points to make. I was talking about the 40% of client funds that have to be held by the registrants in escrow which I think is a good protection mechanism that the Bill offers for us who get into this type of trading and what happens there. The other aspect for me is taxation, you know when we get into the world of virtual asset, where is your jurisdiction? One of the things that Senator Cadet didn't mention is when you get in trading of coins or various forms of coins, the market is a volatile market. In the sense that today it's worth $100 a coin, tomorrow it's worth $15,000.00, $30,000.00 a coin. There is huge movement so there is huge volatility. What that presents to us is huge gains and of course losses but huge gains and if you're paying attention to this market carefully, you can make significant gains. Of course you sell when you're up and you buy when you're down. The question is where does our tax people attack that, the gains and so on and how do our tax people get to understand where we can benefit from this kind of business and trading. And I say that to say that it means as we introduce these Acts and we do these things, our taxation needs to be looked for amendment and redo because as we get more into the virtual world and the digital movement, we have DCash as I mentioned this morning. As we start to do all of these transaction and our young people start to do trades from their phone and all of that and set up an account here in the US, wherever they have their account, the question is how do we get this into our taxation coffers and people will

pay their due and we have to think about that and how we do it.

I am certain that the wheel is not going to be reinvented, jurisdictions are doing this and we can see what they have done and fashion ours to suit. But we cannot pass these and contemplate the benefits it will bring and not contemplate how we're going to tax what happens there and the country can benefit from it. Remember, these types of trading and business requires huge infrastructure development. So what we talk about in terms of our IT, in terms of our broadband and the investment Government and Private Sector have to make in that, there must be ways to recover because very soon when we get into this, we will have to have broadband across our country at a speed and at a rate that is going to require significant investment. So we have to be prepared to think about that as well and how the country and the Private Sector can recover when we do these types of things.

I offer these to say that we not only have to be forward thinking in this, but forward thinking in the other aspects that it will put pressure on the society to do so that we make sure that when we come to do the other Act which is Remote Employment and we talk about attracting people to our jurisdiction to work remotely, broadband technology and that kind of thing and that infrastructure is going to be significant and if we really want to do it, we have to start thinking about it now and in that context. So I lay that for my Senator colleagues on the "Other Side" and to see how we can start that conversation as well.

And the last thing I want to raise on this particular Bill is the need for the education. Those of us with grey beards and other aspects that grey but we don't have it on is going to need significant education because Senator Cadet talks about young people who are millionaires but not all young people have the cash to make the investment. Some of us in the older realm have the cash and we need things to invest in, apart from land and car and house and so we are going to come to young people to find out how to trade in Bitcoin or whatever coin it is. So we need to educate our population at all levels and I think it's something that is going to be challenged. It provides opportunity for the new business as well, consultants to come from our own people who could go and educate, because I know a lot of young people are into this trading. The mover of the Bill spoke about Barbados and what is

happening in that society and companies are ready. There are more than one company in Barbados in this business and I think it can offer to us in Grenada businesses to start to educate people on how we do this and what we do, what the risks are, upside and downside, so that we can make good investments and not go down an SGL kind of route and some of the other bad experiences we had, and it must be done on informed information, and information that is pure and unsullied. So that is the kind of thing, Mr. President, I think these type of Legislation that we look to pass offers.

I compliment the Government and the ECCB for bringing this to the fore. It is really forward thinking. I don't know if COVID caused that, because you know COVID had some bad things, but it had some good things. You know we as politicians in the region couldn't decide on LIAT, COVID shut it down for us. You know we take long to say whether we should keep it going or not, COVID say time to end it, we end it. And we're going to see what that benefit and if it brings benefit down the road. So probably COVID is doing us a good. We're all going digital, we're all going to accelerate our digital platforms, we're all trying to do business different, reduce people coming into businesses and having to move, less concrete and mortar and more virtual. Probably that's a good thing, but of course everything has its risks and has its downsides, so we have to manage that as well.

So, Mr. President, from a Private Sector point of view we fully support this forward thinking. I am happy to see ECCB as the umbrella because I think that institution brings a lot of credibility to the table, a lot of regulation. They don't things vy-kee-vy, they have managed our dollar, they have backed our EC dollar 90% and plus, so they have a good track record when we introduce these kinds of things to back it properly and to say that people who is going into, these are the risks, this is the way we do it and you are safe, and I think that is an excellent thing. So we fully support the Bill, Mr. President. I thank you very much for sending me back to my chair.

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Well I piloted it, so I will wrap up. Yes. So thank you, Mr. President. I just wish to thank all my colleagues on Both Sides for their contributions. I think the take away from this is actually about opportunity. There are some who think this is so far on the horizon, we don't have to, you know, this is beyond most of us. But I too wish to commend the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank for their forward thinking. They actually started this back in 2018, so it's the forward thinking before COVID. But I think that what is gone on during this pandemic period may accelerate the thinking and all of the young people that would be turned on by this. And the whole issue about education and sensitising our youth and providing them with the right exposure, the right support because this I don't think it's so far in the future for us. And it's just going to take one or two bright sparks here and in the region and we can actually see quite a flourishing, a flourishing industry and with the involvement of the Central Bank to provide that legitimacy to it, we can ensure that you know we create an environment that solicits and incubates legitimate, constructive and highly profitable activities for our youth within the region. And then I'm starting to feel like an old man, to get some advice as to what us oldies should also be doing.

And the issue about tax compliance is an important one and it is something that without overburdening this very embryonic market, but it is something that our Ministers for Finance within the region need to be looking at. But the point that Senator De Allie made, is we do not have to reinvent the wheel. A lot of these activities are taking place, there are models with how this thing should be done and I think it's some of those external models that the ECB have taken inspiration from in terms of what is crafted before this. So I think this is quite a ground breaking piece of Legislation. I don't think it's something that is going to sit on the shelf, whether we allow it to, I think there are going to be young people in the eight Member States whose minds are already racing, already involved in stuff in this area and that is certainly going to be a very, very exciting space for us and a sign of the times. So, Mr. President, it is for all of these reasons that I commend this Bill for its second reading. I thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Bills

Bill read a second time.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move the House 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'm duty bound to report that the Bill was considered Section by Section, sorry Clause by Clause not Section by Section, it was so long. **(Laughter)** It was considered Clause by Clause without amendment and…

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: I beg to move…

Mr. President: …and passed.

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

Mr. President: Yes.

(Inaudible comments)

Question put and agreed to.
Chairman's Report adopted.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: 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 Williams, Cathisha Williams you have the floor. Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled the Remote Employment Act 2021.

Clerk: A Bill to establish a remote work permit regime suited to non-nationals, shortly entitled Remote Employment (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

Mr. President: Senator Williams.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: 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 states at this Sitting.

Question put and agreed to.
Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. Mr. President, I will like to just pick up where Senator De Allie left off, when he said I wonder if COVID caused that in relation to the last Bill. And this is a Bill where that statement may apply, aptly, because it's largely because of CODID-19 and some of the unconventional practices it has compelled us to adopt, that we find ourselves here today introducing this Bill to the House. Largely because of COVID, Mr. President, we have become acquainted with the terms working remotely, or remote employment and this is the practice of working in some other

place that is not where your organisation or your business is based. And for most of us drawing from our experiences during the COVID lockdown, that may mean working from home, and for others, the more fortunate among us, or those that are more liquid, that may mean working in a completely different country with your laptop and your feet up enjoying a cocktail. And persons who engage in that sort of practice and that sort of lifestyle are characterised as digital nomads and that is something that has been happening for a while, but because COVID has confined us to our spaces, in the last year or so we have seen an explosion of digital nomads. They have been described, Mr. President, as location-independent, technology-enabled lifestyle, that allows persons to travel and work in an internet connected world.

Mr. President, in the last year or so, the number of digital nomads in the US has more than doubled from 4.8 million in 2018, well that's two years, to 10.9 million in 2020 and that is a trend that is expected to continue worldwide. Now the reasons for engaging in such a practice are obvious. Persons are taking advantage of the opportunity to travel to places that are less affected by COVID or have lower rates of infections, they are able to live in countries that provide rest, relaxation, a respite from the usual hustle and bustle of industrial life in the developed world, while allowing them to continue their work and conduct their work. Also, Mr. President, they are able to benefit from certain exemptions to income tax and certain other duties, so the appeal is obvious and there are a number of countries who have already taken note of this specific market and the potential to increase economic activity in their countries and they have established schemes to attract digital nomads to their countries and increase remote employment in their countries. And we find examples in countries like Estonia who implemented a Digital Nomad Visa which permits visitors to work remotely for 1 year for a required fee and proof of income. Even closer to home, we have Barbados and Bermuda who have introduced similar schemes, allowing travellers to reside in the country for a year, for a fee and with the attendant tax exemptions which of course makes the programme more attractive to digital nomads. And Grenada is not one to be left behind, Mr. President, so therefore we have embarked on the establishment of our own digital

nomads' scheme which we refer to as our 'workation' programme. And this Bill, the Remote Employment Bill is the means by which we hope to implement this scheme.

So what does this scheme do, Mr. President? It seeks to establish a remote work permit regime for non-nationals who are employed outside of Grenada or through contractual obligations outside of Grenada but who are physically present in Grenada and we can distinguish this from the default work permit regime that already exists under the Foreign Nationals and Commonwealth Citizens Act Cap 115. Now the work permit programme under that Act enables non-nationals to seek employment in the domestic space, in Grenada. However this Remote Employment Act enables persons to continue their employment which is based outside of Grenada while they physically reside in Grenada, so that is where the distinction is. And the rational for this, Mr. President, is apparent, it's obvious, you have persons who are… well first of all, as a result of COVID-19, it goes without saying that our Tourism Industries throughout the Caribbean including Grenada have been crippled by the curtailment of travel and that industry is in need of some boost, some boosting, some incentive and this presents an opportunity to attract persons to Grenada for a different type of tourism, employment tourism. Not only does it allow persons to stay for a much longer period than they usually would, I mean most of our tourists will come during the tourist season for two months and return, now under this regime, they may stay for an entire year and they have the option to renew their stay.

So not only does it allow for that, but it allows for the other ripple effects of tourism, which is the injection of cash into the economy through the spending or the engagement of these persons in local businesses. Because if someone is staying here for a year, of course they will have to get access to goods and services, so it means that they will be patronising our local businesses. Of course they would need accommodation, so our proprietors or hotel owners or guest house owners, Airbnb operators, they would benefit from their business. The taxi drivers, bus drivers, they would also benefit from that cash injection, and of course you have the fees that the visitors, the applicant would have to pay to obtain their work permit. And they're able to contribute all of that with minimum extraction of wealth from the economy or providing a minimum strain on the economy. Because one of the features or conditions of the work permit is that you're not able to engage in employment in the

domestic market, you're not able to get a job in Grenada or provide services to other businesses in Grenada. So therefore you're not competing with locals in the local space for employment.

Also, you do not have access, or that visitor does not have access to the public education system, and I would like to stress public because they can enrol or their dependents can enrol in a private institution, but because our public education system is already so stretched and stressed, they will not have access to that. So, the level of strain on the economy is minimal compared to the enormous benefits to be derived from this scheme.

So what we have here, Mr. President, is a symbiotic arrangement, a symbiotic relationship. Visitors are able to enjoy our natural beauty, the warmth and friendliness of our people, they're able to work in a safe environment for an extended period of time, and we are able to benefit from the injection of cash into our economy, the engagement in our local businesses and we are able to grow a new and burgeoning area of tourism.

So, Mr. President, in order to regulate this relationship, we have this Act before us, the Remote Employment Act and through its eleven Clauses it provides for the grant of the remote work permit, it provides for the requirement for an application and the grant of that application, the modification of the permit, the renewal of the permit and the revocation of the permit, because it's important to ensure the integrity of this programme. It's important to maintain a certain calibre of persons, or the standard of persons that are allowed to come into our country, and that is what the provisions of this Act seeks to do. So for example, the application process Clause 4, there's a strict criterion for the application. An applicant which also extends to his or her dependents which may be children, grandchildren, parents, children under the age of 18, they are required to produce evidence of a valid passport for the duration of the work permit, they are required to produce proof of an annual income of not less than EC$100,000. So they have to show that while they are here, they can sustain themselves, so the temptation to seek employment in Grenada will be less. They are required to show proof of health insurance that would have been acquired outside of Grenada for the duration of their, of the work permit and they have to provide a police certificate evidencing a clean record for a year

prior to the submission of the application, for every place that they visited within that year. So we're ensuring that our applicants are of a certain moral character and of a certain calibre.

But the Act also ensures that the circumstances under which they would have gotten the application are maintained for the duration of the work permit. So if during the time that you're here you are charged with a criminal offence, that's ground for revocation. If during the period that you're here that the terms under which you were granted your application have changed, those are grounds for revocation. So therefore in Clause 3 you have a set of conditions that must be maintained for the duration of that vacation. You cannot engage in employment other than that for which the permit was granted. You cannot engage or operate any business in Grenada for the duration for which the permit was granted. Your Health Insurance Policy must remain for the duration for which the permit was granted. So if during that time your policy expire those are grounds for revocation.

So, Mr. President, what you have here is a framework, a framework for the regulation of this scheme, of this work permit scheme, a framework for maintaining the integrity of the scheme and you also have conditions that are put in place whenever there is a breach of the terms of the Act or the conditions of the regime and that is the Act in a nutshell, Mr. President. I have heard or gotten wind of some utterances which question the timing of this Act. Persons have said well why wasn't this introduced sooner, but I think that this is opportune time to introduce this Act because I do not think that this digital nomadism (I don't know if that's a word) but I don't think this is something that will fade into obscurity as soon as COVID passes. This is the new normal. I don't like to use that term but this is the way things are going. COVID has exposed us to ways to use our technology more efficiently. COVID has exposed us to ways to do our business differently. COVID has exposed us to digital nomadism. I really hope that's a word, because that's the second time I'm using it. Yes, a new form of tourism, a new market and it is projected that this form of tourism, this form of working will only grow and expand in the future. Before COVID Zoom Meetings, virtual meetings were far and few in between but now it's a normal part, now it's a norm, now it's a normal part of everyday working life. I personally prefer in person meeting, but that's just me.

Mr. President: In fact we are one of the few Parliaments, in Britain it's a mix, only a limited number of Parliamentarians attend the actual Chamber…

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Yes.

Mr. President: ...in the House of Commons, and the other Parliamentarians stay at home or in their offices and participate.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Yes. Yes that is so, Mr. President. So this is the way the world is going, and it's no different with tourism. It's no different with employment. So this is the right time to introduce this Act and I can only see it auguring to the benefit of our Tourism Industry and to our economy in the future. So, Mr. President, with that I will like to commend this Bill to the House for its passing. Thank you.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator St. Clair. Now I am clearer between my Clair's and Cyr's.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: (Laughter) Thank you so much, Mr. President, and thank you so much our dear Senator for presenting this what I will say, new direction again, new direction. I understand from where I sit, the innovation and the need and the trust that we need to do as a country to get things going again. Whether the time is right or the time is late or the time is, I'm not really worried about the time. I am concerned about the net benefit to the country at the end of the day with this innovation. I've spent particular interest because it sort of grabbed my interest, this Bill in particular and being someone that likes my technology and all of those stuff, did travels and you have to be on the ball, I understand the importance of this. At the same time I also recognise in Grenada our status right now is very friendly, we are a very friendly country in terms of crimes and so on, we are very good. We can boast about that. Our people and so on, we can boast about all of

those things and even with COVID situation we can also boast about that. The question is, whether or not this work permit, remote work permit will really make the dent that we're hoping for and is it the straw we are trying to hang on to, to create the difference for our tourism verses trying to maybe use our current approaches and other different things that we've been doing and sort of use that to build in the meantime than using this as a… well hoping it will get us out. I say this to say that with the numbers, because I've done the research likewise of the US and others with the trends. The question is this four million or eight million persons that are doing this remote working, do we expect to get 2% or 3% of them to come to Grenada? That is my question. In fact before I come here I had some calls from my exporters in Grenada saying Senator, we have to meet, we need to meet urgently because American Airlines move their flights from 7 to 2. I say wow. So I'm wondering how we expect these individuals to reach here. So that's another question for itself. So I'm concerned to know what is that… in this plan do we expect two thousand of these persons to come in? What is the market analysis that would have shown us this? Because this must be in context. Do we expect 10% from Trinidad, 40% from UK, 10% from Canada, so that we can really see that benefit? Our farmers, our service providers can say yes, we have something that we can able to invest, because there are persons who right now listening to us, who will be prospecting on this very important Bill and they're looking and say where can I invest, where could I get my hotels, get it up and running, get my room stocked and so on, so we could make money into this country? So that is one aspect.

At the same time, I have some issues in terms of the technicality, in terms of the Bill. For example I think we needed to have a definition as to what really is this remote worker. It speaks about the permits and all of those definitions but who is a remote worker? I think that is missing from the Bill, because downstream if we try to enforce it, do we just use common knowledge as well. Despite the presentation and the context, in a real situation where you have to apply the Law, I ask myself, do I just come to Grenada? Yes, I get a permit, I work, I write documents, print them, put them in a flash drive, send it in FEDEX, I wrote remotely and I send my documents back to the head office, or is it telecommuting and all of those fancy technologies, and if so I think we should include that. Because in my research it was interesting

that Croatia would have actually created a definition in their Legislation which I know my dear Senator must have seen, based on the information that she referred to. I think we were on the same website maybe, sometime ago, and they actually defined what a remote worker is, and I thought it was very interesting. So I used our language here and I say **"a remote worker is a third country national who is employed or performs work through communication technologies, for a company or his own company that is not registered in the State of Grenada and does not perform work or provide services to employers in the State of Grenada."** I think that would help the document, so I want to suggest this for inclusion. So at least it helps us with our definition.

But also, when you read the Bill itself and I look at again what other models have, the same Barbados and so on. They would have specifically said in it, that you must, the permit, you must be involved in the conduct of remote work. So it's very specific, so you cannot say well you know in this Law thing there are always windows. So it should be clear. Persons applying they should be clear. I look at the application form and I thought that if we are doing an internationalisation, you know we have male, we have female and in some cases we not too sure, once we going international, so I thought that to be fair, equal opportunity and this is the issue about internationalisation. I thought that we could just do some tweaking on that grounds. Then I asked myself a lot of other questions, we should look at how long, and I think our good friend, brother Cadet raised it when we looked at the previous Bills. This company that I am working for, was it start up, yes, what is the history? Did I just set up a company to take advantage of the opportunity to come to Grenada for a remote work permit? And I will speak about those advantages in a while. So I could set up a company today with little history of performance, I may even have a line of credit, quarter million dollars, so I have cash flow and I could come in Grenada, that's fine. Now when we speak about affluent, the type of people we want to attract and they need to show EC$100,000 for income as is required by the Act, in our terms we speaking about EC$8,000 a month. We know there are persons in Grenada who working for some time EC$10,000, by the time you take out tax etc. you may end up with the same 8 and sometime you're fighting to survive. If we look at the average rent and is not without… it's persons of stature and I haven't done the research

because I'm not in that league but I would say maybe at least $3,000, $3,500 maybe minimum to have a decent place to live and that's just one. If you have family with you then it changes, so I'm looking now at what you call the disposable income that we want to be spending and then if I'm a company and I send my individual to work in Grenada, generally my Labour Senator would say you have to give me my full eight hours. So I'm trying to figure out when this person would have the time to be spending so much monies on social activities and all of those things, verses a man who comes on a holiday as a regular tourist, when pretty much twenty-four hours they have time to just spend money and have fun in Grenada. So these are some points I have.

Then as I go and I want to leave the end for where the end is, so the issue of insurance, it didn't say whether you can have insurance locally or whether is overseas insurance. It just says you have health insurance and we know how our companies are these days. I also asked myself, and it may sound foolish that I can work remotely in Grenada for my head office in New York, but there is also a branch somewhere in Grand Anse in Grenada, but really I'm working remotely in America, that's where my database is set up, but there is a branch in Grenada but I'm not even supposed to maybe go in that office I guess because I'm supposed to be working kind of in this home place. Because once I start venturing there, we have issues. So I'm raising those thing, because as we spoke about the different cyber criminals and all those things earlier on, I'm saying people can use this system, companies can use this systems and I tried doing a lot of research to see what are the loopholes that can exist in this, and one that come to my mind is where you can be in Grenada, and we discuss a lot of it a while ago with the virtual asset. Your company might be in the UK but the activities that you are performing on the cyber in your network might be something that is not even a legal activity in Grenada but its legal somewhere else. So for example maybe you may want to speak on cannabis trading, somebody is trading cannabis, legal marijuana, medical and in Grenada, but they're doing all the sales online in some mechanism. How do we treat with that as a country?

So these are some of the questions, and then the last two fundamental points I want to raise is what I call the benefits of coming, not the sun and the sea and the

friend, but the economic benefits. There are two things that strike me in the last part of the Bill, it speaks about a list of conditions, duties, exemptions in Schedule 3. It says **"Household effects admitted such by the Comptroller of Customs not exceeding a c.i.f. value of EC$75,000.00 which are for his or her personal use and not for sale in exchange."** I interpret this as I'm a remote worker coming to Grenada, I can have an exemption of the equivalent of EC$75,000.00 tax exempt and I say well I wonder how I could explain this to my farmers when sometimes they cannot even bring in some fertiliser or something without paying this set of duties. This is one part, so this actually is almost equivalent I think as returning nationals who stay away very long and we want to welcome them back. That's why I speak about the opportunity and how we have to be careful with not being abused and what is the real net benefit back for the country verses this hundred thousand dollars.

And then the last one I would raise relate to one that speaks about… I was shocked when I saw that one. **"100% remission…"**, I am not too sure what remission is but **"remission of duties in respect of one motor car or vehicle of tariff heading 8`3..."** I interpret that to mean that I could bring in a vehicle and I could get 100% duty free from that but at the same time… remember the calendar is for one year I have this permit so 30 days before this permit is over I can sell this vehicle according to the Regulation and I say well, who are my farmers who have to wait three years even if they get 100% duty free to reclaim. They cannot sell it after three years, they have to hold it. They cannot sell it after two years because they will lose the duty concession. And so this is the sort of disconnect I have with the Bill. I like the idea, I mean I support the direction, but I think that, Mr. President, with due respect to the Government Side, I really humbly feel, we need some rework to make it more firm and more fair. These are my comments.

(Sen. Stiell and Sen. De Allie put on their mics at the same time)

Mr. President: Yes Senator… Well, my eye caught both mics at the same time. It's a throw up between each of you. You can rely on your gentlemanness and the Leader of Government's Business has given way so the floor is yours.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Leader of Government's Business. Mr. President, I rise to support this, remote work permit and I want to compliment the Government for their forward thinking as well. I think this sends a good message to what we have seen our environment change as a result of the pandemic and how countries need to adjust themselves economically to deal with this pandemic and probably others to come. And I use the word forward thinking because this is not for now, this is creating an environment, putting forward a Legislation, albeit not perfect, that needs to send the message that we are thinking in a particular way and we creating a regulatory environment to encourage the development of this particular type of immigration.

Mr. President, I have said before and I will continue to say and I say it with no apologies, our population is too small to support certain types of business ninety thousand, ninety-five thousand, ninety-eight thousand people can't cut it and a substantial part of that is people 40-50's age group and a very young population. The in between of 30-40's where some spending power must be is relatively low and we cannot support certain types of businesses with such a small population and I always say, we need to offer a structured form of attracting people of a particular type and calibre that can bring certain types of benefits to our country. I believe this particular Legislation alludes to that or tries to create that environment where we can see and attract people of a particular type. In contravention to and some disagreement to my colleague Senator, I don't think this will attract people in high numbers, we won't see five, ten thousand people coming to the jurisdiction but it will attract people of a certain disposable income which the Bill alludes to, that gives us the kind of thing that we want, the kind of contribution to economic trickle down that we may need.

So for example, I don't believe this Remote Work Permit Bill and what we are promoting here is going to attract people with a certain level of income below a certain range especially if they want to come with their family to enjoy the benefits of the jurisdiction, what we offer. Safe environment, relatively high school standards and my colleague Senator could tell me if I am wrong but I think our basic school curriculum standards may need adjustment but the standard is relatively high compared to other jurisdictions. Generally in the Caribbean and the institution that

she works for is testimony to that. They have produced some of the most best doctors and the most doctors in the world and its part of the environment, it is not only about the quality of the curriculum, it's a holistic thing. So when people are looking to this jurisdiction to bring their families and themselves to work remotely it's holistic, it is not just about them coming in an apartment, sitting with a computer and working, it is a holistic thing and that attracts a certain type of person.

Our sister CARICOM country is doing in successfully, Barbados and it is working. It causes… it also forces the country to engage in certain types of businesses that was not normally there. So for example, do we provide a certain level of accommodation that is suited to people that wants to do this. So condo type and upwards, that the rent would not be $3,000.00, it might be $5,000.00 and $7,000.00, but the people who coming know that is what they could afford. That is why there is a significant screening before we give the work permit of who has to come. And quite frankly, I can tell you when I was Chairman in another place called CBI, we saw a significant increase in applications from non-traditional jurisdiction like the US to our country because of the management of COVID, because of what they perceived as having a passport or possible citizenship in a country where they believe their children and their family could be better safeguarded. We don't understand the implications of that, but it is and it exist. We have to cater for that, we have to use that and say listen, can we get a situation where we could attract, even though it's 25 people, but their net income is in the half a millions and up and they could come with their family. The kind of trickle down economies that we could get in terms of housing, in terms of contribution to motor vehicles and I know you talk about the concessions and what is offered there, but we have to provide something that gives them incentives. Taxation, where we talk about they will be exempt from tax, that is important because their work… they may be physically working here but they are employed in another jurisdiction, you cannot double tax. So you must exempt the tax, so we have to find other ways of deriving revenues, accommodation is one, transportation is one, food is one. You are the farmer's representative; these people may come with particular request for certain types of farm produce that will help your farmers sell to them in a particular way.

International schools will probably be developed to educate their children in a

particular environment, we have to think… I don't like to use the word outside the box, I think that is an overused, underrated statement, we have to think differently about how we do these things and how we attract. Tourism in our lifetime as we know with COVID is not going to be the same as we knew it, that is a reality that is a fact. We have to find a way now to think how we could attract people to this jurisdiction as a different tourist. And you know my colleague from SGU, I refer to SGU again, you know a lot of our doctors who trained in SGU come back 5 years, 7 years as tourist to our destination with their entire family, some of them come back and get married here. They fall in love with this country and what we offer; our people, our friendliness, our culture, our food and they come back. We underestimate that, we underestimate; we think SGU only brings revenue to the GDP immediate. We don't think about the returns and if we were to calculate that what that is and I say this is an extension of this. We can have people come here, work remotely for a year or two years or three years and then you find them saying, boy I think I want to buy a house in Grenada. I want to have my children grow up here because I like this environment.

You know, Mr. President, I will stray a little bit with your leave. You know recently I was told there's a new thing, you cannot refer to people as Mister and Misses, you have to put Mx because you have to be respectful to diversity in the sex. You cannot refer to them as…

Mr. President: I don't belong to that generation and I address people with the appropriate handle that I look for. So you, Mr. De Allie if you are not Senator and…

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Well, Mr. President, you and I are from that school, but I just say…

Mr. President: Senator Williams would be Miss Williams… I hear you but I don't belong to that school so I don't talk that language.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: I only said that, Mr. President, to offer

the fact that the thinking is going to be so different, the environments are going to be so different that we have to adjust our mind to how we do things differently. And the whole morning we spent talking about Electronic Acts and all of these things and how that environment is going to change, it has to apply to the Tourism Industry and what is happening there. I do want to say colleague Senator, St. Clair, that I believe we're going to have a challenge with enforcement when it comes to certain things that we have in the Act, right and who is going to enforce. This Act falls under Immigration as far as I am aware but I am not sure if Immigration is equipped to do the enforcement to ensure that certain things. I think you raised some valid points on, you might be working from home, I think you cited the example of marijuana and what you're doing and whether that fits into our same legal construct and how we need to ensure that some of these things are happening appropriately and how we enforce that. That is going to be a challenge and that is something as we probably set Regulations to work along this particular Bill. We take cognisance of some of the things that you raised and we find some of the things that you have raised which are certainly something for the "Other Side" to think about and those are areas that we can look at as we develop this. But I want to believe… I don't think the Health Insurance is a major issue because most Health Insurance is international and we accept Health Insurance from almost anybody once the card… and you could check immediately whether you are registered and in good standing and so on. So I don't believe that is a big challenge but I think there are challenges as you have highlighted and I believe when the Regulations come to support this Act to ensure it could be operationalised appropriately, they will take into consideration some of these things.

To me and from where we sit in the Private Sector, this offers great opportunities. I think the Government is forward thinking in this particular Act that is coming before the House and I think it provides us with opportunities to think how we can develop businesses around this and what can be offered and the kind of people that are going to be attracted to this are certainly not on the low income side, I could tell you that. This is high income people and high net worth people that are looking to make these kinds of transition and movement. We saw it on CBI and I'm telling you that is how it is going to work here. **(Inaudible comments by Senator St.**

Clair) No, no, no a lot of the people in CBI would want this as well. So there is not much separation from here in that but we have to provide, as you highlighted, we have to provide the right regulatory environment to attract them appropriately and I think this is what this is trying to do.

So, Mr. President, I think this is good. I am supporting it. As colleague Senators have indicated there may be some refinements we could consider in the SR&O or the Regulations when we enact it and that is fair and I think the "Other Side" will take these in consideration but it gives us very good opportunity and I commend the Government and the "Other Side" for this. I think this is very positive. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator De Allie. Senator… **(Senator Garraway and Senator Stiell put on their mics at the same time)** You're giving way, Senator Stiell? Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: The Leader of Government's Business will definitely do, thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. President. **(Laughter)** Mr. President, I really stand to give my full support to the second reading of this Bill and as I have said before in another place, excellent Bill. It took long in coming, we should have had this long before but it is here and now we need to make maximum use of it and most of the time we beat COVID at the head and we beat her… think it's her, COVID is her and we beat her bad. **(Laughter) (Chatter amongst Senators)** But if it's one thing that is good that is coming from this COVID experience is the ability and the environment that has been created to use the technology to make this world a smaller place. So I can't see we going back into all this big travel to do two days travel for a one day meeting, we can do this virtually. And now that we have been able to and we have been looking at this for the longest while I want to believe, how we can attract people into your space and to use the amenities, use the peaceful environment, the hospitable people, the good food and beaches and so forth, how we can really attract them to come and stay a longer time.

I remember a few years ago, when it was first presented in this Honourable

House, that our population is too small to support business in a large sense and we need more people. And I was thinking, how can we really increase this and it was looking so far-fetched, but when you look at what happened in North America and so forth, they sell passport and encourage people of a certain calibre to come into their space and use their resources that they have to help build their space. This is our salvation towards achieving this to increase the population size, albeit probably for one year at a time but these folks would come in, enjoy what we have and you're talking about where they are going to get the time to go and do the tours and so forth? How we get the time to do it? We make the time, as Grenadians we go all about and these days I'm seeing bus crawls constantly, people going and enjoy it. When these folks come in, Mr. President, **(inaudible comments)** yes, Carriacou is making some big money on that too. When these folks come into our space and the children learn in our schools and experience our culture, don't be fooled, they're coming back here because like I have said, all over the world when I travel and they ask where you're from and you have to do an introduction and I will say, I come from a place where you don't have to die to enjoy paradise, that's Grenada. You come in, there is peace, tranquil, just name it.

Mr. President, we have what it takes to build this and this nation will benefit from it. I agree there are some tweaking you have to do. One my colleague Senator spoke of here, you get 100% duty free concession to come in and in one year's time if you choose not to renew, you can sell the asset and go away. Remember this is a competitive environment, so those who went before us, is it Antigua and Barbados and so forth? We look at what they are offering, they're offering a package, we didn't fall below neither did we go way above them but you want to make it competitive and this is one thing that you had to give off because you want to attract people here. And if it means that you're going to get a few dollars off via concession route, when you balance it off with private schooling, taxi, accommodation, food and so forth, the investment is good, it's a good investment, an excellent investment, and it is not much you're giving up, you're gaining more for that little that you give off. So we had to make the balance, look at what they have. We know we have a better destination, we know we have a crime free, we know we have a safe destination, so you give up that to gain on the other end. And I am happy that we are at the right place with this.

The other area that I think sometime we underestimate, you see the role that SGU is playing in Grenada, it is critical. Critical in terms of a small island that is housing a massive institution that the success story is well established, that in itself is a selling point for us and colleague Senator on the "Other Side" hit on it. In as much as a number of former SGU students come back here to vacation, to get married and so forth because of the exposure the country would have received from that institution being here. You will have spin-off from that investment with people coming over because of SGU being here. So we are at the right place.

Mr. President: (Inaudible comments) The Paediatric Cardiovascular Programme in which dozens of Grenadian children right here…

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I'm going to speak to that in a while, [1]CHORES and so on.

Mr. President: …receive high class, world class medical attention is run essentially by former students.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: CHORES.

Mr. President: Former students of the St. George's University and where the operations cannot be done here, they organise to get these kids at no cost to themselves and their parents up to receive world class cardiovascular surgeries, so I am just re-enforcing that. It's a big spin off.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes, Mr. President, you are right on the ball. As I was saying, we are at the right place and I was just waiting and I was hinting to my colleague Senator from the business community when he was speaking of SGU, CHORES. And I know it's largely a population of ex-students of SGU that comes back to give something to this country. And when they gave us this hi-tech scan that would do scanning and also transmitting the images remotely, so

[1] **CHORES - Children's health Organization Relief and Educational Services**

they are able to stay overseas and make diagnosis, help in the making of diagnosis in Grenada in our General Hospital through this hi-tech scanner that they have donated and it is from the same CHORES. The point here, Mr. President, and as we rightly put it, we have all to again and we have missed this before but I want to thank COVID because it has given us that opportunity and there are going to be more opportunities for us to maximise on this. What I have said at another place, we just need to police this thing properly. Those areas that we would need to beef up on and yes the SRO would do that but you ensure that you police this according to what the Law says and you can't go wrong.

I want to end by saying, I was at a little gathering a few weeks ago and there we had a number of people, students, their children studying in universities in England and elsewhere. They said they found it strange in their time when vacation came, they weren't thinking to come Grenada, they're roaming the streets of London and elsewhere but they have seen a shift. Those children are looking to come home and enjoy what we have to offer, there is a significant point here. I also listened to an athlete who came during the summer break, albeit during COVID to do her training at the National Stadium in Grenada on a whole and she said she came here because of one athlete, Melanie Rodney, student athlete in the University in the United States and she said Melanie was just talking about Grenada and the Stadium and what we have to offer and she said no, I have to come here and see what it is. And she came to train here, spend probably a month or two, it's obvious she had to pay rent, taxi, came here with a coach, have to utilise the stadium, there might have been a fee for it but albeit in the country. She was probably the first nomad coming in and utilising our space but now you put a proper structure in place. There is an old saying "the sky is the limit", we have more to benefit from this. And, Mr. President, I am all excited about this because this is forward thinking of this Administration and as we have proven over the years that we are all about innovation and we are looking for opportunities to expose our people and to give our country the opportunity to sail and to do well. Hence the reason why it is so important that we continue to follow the path, follow the protocols and do what is necessary to ensure that the State continue to remain safe and programmes like these will obviously succeed and the beneficiary of it will be the State of Grenada,

Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Mr. President, I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: I think I see Senator Lewis's light is on. Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and just to quickly say that I am not sure if it is a good sign or omen that I immediately agreed with, through you, Mr. President, Senator Garraway on the issue of monitoring. I wouldn't use the word policing, monitoring because I identified with some of the concerns raised by my colleagues on "This Side" here and even on "This Side" there. I would be more concerned taking into account all that they have said with the possibility whereby you can have individuals who may be operating under the remote work permit who is not expected to perform work in Grenada but given the global nature and regional nature of some of the companies that we have in Grenada, they find themselves in Grenada albeit to provide remote work outside of Grenada but there may be a branch or interest in Grenada and able to do those work locally and probably displacing or replacing, even if it is one person it would be of concern for us. So the aspect of monitoring would be important. I was also a bit concern that work permit is issued through… falls under the Immigration Department. I see the aspect of the register and I think it would be important to have sharing of information of this information between the Immigration Department and also the Ministry of Labour. I think that would be important, just as a recommendation. We can do the different tweaking as we go along, those are just my observation.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Well I am not sure there is too much more for me to say. I just want to first of all lend my support to this Bill, it is forward thinking, it is innovative, it is falling in line with what we are seeing of other destinations within the region. We are a little behind but that's not necessarily a bad thing. My view on this is there is a lot of focus that this is something that has emerged through COVID and at the end of the pandemic this is a market that will disappear. But I have a view that this is going to continue to grow and I think what this pandemic period has done to many is to relook at their lives, their lifestyles and this is a mode of working that

will appeal to a very specific group. It is niche market so the concerns that I was hearing from Senator St. Clair as if there is going to be an influx and is competing with and we have to choose between our existing traditional tourism models and this model, there is no competition and there is no conflict and there will be no harm, only benefit from this. And I believe that as time progresses, as things settle, there will still be persons who are looking at quality of life who have the financial means, they have the ability to be able to retreat, whether it is for a year, two years, for a period of time in paradise and still be able to work. And the technology allows it and there are many professions that will allow it.

So I believe that as long as we position ourselves and we will see along with Barbados, the Bahamas, others that are doing this and we will see how that market emerges, the critical thing for us is we are there in the mix and we know the beauty of what we have here and we know that if it's packaged properly, the correct services are provided, we know that we will be able to attract the types of persons that we are looking to attract and over a sustained period. And the question about concessions and how we are treating this niche group of people, we have to be competitive because we are now in a competitive market with other destinations that trying to do the same thing. So it is important that we are able to provide a product that is at least from a service perspective, a price point perspective, it is competitive. Where we would distinguish ourselves and differentiate our offering is based on our culture, our people and this beautiful surroundings that they're going to have and the quality of life that you will have for that period of time here in Grenada versus Barbados, versus Bahamas and versus anywhere else. We know the uniqueness of what we have so I commend the Ministry for the creativity in coming up with this programme. And it's a programme that I can see will evolve overtime as that market grows, but I see this as a long term initiate niche but high value and that's what precisely where we should be targeting. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Stiell. The question is that the Bill… **(Inaudible comments)** Oh sorry, excuse me Senator Williams. Senator Williams.

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

I will like to thank the Members of the House who preceded me for their presentations and I hope that they would have assuaged any of the fears of my Senator colleague, St. Clair and I just wanted to assuage your fears even further by giving clarity to some of the concerns that you raised. Mr. President, through you, one of the statements made by the dear Senator or rather questions, was whether we were hanging on to this particular scheme as the last straw in an attempt to save the Tourism Industry. I don't think that was the implication, we are not hoping to rely solely on remote employment as our only form of tourism but we are hoping to capitalise this on a growing sector. The way I look at it, we have nothing to lose by going forward with this initiative and capturing all the benefits that we can from this emerging sector. However if we fail to take advantage of this and miss the boat so to speak, the losses, the effects may be detrimental to our economy. We will find ourselves in the back, we will find ourselves trying to catch up to our neighbors such as Barbados and Bermuda and Antigua and Barbuda who have hopped on to this train. So this is something we cannot afford to miss out on and whether it is 2% or 3% now, we expect this sector to grow exponentially in the future. So if we can capitalise on that even by a little bit because that 2% or 3% can make the difference for a small business person in Grenada, can make the difference to an apartment owner, a taxi driver, to the farmers. So if we can extract that, let us do it while we can. Some research by Bloomberg projected that by 2035, there is expected to be one billion digital nomads, by 2035. So it is imperative for us to grasp this opportunity, to seize the moment while we can, *carpe per diem*, Senator.

In relation to the definition for remote work, I believe that section 3 (1) of the Legislation captures that adequately. While it doesn't say remote work, it refers to non-nationals who work remotely which is in essence the same thing. I believe the Senator's concern was that it was not specified that the person should engage in remote work but I believe that section 3 (1) captures that sufficiently. Also the Senator expressed concerns about the form of the application, the use of the titles, the gender specific pronouns. Section 11 of the Act empowers the Minister to amend the Schedule so that is something that can be easily addressed by the Minister.

With regard to the minimum requirement of income, that is something that you

can find in all of the other schemes and the threshold is comparable. In Barbados it is $50,000.00, in Estonian it is $4,000.00 a month which adds up to maybe $100,000 something so it's loosely around the same range. But regardless of that threshold, if you're living in a place for a year, it is obvious that you would have to spend just to maintain a basic lifestyle. You would have to eat, you will have to travel, you will have to pay your utilities, you would have to pay your rent and those small sums add up eventually and they can make the difference of the lives of Grenadian proprietors.

Finally, this Act works in concert with the Immigration Act and the Passport Act, so the methods of enforcement that are currently employed by the Immigration authorities in relation to your normal work permits under the Foreign Nationals Act, those mechanisms for enforcement will also be employed in relation to this Act. So while yes enforcement will always be a challenge and we will have to try to improve, the current structures for enforcement will be used to enforce this Act. So there is no need to reinvent the wheel, we can change the tires and strengthen it, but we have the basic structures for enforcement there. So, Mr. President, those were just some of the issues I wanted to address from the presentation. I think everything else has been sufficiently covered by my colleagues and with that, I would like to commend this Bill for its second reading. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Williams. Honourable Members, the question is that the Bill… sorry. Oh, Senator Joseph. Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Sorry, Mr. President, I didn't realise that she was just wrapping up there. You see I wanted to bat number eleven and you know number eleven sometimes is one ball you get and you finish.

Mr. President: Senator. She's closed the debate.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Well I understand sir.

Mr. President: You may wish on the adjournment **(laughter)** to make a comment. That is pretty much open, but it would be kind of awkward of me now that

the debate is closed. I don't want to set a precedent. I mean I'm emphatic with you as the newbie in the thing, but you can, you can, there is one opportunity… when the, just let me just say this for your benefit. When we are reading the Bill for a third time before the Bill is passed, is one window of opportunity there, where you cannot at that stage introduce anything controversial. Yes? So when the Bill is being read a third time, if you wish to make a brief comment I will allow, because you can make an intervention there, but you can't introduce any completely new matter which was not discussed in the body of the debate, but you certainly can make a compliment of some sort.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Yes but, Mr. President, can I use the adjournment to do that?

Mr. President: Well yes, well I'm saying either way you can use the adjournment.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: I'll prefer to do it that way.

Mr. President: Okay

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Thanks.

Mr. President: It's up to you. Yes.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. President: Senator Williams. Sorry, then Senator Williams. The Clerk and then you Senator Williams.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. President: Senator Williams now.

Bills
Adjournment / Resumption

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: 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 put and agreed to.

Senate in Committee.

Senate resumes.

Mr. President: Honourable Members I have to report that the House met and examined the Bill Clause by Clause without amendment and was passed.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: 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: Honourable Members its 5 o'clock. I want to suggest that we take a brief adjournment for about 10 minutes. Yes? Honourable Members, the House now stands adjourned for 10 minutes.

Senate adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Senate resumed at 5:22 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms: Order. His Honour, the President.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, pray be seated.

(Sound of Gavel)

Mr. President: This session of the Senate now resumes. Honourable Members, we've had a very long day and there is still a significant amount of work ahead of us. There are in all four (4) Private Members' Motions. Senators may wish to speak on the adjournment and then there are a plethora of questions down on the Order Paper. With all of that set, I am setting 8 p.m. as the time for the adjournment of today's sitting of the Senate. If we are able to complete the Order Paper, that will be just fine, if we at 8 o'clock have not completed the Order Paper, then the Senate will resume at 10 in the forenoon on Tuesday upcoming. So 8 o'clock is when this sitting of the Senate adjourns, so Senators be guided accordingly.

Just let me get the… I'm just trying to pull up the Order Paper. Oh sorry, questions.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, answers to all but three of the questions have been provided in writing, have been circulated to Members. None of the questions on the Order Paper have been indicated with an asterisk requiring an oral response. So what I can do is just quickly indicate the three questions that are unanswered. As I said they were the new questions on the Order Paper, but all other questions have been answered in full in writing. So my suggestion is that we can dispense with this item quickly once Members on the "Other Side" are satisfied with the written responses that have been forwarded and the commitment that the three outstanding questions will be made available at the next sitting.

Mr. President: Okay. So Senators who have registered questions on the Order Paper, Roderick St. Clair could you for purposes of the public just rise in place and ask your questions which do not require oral response, but as the Leader of Government's Business has indicated, the written responses have been circulated. So you would ask your questions and acknowledge as the Clerk has informed me,

that those questions were emailed which as you know on the basis of the change, the last change we made in the Standing Orders, is as good as having the Police outrider, physically deliver them to you.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you so much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: So, such is the benefit or remote working. The police is working remotely from home.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you so much, Mr. President. And I will be very quick in the questions for which we have answers. We had question number 1 to the Leader of Government's Business and the question was: What is the number of Farmers ID generated to date by the Ministry of Agriculture? I don't have to give the answer right, or do I have to?

Mr. President: No because you didn't ask for…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Okay, yes and this was, and I could make this to my constituents accordingly. So these questions were, this was answered. How many vendors have been registered as is required by the Praedial Larceny (Amendment) Act, 2020, this was also answered. And then then the question was, if none, when is registration of vendors scheduled to commence, and of course it was said it's an ongoing process. How many members are currently making up the Praedial Larceny Task Force and there is some good information here, which I will share definitely with my constituents. So this was a Praedial Larceny matter which is a burning issue in the country.

The second question had to do with the Land Policy of the Government, and of course the question asked: Has the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands developed a Land Use Policy for Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique? And there were answers which will be given at some time to my constituents. If yes, has the Land Use Policy been implemented and if not is there an implementation plan and is the document available for the public, which I was told yes. And then question number 3

had to do with fisheries. And it essentially says: Government has reported that thirteen new ice machines will be procured, delivered and installed at all fish markets in Grenada and Carriacou in 2021, through a grant from the Japan International Cooperation System (JICS), and so following questions to that, what date was the grant support agreement with the Japanese signed; is there an implementation plan for the execution of the activities under this project; what month and year is the project scheduled to start; what month and year is the project scheduled to end; during which month and year are the ice machines scheduled to be purchased and of course are installed and upgraded? That was another part of the question. And then there was a question number 4 which had to do with the poultry policy and it says specifically, is there a listing of the recommended…

Mr. President: May I just ask for the record and for the public, your last question was answered, was it?

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, yes. Sorry about that. Yes, yes. Sorry. Yes. And I must say the last question was answered also, and the forth question which was also answered related to the Poultry Policy, and it says is there a listing of recommendations contained in the National Poultry Policy of 2017? And of course yes and what the recommendations were and the list of recommendations are here. It's some 18, 19, 20, 20 or so recommendations. Then it asks is there an implementation plan that is available? And it was also answered yes to that, and if there are copies available. Then it also asks, indicate the elements that have been implemented. So what parts of that Poultry Policy, recommendations that has been implemented and of course there were answers provided for that. And then the other question relating to the policy was, for recommendations not yet implemented, is there a time-line that is available for items not yet implemented? And of course, it was said that the implementation plan is being reviewed, and that will be done with stakeholders, and of course that was answered. Question number 5, this one had to do with the issue of mongoose and so on. It asks the question to the Leader of Government's Business on pestilential activities of rodents. Well basically, is mongoose, rodents, they're the same species. Do any of our hospitals have in stock

the necessary medication or antidotes in the event that mongoose having rabies, bite someone in our population? And this was answered and of course the answer was yes. And I will stop here, because on the listing you had Senator St. Cyr and then I think I have one or two others after, if that is okay. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, with your permission I would like to highlight to this Honourable House that there are some other outstanding questions or matters that were not addressed before, namely from Honourable Senator Cox, the issue of the National Youth Ambassadors and also from the Leader of Government's business, the report on the STAR Programme. So I'm just highlighting this here that…

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: That isn't… my understanding is the questions were asked they were answered. I think the Senator had some follow up questions with regard to the information provided, but they're not on the Order Paper because they were answered. So if the Senator has additional questions then she needs to submit those but as far as we're concerned they were answered. And which is why they're not on the Order Paper.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Again, with your permission, Mr. President, I was promised documents as it relate to the National Youth Ambassadors Programme, I have not gotten those. And the Honourable Leader of Government's Business promised to provide a report on the STAR Programme that was not received either, that's what I'm talking about.

Mr. President: Clerk, could your office clarify on those claims and counter claims? We're not going to resolve them here, but if they are, if you go back into the Hansard and track those two issues. Could I suggest Senator St. Cyr that you keep in touch with the Clerk on this matter? You said there are two outstanding issues: one is a report of something that you have not received, he's going to follow up on it by going into the records and see, and if there is not completeness, consistent with what you have been told then I guess he will speak to the two relevant Senators on the "Other Side" and we take it from here, but we cannot at this time resolve those claims and counterclaims. Yes, so I'm not allowing it to die but there is backroom work that has to be done, that can't be done here. Because we are not in the position to either uphold what the Senators are reporting or to uphold the claim that you are making, that you haven't received it. So you have a responsibility onto yourselves to follow up with the Clerk on this matter. And yes, the earlier you do it before the next sitting, the better. Yes?

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. So I'll move to the matters of questions that we have now. My first question was to the Leader of Government's Business and it reads, can the Leader of Government's Business provide a list of all advisors to the Government recruited during the period 2013-2018 and 2018 to present, their job descriptions, remuneration and benefit packages. Answer to be provided at the next sitting.

Question 2 to the Leader of Government's Business…

Mr. President: Let me ask, you got an answer to this?

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: So that's what I said, the answer to be provided in the next sitting.

Mr. President: Oh, the answer is upcoming.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Yes

Mr. President: Okay, alright.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Question 2 to the Leader of Government's Business on tabling of report in Parliament and the question reads, in accordance with Part 2, Division 1 Section of the Education Act of Grenada 2002, the Minister for Education must table in Parliament an Annual Report on the state of education in Grenada within 12 months of the end of each school year. Can the Leader of Government's Business indicate when such a report for the school years 2018 to 2019, 2019 to 2020 would be so tabled? The response: The Ministry expects to have a report available at the end of the year.

Question 3 to the Leader of Government's Business on food deliveries to schools, and the question reads, can the Leader Government's Business provide a list of unauthorised food deliveries to schools across Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique within the last year indicating: (a) the donors of the food; (b) the type of food, example cooked, canned, bottled; (c) the condition of the food, example fresh, expired; (d) the specific school to which the food was delivered and (e) the dates on which the food was delivered. The response: with reference to the request for data on unauthorised donations of food to schools throughout Grenada, the Ministry does not have that list.

Question 4 to the Leader of Government's Business on contracts, and the question reads, as it relates to the types of employment contract being used by Government, can the Leader of Government's Business: (a) explain the difference between contracts of service and contract for service, including duration or length of contract; (b) what criteria are being used to determine who gets contracts of service and contract for service and (c) what is the difference in remuneration and benefits of the above-mentioned contracts. Answers to be provided at the next sitting.

Mr. President: Senator Roderick St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. Continuing…

Mr. President: You have a question in relation to…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: …question…

Mr. President: Praedial Larceny…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: …on the Praedial Larceny Fund, exactly. Thank you, thank you. So the question to the Leader of Government's Business and I must say thank you again for response for some of those questions. So in this one, it says, is the Praedial Larceny Fund as set out in section 17 of the Praedial Larceny Act No. 5 of 2005 in existence and operational? If the fund does not exist, then provide an explanation for this deviation. There was no answer.

Mr. President: What did you say?

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: No, there was no answer to this question.

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, the answers would be provided at a later date. And it says also, what is the dollar value of the fund, if there is a fund as of December 31, 2020 and March 31, 2021. We then asked further to it, when was the last month and year, monies were caused to be paid into the Praedial Larceny Fund; what was the dollar value; the last monies that were caused to be paid into the Praedial Larceny Fund; when was the last month and year monies were caused to paid out of the Praedial Larceny Fund; what was the dollar value of the last monies that were caused to be paid out from the Praedial Larceny Fund? And of course I'm assured that, at the next sitting we would get the answers for this.

The next question to the Leader of Government's Business had to do with the farm machinery pool at the Mirabeau facilities of the Ministry of Agriculture. And the question is: is the farm machinery services of the Ministry of Agriculture established to provide land ploughing for farmers located at Mirabeau, St. Andrew's currently functional? And the answer was no, the farm machinery at Mirabeau is not functional. If it is not functional what month and year was it last functional? The

farm machinery service was closed December 2018 as per the response. What are the reasons for the Ministry of Agriculture closing its farm machinery service at Mirabeau? And of course the answer says, the decision to cease operations at the farm machinery service was based on recommendations from a Cabinet appointed-committee to look at aspects of the operation of the service in an outsourced mode, to hold consultations on the matter and to table the proposals with recommendations and an implementation plan to take the matter forward. The committee's major findings was aging fleet of tractors, durability of new tractors, unavailability of spare parts, high operational cost, lack of proper supervision, poor worker attitude and operators…

Mr. President: In short Senator, the question was answered, is it?

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, it was answered.

Mr. President: Yeah, well let's kind of make it brief as…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Okay, and then it says, is it Government's policy to have it reinstated? And of course it was said that the Government will look at a public-private partnership arrangement, to have it reinstated.

And of course the third question speaks to the position of the Chief Agriculture Officer within the Ministry of Agriculture as provided for by the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2021 and as approved by the Parliament in December 2020. Is the position of the Chief Agriculture Officer within the Ministry of Agriculture currently vacant? Yes, the position is vacant. What month did it become vacant, on retirement of the substantive holder on the 7th of July 2020. Is there any attempt to fill the position, the Ministry is in the process of doing such. And then I asked the question…

Mr. President: Just for my own clarity, is the Chief Agriculture Officer the same thing as the Chief Technical Officer in the Minister of Agriculture, or are they two different things? Just for my own… I don't have any idea. Hello?

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. President: Oh, two different positions.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: This is the, this is the choir master of all, who coordinates the entire Ministry, technical things right, and after that is the main position that coordinates all the departments. In the absence of that, it is different, so listen to this, Mr. President. The general functions of the Chief Agriculture Officer are being covered collectively by officers within the Ministry. And then the question was, when are we going to fill this position, as soon as possible. And of course, I asked the question, are there any existing staff within the Ministry of Agriculture who satisfies the minimum requirement for the job position of Chief Agriculture Officer. The process of identifying a suitable qualified replacement is on the way. So this is good news.

So here ends the questions. I must say very thank you to the Government, Leader of Government's Business for having the answers and particularly the last set which I know you have up to 30 days and you had like about two or three weeks and we got them. So I say kudos to you and so more questions will come to see how we can answer more. Okay. Thank you. **(Laughter)**

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Oh, I have a lot of volunteers. **(Laughter)**

Mr. President: Yes, yea.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 13 - Personal Explanations.
Item 14 - Motions.

(Inaudible comments)

Public Business

Mr. President: Senator St. Clair. Yes and under Public Business, Senator St. Clair has the Caribbean Agro Industries. He also presented us with a Petition, with a prayer that the Senate supports this Petition and we said we will take one big bite at the cherry and eat everything one time. You know, as a father you will know that, or you should have learnt as I did, never leave your meat for last, because when your plate, the emptier your plate get is the more that meat stand out and you know the kids come after the meat. So I learnt to eat my meat **(laughter)** together with everything else in the plate **(laughter)** and to leave the provision behind, which kids don't normally like. **(Laughter)** So, anyway. **(Laughter)**

Clerk Assistant (Ag): Item 16 - Public Business

Mr. President: So, Senator St. Clair the floor is yours, with your Motion…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, thank you, thank you so much…

Mr. President: …dealing with the Caribbean Agro Industries Limited Corporation…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you so much, Mr. President. I stand to present this Motion in my name. I think that's the procedure, ehh?

Mr. President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you. Thank you. Alright, I, Mr. President, the context of this Motion.

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Oh sorry, sorry about, yes. So the Motion reads…

Mr. President: We can't proceed, well you can proceed but we can't engage the debate unless you have it seconded, so I hope you have all of that set up.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Well, I don't know, I not, it's not set up, but I have lobbied. **(Laughter)** Yes, right. So… **(Laughter)**

Mr. President: No, I'm not using set up in a derogatory sense.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: No, no, no, no, no I'm with you, Mr. President…

Mr. President: All I'm saying is the rules require …

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, yes, yes.

Mr. President: …that your Motion must be seconded, if it is going to be debated.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, yes

Mr. President: It has met the requirements of the Standing Orders, so it's on the Order Paper, but for us to proceed with the debate…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes.

Mr. President: …you've got to have a seconder.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Correct.

Mr. President: If there is no seconder then the Motion dies.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Does the seconding must be from "This Side"?

Mr. President: No, it says…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Right.

Mr. President: …the Motion must be seconded.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Right, good.

Mr. President: Then it says…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Because I find Senator Garraway seems to be…

Mr. President: The Sergeant-at-Arms neither can't second it, neither can I .

(Laughter)

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Okay, okay, alright, so I read.

Mr. President: So when I say I hope you have your business set up…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yea, yea, yea, yea, yeah, I…

Mr. President: Okay.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yea, yea, yea.

WHEREAS the Caribbean Agro Industries Limited is a Corporation operating in the State of Grenada, primarily involved in the production of animal feed and flour;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Grenada has provided Caribbean Agro Industries Limited with fiscal incentives Cap 107 SRO 16 of 1978;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Grenada has agreement with investors at the Caribbean Agro Industries Limited, that specifies several terms and conditions to govern the operations of the both parties;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Government reviews the existing agreement including the fiscal incentives with the Caribbean Agro Industries Limited, such that farmers would be able to get more affordable feed for their livestock.

That is the Motion in front of us, so I now ask for a seconder. So at this stage I politely ask Members of this House to, who are willing to second this Motion.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to second the Motion.

Mr. President: Okay, Motion has been duly seconded. Back to you St. Clair.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. President: Senator, Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes, thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President…

Mr. President: You rise…

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: I rise to…

Mr. President: …for

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: …to move a Motion for an amendment to the Motion that is before us.

Mr. President: …you rise on a Motion. **(Inaudible comments)** Okay, proceed Senator. St. Clair you understand what's happening?

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Well I…

Mr. President: You've moved a Motion…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: I want to find out; I mean how he's amending my Motion. I'm trying to interpret that.

Mr. President: Yes, well. Alright let me refer you to the rules.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Or if when he suggests amending it's still my Motion. **(Inaudible comments)** Well I don't know because the issue about the meat and how much meat, I don't know. **(Laughter)** That was it. **(Laughter)**

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: If it will help, Mr. President, I can circulate the amended Motion.

Mr. President: Wait, I'm just looking for the rule here. Senator St. Clair, I draw your attention to Standing Order 32 - Amendments to Motions, how moved and put. **"When any Motion is under consideration in the Senate…"** and your Motion is under consideration because it has been duly seconded, moved by you and duly seconded, **"or in a committee thereof, an amendment may be proposed to the Motion if it is relevant thereto. 2, an amendment may be proposed to any such amendment if it is relevant thereto. An amendment to a Motion may be moved and seconded at any time after the question upon the Motion has been proposed by the President of or Chair and before it has been put by the President or Chairman at the conclusion of the debate upon the Motion."** So you have put your Motion, it has been seconded, albeit the debate is about to commence and we have a proposal to amend that Motion.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Alright, so have we looked at 4 (a).

Mr. President: "An amendment to a Motion may be moved and seconded at any time..."

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Alright, well let's hear what…

Mr. President: "…after the question to the Motion has been proposed by the President or the Chair and before it has been put."

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Uh hum, shall be put so upon the Motion as the case may require and after further debate which may arise. Okay so basically you're saying that Senator Stiell want to propose some change in the language as we spoke during the break, and then we debate that after.

(Inaudible comments by Senator Stiell)

Mr. President: Well the amendment doesn't necessarily have to succeed. He offers an amendment and if the amendment is not, doesn't succeed then your Motion, we go back to your Motion as put by you, and debate that.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Okay, but I don't have to accept the suggestion of the amendment.

Mr. President: No.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: But it's always good to listen to what the others have to say.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: So, Mr. President, through the Sergeant-at-Arms, if we can circulate the proposed. Remember I can read it out and then we can…

Mr. President: Well, you, well if it's going to be a little lengthy it is better you circulate the paper so we could follow what you're saying.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Okay. Ok, I would read in the meantime. So in terms of the recital the Member on the "Other Side", the first three paragraphs are identical: **WHEREAS** the Caribbean Agro industries…

Mr. President: Do we have the copies?

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes I have copies.

Mr. President: I think it is right for us to have copies in front of us; you have to let me have a copy.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Circulate these. So the first three recitals are identical to what we have heard from the Member on the "Other Side". The amended paragraph reads as:

"NOW BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate support Government's continued holistic review of the existing agreement with the Caribbean Agro Industries Ltd." So this is the amendment that is proposed so if I would ask for that to be seconded and then I can go into the explanation as to why…

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. President: Somebody to second the amendment. **(Inaudible comments)** He is offering to amend the Motion. So he submitted, so somebody has to second his effort. No, if the proposed amendment does not have a seconder it fails and the floor reverts to the Senator who has moved the substantial Motion. So the same process in presenting the Motion is the same process in seeking to amend it. Yes, Senator Bhola.

Sen. the Hon. Roland Bhola: Mr. President, I stand to second the Motion of

the amendment to the original Motion.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. So, Mr. President the Motion as presented by the Member on the "Other Side", we actually have no fundamental issue with it. So as it could be seen we are supportive, there is no change to the first three paragraphs which outline an arrangement that has been in place for over forty years and Government recognises the deficiencies of that arrangement. Where we have sought to change to amend this is reflected in the final paragraph which as was discussed at the beginning of the day when the Petition was presented, Government already recognises this, Government has already started to engage, has engaged Caribbean Agro. Discussions are taking place with regard to not just elements of the agreement, not just speaking to cost, there are other elements that need to be considered, need to be reviewed. From Government's perspective it is to do a thorough review of the entire arrangement, identifying those deficiencies, identifying specifically, those specific to Senator St. Claire's concerns but beyond that. Those elements that are inhibiting the development of our Livestock Sector specifically the area of feed for poultry, for small ruminants, for hogs and the Government, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Government as a whole has a very detailed plan in terms of the development of the Poultry Sector.

We recently… a lot of work went into the development of a Poultry Plan, that has been approved, that is being implemented and that spoke to some of the questions that the Senator on the "Other Side" had posed to Government. So Government is in full recognition, one, of the potential of the Livestock Sector, our commitment to our livestock farmers, recognising the challenges they face specifically in the area of feed and the service that the Caribbean Agro should be providing us, the region and it being based here in Grenada. The anomaly is in terms of pricing amongst other things, in terms of cost of feed here in Grenada where it is produced and the cost of feed in the wider territory. And this is a matter that we have undertaken some time ago and what we seek to correct in the

amendment is not giving the impression that Government has been waiting on this Petition, been waiting on the prodding from the Senator on the "Other Side", Government has already undertaken and well on the way in terms of identifying those deficiencies and then the actions that would be taken to correct them.

In addition, the original recital spoke of just the area of affordable feed but as I said, Government is looking at the agreement in its entirety and all of those deficiencies and which of those deficiencies through negotiations with the partner and we can't divulge in details of those negotiations in this public forum but we don't want statements within the Motion that's proposed that limit the discussion and the negotiations that are going to be taking place, are taking place with Caribbean Agro. So the rewording of that last paragraph within the context of the entire Motion where three quarters of the Motion remain unchanged, I don't believe should be offensive to the Member on the "Other Side" but is more accurately representing what is actually taking place. And those are the reasons, Mr. President, that the amendment as articulated is proposed.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. I see this in good spirit; I see this… it says **"BE IT RESOLVED that Government reviews"**. We say here that **"BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate supports Government continued..."** We will discuss more details on this continued holistic review shortly in the context and I welcome the flavours to this. So in that context I am prepared to use this amended Motion to…

Mr. President: You now have an opportunity to put all the arguments you wanted to lay down earlier. You're just accepting an amendment but it does not deny you the opportunity for tabling your arguments and speaking to the concerns of your constituents.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate your guidance.

Mr. President: The rules aren't designed to shut you up you know, so I don't want you to walk away with that. I mean you obviously put a lot of effort into this and you came prepared so the floor is now yours. Just bear in mind at the toll of the 8:00 hour we will adjourn until Tuesday at 10:00.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, thank you. Mr. President, the whole matter of the feed and so on with farmers because I have been around farmers for a while, it has always been a burning issue. Being the Senator it becomes a bigger responsibility when the constituents come to me and they say Senator, look, we have received a communiqué from [2]ADM on the 29th of January saying feed price is going to increase by how much and how much percent as of the 3rd of February, Senator we have a problem. This is where it all started. So immediately we sat and I say as the Senator I need to look and see what is it that we can do, if there is an agreement, what is happening and they say yes there is an agreement and I keep speaking to the farmers and I say well ok what are the options we have. Of course I came to class very well with the Clerk in my early days and we had a lot of debates in a lot of different aspects of the learning of the different orders and so on. And I say well you know we can petition this thing if you have a problem. I didn't even know what this whole thing was about and so I went through trying to learn. But what I do know is by the 5th of February I was able to WhatsApp for a copy of the document to the farmers, in Carriacou, in Grenville, in different areas so that they have a tool, an instrument which they do not normally have access to except well of course through my access. And they would have had now this document which we call the Petition and they went around and they speak to fellow farmers and they got them to sign, some of them didn't sign properly, some sign properly and so I know this has to get in for the next sitting based on the notices with the Senate etc., which was supposed to be sometime in March or something like that and so I explained, I said whatever we have, whether it's one form, two forms, three forms we have to

[2] ADM - Archer-Daniels-Midland Company

move so that we can get it because this is an urgent matter. So by the 26th of February I was able to forward the cover letter and of course, later the copies of about 19 pages of the document to the Clerk. I came, I met Ms. Blackman and I made sure everything is ok and they say they will hold it in safe keeping, I don't need to have a copy. I said ok and I left it and I saw it back on the email.

Whilst that was going on, we say well you know if the agreement which was said to be an agreement between the Government and the Caribbean Agro then we have to ask the Government to do a review because the signatures is the Government and of course the Agro. And so we say we will have to do a Motion. So I went and do the research and so this would have also been submitted to the Clerk via email there and about. Sometime around the 9th of February there about, I would have sent that Motion along with my other Motions. So this is where it all started but at the same time I started doing my research while I was waiting on the answers for the Poultry Policy and discovered that sometime in 2017 part of the recommendations of the region, of the whole poultry system was to review the agreement with Caribbean Agro. So I said well we're in 2021, why? And then sometime later I think, well I saw it on NOWGrenada, the 1st or 2nd of March that Cabinet appointed a Committee to review the whole thing and I was so happy when I see this. I said wow. I say well now at least what we want is action. So I am very happy when Senator Stiell is able to stand bold and say hey, we already started review so we congratulate the Government on this action and for the higher order of asking the entire Senate to support the holistic review.

But, Mr. President, the review as I discussed even with other colleagues, I know my good friend in Labour and some people say you know the monopoly and the monopoly and it's not about no monopoly. I recall in January when we spoke about the GRENLEC matter and we spoke about the buy back and all these things, I said we need to look at the Caribbean Agro matter because that was on the 27th I think it was in our last meeting. And Senator De Allie say yes we look at that too. So I do my research and I say let us look at it, it is not about nobody want to close down Caribbean Agro. Caribbean Agro is long standing, it's here, it's home to a lot of our workers, it's home to a lot of our industries that are developed. The question is how can we look at the agreement and the fact that in 2017 the Government itself,

even Caribbean Agro itself who was part of those whole meetings that used to be held then agreed that we need to look at this thing. So whilst they're trying to think about looking the poor birds are dying, farmers are getting out of business, people are paying more for chicken and all we're saying is let's stop and let's look. The question though is while there is a holistic looking, you know, Mr. President, I could be looking as you said earlier on even to Senator Garraway, you were wondering if he was presenting to Senator Cox, of his presenting watching you; it depends on where you're looking.

So there is a few things I looked at that I thought that is very important to opportunities. So for example we speak about reviewing of the whole pricing regime and you know, Mr. President, I always speak about the revolution as a young boy and the impact the revolution had and I was amazed that in 1977/'78 when this agreement was signed with Caribbean Agro and the Government of Grenada, we know in 1979 in March we had the revolution but by October in that same year 1979 the Government then, the People's Revolutionary Government spearheaded, that the Ministry of Finance is alive now, Minister Coard, actually reviewed the agreement and specified considerations for the way that the pricing should be done, consideration for transport. So all those different costs, so it is fair. So if there are issues that need to be tweaked, certain arrangement that need to be able to modify, to bring some easement on the final price then you can see where those things are happening. In fact feed is a price control product and for a price control product, it have to be reviewed by the Government before you put a final price and so I found it strange that a letter on the 29th to the Government saying look on the 3rd prices will be changed, I said something wrong. So I called the Ministry of Trade and I said what is happening? So when we speak about review, review don't mean close down Caribbean Agro, it is about how we do the business of the country to the benefit of our stakeholders and that is why I thought the action of the Government during the revolution was swift and very precise as to adjust measures not only about the pricing mechanism but even about the workers, ensure that they are qualified locals etc. etc.

But I want to go further because making feed affordable and that is the objective. You may wonder, am I going astray? No. To make the feed affordable

they will tell you what are the fees involved, how can we manage those costs and I remember on the 27th you said to me, Mr. President, the main cost is electricity. I don't know I haven't reviewed those figures. So the question is how we can work with the Agro to improve that but there are many other things in making the price affordable. For example in the agreement with Caribbean Agro and Government of Grenada, we speak about vertical integration. They both signed to integrate the company, meaning that they're not only producing feed but they can either go backward into planting corn and other inputs that we can grow locally and that will create a whole set of stimulation for some of the Government Estates and other lands in the country and provide more employment. Look at what CaneCo has done in a short time, they are fully integrated from cane to rum to export. So the point is there are opportunities in the agreement that has never even been touched and that can make feed more affordable through different interventions. They also speak about utilising the experience and the expertise so that we can better leverage the industry. Here we had I think recently one of the hatcheries in Barbados coming to Grenada to see how, maybe because I think Grenada is one of the major purchaser of the chicks to even set up industry here. So could you image a tripartite arrangement between the Government, Caribbean Agro and this hatchery, what that can do for this country? So when we speak about we're doing a holistic review to make it more affordable, this is some of the things I am not too sure is being looked at. Maybe it is but it hindsight or in no sight at all, this is a matter.

The issue also of standards, that's another one, the reviewing of the agreement. The agreement speaks of the Caribbean Agro Industry would make the Government… **"Government can come at any time in the presence of the representative and take a sample to test to make sure it meets quality standards."** But the agreement only speak about flour but a major part of their product is livestock, feed. So this review process involved, being able to go take samples of feed because the agreement doesn't say that. Is that happening? And these are some questions we may have to ask later on, when last we test, have we taken the samples etc. because we need to ensure that those things are happening for the interest of the industry. And I appreciate, we need to develop the whole livestock industry and at the end of the day all of us want to achieve. **(Inaudible**

comments by Mr. President)

Mr. President: Even if the agreement does not talk about standards that feed must meet, there is the Bureau of Standard Legislation which gives that State, standard body, full authority, both in Law and in Treaties and understandings that have been engaged in and it is a very competent body right and it can set those standards. I am just making that point. So even if the agreement may be deficient in it, that is still not an escape route because the Bureau of Standards could be activated to come in, do the necessary test and determine whether or not the standards are being met and if the standards are not being met, there is a sufficiency of a regulatory and statutory powers to be able to assist you in that regard. I just thought I'll just point that out for your knowledge just in case you may not have thought about it. Sorry for disrupting you.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Oh no, Mr. President. I think you could represent the farmers excellent; you could be a good Deputy Agriculture Senator. **(Laughter)** Because I actually had a discussion with the Director of the Bureau on that matter, specifically we had that discussion and he might be listening now and I say… because I actually sit on the Council also. I said, I am not using my influence but it's a matter that… that time I wasn't aware of that integral part. I said we need to at least look and see, have local standards for those things and he said you know it's a good point. So whether they have it or not, we're not too sure but if not that is not a problem in developing. So, Mr. President, you are right on target.

So these are the type of matters and I say I wouldn't keep it long, I think the gist of what we want to see is a review that would make those clauses that exist purposeful, meaningful and have results in short order. Chickens, poultry, six weeks and you need to recycle them. So if we don't act quickly we will lose a lot. And there are a lot of other things that I don't want to go into. We speak about levies that the Government could establish so as to incentivise because Caribbean Agro can worry, if you import a lot of chicken which we are doing, then the local chicken situation would not develop to the point that they make it economically viable for them and then they may have to lay off workers, they may have to close down but that's not

what we want. What we want is more, not only chicken but more livestock in the country so we can have more jobs and more activities where we could start utilising some of our lands to even produce the local feed. This is what we want, Mr. President. But I am fearful, you know I always have a fear, that in the agreement and that is what triggered the whole thing afterwards you know, the performance in this agreement on the Caribbean Agro side and on the Government side. If Caribbean Agro is not performing, Government can intervene as said in the agreement and temporarily fix things. So as you say rightfully, we don't have to wait for things to fall apart if we think they're not doing the right thing and at the same time if Caribbean Agro realise that their business system is not efficient enough to be able to sustain and Government technically is not performing its enabling role that it agreed to do based on the agreement, it said that I will provide enabling environment so that we can be able to invest and integrate, then…

I saw something that they may sell all the shares and the Grenada Government have to buy the company. I don't know if that's how all agreements are set up but the Government will have to buy back… not buy back, but buy the Caribbean Agro. We don't even need to get there but that is in the agreement. We don't even need to get there because it is not about that, it provides jobs, it provides everything and then we complain and we say farmers are not doing much. Look at how much chicken we have to import and we're not looking at how we can help this situation. Farmers have problems, we know that, we have some new factories that have been developed, some new industries and so that is even showing the confidence that these new investment have despite this situation. So all we are doing is calling on Government to say look, let's make this place better and so I am very happy when I see such wonderful adjustments to this Motion that I may have to go to Senator Stiell next time before I table to the Clerk and ask him to help fine tune it because it is not about the Government, about me, about the farmers, it is about us trying to do one thing for a better Grenada and that's the spirit. As I told him during the break, I said, Senator Stiell we don't have an argument, we're going to discuss it, we're going to debate it but at the end of the day it's to make things better and that's all I want to present on this matter, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Roderick St. Clair. Senator De Allie? I am seeing hands and I'm not seeing lights. I don't know what that means.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President. I want to just add two pence. I am a Private Sector representative in the Senate so I have to tread cautiously because I cannot appear that I am trying to dismantle a company but at the same time…

Mr. President: May I just be rhetorical, isn't Senator St. Clair Private Sector?

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: I would assume so, all farmers are businessmen. But I did say to Senator St. Clair when this was being proposed and being looked at, that there is need for support in what he is proposing and I say that, Mr. President, through you from the point of view that I believe there has been a longstanding complain about the quality of feed, the cost of feed and I dare say flour as well that has been output by Caribbean Agro. When you talk to Members of the Agro, they will tell you they have data to indicate otherwise but farmers have come back… take for example the experience with hogs. A lot of farmers in pig farming have had to shut down because the price of feed to produce a hog of a particular quality was costing so much that it can't be financial viable, you would have to sell… I mean pork is selling at $10.00 a pound or probably more than beef now and there are a lot of farmers who have not been able to continue the business because it is just not financially viable for them to support themselves. And then when you talk poultry, you hear farmers in the business would tell you they could get feed from within our region; Trinidad, other countries in the OECS that seem to be of a much higher quality, give a more better bird and so on and so forth, even flour. We have flour coming in from our sister countries in the OECS that raises concern as to exactly what it is that comes out of Caribbean Agro in relation to quality on some of the areas that we are doing. And I believe that there is need to look at the agreement.

Mr. President, it's a reality that monopolies are not the way to go, sorry that have to be said. We haven't had a good experience in this country with monopolies.

We started with Cable and Wireless, we know what happened there, we went with GRENLEC, we know what's happening there and I am not sure that the mode of operation for monopolies has changed from when they started, how many years ago, 40 years ago, to what the environment now wants. And we know in this environment competition really breathes and push companies in the Private Sector to ensure that their standards and their quality are maintained and that their research and development into the products that they do is also kept on the cutting edge to keep up. And that is something and I am wondering, for the sake of the environment, doesn't necessarily happen because you get comfortable with the monopoly and basically monopoly says you have to take what I produce in that sense. And then there is the issue of inefficiencies that's passed on because you have a monopoly, that is the reality. That was the Cable and Wireless story to a large degree and the exploitation that happened there.

So from a general perspective, I believe that this is a situation that needs to be looked at. I understand my colleague saying that there is need for urgency and I think that is his ploy and I know the Leader of Government's Business on the "Other Side" would tell you, these legal constructs are never easy and Senator St. Clair indicated that if we need to push it beyond a certain way, we're going to end up with a GRENLEC again and we may lose again and then we have to buy it. So is that what we want? Senator St. Clair says no, we want to adjust things in the agreement in the clause but there is the legal constraints with these documents that prevents that at times and I believe the Leader of Government's Business is saying that, listen, we are engaging in discussions, we're looking to see what is the best way to do this and hopefully we can get to a place where it could be done properly and the farmers can succeed and Senator St. Clair says we need speed.

So, Mr. President, I am of the view that there is need for us to relook what exist and we need to change the construct. However, it is not going to be simple, it is not going to be easy and I don't know if we can get the speed that Senator St. Clair wants whilst in the meantime farmers going out of business, chicken are expensive, they're not growing at the rate they need to grow, all of that is there and there is some concern. But I appreciate the fact and I support the fact that, that arrangement needs to be looked at, needs to be reviewed. I don't want to use

dismantle, might be a strong word to use, to say to dismantle, but you know the issue of quality control and Government having a say through the Bureau of Standards. Bureau of Standard probably don't have a mandatory standard and that is what we need. If we were to get Bureau of Standards to put in a mandatory standard for the production of feed of a certain type and a certain constituent probably then we can use quality control measures to effect the agreement by Law and that is probably a way to go.

You know any vehicle could come into Grenada because we don't have certain safety standards and that is how you control some of these things to ensure that certain things happen. You put quality and safety standards in place to ensure that the product that you get meet a certain standard otherwise it cannot come into the market. You don't need to limit and say ten years for a vehicle, just say that a vehicle needs to have x amount of those bags that deploy when you meet in an accident and you would see 60% of them can't make it to the market. We need to be creative and start to use things that give us ways around these things. And my brother I am suggesting probably quality standards through the Bureau is a way to go. The Government may want to consider doing some mandatory standards to help push that in the direction where instead of dismantling the agreement, give you the quality and the price issues that we can work with. So, Mr. President, I offer that to see if we can get this to move. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. And just to throw in my little bit on this because it is a matter that when it came up, I have had calls to engage in some discussion with my colleague on "This Side" here, Senator St. Clair and the fact that there are workers there and I should state up front they are Members of our Union. So I had added interest, apart from being the Labour Senator, to make some inquiries and I'm aware that there are ongoing discussions with the Government and I have found that the aspect of importing feed and flour is not monopolised, but since 1991 you were allowed to bring in feed and flour from St. Lucia and St. Vincent and under the Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article

164 that addresses lesser developed countries and more developed countries have been in place and this have been extended in order to help protect the local industries in the region; OECS region up until 2028. And that the aspect of the price of feed which needs to be discussed could also be influenced by the question of quantity purchase from the company and therefore the aspect of increasing as we have the local investors now going more into poultry. There are arrangements within the company that will allow for graduated price reduction based on the quantity purchase but it requires, as I have spoken to my colleague here, the coming together of the farmers to be able to have volume, so there are different mechanism and I am confident that in this engagement with the Government and the farmers, these things will come in the light.

The question of quality, because these are things not because we represent the workers there only and not because they are unionised but as citizens of Grenada, you want to ensure that what people consume is of a high quality. You also want to ensure that what goes into what you consume is of a high quality and what we found out is that, hearing a number of the conversation in the media and from some of the farmers about the aspect of the yield of the feed. So for instance feed coming out of Trinidad, it was said that it's giving you a high yield. The question of what goes into this feed is said to be very important, so the question has to do with whether or not the feed coming out of Caribbean Agro Grenada has hormones in it, was modified or whether or not it is more healthy so that at the end of the day the feed consumed by the birds all depends on where it comes from you may have a bird that develop at a much faster timeframe in terms of yield but what may go into it may not be the best quality. So I guess all of these are matters that will be looked into. And then also crucial is the factor of when one look at Barbados versus St. Lucia, Barbados started I think in the 1990's and I think they are almost at 100% local poultry production, but they made the hard decision to result in this and it created issues in the beginning. It is recommended that we look at the St. Lucia model. St. Lucia has a market sharing arrangement where the Government in St. Lucia, the policy governs guarantee about 32% of all local poultry must be… the consumption of local poultry must guarantee about at least 32% so that if you have those arrangement, it therefore means that there will be more demand from the

supplies from Caribbean Agro, because Caribbean Agro will be selling to the local producers.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: Sure.

Mr. President: …on your feet, just my own clarity. Are you saying that in St Lucia there is what may, what I may describe as a licensing limit, meaning 32% of all the imported poultry must be local? So if I am spending a million dollars a year, alright, there is a licensing limit, I will only approve $700,000? Is that what you saying? I'm trying to just understand the concept here.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: No the meat. In other words the share, in terms of local usage of locally… you must ensure that rather than, let us say for instance I think our Import Bill in terms of poultry right now is about what, $35 million. You would find that, so let us say that equates to let us say 30,000 birds as an example. Rather than, rather than importing 30,000 birds…

Mr. President: There will be a limit?

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: …there would be a limit…

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: ...and the rest must be taken locally.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: 32%, yes locally share guaranteed.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: …guaranteed.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: No, no… No, whatever is required. What we are saying here, we are using this as an example so we do not need to reinvent the wheel. And I'm saying that…

Sen. the Hon. Roland Bhola: (Inaudible comments) have that in existence…

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: 40%.

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: Forty.

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: But it is not, but it is not done. Is it produced? It is not fulfilled.

Sen. the Hon. Roland Bhola: … 40% guaranteed.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: But it is not fulfilled, because we does not have...

(Inaudible comments by Sen. the Hon. Roland Bhola)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: No, that's not the issue. What I'm saying here, but in St. Lucia, based on policies and everything that they have done, the mechanism that they put in place, they have been able to achieve that. So we have 40% which is better but we are not there.

(Inaudible comments by Senator Stiell)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: No, I'm agreeing. What I'm addressing here is that there are mechanisms that can be used, and let us get there. Now what this would also do, it will guarantee the jobs that are there, because of crucial importance is the preservations and the guaranteeing of jobs and will also increase jobs because if you have a higher demand from the local suppliers, most likely they may require probably additional workers. There is also the issue that location, which may not be able to be resolved like this. In St. Lucia and St. Vincent the Mill is located on the Port, so there is the aspect of reduced transportation costs. But one may argue that at least someone in terms of transport is getting some form of income. Yes, so you may have an issue at one hand but someone else is getting, someone local because there isn't as far as I'm aware any foreign owned transportation system that is getting anything from Caribbean Agro. So it is local truckers and transportation operators that are getting this there. There is the issue of…

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: …and that's where I've said that Caribbean Agro is not a monopoly of supplies, it is a monopoly manufacturer, that is agreed. So for instance during April or May, March, April, May when Caribbean Agro

was suspended for roughly one month as a result of some development relative to COVID, local poultry farmers and others had the authority to bring in feed from out of Trinidad. That was actually done, but I can assure you based on the research that we did, it did not result in cheaper feed, it did not result in cheaper feed. And there's also the concern that even if you are able to move in that direction, which will be so far in violation of the Treaty of Chaguaramas 164, that is in place until 2028, what we have found is that it is quite normal sometimes that when you engage a supplier for the first time, you may get a good deal, but as you become more and more dependent on that supplier, supply and demand, the price…

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: …goes up and therefore, if there is more guarantee, there is more guarantee once these arrangements are worked out with the local supplier…

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De. Allie: That's what Roderick saying. They don't have any guarantee, they're just announcing price increase as well.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: …but it is also important on the aspect of price and I will just give Senator St. Clair this, and if you'll permit me I will just, because as I said we, based on …

Sen. the Hon. Roland Bhola: (Inaudible comments) circulate.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: No, I just, I just had one, I just…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: You were circulating e, you will send an e-copy.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: No I just want to …

Mr. President: While Senator Lewis is talking **(inaudible comments)** …and I'm intervening a little bit now on the extensive side because I am of the view that this is the kind of discussion that the Parliamentarians and the Farmers' representative as a Parliamentarian ought to be more frequently discussing. The business of the, and I am certain that this session of the Parliament is going to have a lot of viewership, because people are interested in these issues. Senator Lewis, continue I'm not stopping you. I'm just…

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: No, no, that's okay. I mean I think it is important, so I don't…

Mr. President: Yes, yes…

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I mean once…

Mr. President: It is a very important discussion.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: …you **(inaudible comment)** procedure once these are important, these are important discussions.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Mr. President, and forgive me if I sit but Senator Lewis is correct, it's a 164 article item that is protected. In other words, feed coming from a more developed country like Trinidad into the OECS will attract higher duties and that is why the feed he's talking about coming in from Trinidad may necessarily be more expensive. However what he didn't mention is the quality of the feed, because the farmers will tell you that the quality of the feed coming in from Trinidad is a much superior quality than what they are getting from Caribbean Agro. Senator Lewis is as well alluding to the fact that what is probably coming from Trinidad in terms of the formula and the chemical combinations may be different, where it's more hormonal from the feed external than the one that is produced locally which appear to be more on grain and natural, and that is another area of

discussion. What extent… and that is why I said quality standards must be put in place.

In other words what percentage of the formula of the feed must be hormonal, to protect our health, what must be natural, what must be other part of the feed? And if we don't have those standards and to be able to benchmark it against something that we think is international and good for our community, then we are not really going anywhere. I mean that is where we need to start, we must benchmark against something that we think is good for us and put that in place, so that even the local producer, which has the monopoly to produce meets those standards. Even the external ones have to meet the standard and that is where probably the Government needs to take that kind of conversation.

Mr. President: Yes, if I may add, I can tell you that this discussion is so in-depth. The experience of Ghana and what happened and how the European former colonialist destroyed an independent source of bird production in Ghana I think it was, and using the multilateral organisations they dismantled the entire production and opened it up for the dumping of waste chicken parts from Europe, so that the industry where people grew whole bird, ate whole birds all produced in Ghana I think the situation was, all of a sudden they were pressured by different instruments introduced by these multilateral organisations like the IMF to get out of that business and they ended up now having to import and they still do at enormous prices parts of those birds which were never consumed but was used primarily in the dog food and cat food industry, that has now found a healthy market. So people are eating chicken foot, they're eating chicken bum, they're eating chicken and an entire industry was dismantled. And let me say this, while this happened in the last twenty to thirty years, it has accompanied us since slavery, because while we celebrate eating all of this pig snout and trotters and things that… in fact, that professor has produced a very detailed work on our nutritional patterns going back to the period of enslavement and linking it to the chronic diseases that we now have, as a result of that.

So this discussion is so deep. I mean we're touching really important parts of it, but it's a very deep discussion on how the world has been colonised, how there

has been a maintenance of a systematic disparity in the world, which is imposed upon us and the refusal, the inequality of the distribution of the wealth created in the world, is what we are witnessing and we are seeing it in food. Just thought I would make that point there. With your indulgence, I'm giving you the Chair in the opposite direction, because I've interrupted you and I really didn't want to, so you can have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Mr. President, thank you very much. That to me is important because the nation, the region and the world is listening and this is what we are here for, to be able to address the issues. We do not have to agree, we have to be able to debate issues based on our research and our convictions. At the end of the day, leave with the best possible position.

Before I go into the document, just another local point I want to raise. That our research and investigation has revealed and I guess that is where maximising of profit and the open market or capitalism comes into play, that even when Caribbean Agro gives some reduction in prices, that was not passed by the retailers to the consumers. I want to establish that, even when. So you request a holistic discussion yes, but we need to bear those things in mind, even when those things were done, in terms of reduced prices, these were not passed on to the final consumer.

Let me just read as I give, this is a paper prepared, written by Desmond A. Ali, PHD for the Caribbean Poultry Association in February of 2021 and therefore the local farmers through their Association ought to be aware of this. And I'll just highlight the following, just two with your permission. It says "in 2020 corn prices went from US$3.96/bu." That's… what's bu again? I guess it had to do with the weight.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Bushel.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Bushels, bushels. Yes **"to 4.9, up 59%. Soybean meal went from US$2.81 a tonne to $4.31 up 54% and wheat from US$4.84 to $6.73 up 39%."** This wheat, remember wheat are brought into

Grenada. It also says **"the cost to produce chicken in Brazil rose 47.28% in 2020 with feed prices up 42.05% and pork rose 41%. Similarly in the USA feed prices rose 12% in the same year."** We are not producers of wheat and yet still in these countries they are faced with those prices, transportation costs, freight etc.

And he said that he wished he could have, and then now with China, China during the recovery period now and after the lock down is gobbling up wheat and he wished that he could have guaranteed that 2021 we will see a reduction in feed prices, wheat etc., but he cannot guarantee that. And I'm saying all of this to say that there are some things that… some price, some things that are imported, in terms of the price setting. But there are provisions within the existing agreement that can be utilised to help achieve the objective of stabilising price or reducing price and to encourage the involvement of the large scale poultry, because the cost of production is between, feed is between 60 to 75% of the cost of production. And and for the small farmers who purchase probably a few bags of feed they would not be making anything much or be able to survive there.

And that is why through you, Mr. President, I'm appealing to my goodly Senator friend here, and we have had that discussion before, that's the importance of organisation. That's the importance of organisation and we are aware that recent moves have been made to get back the Association together and therefore I want to use this opportunity to, through my good friend here to encourage that arrangement. And I am sure that with a conscious approach to effecting those management we should be in a better position, taking into account that we are aware for those who eat meat, those who eat chicken etc., that there has been concerns expressed that some of the chicken and other things consumed in certain fast food outlets may not be the best for our health, and what it has been doing. And that's the contribution I want to make to this. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Lewis. The Honourable Norland Cox. Just one word on an update of time. Anytime I receive an acknowledgement of my youthful photos I feel good. The Leader of Government's Business has been suggesting that we adjourn an hour earlier, rather than 8. I have the staying power actually to go to midnight but in consideration of the support staff and others, alright

and some people have to travel where there are limited bus routes, I would adopt the Leader of Government's generous suggestion that we take the adjournment at 7 or we take the adjournment at the point in which this Motion concludes and we resume at 10 o'clock in the morning on Tuesday upcoming to continue the debate… **(Inaudible comments)** …and on that… So actually we will wind up on this. I would appeal to Senators to, because we are adjourning and in consideration of the long day of the other Senators and for people like Senator Stiell who maybe burst of energy is not equal to mine that we, matters for the adjournment be dealt with when we resume on Tuesday. Yes? Now it's an appeal, it's not an order. You have a right to speak on the adjournment, but I'm just appealing to you in light of the very long day and intense day we've had. So Senator Cox the floor is yours…

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: And it's now, it's now 7, a minute to …

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Just two minutes. I do agree with the suggestion that we should and we can adjourn, or should adjourn after we close off on this Motion. But I've been paying attention, Mr. President, and listening to the contributions and I think it is important that we stay on focus in terms of what is the problem. And the problem is that the farmers cannot find their way. Basically, they're not going to make it if something is not done and that is the crux of the matter. And I heard a number of report analysis and feedback and prices increase here and there. The fact of the matter is the farmers, they just cannot function. But I think a very important element that I have not heard so far is the willingness from the primary person in this, or institution in this whole discourse, the willingness to work and compromise where necessary to resolve this matter. That I have not heard coming forth, so I trust, I know that Government, we have been working. And based on what I know such indications have not been so forthcoming, that willingness, we have not seen that as yet and I think that will be the key to resolving this matter, in the interest of every person, especially your workers who are there. There must be a willingness by all parties, otherwise it's not going to work out. I just wanted to

indicate that, Mr. President, because I understand how this thing and I have a clear indication of what is contained within that agreement and some of it is **(laughter)**, I don't even know. I can't even understand how it got there to start with, but nonetheless it is there. But there must be a willingness by all parties to resolve this, because if we just say well this is happening or that the thing is so, we can't do this, we can't do that, the farmers are going to lose out. So I just want to make that contribution but obviously supporting the efforts of all parties on board to ensure that we resolve this matter in the quickest time possible. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Yes.

Mr. President: You have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, I would be very, very brief…

Mr. President: Matthew, yes.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: I think it is instructive that I say this. A few years ago, I was in one of the Islands…

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: …in one of the Islands and they found chicken there, back and neck that was 14 years old, 14 years old. I am trying to make the point that this chicken would be very dangerous to our health, and to the health of the people. I'm also saying and this is pointing to the fact that we really need to develop our sector so that this thing don't happen to us, where we end up with virtually bad chicken.

Mr. President, Senator St. Clair accepted the amendments to the Motion, but I just want to point something out, which I think is very instructive. The new addition says, **"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate support Government's continued holistic review."** Now I am willing to accept anything that I think is right or good, but what exactly is Government's Terms of Reference to the committee that it sets in place? What exactly is its TOR? And I think it's very important that we have an insight or an idea as to what the TOR really is.

Now, Mr. President, I have with me here the 1977 agreement, in fact I went through it and I did a whole lot of highlighting. Now during the process of looking at this, I want to suggest that there are some articles, I have them highlighted but I'm not going to call them. Some articles especially those dealing with reducing inefficiency and creating more efficiency which would in turn drop or possibly drop the price of the commodity, which is the feed. Special attention and emphasis should be given to those, because as Senator St. Clair said in the beginning, the whole aim of this exercise is three fold, one, good quality feed, two, costly feed and three, availability of the feed. This is the whole objective and if what the Government is doing would not lead to that, it means therefore that we'll be having an activity in futility. If that can happen, then what happened in that Island would never happen to us because our production would be up and we'll be importing much, much less. So, Mr. President, I do hope that the Senate accepts the Motion and we see results at the end, because this to me is what is critical. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Not all the time I listen to you, not all the time I listen to you. I throw it back for you. **(Laughter)** I will give you a surprise. **(Inaudible comments)**

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes, Mr. President. I just want to stand to signal my support for what we've been doing here today. I understand very well the Motion that is before us and…

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I say I understand very well the Motion that is before us and…

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: …found myself?

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: No I said I support what we are doing at this point in time. Yes, and the Motion that is before us is very important as it relates to the production of not just poultry. But we're looking at, we had an issue with swine production and so forth in the past, but the entire sector that has been pressured as a result of what we are seeing and what we have experienced over the years. But it is important to note that we have to tread cautiously with all that we want to do as it relates to an entity that has legal teeth and support to do what they are doing. You cannot bulldoze unless you want to create another debacle as what we're seeing recently. So it's a question of if we had taken the Motion in its original sense, it might have created another GRENLEC. So you have to temper this thing and I understand very well because I've being in touch with farmers. I do a little farming for myself to, so I understand the context of this. But I just want us to tread cautiously in this regard.

Diplomacy I want to believe, is key in this case because the agreement that have been flaunted before us give the authority to the entity to do what they have been doing. But I do agree in this dispensation, monopolies have been disbanded in the United States and so on where this company seems to have its headquarters.

But you cannot come with a big stick. While we want to ensure that farmers are able to survive in this harsh economic times with cheaper feed, better quality feed, we have to do this with a lot of diplomacy.

The last point, as it relates to the point that Senator Lewis made and backed up by Senator De Allie as it relates to two things. Yes, when they had the exposure to the COVID virus and had to shut the plant down and there was negotiation and arrangement to bring feed out of Trinidad, I had to purchase the feed because I had my birds and so forth and I could say, yes the price was a little more but the quality was superb, and the birds seem to have liked it, very much so. But I agree with your points Senator De Allie in terms of what is being offered and the role that the Bureau of Standards has to play right now, in ensuring the inputs in the feed that is being produced is one that would ensure that not only the birds do well, but those of us who consume the products, meat, the poultry itself, the eggs of the meat. There was a cry some time ago and the egg producers were complaining that something is wrong, the chicks were not laying as they used to and when they lay it, there was a competition between the farmers and the chicks themselves to get the eggs. It still happens and I look at this with the feed we brought in from Trinidad. So it's much more than what is before us here. But I want to end by saying with all that we want to ensure that the farmers get an opportunity to survive in this market and to get support from Caribbean Agro, we have to employ diplomacy. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, thank you, Mr. President. I first want to thank all my colleagues, Senators for their contribution, verbally and those who didn't say anything I know that you're taking in the discussion and we appreciate that. I heard several dimensions and I was very happy to hear the different representations of the details on all sides, from the Agro side, from the farmer side, some of which I have and I know I didn't say and it's good to see that collectively, we all understand. Whether it's the trade issues, whether it's the labour issues, whether it's the quality of feed issues, whether it's the importation issues and

which brings to Senator Stiell's word of holistic. Holistic, it means that all of us here, holistically also understand what is before us. I note my good friend brother Garraway, Senator Garraway's point of treading cautiously. Haste doesn't always mean running 100 miles an hour, but there is something called situational response to the matter. So sometime you might be able to run fast, sometime you run slow depending on the feedback you are getting. **(Inaudible comment)** Hasten slowly my colleague say.

However whilst we do that I think Senator Joseph made a very important point. There are some clauses, it may not necessarily mean changing but are we implementing it to help? So for example the local production of using local material, corn production, maybe soya production, you know. Can we do some research into that and set up plots and look at the productivity and how can we reduce that, and I think Senator Cox sort of hinted to that direction, the willingness. So we have to have a dialog and I'm happy that we're all seeing the same light. I don't see that Senator of Labour here have an issue. I know the delays, he's representing the workers but the workers are us, our friends, our family who is living there. At the end of the day, the farmers, the thousands of them is who we, and not just poultry farmers, and I think, I hear in the message that we understand and that also come out, that we recognise we need to do something as Senator Cox say to, and it's not the word help. So the farmers shouldn't sit there and feel well it's a help it's a purposeful action to able to make their enterprise better and to fulfil a service to the nation. It must not be seen as a sort of help. Okay.

However, as I close, because the message is clear. We'd want the Government as we agree, as recently, to act in good timing, act with and involve also. I am having some discussions somewhat with the Minister for Agriculture and another team going on, where some teams are happening at the trade level but I think we have to be discussing, the Senator have to be involved, the producers have to be involved, the Government has to be involved, labour has to be involved and sit down. We cannot be divided to address this matter. That's why me and Senator Lewis has been in dialog constantly and I said don't, it's not about closing down, it's about how do we get for betterment for this country. And, Mr. President, you made it clear, it is not about destruction because even when we speak about the vertical

integration, you could have a vertical integration, that is what we refer to in ventures of vertical monopoly, to the point whereby you have the key inputs, working along with the producers into the Retail Sector, that is so organised that you are benefiting through the sales of your feed, farmers benefit, consumers benefit, farmers in the field benefit. And I think if we look at it from the Government end please, look at that holistic approach and don't only look at the Caribbean Agro in the mix, we may realise that they may then discover, but wait, there is an opportunity here and that's why I use the example of CaneCo. So in this regard, Mr. President, I commend this Motion to my fellow Members.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, the Motion in the name of Senator St. Clair, as amended and I wouldn't go through all of the recital. I would just deal with the actual resolution part of it itself. As amended reads:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate supports Governments continued holistic review of the existing agreement with Caribbean Agro Limited.

Question put and agreed to.
Motion approved.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, well we did say that this would be the last Motion before the adjournment. I want to thank each and every one of you. I want to express my thanks to the police officers who have accompanied us here, whole day on your feet with little breaks of course, but nonetheless tiring and for those who have to journey to the further parts of the country. I didn't hear much of Senator Judd today, I don't know if he's reserving for the continuation, but…

(Inaudible comments by Senator Judd Cadet)

Mr. President: Oh, I was yes. I was unavoidably absent, yes, yes, that's right. But I didn't hear you though, anyway. So I want to thank each and every Senator, Sergeant-of-Arms, Assistant, the IT people. Tomorrow is one of those

public holidays and as I grow older I look forward to them. In fact I wish they were back to back holidays, but I want to thank everybody. I think this has been a good session. The Senate now adjourns until Tuesday upcoming at 10 a.m. in the morning.

(Gavel sounds)

Senate adjourns at 7:19 p.m.

Resumption

Senate resumed on Tuesday, 8th June, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

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 Roland Bhola		Member
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 Cathisha Williams	-	Parliamentary Secretary – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Senator the Honourable Tessa Alexander St Cyr	-	Member
Senator the Honourable Matthew Joseph		Member
Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie	-	Deputy President
Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis	-	Member
Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair	-	Member

Prayers
Announcements

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

(Senate prayer was said)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Let us say the Lord's Prayer together.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. President: Honourable Members, pray be seated. This Senate now resumes.

(Sound of Gavel)

Mr. President: Let me just convey a warm good morning to all. Honourable Members, once again good morning to all. When we adjourned last week Wednesday we adjourned on the point on the Order Paper where Senator St. Clair was to introduce the second Motion standing in his name. So Senator St. Clair I will hand over to you. Colleagues I am not setting a time but I think it might be a reasonable expectation that we could wrap up the proceedings by about 1 o'clock. It is not a fixed time and it is not a limitation on time, it is just an expression of desire if we can wrap up by 1. I don't anticipate that we will be breaking to come back for lunch. **(The President converse with the Clerk)** Lunch would be available. My own individual preference would be for us to go straight, complete the business then adjourn and take lunch and call it a day's session for this sitting of the Senate that is my preferable option. The second option is to work up until 12, 12:30 or maybe closer to 1 then break for lunch and then come back and resume and that takes us well over the 1 o'clock target which I am again repeating, it is not a fixed time but an expression of what I hope most Senators would wish for. So that's it, do I get a sense that we will work through, complete, bring this Session to an

end and then have lunch or that we would break for lunch? **(Members raised hands)** The fingers indicate that we will work through?

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: We would work through and then we…

Mr. President: If that's the sentiment, then let the Senate be so guided. I mean I could make a decision but I don't normally like to do that. I really like to operate on the basis of a team spirit and what Members decide. So Senator St. Clair the floor is yours. I think it's the Motion (b), yes.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Good morning, Mr. President, and good morning fellow Senators. This morning, Mr. President, I am here to present the Motion in my name and I would read, it says:

WHEREAS it is necessary to provide for the services of the State of Grenada in any budget cycle by means of an Appropriation Act;

AND WHEREAS the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year 1st January to 31st December, 2021 was approved at the sitting of the Senate in December 2021;

AND WHEREAS the approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure presented the activities and work programme for the various Government Departments and Ministries;

AND WHEREAS the activities and work plan of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year 1st January to 31st December, 2021 so passed did not provide a timeline of the activities and projects;

AND WHEREAS the timeline of activities will contribute to improved delivery of work plan activities, projects and cash flow management;

AND WHEREAS monitoring and evaluation is a prudent management process to improve delivery and implementation rates;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that activities and project items

presented in the now approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year 1st January to 31st December, 2021 be presented in a quarterly timeline to improve planning, implementation and monitoring.

This concludes the reading of the resolution. In terms of seconding, do I have to ask for a seconder?

Mr. President: You must get a seconder otherwise the Motion cannot proceed.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: So I ask for the seconding or you would ask?

Mr. President: It's not my Motion Sir, it's yours.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: So I would like to request a seconder of this Motion.

Mr. President: Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, I beg to second the Motion now moved.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I rise to propose that the mover of this Motion withdraws the Motion. I will lay out my reasons for this request based on the fact that all that is outlined within this Motion… First of all the premise that the annual budget process does not provide for the things outlined, so details of the activities, the projects, the programmes, the monitoring and evaluation elements of that, the provision of timelines, cash flows to assist in the implementation process, all of these things, Mr. President, are in fact part of Government's annual budget process.

So if you allow me, I will go into greater detail as to precisely what is provided for as part of Government budgeting process but in addition to that the additional work that takes place in terms of the development of corporate plans, work plans which outlines precisely what Senator St. Clair has outlined in his proposal and on presenting my case, I will beg to move that the mover of this Motion withdraws it.

Mr. President, enshrined in Law under the Public Finance Management Act of 2015 and the Regulations and specifically section 16 of the Regulations of that Act clearly laid out are the requirements for the development of a corporate plan and annual work plans for every Ministry and every Department of Government. So first of all at the high level, the corporate plan, it aligns the programmes, the projects, the initiatives of Government as a whole of each individual Ministry and Department to ensure that those…

Mr. President: One second, Senator Stiell. Your request for a withdrawal, I think it would be proper for you to state your intention. I believe we should allow, because the Motion has been seconded, let him present the engagement of the Motion and you can rise again to ask that he withdraw it and that's a matter for him. But the Motion has been seconded so it is now for him to give an outline of the contents of the reasons that he is advancing for, why he is advancing, what he is advancing and then in response you can ask for the Motion to be withdrawn. He hasn't yet finished presented, he just read the Motion as is. So I should give him the opportunity to and in response you can ask for him to withdraw the Motion and give your reasons why and if he is so moved and he withdraws it then the Motion is withdrawn.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, we can do it either way. The approach I was seeking to take will outline precisely what is within the Member's Motion but if you wish for us to extend the discussion we can do so. But as I said on my presentation there will be a very clear alignment in terms of what the mover of the Motion is proposing and what I will run through. So it is simply in the interest of time but if you so suggest I will be so guided.

Mr. President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you so much, Mr. President. The good thing about life, Mr. President, is that there is a God and the good thing about God; they say God sees into the future, man cannot see into the future. So I appreciate your permission to continue to present this case such that we can then decide down the road, we cannot decide of course before even seeing what is there.

Mr. President, why this Motion? This Motion comes from three different angles. In this very House, the joint Houses during the Budget Presentation by our dear Minister for Finance, he alluded to a very important point in that and that triggered a lot of things in my mind on that day where he said that it was pertaining to the issue of implementation and he said some words to the effect that the Ministry of Finance…

Mr. President: Just one correction, the presentation of the Budget was not done at a Joint Sitting of the House. I just want the records to be factual on that.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Members of the Senate may have been by way of invitation present in the Chamber but the Budget Presentation is never done to a Joint Sitting of the Houses.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, good education. So it was statements to the effects that the Ministry of Finance found innovation during the last year and I think it was during the COVID period they were able to improve the management of the cash flow and to get things done because of some new accounting or some software system so that they can unlock monies if there is delays in one area and I was really excited about that because that has been some problem. You hear that some Ministries say that the Vote run out but we cannot find money but the Ministry of Finance can find ways to unlock and I thought that was really a good point. And then I

was further triggered during our Senate discussions on the Budget by my dear friend Senator Cox when he admitted, look we have problems with implementation and of course I saw it more in his speaking about projects in terms of infrastructural projects because we speak specifically about procurement and we have to get some Canadians to come in and we have to find ways and I was very happy to hear that and how the Government is moving to… So by its own admission, and implementation issue is not only about Government, we all have different procrastination, different challenges in all our lives, so that is one angle.

But when I started meeting with my farmers, Grand Anse fisher folks and all of those different, they keep saying to me, Mr. Senator we like your spirit but I hope you don't fooling yourself because things always take long to happen and I say don't worry once we put our systems in place, organise ourselves, have dialogues, at least let's do that rather than not doing because it is only through that we will know whether or not we are falling short of our request. So that was what drive that to me, 90% of what I say in this House is what is being fed to me and the farmers and the fisher folks could tell you that, even regular people. So this is the premise, it is not my feeling whether or not the Government implementing or not, it is not that at all.

Now, when I… so I say how do I investigate this thing? So I started looking, I start researching and I eventually found myself to the Public Finance Act and rightfully so as Senator Stiell bring me to the real spot 16 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015 and this is where I landed. And then I also looked at the Budget and looked at how the items are presented because as an average citizen, Mr. President, really and truly I always hear about the Budget and the details but I never really go into details of it except in this new responsibility. So I was amazed and so impressed with the different items and activities particularly for my interest of course Agriculture and Fisheries, that is where I focus and so it is very small reading so I have to look through my glasses. And so for example in the Ministry of Agriculture in the agronomy section, there is a plan it says "performance priorities" it shows us what was accomplished in 2020, this is excellent, it then shows us the priorities and strategies for 2021. So for example it speaks of propagation of economic tree crops, roots and tubers, propagation of citrus,

strengthening of banana and plantain industry, rehabilitation of propagating stations and each little Department has their own little work plan and this is good for the different Departments.

Mr. President: (Inaudible comments) …and from what you has just told the House, how does that square with your recital which begins, activities and work plans and Estimates did not provide a timeline of the activities and the projects?

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: I am coming there, Mr. President, I am laying the foundation, I am almost there. So the next section speaks of key performance indicators and it gives us a number of plants produced, number of tech packs produced, it tells us what the actually monies spent in 2019, it shows us what was for 2020 provisional because you do the estimates for the last few months, provisional and then it says the amount of monies that is planned for 2021. It also go further to 2022 and 2023 because as rightfully said by Senator Stiell the Corporate Plan caters for that 3 year projection but you do a one year where you speak of the specifics. So this is good.

The challenge comes, Mr. President, when you go to 16 (3) of the said Act that speaks about **"every Ministry and Department shall, on the basis of the corporate plan…"** so what Senator speak about is the corporate plan. I am going deeper now and I want to say, I spent about two hours last night googling all on the Government website looking for this corporate plan and the only plan that keeps showing up when I search I think it's the NAT, the National Adaptation something. So I am yet to see which is catered for in the Act, the publication, one week after this Budget was passed for the publications of those plans. Because I take it as Senator Stiell is trying to allude that there is another plan apart from this what is contained in the Budget which I for me is ok with this contents here as you rightfully also figuring out that the items as raised are here. The issue and the substantive issue is the issue of time, this is how we could measure whether something is happening or not. And so it says specifically under that section, it speaks about priorities and action for the budget year, I showed you that, expected results, I showed you that, timeframe and that is the one I am looking for up to

now. The officers, we see that, even the budget, the amount of money is there, all of those things are there and it also speaks about **"update the annual work plan to reflect the National Budget approved by Parliament"** and it speaks about **"no longer than one week after the approval of the Budget**" that there is the publication.

The real issue is item (c), which is time. They tell us, I learnt that, when you're setting objectives, they have to be SMART and SMART meaning, there is a series of things but one of the major part of SMART is it have to be time bound and this Budget and Expenditure and Revenues and so on that we have for the year is time; January 1 to December 31 and we have a series of activities to take place inside of there. For example if we have programme to do plantain and bananas, fine, all I am asking very simple, Mr. President, and this is a very simple request. You type plantain and banana in your type writer, you put in your bracket (q1) so I know when we sit here and I pull this up and I go to my farmers, we can say we expected to do this in q1. But as it is now, it is open, so it could happen anytime in the year and no one can be held accountable and this even further aggravates the matter which I don't want to go into in terms of the performance of our officers and their meeting of schedules and deadlines etc. for the whole purpose. I don't want to go there, that is not the purpose of this. It is a matter of how do we look at that. And if you start knowing when those things would happen it then ties back into that very important point that the Minister for Finance made in terms of the software which could coordinate amongst Ministries to allocate resources and finances based on maybe, there might be a project that may be lagging and those things happen for different purposes.

So for example, we look at the Budget for this current year and we have the allocation for the hiring of the Chief Agriculture Officer, this is the equivalent of almost as the Chief Medical Officer at that level in the Ministry. And to date, we had the answers last week, July 7, 2020 this individual retired and we know 60 years was coming many years before, I'm not even going into that. But at the same time now we are on June 7 and the responses that we got from the Ministry is that things are put in place and we're almost getting ready to prepare for the next Budget cycle, Mr. President. And then when I read recovery, transformation and resilience as our theme

in our Budget and I look at the statement that was presented again by our due Minister for Finance that we will redouble our efforts to make agriculture great again.

So the request, Mr. President, is not a… it's a very simple request of (q1, 2 or 3 or 4 which quarter) so we could able to help and monitor and also the different managers and so on within the Government could work on that, even at the Ministry of Finance and coordinating they could see whether persons are going back and forth. This is all the request is, it is nothing complicated, so whether there is a plan or not, we're not saying no. What is so difficult to put three more characters? It's not printing of paper, it's e, it is digital, it does not interfere with anything and I believe that we should not be running away because this will help us for monitoring and able for delivery. It provides confidence for everybody and transparency for interaction. That's all I'm asking, Mr. President, to this Honourable and I finish my presentation on this matter. Thank you.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, as per my opening statements I still beg to move that the Motion as presented be withdrawn. We have heard the rationale from the Senator and his suggestions and his motive, the sentiment behind that is all very, very honourable but we have to come back and focus on what is outlined in the content of the Motion that is being presented, outlining that Government does not have the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place, does not have timelines, does not have resource allocations etc. And just focusing on the Motion before us, I once again put forward the argument that those precise things are covered and covered comprehensively within the Legislation of the Public Finance Management Act and the Regulations and specifically to these items, what is covered under section 16.

I also hear from the Member the request and what he is requesting is again, it's

different to what is outlined in his Motion. That Motion seems to distil down into simply the need for open bracket, closed bracket and what's inside is a timeline against every programme, initiative deliverable of the Estimates for Revenue and Expenditure.

That document, Mr. President, is probably over 1000 pages thick, thousands and thousands and thousands of line items within that. So the practicality as simple as the Member on the "Other Side" presented, I think from an administrative perspective, it is not a simple thing. And to do that accurately, to do that consistently and to use that as the tool to measure Government's progress. Which is why Government in coming into office in 2013, recognising the implementation challenges, diabolical implementation and performance of the previous administration, the historical challenges all administrations have had, in implementing its programmes, putting a number of measures, starting with Legislation. You cannot have a more powerful mechanism to ensure that Government is held to account and that there is transparency in the delivery of its programmes, which were intended to develop the nation and provide benefits and services to the people. So recognising the importance of that, encased in a legislative framework with Regulations, a process is put in place for that very monitoring and evaluation, in a very practical way, in a very efficient, thorough, well thought through way.

And this isn't something we just came up on the back of an envelope; this was done with support from the World Bank, from the Caribbean Development Bank, the European Union. All of our development partners that we're working through, working with at that time, through the Structural Adjustment Programme, seeing how we can reform our practices, how we can build capacity in the capacity that we need to be able to deliver on the programmes set out by Government. And that starts with the corporate plan and that corporate plan is over a 3 year period, that corporate plan links into our National Sustainable Development Plan, which is our 15 year vision, and then that corporate plan is then broken down into work plans for every single Ministry and every division within those Ministries. And those work plans speak to precisely what Senator St. Clair is asking for, which is a breakdown of the high-level programmes, through to project, through to initiatives. That level of granularity, with timelines for delivery on a

quarterly basis and there is quarterly reporting on those work plans, the resources to be assigned, both financial and human, who is responsible, by when and by whom and what. And that is tied specifically into the annual budget and is part of the annual budgeting process and those work plans are reviewed and revised on a quarterly basis, as the Senator is requesting, adjustments made where we're falling behind, how to ensure the efficient execution of those programmes. Is it perfect? Absolutely not! But the mechanism in terms of doing the monitoring and evaluation that is requested for is what is done. And what the Senator is asking for, is open bracket, closed bracket, it's not required, Mr. President. But I understand the simplicity, I understand how that could be viewed as useful, but the tools that are already developed and have been put in place since 2015 give us the visibility that we need, to make the decisions that we need, to ensure that we are operating as efficiently as possible.

But, Mr. President, I will go further and I would share our observations being in Government, being tasked, being charged, mandated, together with our colleagues in the public service as Government in delivering these targets. And that isn't actually where the problem lies, the problem lies in having the tools to actually, not to monitor, we can monitor, it's the tools to actually implement. And that is why we've moved to, we haven't just focused on the Legislation, we haven't just focused on developing a framework of written tools to guide us, we actually established a dedicated Ministry for Implementation, recognising the challenges of past administrations, our own challenges and the challenges of others. A dedicated Ministry, but it's one thing creating a Ministry that doesn't have the people and the skills needed, we've gone beyond that. We recognise the resource investment that's required to provide the capacity to do what needs to be done and whether that is from local resources, whether that is approaching external partners to provide additional resources, programme managers, project managers, engineers, administrative personnel to be able to not just monitor, but to directly engage where bottlenecks, identifying bottlenecks and then the necessary interventions to unblock those bottlenecks. So we've gone beyond that.

We've also and Senator Cox would be able to speak in far more detail, he is the Minister with responsibility for the Ministry of Implementation, so will be able to expound

on my highlighted outline. But other parties have been involved; again bringing competence, bringing skill sets to improve our implementation rate. I don't have the figures off the top of my head but I know for a fact coming into office in 2013, the metrics applied to our implementation performance was abysmal, absolutely abysmal, Mr. President. And with the measures that we have put in place, the Legislation, creation of a dedicated Ministry, the resourcing of that Ministry, providing the Ministry with the tools necessary, we have already seen a significant increase over the subsequent period in terms of our implementation rate, but we still have a very long way to go, Mr. President, but that process has started. So that is the bigger picture and trying to identify ways of improving the delivery side of things. There is value in the Senator's insight there, but where he is pointing us to, with the Motion that is before us, I come back to my opening argument this is redundant.

All that is being asked within this Motion is already accounted for within the Public Finance Management Act of 2015, and specifically outlined in section 16 of the Regulations. And I will go through, I'll just read out what is stated: **"Every Ministry and Department shall, on the basis of the corporate plan…"** which I spoke about, that's a 3 year rolling plan which is linked to our 15 year National Sustainable Development Plan, **"under sub-regulation 1, develop an annual work plan which will inform the resources required for the budget year and which shall include priorities and actions for the budget year, expected results, the time frame, the responsible officer and the resources tied to the budget submission."** It goes on, **"every annual work plan shall be approved by the line Ministry, every Permanent Secretary and Head of Department and they shall take responsibility to ensure that the annual work plan and the draft annual budget comply with the budget circular and other directives, orders, instructions and guidelines under the Act."** Also, **"update the annual work plan to reflect the National Budget approved by Parliament,"** by Parliament, precisely what Senator St. Clair is asking for. And finally, **"not later than one week after the approval of the National Budget by Parliament, publish the corporate plan on the official website of Government."** Now the points that Senator St. Clair raised was he looked on the website and he could not find the

corporate plan, that is something we will have to follow up. But it clearly states within the Act that the corporate plan which is that overarching framework for Government's delivery shall be made available on the Government's website.

So, Mr. President, we understand and appreciate the sentiment behind the Motion. We are sensitive to the Senator's concerns about the need for us to be implementation focused and the need for us to improve our implementation rate, notwithstanding the significant improvements that have been made since 2013. We're sympathetic to that, but based on the specifics, the construct and the request, the objectives of the Motion before us, it is redundant. We are doing all of that and much, much more. And it's for those reasons, Mr. President, that I beg to move that the Member on the "Other Side" withdraws this Motion, due to the fact that it is redundant based on activities already committed to and put in place by Government. So I seek a seconder for the Motion. So proposed, Mr. President.

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Cox, yes. Cox first.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, thank you very much. Mr. President, I stand to second the amendment suggested by the Leader of Government's Business, to withdraw, oh sorry, a withdrawal of this Motion, and to offer some supporting contributions to the recommendation to withdraw this Motion. And I just want to start first by saying, Mr. President, we on "This Side" in anyway our recommendation is not to in anyway diminish the concerns of the Representative for agriculture, and we'll explain further as I go on, Mr. President.

Mr. President, before I go on, I just want to register, probably this is not the right time, just my apologies for being late this morning and coincidentally, my lateness had to do with a meeting with senior management to stay on par and stay focused on the implementation of our key projects within the Ministry. So, Mr. President, it's quite a coincidence that we're having this discussion now. Mr. President, I first, I think the most

important thing is that we need to look at the Motion before us, and also equate that with what my fellow colleague Senator St. Clair had presented. And I think the first thing that I wanted to point to, I do not know if it was an error on his part or if it was intended in that way, but the Motion speaks clearly to the whole of Government, all of the Ministries, Government's entire operation, but his presentation while he mentioned the presentation from the Minister for Finance, was more centred around his stakeholder base which was agriculture. And I think maybe there was an opportunity there for him to present the Motion, tailored directly towards agriculture, that key focus group that he is focusing on and I think that is one of the first things I want to point out, that there is a disparity in what the Motion is requesting and the main tenet behind the Senator's presentation. So that is the second thing that I wanted to look at.

Mr. President, the issue of implementation, and I think it's important to help bear some clarity as to understanding the context. When we speak of implementation and Government, what does that entail, or what are some of the intricacies of the implementation process? And implementation in Government seeks to cover a number of issues, and there are a number of factors that influence that implementation rate and how it is measured. And I'll speak to the Senator's presentation in terms of agriculture, and use as an example on why we historically, we have the challenges with implementation and why we continue to look at ways of improving that implementation and to erase some of the bottlenecks that we have before us.

One of the first thing, first things, Mr. President, is that a significant number of our funding for projects in agriculture is tailored through foreign agencies, international agencies and as the result of that, we as Government have limited control as to the disbursement. If they have challenges on their end, then we have delays on our end. And that is one of the things that affect implementation in agriculture, some of the agriculture projects.

Two, some of those projects are loans, and there are certain stipulations, terms and conditions attached to those loans for when it's to be disbursed, and what conditions are to be met, and sometimes some of the same reasons, some of the same delays for those disbursements are as a result of the stakeholders, probably not

meeting the requirements, not meeting the parameters. So sometimes we have to go back and ask for those terms and conditions to be lessened to be lowered, so that our persons, our farmers can benefit from it. And you have to understand when those support comes, they come on a broad base. We are treated as Latin America and the Caribbean, and not just OECS, so there are a number of countries in the Latin American area, their level of agriculture is way beyond ours, and so it forces us at times to shift those parameters to be able to get us involved and to get us encapsulated in those funding support for agriculture in particular.

Mr. President, another critical thing and I heard it mentioned, the issue of hiring of the Chief Agriculture Officer. Mr. President, what I can tell you and this Honourable House, agriculture is a specialised area. I know it because I have a speciality in that area, an area which I was trained in and I can tell you. I left that position and I'm certain up to this day that position has not been filled as yet. And the reason for it is that it's a specialised position, you cannot just go out there and pick up a manager or somebody to teach or somebody to work in agriculture, agriculture is specialised. And so one of the challenges that we have been moving with, together with the Ministry of Education in terms of offering scholarships for persons in the Agricultural Sector and the uptake is very, very… So those are some of the key tenets that are affecting implementation, getting persons to come and work in the sector. And we understand, we understand the challenges but some of the things, so when we do get the scholarships, persons they don't take it up, but we're trying our best to ensure that persons move in that sector. And so I just wanted to bring that to bear as some of the key issues that are affecting implementation and that has historically affected implementation and a lot of it, as Government you do not have direct control. You put the necessary structures in place to influence as much as possible to get your key results from those sectors.

But what I can tell you, Mr. President, in going back to the Motion and I'm looking at the last part of the Motion that speaks to presentation in a quarterly, timely and improving planning, implementation and monitoring. What I don't understand, how does the Senator and his stakeholders tend to, how are they going to do that? Because you are asking for this information to achieve this, that is what the Motion is saying. I don't

know if it's for Government to do it, because as my fellow colleague Senator said, Government is already doing that. So the question is what mechanism, what measures do the farmers have in place to achieve this? And I think that is something that needs to be to be clarified, alright. So Government is already doing that. We do not deny that we do have challenges, we do not deny that but the fact of the matter is, the key tenets of how the budget is presented, how it is prepared, it's a logical process and it must be followed. I can tell you we do prepare our quarterly reports so that we can inform the Ministry of Finance how they can prepare cash for us to spend. That is how it happens. You cannot just make a phone call to the Ministry of Finance and say you need $50 for this month. All that must come and they will also remind you that you have to, that must be linked to the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, that must be linked to what you submitted from your Ministry, for your request. If there is a project and for some reason, that came about as a reason of an incident or accident as we normally have, we do have that, there is a mechanism for treating with new projects through the supplemental. So then we can say look we have a new issue through the supplemental come June, you make a request and you present your case. Otherwise than that, the Ministry of Finance would not and cannot from a legal standpoint just fund projects willy nilly, it cannot happen.

So we understand that sometimes I think there's a strong assumption that for some reason persons see that the slowness in implementation of some of the projects from the agriculture standpoint is as a result that we don't have any structure and place as to how Government function and that is not the case. And hence the reason why, we are asking for this Motion to be withdrawn, because it clearly presents some level of redundancy, what is already ongoing. I do not know if there is, Mr. President, any specific information with a particular project or projects that the Member might be particularly interested in that we can address. So that is not an issue, but to ask for the entire, whole of Government, all the departmental plans, all the quarterly, I can tell you that is, I mean, it's ongoing, it's something that we have to do but it's there and it's a pretty cumbersome process.

So I say this, and I say this so that the Member can understand that we do not mean any ill tension by asking for the withdrawal of the Motion, but in the context in which it is presented and for the purposes of the procedure of the House. And based on what we know happens, and based on what is presented, we believe that our approach to this Motion that is before us is right and appropriate, based on the procedures of the House, based on the context that is presented here. As I indicated initially this is asking for the whole of Government and the Member presented on the basis of agriculture. So that is something, that is where the disparity lies for me, and as my dear colleague Senator indicated, we do understand the frustrations that persons may have, but there is a clear line of how we approach the projects and there are parameters, there are circumstances beyond the control of Government especially in the case where the funding is outside of the country and there are terms and conditions, how it should be spent. And we understand, Mr. President, I can tell you for example in the case of NAWASA, there are a couple projects that we are working on and because of COVID, they are saying to us, the country that is funding, they are saying to us that, that is not their fault. That is not their fault that we couldn't do nothing, that is not their fault that the country was shut down, that is not their fault that planes weren't flying. You didn't use those funds within that time and as such it is cut. I don't want to go into the specificness because those countries they are friends and we want to continue to work with them. But that isn't nature of how these engagements work. Now when I **(laughter)** met with NAWASA we had to find funds. The project is important and persons need the water, the upgrade is required, so we have to find funds. What do you do? Other projects are going to suffer. So that is the dynamics that we deal with on a daily, quarterly, monthly basis.

So, Mr. President, I make this contribution in support, to bring some clarity. I think the whole issue from our end is to bring some clarity as to why we we're making this recommendation on our end re the Motion before us. Thank you very much. I do hope this would have helped my fellow colleague Senator, who knows of course he can at any point in time engage me inside or outside this Chamber for support, because it is an area that is a very close to my heart. Thank you.

Public Business (Cont'd)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: Mr. President, I seek your guidance based on what is being discussed, as to whether or not I can make a contribution.

Mr. President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Right, okay. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Let me just say off the bat that after listening to all of the discussions so far, especially those advanced by the Leader of Government's Business, I am more convinced that we shouldn't even be debating the matter. The matter should be passed. **(Applause)** Based on everything that the Senator has said, he said that everything that has been asked for, is already being done. This is the Senate, this is the nation's business. As we speak, I am confident that a large portion of the population is glued, listening to our discussion, and this is the best place to have these matters addressed. Not only this, all of the reasons, even advanced by Senator Cox, as to the challenges as to why timelines cannot be met or things implemented, could be advanced for the reasons why these things cannot be done. The Motion is not designed to chastise anyone, the Motion is designed to say let us give a plan as to when we want to achieve x or y. The very said plan that the Leader of Government's Business has advanced and to indicate that Senator St. Clair can approach our good colleague Senator Cox, either officially or unofficially to get report, this is not an individual matter. As a matter of fact although I'm standing here representing Labour, I've a dire interest in the farming community. So I don't want to

hear discussions that took place on the side, of national importance. Labour is not representing, labour represents everyone and we are all here collectively representing all the different interests in Grenada. And so everything that I've heard, and that is why I raised to speak now, because I know we want to manage time, but we must not sacrifice the debate on the interest of time. We must not sacrifice to advance, that if we debate the matter, we're looking at time, because these are redundant. And there is nothing wrong in being redundant sometimes. **(Applause)** Sometimes redundancy emphasises that which you want to emphasise, and there is absolutely nothing wrong in this. We can make a conscious decision to fall within the realms of what people say is redundancy and we can explain this. What is being asked for is a report to the Senate, it is not for me or the farmer's representative to go to the different Ministries...

(Inaudible comments)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: …and therefore I'm saying that everything has convinced. Further than this, I'm just seeking your guidance on a section of the Standing Orders under withdrawal of Motions, and if I'm missing something, I want to be so guided.

Under withdrawal of Motions which is, which is what has been advanced by the Leader of Government's Business, it say how a Motion may be withdrawn, and I've not seen anything here that allows for any Senator to call for a Motion to be withdrawn except by the mover of the Motion. If I'm missing something I wish to be so guided. There may be another section of the Standing Orders that address this matter but it says with your permission if I may just go through it:

"Withdrawal of Motions…," that's section 31 on page 21 of the Standing Orders. **"A Motion may be withdrawn at the request of the mover…, at the request of the mover after it has been moved by leave of the Senate or Committee before the question is fully put thereon, provided there is no dissentient voice." (Inaudible comments)** Well I see dissentient yes. So I was just seeking some guidance on it. Not for anything but just for my understanding but my substantive

intervention is that on the question of the Motion advanced by Senator Roderick St. Clair, I think it is timely, I think it will help all of us. We have all identified, not just in the Senate but throughout Grenada that one of the major challenges that we face is that of implementation and reporting with timelines can assist. As a matter of fact, in my view a mechanism like this and the reasons as advanced by Senator Cox can help us to identify issues that we on "This Side" here may be able to make suggestions as to how to get things done. And that's what I want to raise in advance in relation to this Motion, thank you very much.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Lewis. Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, very interesting Motion this morning, very, very interesting. Mr. President, I just want to point just a couple comments made by the Honourable Senator Stiell. He said that the sentiments expressed by Senator St. Clair are very honourable, very honourable sentiments are expressed. Now if sentiments are honourable, I expect that the sentiments should be supported because we all are in the Honourable House doing the honourable thing. Mr. President, in relation to implementation, a comment was made and I am going to come to the substantive issue in a while that implementation was diabolic so to speak before 2008, sorry during 2008/2013 that's the correction. But I want the Honourable Senator to go into reverse gear, take a look at what happened in this country before 2008 in terms of management of this country and this economy. Mr. President, we cannot run this country in a manner that we are…

Mr. President: One second.

Sen. the Hon Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I stand on a Point of Order 37 (1) relevance. We're speaking about the Motion before us. We're not here, this is not a platform, Mr. President, to debate on what the Member on the "Other Side" believes did or did not happen historically and the direction the Member is about to take. I believe in

terms of the relevance point, I would prefer that he sticks to the Motion before us and not use this as a platform for some other agenda.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, when 2008 and 2013 is referred to, it's just a historical context. Mr. President, the management of this country is still important to all of us inside here and the nation for us to appear to be running this country by ear, quote, unquote "ear", we cannot do it that way.

Now the Motion before us ask for certain things to be done, Mr. President, and my question to this Honourable House is this, if the Motion is passed, what harm would it bring to this nation? Would it hurt the nation or would it help this nation, Mr. President, this is the fundamental question we need to ask. Mr. President, implementation is so important to this country that the Prime Minister, the Honourable Prime Minister took implementation under his wings because there was a problem with implementation and he saw it as critical that implementation be done and one of the key factors in measuring implementation is time.

I have a teaching background, Mr. President, and when we set objectives as Senator St. Clair said, we use the SMART principle, it must be realistic, it must be timely and it must make sense. So we are saying the Honourable Mr. St. Clair is saying in that Motion here, that let us set timelines. Before the budget is developed, there are consultations, all the different Ministries come together, they consult. When Cabinet and the Department Heads and so on, when they are satisfied then the Budget is read and these are things that are supposed to be done, what is wrong in setting timelines?

Now, Mr. President, let me just say this, the Government said that they were able to access around $60m to pay for GRENLEC. That money was accessed because certain projects were not done, so that monies were available at the end because these projects were not done. Which are the projects? If we have this thing structured in such a way where it is timely, then you could go back and say this, that, that, that. And not only that, if we divide it into quarters, I'm just using quarters it could be a six month period, if we look at it in quarters at the end of the first quarter we assess and we reassess and we plan and prod our way forward because we see the weaknesses and

then we move forward and strengthen those that are weak. So, Mr. President, I have no problem in supporting this Motion, I think that this Motion can only help the Administration of this country and the Administration of this country is not just about this Government. So, Mr. President, I stand here very humbly to put my full support behind this resolution.

And I just want to before I sit read, it says that **"the activities and projects presented in the now approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year be presented…",** (let me put on my glasses, Mr. President), **"…January 1 to December 31 be presented in a quarterly timeline to improve planning"** and this is the point I am making. To improve planning, we are not saying planning is not there but I remember in the 4H movement we used to say to "make the best better." In whatever is good we can always improve on it and there is no harm that will come to the nation, Mr. President, by passing this Motion. So, Mr. President, I wish to take my seat. Thank you very much.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to support the move that was made by the Leader of Government's Business or the request by the Leader of Government's Business asking the fellow Senator for Agriculture to remove the Motion on the grounds that what he read in the Motion is actually being done currently. And recognising this on the floor he chose to speak something totally different to what the Motion is and that's where the deception is because you presented a Motion asking for timeline and I have a problem with that because timeline is there in the budget already. So come June after six months, there is what we call a Supplemental Budget, so you will look at where you at and you may need more resources and you do this then. So it is a question of understanding what Government is all about and what budgeting is all about.

The big issue here, Mr. President, is understanding how you do budgeting and the Member suggested in his presentation and at one point in time I was agreeing with a

point he was making as it relates to timeliness in getting things done and I say ok fine and then he said I don't want to go into that area and say the officers are not, or words to that effect doing the things in a timely manner, I am not going there. So then I say but what is the point because if that is the issue then speak to it but he moved back and somewhat indicated or suggested that it may have projects without funding. A proper budget, Mr. President, must have funding attached to it. Remember budget is an estimate of Revenue and Expenditure so you look at what the projects are and then you look at the source of funding to finance the budget. So if you have a project in your Budget Statement, there must be funding and take that, there must be funding to make it happen.

But let's go back to 2012 and he is within that syndrome of not understanding how budget is done, remember that big billion dollar budget and I mean everybody was oh and I was sorry for the school children. They were a part of the billion dollar budget being presented and only to know it was a fast because a budget of one billion dollars was presented but there was no funding for it. We are not like that. Everything that you see in the Budget Statement, there is funding to back it up. So when you're talking about and the Senator that preceded me speaking about words to that effect being truthful and you cannot run this country on ear and all these stuff and so forth. I mean you could say anything but we have to be focused and understand if you're going to run a country and to do it well and you want to establish a budget, you must show funding. So 2012 when the billion dollar budget was presented, it was a sham, there was no funding hence the reason why it busted before it started and where were we, selling state assets to finance your budget. And it got so bad, Mr. President, that we sold assets that was not even Governments to finance the budget. So when you come here and to start this war, have your evidence.

Let us go back to the Budget... the Motion. I had to answer, when they juke ants' nest you have to deal with it. **(Laughter)** Allow me to continue, can I continue? Let's go back to the Motion, what is there. The Motion that is presented on paper and the discourse given by the Member Senator here this morning was totally different and I understand he had to because he realised the Motion on paper lacked substance

because what he is asking is what is being done within the Government. And frankly it's an accusation on the Public Officers who work tirelessly to make it happen. It's the Public Officers who will prepare the corporate plan, it's the Public Officers who will put the necessary systems in place to make it happen, they are the ones who do it. And to suggest in that Motion that they don't do it is an embarrassment to them and I don't think it is fair. Hence the reason why we are asking that you remove it. But I understand where the mix up came, it was a total mixed up because yes your constituents talk about things going to happen and it takes a long time to happen and that kind of throw you off guard. So you have to wheel and come again.

But the point here, Mr. President, this is the Honourable House and when we come to debate here we must be factual, we must do our proper research and when we present information it could stand the test of scrutiny, this one can't. And I stand up here today to defend my Public Officers who I know spend sleepless nights to prepare and to make sure that when that document is presented over a thousand pages it is populated for not just one but for the three years that it covers; the cycle that it covers. So to suggest that they don't do their work is unfair to them and I heard you Labour Senator suggesting the 4%. If we take this as he is saying here, he is saying they don't deserve it you know because they're not working, it is unfair to do that to our Public Officers. I won't say that like you. I am saying that they work hard and they deserve it but as the Government say it's a matter of time and I am going to end by saying the last thing.

It was brought up that we repurchased GRENLEC and we found $60m from savings within the Budget, the information is there you know. The head of the Public Accounts Committee who chairs that, the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition. **(Inaudible comments)** Well he has it in name, he could have presented the information so he could have educated his Members on the "Other Side" so that they wouldn't come and make those sorts of blunders. The information is there, you want to know where the savings were had, I will give you one. There was a Home Improvement Programme, over 5 million dollars towards it, putting in bathroom in homes and so forth but we were locked down, COVID say no you're not doing that this year that was

savings 5 million dollars already. And there are much more, but I am saying the information is there and the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition who is the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee had a right to educate his Members and to say these are the areas where the monies were had so when his Members come here to present they will be factual, they will educate the nation properly so as for now it's misinformation. Mr. President, I want to continue to support the move made by the Leader of Government's Business that my fellow Senator, he is my good buddy from a long time, to remove or withdraw the Motion and probably he could come back with what he discussed. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Senator De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President, and a good morning to my colleagues. Mr. President, I hesitated to speak on this but I wanted to mention a few things. I rise to not support the Motion as it is written because of a few reasons; first one being and I want to start on the premise of… My goodly Senator says and I read with your lead, Mr. President:

"BE IT RESOLVED that the activities and projects items presented in the now approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year 1st January to 31st December, 2021 be presented…" and that's the important thing here to me. **"…be presented in a quarterly timeline to improve planning, implementation and monitoring."** I have no doubt that putting timelines and monitoring these timelines, the achievement of or not is important and then to reevaluate why we have not, is a prudent thing to do. It happens across all sectors and all businesses. Unfortunately, I think the Government budgeting process is quite different and requires a legal construct that is quite different to what we know in a Private Sector setting as a contrast. So for example in my business, we present a budget, it may be on a three (3) year strategic timeline. We would evaluate every year and put a short term one year and evaluate accordingly and to see why it is not being achieved in particular areas or not. There is nothing wrong with that and in terms of

how you do it and in terms of getting a matrix done in timelines, actions, people responsible, there is nothing wrong with that, that is a prudent thing to do. In a Government setting, the Mover of this Motion is asking that this be done in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure that is presented to the relevant Houses in a format of a quarterly timeline. I am not sure that can be done or facilitated in that construct.

The Public Service budget in my view and my understanding, Members on the "Other Side" could correct me, when we present a budget in Parliament is to achieve a few things; is to state what the Government plans to do over a one year period. In recent times my brother, you have not been in the Senate when these things used to happen. Normally a budget will just come with one year projection and that's it and you have the Votes presented and they tell you what vote for what Ministry and that is a legal construct because the Ministries cannot approve any monies that come through the Consolidated Fund unless these votes are approved. Correct, my colleagues on the "Other Side"? **(Members indicated)** In recent time because of the PFMA, we have had coming to this Honourable House risk analysis, we have had coming into this Honourable House medium terms strategy paper which gives us a three year and I am alluding to the corporate plan. We have coming to this House understanding how the risks associated with the budget being achieved or not achieved, up-side risks, down-side risks and mitigation efforts to look at these things. I am quite certain you got the papers and you have seen them accordingly, this was never done in prior years. I say this to say that we have seen significant improvement in how Government presents its budget and how they plan to achieve it and they say to us the possibility of not achieving and which risks are more important to look at and to mitigate.

For example, the PFMA includes in it a release clause based on the KPI's that have been set linked to the GDP for whether it is wages and salaries, debt and so on and how we could come out of that if there is a serious issue that affects us like a pandemic. That is progressive thinking, **(applause)** absolutely. When you read, the FROC just presented their report recently through you, Mr. President, I may divert a little. When you read the speech put down by the current Governor of the ECCB Bank

brother Timothy, you see he says in that document how progressive the Grenada Government has been to introduce first of all the PFMA and what it represents and what it holds the Government to in terms of how they execute, what they execute and it's not only from a financial point of view but also from a timeline point of view and I think you need to pay attention to that as well. **(Applause)** It is not only how we do it but what must be done. And, Mr. President, I hear what my brother is putting forward and I agree with that and I don't think it is possible in the current construct in how the budget is presented. Probably what we need to do is have another document be put that takes and speaks to how the Ministries will then feed up into the greater corporate plan on their timelines. But at the same time I don't think it is important for Parliament to get involved in the granular operations of Ministries and their timelines. That is for the Minister and the Government to deal with and probably come to report to Parliament when these Ministers… my colleague Senators on the "Other Side" report to us in the question and answer period when they present themselves why they are not achieving what they are achieving.

There is another way to do this and I don't believe the paperwork that you're suggesting here where you say "BE IT RESOLVED…" is the way to go. I don't want to see more paperwork, I want to hear from the colleagues on the "Other Side" and the Ministries they represent and the timelines they have set themselves for implementation and achievement, why it has not or why it has achieved or have not and the reasons and how when they report to this august body, how we can assist in getting them back on track based on the plans they have put forward. We have overview, we have oversight, the President always says Ministers must come and report to Parliament and give us reasons why they have not and why they have, if they have achieved or not. And we are to serve as oversight to the Government and to the Ministries through what we do here and get reasonable explanations. Your questions that you put recently to this august body and to the colleagues on the "Other Side" are commendable and that is the way we have to go. We have to question and drill and I don't believe coming with another cadre of paperwork is going to help with that in terms of the quarter. I think it's done to some degree; we have to ensure that the explanations are given and the

oversight is done. That is my contribution, Mr. President, on this matter.

Mr. President: One second, I want to take a 5 minute adjournment and during that adjournment, could I have a… what the lawyers describe as a side bar with the mover of the Motion and the Leader of Government's Business. Because we are now entering… unless there is another contributor to the debate on the Motion, the mover of the Motion will be about winding up the debate.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: The Motion that has been moved is that the Motion that has been presented by withdrawn and I would simply wrap that up and we will put that to the House.

Mr. President: That's why I want to have… it is precisely for that reason I want to have a side bar with the mover of the Motion and yourself, just my judgment. So the House stands adjourned for five minutes.

Senate adjourned at 11:31 a.m.
(Sound of Gavel)

Senate resumes at 11:57 a.m.

Mr. President: At the point of the adjournment of the initiative of the President, Senator St. Clair was about to wind up the debate, yes? I got no other indication that anybody else was going to contribute so Senator St. Clair you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon Roderick St. Clair: Thank you so much, Mr. President. This morning we started off to look at this Motion as presented saying that **"BE IT RESOLVED that the activities and project items presented in the now approved**

Public Business (Cont'd)

Estimate of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year 1st January to 31st December, 2021 be presented in a quarterly timeline to improve planning, implementation and monitoring." We have debated on both sides this morning vigorously, I have listened and considered all the different factors. Of course notwithstanding all the foregoing, at this time, Mr. President, I think it's wise and to my fellow colleagues who would have contributed significantly to the enlightenment of this important subject, which is important in terms of how do we get things done. We will go back and we will rework this and so with your permission, I want to ask you, I guess inform you I think, that I would like to temporarily withdraw this Motion to do some rework on it, after which we will work on re-tabling at a future sitting in the soonest possible time. I thank you.

Mr. President: Alright. Thank you Senator St. Clair. **(Applause)** Just for clarity and for the records, am I to understand that you are withdrawing the Motion at this time?

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: I didn't hear the last word, Mr. President.

Mr. President: I said, am I to understand that you are withdrawing the Motion at this time and as you say you will bring the Motion back at a subsequent date? Am I to understand that you're withdrawing the Motion at this time?

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: At this time, we're temporarily withdrawing so this time there's no further debate at this time and we'll reword in a future...

Mr. President: Well …

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: …sitting.

Public Business (Cont'd)

Mr. President: …the rule certainly don't allow for further debate. From here we would put it to the vote, but if you're withdrawing it at this time, Honourable Members the Motion brought in the name of Senator St. Clair, the Motion dealing with the, sorry, dealing with a resolution, **"BE IT RESOLVED that the activities and project items presented in the now approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure in the year one 1st January to 31st December 2020 be presented, at a quarterly timeline to improve planning, implementation and monitoring"** is now withdrawn. Honourable Members the said Motion is withdrawn to be submitted at a future date in this session.

Motion withdrawn.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis I think you have…

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I rise to address this Motion standing in my name. It goes as follows: **"Motion on the ownership of the Grenada Electricity Services Limited (GRENLEC);**

WHEREAS accepting that the Government of Grenada has repurchased from WRB the controlling shares in GRENLEC;

AND WHEREAS accepting that GRENLEC is now publicly owned;

AND WHEREAS knowing that GRENLEC is one of the nation's most important assets for economic, security, social, cultural, health and other developmental activities;

AND WHEREAS believing that this prized asset must serve the general good for Grenadians;

AND WHEREAS recognising the need for Grenada to have control over its electricity generation;

AND WHEREAS considering that the people of Grenada must be in a position to begin to reap the benefits from GRENLEC", just an error with a word there. **"NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

Public Business (Cont'd)

1. **The Government of Grenada must continue to be the majority shareholder.**
2. **Should any part of the Government of Grenada shares be divested, then local companies, diaspora and nationals must be given the preference to purchase the shares.**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT if affirmed this resolution be forwarded by way of message to the House of Representatives." Herein ends the resolution.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Mr. President, I rise to second the Motion.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I rise to move an amendment to the Motion as presented. Sergeant-of-Arms if these can be circulated to Members please.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Mr. President, I rise on a point seeking your guidance. The motion has been moved and seconded; my understanding and I await your guidance, that, because it has been moved and seconded, it must be debated before any other matters can be considered in terms of amendment. I seek your guidance on this.

Mr. President: One second. Senator Stiell I think, I think you moved a little prematurely.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: According to my interpretation, Standing Order 32 (3), it says **"an amendment to a Motion may be moved and seconded at any time after the question has been proposed by the President."** So after you propose your question, Mr. President, is that the point that… so once you have posed the question I am…

Mr. President: Well I haven't…

Public Business (Cont'd)

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: …in a position to…

Mr. President: …yet posed the question.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Oh sorry.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I have not yet debated the matter.

Mr. President: (Laughter) So **"an amendment to a Motion may be moved and seconded at any time after the question upon the Motion has been proposed by the President or Chair and before it has been put by the President or Chair at the conclusion of the debate upon the Motion."** Well we haven't started the debate yet, so it has been moved and seconded. Let him present the arguments…

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: And then after you pose the question I can?

Mr. President: Yes, after the question is proposed. So when I announce that the Motion be read a second time, then the Motion is proposed to be read a second time, at that stage you can move your amendment. Yes Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. As Labour has indicated before and in this we have always welcomed the repurchase of GRENLEC because we think it is something that must be in the control of the people of Grenada. But important for that, for us to be able to enjoy those benefits and for us to not have a repeat of the challenges that we had, not in terms of performance under WRB, because no one can deny that the consistency, guaranteeing of service, quality of service was there, but we all would agree that the benefits of the company, in terms of its financial performance etc., went out by and large, out of the country. And therefore, what we are seeking to do now that it has been repurchased, we want to ensure that we

do not end up with another WRB scenario, whereby Government may seek to divest its shares or the majority of its shares.

So I do not see this matter here as, I do not see it as contentious issue. As a matter of fact we have supported the move by the Government but we are trying to ensure through this debate and this Motion that, that which has been advanced to us as the objective of repurchasing the company is maintained. Some of the key indicators to this, certainly must be the management and the Government has indicated that, at the time of the repurchase, it said that it is in the process or was in the process of seeking to get a professional unit to advise and even manage the company. We want to ensure that whatever is being done is driven professionally and not being influenced by what we call political considerations.

On the issue of, because the Board of Directors sets policies or follows the policies of the Annual General Meetings, yes, it is important that the composition of the Board be such that it is driven by competency, qualifications and the ability to do the job. All of these must lend itself, Mr. President, for the proper functioning of price and asset. We need to also, that the composition of the Board must continue to make provision for a worker representative. I want to repeat this, the composition of the Board must continue to make provision for a worker representative, who is democratically chosen by the membership, the workers of the company. An election is normally being held if there is more than one nominee and at the end of the day the person getting the majority of the vote from the workers becomes the worker representative. Why am raising this? Only last week Wednesday a meeting was held by Government officials together with the workers and the report that we have gotten indicates that there may be some reconsideration of this. I'm not saying it is the case, but I'm raising it here so that we can all know that we do not want to see any challenges or any changes to that composition. That has worked well, that has worked well and Labour, Labour expects and the workers of GRENLEC in particular expect that the worker representative, the position of the worker representative shall be maintained. As a matter of fact I will go further to make the point, that it is the view of the Labour Movement, the Grenada Trades Union Council which has always been part of the

workers charter, in all of our engagement with the various political parties before any general election to have a worker representative sit on all Statutory Bodies, or any State Owned Enterprises. This is extremely important, so I'm just repeating this here.

Within the same discussion that we're having in terms of time frame, it would be useful for us to know time frame that the question of the management, professional management structure will be addressed. As I indicated all of these were spoken about at the time of the repurchase in our engagement with the different Ministers, and I know he will not get into any problems for that, if I refer to him as my good colleague, Senator Cox who has that responsibility. So these are drawn to your attention.

We all know that in the lead up to the sale of GRENLEC, which we opposed, which the Labour Movement opposed in '93, '94 in the mid 90's, that there were genuine concern about the running of the company, that was then owned by government, and we do not wish to see a return to those days. GRENLEC is too important, electricity is too important for us to go back to those days. So, Mr. President, as I said this to me is a very short matter that is designed to ensure that we continue to be the major shareholders, that's the Government and people of Grenada, and right now the share arrangement I think it is 71% that is owned by the people and Government of Grenada. And even if there is an attempt to divest part of that we must maintain the majority control, but even if any portion of that is being divested it must be made as a priority, preference must be given to local Grenadians and the diaspora and local companies. This will give us a sense of worth, this will give us a sense of purpose and this will bring justification to the repurchasing of GRENLEC. We have addressed the issue in the past, as to what brought us here but we are where we are, that will help us especially in this trying times to be able to retain the earnings and the profits and make necessary allocations from the company for our national interest.

I'm also asking for a consideration for the workers and that came from the workers even after the meeting and that were raised, I think at that meeting and I stand to be corrected. I know Senator Cox had to leave a bit early, because it was the same day of our sitting and that meeting was attended by the Honourable Prime Minister and the Minister for Finance, and one of the request made by the workers, which we

support, as similarly done in the sale in the mid-90s, that shares, there should be some allocation of shares to the workers and be given at a reduced rate. So that is one of the other recommendations that we are just seeking, but… in other words this does not, all that goes in keeping with the genesis of ensuring that GRENLEC stays in our hands. That regardless of the challenges that we face as a country, we must not lose control and the people and Government, it is important in this discussion to not just speak about the Government but the people and the Government of the country in terms of ownership. And it is for these reason, Mr. President, and for the others that we have identified under the repurchase of GRENLEC, that we move this Motion for consideration. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move amendments to the Motion as presented by Senator Lewis. The amended Motion which has now been circulated, reads as: **"WHEREAS GRENLEC is a public trading company, which is majority owned by the Government of Grenada;**

AND WHEREAS knowing that the provision of energy is important for economic, security, social, cultural, health and other developmental activities;

AND WHEREAS recognising that it may be deemed to be in the best interest of the State of Grenada to maintain a majority shareholding in GRENLEC;

AND WHEREAS considering that the Government Grenada has already committed to ensuring that citizens of Grenada are the preferred individuals to whom it will sell any of its shares in GRENLEC;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Grenada has a fundamental responsibility to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of GRENLEC through sound operational and commercial decision making;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Grenada has already started a strategic review of GRENLEC with technical support from the World Bank, to determine the best path forward for the company;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Public Business (Cont'd)

1. **The Senate supports the Government of Grenada's efforts to develop and implement a strategy that will ensure the long-term viability of GRENLEC, enabling it to best serve the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique for generations to come, while contributing to mitigating the negative effects of climate change; and**
2. **And that the Senate supports the Government of Grenada's position that citizens of Grenada should be given preference to purchase shares sold by the Government of Grenada in GRENLEC."**

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I rise to second the amendment offered by the Leader of Government's Business to the Motion before this House.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, at this time the most important consideration in planning the way forward for GRENLEC is developing a model that ensures GRENLEC's long-term future, ensures Grenada's energy security and ensures that GRENLEC is capable of delivering a service to households and businesses that offers the best possible quality and price. So in a nutshell, Mr. President, the best possible model for both GRENLEC and Grenada as a whole. It is therefore too early to say whether or not Government should or shouldn't retain its majority shareholding in GRENLEC, if the shares were sold. Mr. President, there is some who say we should retain a majority shareholding; there is some who say we shouldn't. There are advantages and disadvantages with both options, there are costs and benefits associated with each of those options. What we can say, Mr. President, is that Grenadians both here at home and abroad and whether that's institutionally or individually will be given every opportunity to purchase shares and invest in GRENLEC. Also, that the Government has absolutely no intention of running

GRENLEC, we're not qualified, Mr. President, and history tells us we're not qualified to run operations such as these the most effective way. And that whichever entity does manage GRENLEC, it will do so in a way that, in addition to making the best commercial and operational sense for the company for GRENLEC, it also best serves the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Therefore, Mr. President, at this time all options, all options need to be assessed.

What is required right now is that Government does its homework and that goes beyond just looking at the potential share ownership or the ownership structure of the company, but more importantly it needs to determine the most favourable operating and financial environment for future investments or sale. And there we speak to critically the terms and conditions of any potential sale, the need for a realistic valuation of the company and its price and that is not just based on current earnings but also future earning potentials, and that requires independent auditing, it requires professional valuation and all of that within a process that is wholly transparent. Critically, Mr. President, any decision that would be made will be made with the full engagement, the full consultation of all stakeholders and that includes the social partners, the Trade Union Movement, critical partner in that discussion, the Private Sector, the churches, civil society, the nation as a whole, this is a public and national conversation. Mr. President, we cannot, absolutely cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past. We certainly can't repeat the recklessness of the then NDC Administration back in 1994, that virtually gave the company away to WRB. And we continue to say, Mr. President, that our issue was not with the principle of selling shares in GRENLEC at that time.

The fundamental issue that we had, was the terms and conditions of that sale, the price at which those GRENLEC shares were sold to WRB, and let us remind ourselves that purchase price back in 1994 was $15m where in **(laughter)** that was the headline price of which $4m had to be given back as a contribution to the purchase of new generators, an additional $2m in severance payments to workers, so what Government… **(Inaudible comments by the President)** …a pension plan. So what government actually received for the sale of GRENLEC at that time was EC$9m, and the repurchase price that the Government had to pay at the end of last year was

US$63m, $170m we paid for this critical, valuable asset. $9m and then you resell it back to Government, based on those onerous terms of that share purchase agreement, $170m. And in addition to that we all recognise that some level of investment would have taken place during that time from 1994 through to more recent times, but it's a fraction that was under investment in the company. And to end up with a repurchase price of $170m was extortionate, Mr. President. This was not based on fair value, this was not based on what best serves the interest of the Government and the people of Grenada, but what is in the best interest of that investor.

And that brings us then to the terms and conditions of that sale, a one-sided agreement that serve the purposes of the investor primarily not the Grenadian consumer. An 80-year monopoly for generation and supply distribution; a monopoly that would have stood from 1994 through to 2073, with a share purchase agreement that bypassed our own national Laws and again, as I said, did not serve the best interest of the people of Grenada. An arrangement that meant that the company would self-regulate, they would set their own prices, they would set their own terms and conditions of supply, which resulted in Grenada having some of the highest electricity rates in the region, in the world and that is a burden, a burden on our households, on disposable income of ordinary householders, an absolute burden on our business sector. And then with their vested interest, WRB's vested interest in diesel power generation, absolutely no incentive to transition to renewable energy, which will not only bring down the cost of energy for all of Grenada but would also enable Grenada to play its part, in terms of addressing the fight against climate change, where individuals and companies were prohibited from self-generation. So even if as an individual or a business you had the means to install solar panels, wind whatever it may be, an arrangement that was prohibitive and prevented individuals and companies going down that route, virtually impossible for persons to self-generate. And, Mr. President, if government had not have taken that bold step and amended the Electricity Supply Act, liberalised the Electricity Sector here in Grenada, if it wasn't for that bold move, that had consequences, that yoke will have been tied around our necks for another 50 odd years, Mr. President. This Government's commitment to addressing these ills cannot

be questioned and we'll continue and the process that we will follow in this coming period will always have the best interest of the company and the best interest of the country at heart, as we move forward.

Mr. President, the point I am making here is the importance of finding the right partners and entering the right agreement which are fair, transparent and serve the best interests of the country. Identifying those right partners who have the financial capacity, the technical capacity to invest and run GRENLEC to transform our energy centre is absolutely, absolutely critical in the decisions that we take moving forward. And once again to ensure the highest possible quality of service to consumers at competitive rates, the adherence to the regulations as part of that Electricity Supply Act, the establishment of the Public Utility Regulatory Commission which provides a framework for fair operations of the energy providers, ensuring once again the quality of service, the prices that are charged are as competitive and as fair as possible. Another consideration in terms of potential investors, partners, is also their adherence and their commitment in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility to ensure that they are serving in addition to their commercial interests. But they are also making their contribution to our community development, national development and other such services, other such support we would seek from our potential investor.

Mr. President, work has started on all of these things. Government, with the support of the World Bank are in the process of assessing the different models, different operating models be it from a financial perspective, from a management perspective, an operational perspective and developing those future plans for GRENLEC in addition to the different options that are available for Government's divestment. Once again, Mr. President, as we go through this process assessing and understanding from a commercial financial management perspective the right model to serve Grenada, any decisions made will be made with a full engagement and a full consultation of all stakeholders.

So, Mr. President, at this time that work is being carried out, it is not prudent to lock ourselves one way or another into arrangement principles other than those that are outlined in terms of those measures that will result in the best possible outcome for the

company. So running through the amended Motion before us, the first recital: **"WHEREAS GRENLEC is a public trading company which is majority owned by the Government of Grenada…"** This consolidates the first two paragraphs in Senator Lewis's original Motion and it addresses the error in his original Motion which speaks to the company now being publicly own. GRENLEC under the old arrangement had private and public ownership within that construct. The recital regarding, **"WHEREAS knowing that the provision of energy is important for economic, security, social, cultural, health and other development activities..."** remains unchanged and highlights the significance of the strategic importance of the company. **"AND WHEREAS recognising that it may be deemed to be in the best interest of the State of Grenada, the Government of Grenada to maintain the majority shareholding."** It may but there may be other models, what is critical, what is absolutely critical is that whatever the final outcome, whatever the final decision truly serves the best interest of the country. **"AND WHEREAS considering that the Government of Grenada has already committed to ensuring that citizens of Grenada are the preferred individuals to whom it will sell any of its shares in GRENLEC…"** again fully supportive of the principle outlined in Senator Lewis's original Motion. **"AND WHEREAS the Government of Grenada has a fundamental responsibility to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of GRENLEC through sound operational and commercial decision-making."** Again this underscores the point that the decisions that are made are subject to deep analysis looking at the operational and commercial sides of the business. **"AND WHEREAS the Government of Grenada has already started that strategic review…"** as I said working with the World Bank, working with other technical experts to support us in terms of determining that path forward.

And what the amended resolution is asking is, **"NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Senate supports the Government of Grenada's efforts to develop and implement a strategy that will ensure the long term viability of GRENLEC, enabling it to best serve the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique for generations to come while contributing to mitigating the negative**

effects of climate change." And then the final which again is supportive of Senator Lewis's principle **"that the Senate supports the Government of Grenada's position that citizens of Grenada should be given preference to purchase shares sold by the Government of Grenada in GRENLEC.**"

So, Mr. President, for the reasons outlined in terms of the approach that is presented which we believe encapsulates the general sentiments as presented by Senator Lewis but broadens that within the context of the holistic decision making that is required to ensure that we come up with a model, a construct which meets all of our requirements that is transparent, that is based on operational and financial principles and end up with a model that best serves the company, best serves the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique and ensures we take a very different approach and we do not repeat the mistakes and the recklessness back in 1994. And it's for those reasons, Mr. President, that I present these amendments to the House.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President, and I appreciate the accommodation. I wanted to say a few words on the resolution as moved by my brother from Labour and to comment on it and to say that in principle we support what the Motion is trying to do. However I have difficulty with some of the wordings of the Motion and I will elaborate a little. First of all GRENLEC is publicly traded and that in itself requires us to be careful when we say we want the Government to be a majority shareholder. It all depends on what percentage of the 71% you're asking Government to put to be traded? And if you're saying it cannot be more than 51% in order to maintain the majority shareholding, I believe that will send the wrong message or send a mixed message to the investment community and people who want to potentially invest in the company and the perception that may come from that. So we need to be careful as we work the wordings around that.

The other thing, I support the Leader of Government's Business in the fact that, Government of Grenada, if they were to maintain the majority shareholding it means…

what I understand that to mean is that the majority shareholder still maintains the overall running of the company in terms of who sits on the Board **(inaudible comments)** (Let me finish, let me finish) …the Directors that are on the Board, and will have significant influence on management and policies as we go forward. That is a possibility that can exist if you maintain your majority shareholding. As a single one majority shareholder, single one majority shareholder and get me clearly, if I maintain 51% of the shares as a single majority shareholder by virtue of that I basically control the Board and the appointees on the Board and there is no doubt about that and if I do that I basically control the company and a lot of its operations. And I don't think we want Government to be the operator of this particular company based on its importance. And I say quite plainly and the Leader of Government's Business said it, Government doesn't want to run it, I don't want to see them run it either. I think this must be run in a suitable company whether Private Sector or not that has the necessary qualifications that could run this and develop this strategically for us over the next 40 years or 50 years, whatever it be. I don't ever believe we need to get back into an agreement that we had as we had with the previous owners, that is not the way. And I think we have set up through the last set of legislation we passed with the [3]PURC and all of these ancillary organisations that ensures that we keep whoever becomes the person to run this company set within certain guidelines as to how they set rates, how they plan to develop the alternative Energy Sector of the country and what we allow. The previous Act under the previous owners gave us no sort of flexibility to do that and in this new dispensation where alternative energy is such a major thing and what we do and how it can reduce cost because remember at the end of the day is a few things we want to achieve here; the cost to the average man in Grenada must drop whether through alternative or a blend of alternatives and diesel powered as we have it now. That is a major cost and it's not just to the average man, to business as well.

We in business have been, over the years told that we're not competitive. Certain businesses in Grenada couldn't be competitive with our sister or brothers in the

[3] PURC – Public Utilities Regulatory Commission

region because the cost of electricity was prohibitive and when you worked in the cost and you flood it into your products. So this is something that is important to all of us and it is necessary that we get the right partner to work with this company that could ensure that down the road we have the right blend of energy production in the country that could give us these benefits that we so badly need.

I have no difficulty, Mr. President, in nationals being given the preference to obtain shares that is put on the market for buying. I have no difficulty in institutions purchasing some of those shares, there must be limits as well as to what we allow. But I did say in this House previously when we had some discussions on this, that we must set aside some shares for young people. We need to encourage our young people, even though it's a million shares, whatever it is at a special price to let the… the young people are our future. These are the people that have to take this country and take what we have… assets like that and run with it and I believe we must find a way in whatever prospectus we put out to allocate some shares for young people at a special price to encourage them. They don't only have to buy car and land or invest in only what they do but at least encourage them to invest in a national asset that could benefit them and their family and their children probably years from now. Because investment in shares doesn't necessarily give you immediate returns, it's a long term investment for you as a family and as a Member over the years to grow in value and if this company is fortunate and properly run, you will get dividends and you will recover as you move ahead. So it is important that we do that and we consider that in this as we go ahead and against the principle that the Labour Movement is proposing in this particular Motion.

I believe the role of Government must continue to be one that sets the regulatory framework and environment for the Energy Sector as a whole and Government must not move from that role, that is the role. They must not get involved in Private Sector run companies or potentially run statutory companies that could be profit making and how we invest the profit. The CSR principle that the Leader of Government's spoke about must be done and must be there so that we could continue to help with the community aspect that companies of this nature, all companies must invest in to build

our country on that side. So that is important and we support that as well.

Employees of the company and I have said that before, we have excellent employees in GRENLEC in terms of their qualification and their commitment to this company and have done us well in the last years that they have been there. They must be protected and must be rewarded for whatever they put into the company and what they give to the company. I have no issues with that kind of principle and that being developed in whatever strategy that comes forward.

So, Mr. President, I fully support the principle of the Labour Movement in this particular Motion but I am more inclined to accept what the Government has put forward, why? Because I think it encapsulates what you are saying in terms of the principle you would like to be enshrined as we move forward but it widens it as well and that is something that we need to pay attention to. I am particularly interested and would probably ask our colleagues on the "Other Side" to ensure that whatever we do has to have a serious element of alternative energy. And you know, Mr. President, if we were to limit this as Labour is proposing and when you see what the PURC in recent times have been doing publicly with alternative energy, we can imagine a day down the road when production of electricity will change. It will have… we're talking about setting up farms. I think my brother on the "Other Side", I was listening to him yesterday, talking about 5 and 10 acre farms to set up solar farms, to put megawatts of energy through the grid. So do we want to have one company controlling the grid and controlling production? These are questions we need to ask ourselves and if we need to disassociate and have one company run the grid, one run the production, the advantages and disadvantages. We have models in the Caribbean we can look at. These are things that we need to seriously consider as we move it forward and if we're going seriously into alternative energy, production of energy to the grid must be something that is carefully considered and how we manage that going forward, what blend, what mix, what percentage must be alternative versus generation through diesel or other forms. You may want to generate through natural gas, again further reducing, do we want to continue on diesel, diesel is expensive. These are all strategic questions that encourages the right partner. I think my brother on the "Other Side" indicated that

the two greatest CO2 emitters in this country is transport and electricity generation. We have an opportunity now to change electricity generation and get it within the realms of where we want to be. Yes we are a little dot in the world and probably what we emit is of no great significance but for our own people and for potential investors we must show that we are compliant on the environment.

So, Mr. President, I rise to say that from where I sit in the Private Sector and from our Private Sector, we fully support the principles espoused in the Motion brought by Labour and some of the things my Senatorial colleague have spoken about for workers and so on, we fully support that. But I believe that the one that's crafted by the Government is more holistic and is more accurate in its wording and I would put my support behind that as we go forward.

So I end there quickly and, Mr. President, with your leave, I know I have to depart the House as I have asked for permission and I want to say the next Motion that is coming on compensation I fully support it. I throw my support behind it. I will like to see you put timelines on revision and I am suggesting you consider five to ten years and I will like to see that you talk about what the proposed increase should be in the figures that you have listed right **(inaudible comments)** and I think… **(inaudible comments)** yes, and that is something that I support my brother because from where I sit in another place these costs are absolutely ridiculous and when I remember the gentleman in St. Andrew's that lost his whole field of watermelon to some vicious attack by some whatever. Based on these rates that we have there, if the Government wanted to help with compensation that is nothing compared to what he would have put forward. So these are things that are really outdated including the Public Service Commission Act, very out-dated. Thank you, Mr. President, and I thank you for the time and the permission for me to exit.

Mr. President: Was there an anticipation that I would have denied you the permission to leave? I don't know, Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms you think you have the strength to enforce a denial? I don't think so. **(Laughter/inaudible comments)** Are there any other contributors to the… what's on the floor now is the amendment

according to the rules. Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. I stand to support the… Senator Garraway. I stand to support the two Motions **(laughter)** seriously…

Mr. President: Senator, the rule is clear under 3 and maybe I could just read it **"an amendment to a Motion may be moved and seconded at any time after the question upon the Motion has been proposed by the President or the Chair and before it has been put by the President of Chair at the conclusion of the debate upon the Motion."** So, the Motion was moved by Senator Lewis, was seconded by Senator St. Cyr. Senator Lewis on the question that the Motion be read a second time delivered the broad outlines of his Motion, the merits upon which his Motion is based in argument and reason and when he was completed with that Senator Stiell, Leader of Government's Business moved an amendment which was seconded I think by Senator Cox, was it? Yes, Senator Cox. You see the Alzheimer's is far away. A debate on the amendment now ensues. I know it's a bit facetious when you said you were rising to support both but at this stage there is only one item that's under consideration and that is the amendment. If the amendment does not succeed by the wishes of the House, that is disposed of and Senator Lewis's original Motion now gets back the attention of the House and any solicitation of vote on that Motion would be on Senator Lewis's Motion. So where we are at the moment notwithstanding the little bit of humour interjected, we are actually debating the amendment to the Motion. So let's just be clear on that. Proceed Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you for this important clarification, Mr. President. Firstly, regarding the amendment, the principle of item 2 in terms of the public, our Grenadian nationals having the opportunity to own part of what belongs to us, it is a very important thing. I know the details as to how this will be done as Senator De Allie would have mentioned as to what percentage is reserved etc., cannot be discussed here at this point but at the same time we would want it to be done in such a

manner that it has an impact. It should be done in such a manner that it has an impact regarding the future. At the same time the item number 2 on the Motion regarding Government's effort as it relates to the climate change issue, I think this is a very critical factor because particularly now the whole issue of climate change, global warming and things that we can do as a country is very critical. The issue surrounds though is at the end of the day and I think it was said by the Government Senators, also affordability is what we all want at the end of the day, it is not that we own this but affordability. I hear very clearly the matter of Government doesn't want to tie itself down to be the majority shareholder, quote, unquote, at all times because that could restrict innovation and growth and opportunities and so on and that is understandable. The question still though is that I can have majority shares but it can be 25% depending on how you design the share structure and you design that the other 75% that is sold among other persons they cannot sell or combine in such a manner that will cause you as the Government to lose that control. So we have to be smart and not sell out and I know we have a lot of smart persons in how we do this and that is the recommendation.

The point of Senator De Allie is a very significant point of the youth, we need to cater for that because that is in itself a resource, and how do we do that? We must not just only speak of it because as Senator De Allie rightfully say that the youths, young growing up, you may want to buy a car, you may want to buy a house, buy some lands but most times how it's done? You have to go and get financing. So the question is, we also have to look at within this whole construct the enabling environment so that the same youth can be able to go and access and get a loan to invest in this, I think this is something that we need to look at.

My concern at the end of the day is, will the company be stronger management wise and I say this to say that seeking partners, other investment partners, what would they want? What would be… there would be negotiations and we have to understand what they're willing to give up. So yes I support the amendment, the climate change issues, getting us to have but there is some little fine prints again that you may say the Senate cannot go through the fine prints but those fine prints are what is critical to ensure that what we're supporting here is really what is being support. That is my

statement, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Any other Senator? Senator Judd.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to support the amendment to the Motion that has been put forward by the Leader of Government's Business. Mr. President, I too agree with the Government that it's probably too early to confirm to a position whether or not you want to remain the majority shareholder or not. I think this must be properly studied, properly evaluated and the best position must be taken as it relates to the company being profitable as well for the country, for our people.

Also, Mr. President, point one of the Motion which speaks about mitigating the negative effects of climate change is also very important moving forward especially in the time that we are. Currently, Mr. President, we know that greenhouse gases continue to be on the increase. In fact the last report that I have read, I think we are on the way towards 450 parts per million of carbon dioxide being emitted into the environment. Mr. President, one report also stated that we already crossed the tipping point of carbon dioxide and as a result of that, if we continue, what this means is that significant cascade effect will happen globally, that will result in increase and frequency of hurricanes, which we have already seen. Pandemics will continue to be a thing that we'll have to live with, if we continue to see increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. So therefore, Mr President, the Government's commitment to mitigate the negative effects of climate change by ensuring that we find alternative source of energy is highly commendable and highly accepted. And as young people, Mr. President, as a youth myself I wholly accept this, because this is the planet that I have to live on. As they say, there's no Plan B, and as small as we are the thing is, Mr. President, it is affecting everyone, and we need to lead by example. We must lead by example and I know we are leading by example throughout how… our management of the COVID crisis. We are leading by example of how we managed our economy in the last seven years, and we should lead by example as well as ensuring that we mitigate the negative

effects of climate change.

Mr. President, as relates to the divestment of the shares of GRENLEC, Mr. President, as well we have heard a number of occasions of Government's commitment to ensure that Grenadians get the first preference. Again, Mr. President, this is highly welcomed and highly appreciated, because we don't want to go back to days where we would have had an agreement that was highly one-sided and was not in the best interest of this country. And many of us would have read the share purchase agreement and see how very, bad, might be a very understatement but devastating, this agreement was towards this country, and towards the people of this country. And so therefore, Mr. President, what we want for Government to do moving forward, is to ensure that the agreement, to ensure that the contract that they will have with the managing company or the individuals that may become, whether it is a majority shareholder, that the agreement is in the best interest of Grenada and the company. Senator De Allie's recommendation as it relates to young people, shares being set aside for young people. Mr. President, again, this is welcomed. If that can be done, that will highly be welcomed and we've seen Government's commitment towards young people being displayed in a number of forward thinking legislation that has passed through this House. Recently, well on Tuesday we would have passed the Virtual Asset Business Bill which would have basically explained to young people that here is an opportunity for you to acquire assets; here is an opportunity for you to ensure that you move with the times, and secure yourself and become financially free by engaging in such practice. We have seen Government's commitment in ensuring that there is increased amount of monies available in the small business arena. And therefore I don't think Government will shun away from the idea in principle of ensuring that young people get some level of support or access to whether it is shares or whatsoever in this company. But again this must be studied, this must be evaluated and the best possible solution must be put forward. Again, Mr. President, I support this Motion, the amended Motion put forward by the Leader of Government's Business. I think it is what we need at this point in time, as we continue to discuss the direction of this company. And so, Mr. President, I give my full support to this amended Motion. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Public Business (Cont'd)

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Cadet. Senator Lewis; oh Senator… Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I could set the tone, so that's okay. **(Laughter)** There's no strategic advantage or disadvantage for me. On the amended Motion, Mr. President, through you, there's a fundamental difference. The principles I understand and accept that, ownership is important. There is a fundamental difference. It says here, the amended Motion and this is what we are speaking about. It says in recital number three, **"AND WHEREAS recognising that it may be deemed to be in the best interest…"** and as further elaborated by the Leader of Government's Business they do not want to commit themselves to a policy position upfront as to what ownership structure it shall take. And we in the Labour Movement are calling for a policy position, that the majority of shares in GRENLEC must be owned by the people and Government of Grenada. When all the discussion was made about repurchasing the shares that was one of the reasons advanced. As a matter of fact I'll go further to put on record. We do not support NAWASA being owned by any private entity. I know it's not for discussion, yes, but making a policy position and the Government must lead. Given the importance of GRENLEC, given the importance of electricity to the development of the country for all the recitals advanced here, if we as the people and the Government do not maintain the majority shares, we do not control and therefore we can find ourselves in a similar position to the concerns that we expressed about WRB. And I'm not speaking about the agreement, because I do not expect to have a repeat of that agreement that was made in the 1990's, I do not expect that. You can maintain majority control, but you can have a professional firm, executive management contract to manage the affairs of the company, in which the Government takes a position that it will have a hands-off approach, in terms of the management decisions. Yes there are policies, you do not get involved in the day to day running of the company and even by extension, majority shareholding, if you make prudent decisions, the Members of the board as advanced by Senator De Allie, and he's not here but it was his decision to leave, does not have to be

people who are not the best competent. Public ownership throughout the world and certainly in Grenada, and in a period that is not too far from here, in the 80's, have demonstrated that the right leadership and guided by the principles on the best interest of the country, the Government will make the best decision in the interest of the people. And it is not to indicate that if we control the majority, we're not sure what we will do. No, you can make decisions that I own this business as Government and people, but my criteria, so one of the criteria could be, to be able to serve on the Board of Directors. So let's say Government can select let us say nine or ten members of the Board, you can have a ranking system in which you identify a committee to vet people that you may consider to serve on the Board. So it is similar for instance, the question that would be asked of Board members, the Chairman or any Board members. If this position had to be advertised, would that person that I'm considering be a successful candidate? This is not magic and to suggest that if Government maintains the majority of shareholding that the company have to be run poorly or badly, I think is a disservice to us. Yes we have a history, we have a history of doing exactly that, but we are in a position colleagues to do better than that.

And my colleagues on the "Other Side", and I say this colleagues genuinely, this is about national development, this is not about where you sit or where I stand, it's about Grenada. When there is need for us to take sectoral interest we'll do this, because there are times we have to do that. But on a discussion like GRENLEC as a national asset to be controlled and owned by we the people is enough for the Government or for us in the Senate to call for a policy position to be taken, that we want to maintain the majority of shares in GRENLEC and here I speak boldly of a minimum of 51%. I'm not speaking about a majority as a single block; I'm speaking of a simple majority. It is accepted that the shares is made up of 100%, simple maths, it can't be 50/50 chaos, a minimum of 51%. But with the principle that the day-to-day management will be put in the hand, the same objective that they have, professionals and with the understanding that we as politicians, the Government will not get involved in the day-to-day operations. And we will give that management authority, the responsibility and the clear authority to make proper management decisions. You know

what we're interested in? We are interested in the company being profitable. If the company is profitable, we can use that profit for investment purposes and the government will look good. It is not just the ownership that will make us profitable you know, that's not what I'm saying, that it not what labour is saying. Labour is saying to be able to ensure that we reap the benefit as WRB did, because WRB was the majority shareholder, as WRB did, let us now perform that role, and let us at the same time perform the role that we have praised WRB for, in terms of its professional management. But yes they took it and run out, because that's capitalism; obviously it is the maximisation of the profit. So the fundamental difference, I do not support the amendment, strictly on the base that it is saying that we are not prepared to give a commitment as to the ownership. Even in the resolution, it is not addressing that matter. I agree with the majority of reasoning, advanced by the Government's Side on this matter, but the fundamental issue is ownership.

Let me quickly address the aspect of the youth, and I totally support that, because it is an investment opportunity that should be given to them, so that in their latter years, they will have some form of investment to be able to live on, and not having to depend on, all depends on where they're working, they may not have pension etc., and it can help in their quality of life. However, it ought to be based on the following principle. And that principle must ensure that the youth, all of the youth of Grenada, have some avenue to be able to attain that investment, because I'll tell you why. At the end of the day if we only allow for the children of the well-to-do, who may be able to have disposable income and have access to finance, that the majority of youths on the block, in the secondary schools etc., do not have access to, then we'll be continuing to widen the poverty gap. I support the principle, more than the principle, and I'm going further to ensure that whatever we do, some needs assessment must be done, just as how for instance we make certain benefits available to, all depends on the income bracket that you fall within, that can be a principle to ensure that we reduce the dependency syndrome, that when that youth now becomes someone in the advanced age, after 20 years of investment, there's a possibility that they would be in a better position to make use of these advantages.

Public Business (Cont'd)

I am now more worried, after listening to the Leader of Government's Business, and after recognising the word "may" here, I am more worried as to the future of the company. I'll be brute frank with you, Mr. President, and I'll tell you why. I came here with the Motion from Labour with a very open mind, despite our interactions with Government Ministers during the discussion on the repurchase. The fact that we are not prepared to take a policy position on the ownership to ensure that the company remains in the hands of the people of Grenada and the fact that it has been advanced that we need to allow the discussion to determine where to go, leads me to be very concerned. And something that has come back to mind, and as a duty and obligation I'll repeat it.

In our engagement with the Minister for Finance, that's Labour, when the TUC advanced this position, in the space of half an hour what I'm about to say was repeated a minimum of five times, I counted it, by the Minister, that the ownership structure and if shares have to be divested, even in terms of non-nationals and the cost of the shares relative to what we paid for it, he used example, if someone for instance may have done something else for the Government, for instance like the building of a hospital. That stayed in my mind, not just my mind but in the Labour Movement mind. And in an interesting manner, once the Leader of Government's Business started to speak and I recognised where he was going in terms of the ownership structure and leaving that road open for a private person to possibly own the majority of shares, this has come back to my mind and I'm worried and I'm concerned, and we'll continue to advocate in the Labour Movement for this not to happen. GRENLEC is too important. We have paid too much, by the amendment to the Electricity Act which has caused us to pay so much and this had been introduced by the Leader of Government's Business. I've advocated those things already but it came back. We maintain in the Labour Movement that the approach to the repurchasing was handled badly. It has cost us more but we are where we are, but we have paid too much and our country has gone through too much. And the future of our people is tied up too much, so that we must ensure colleagues, at the end of the day that the ownership of GRENLEC remains in the people hand. And it is for that reason fundamentally, I can't support the amendment. Because

it opens the door and it gives our blessings and support to the Government to change the current ownership structure to put back GRENLEC in the hands of a Private Sector company. Albeit the Government may be convinced that it has gone into an arrangement with a reputable company, because there is no doubt that WRB was a reputable company. That's not the argument, the deal that they got plus apart from the deal, even if the deal was good, even if they paid what we believe was a fair market value for the shares, the price of the shares, the fact that the majority of the company was owned by a foreign company, it means that our profit, the outcome of GRENLEC was taken away from our shores, similar to cocoa, nutmeg and bananas, in terms of our colonial past. Let us, let us continue to own the majority of shares in GRENLEC, in keeping with the decision to repurchase GRENLEC, and for this, that's my position on the matter, Mr. President. Thank you very much.

Mr. President: Senator Cox, Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I rise again to reaffirm my support to the amended Motion before this Honourable House. Mr. President, I think it's important that I start with some clarity and why we are where we are today. And we are here where we are today speaking about this important national asset because this Government stand alone in making that decision to get back this company for Grenada. Remember that. It was this governmental loan that standed out in the wind, with all opposition from all sides, all kind of criticism, so that speaks volumes, Mr. President. **(Applause)** That speak volumes. We did this for Grenada, and so we have acted always in the interest of the country and that is the fact, Mr. President. I think we need to start off in that regard.

Mr. President, it is clear what this country means in terms of development, the economic development of this country and my colleague Senator, who does speak a lot in terms of the issue and how companies, how manufacturing, how small businesses are restrained because of the cost of energy. And we have always been consistent, always for years we have been consistent, that our ultimate goal is to ensure that we

get the prices down. That is all. We have to say that consistently and I want to further look at this. We, Mr. President, for the first time in years the Board of GRENLEC is only Grenadians. Mr. President, it's this Government that made that happen. It is only Grenadians that are currently directors of that company.

Mr. President, my colleague Senator representing the Labour Movement indicated that he understands that there is attempt to, not to include the worker representative on the Board **(laughter)**, but this is so far from the truth and far from our actions. We made amendments to the Articles of Association and that was not changed. On the 29th of April, we held an Annual General Meeting of the company and a staff rep was elected. We allowed the process, we allowed the staff to select their rep and there is a staff rep on the board of directors of GRENLEC, so I don't understand that as recent as last week, why such information would come to you indicating or insinuating that, that is not the case. So I am somewhat lost in that regard.

Mr. President, this whole process and discussion of GRENLEC has been confusing, because Government has been alone in the battle trying to get this company back. Now that we have it back, we have indicated that we are going to engage our development partners to help us to do the necessary assessment to see what is there, to come up with a prospectus as to how we can divest. We have said that bonafide Grenadians are going to be given the first priority to purchase those shares, when we get to that point. We have been consistent in that regard. All we are saying in this Motion, this amended Motion is that until we have done those necessary assessments, that it is only there and then we can get a clear understanding of what is the best way to move forward. And if it means after our assessment that we should, the evidence yield that we should remain as the majority owner or shareholder, then so be it. But at this point in time, all we are saying that it is too soon until we make the necessary. I don't see what is the difficulty in that, Mr. President, I just don't see. So that is what we are doing.

Mr. President, another critical aspect, and there are discussions about us going back to the past, and I'm happy that, that was raised. It is because of the actions of this Government that we have put structures in place to ensure that that doesn't happen.

The Electricity Supply Act, the PURC, all these structures were not present and we had strong resistance when we put forward those measures and it's because of that resistance, that is the reason why we had to pay so high. It is because of that resistance and that is why we are here, that is why we are here.

You know, Mr. President, recently, as recent as last week Thursday a new generator for the company came in **(laughter)**, and you know again, you're hearing, talk that oh the generator was purchased by the company before and it only arriving now. Mr. President, that is false. The previous majority shareholders refused to invest in the company for years, knowing that they were leaving, left it to deteriorate. One of the engines went and we were at a significant risk, so much so that we had, there are backup generators that were leased to ensure that we stay afloat in terms of supplying energy to this country. So on the 1st of March this year, 2021, Government as majority shareholder took a swift decision to enter into a contract to purchase a new generator, and that generator came, it arrived on the Island last week, and it's at the plant in Queen's Park and we are very hopeful that we keep on schedule to have it installed and operational by July 31. Those are the actions that we are taking, Mr. President, so I am somewhat confused sometimes when you hear all this misinformation as to Government actions, and insinuating that we have some kind of mischievous act. We have been consistent from day one. We have said that we need this national asset to be back for Grenadians to benefit from it, and it is this Government that did it, this government. No other government was bold enough to do that, and I don't think it have any others coming that would be bold enough to do it either, Mr. President. I'm certain about that. **(Laughter)**

Mr. President, I want to speak a little bit on the renewable energy and how our actions have helped Grenadians to participate more in the development of the company. Right now we have what you call self-generators, because of our actions, persons, you can generate for yourself. You never had that before. Now… **(Inaudible comments)** …no permission, persons weren't given, hear what used to happen, Mr. President. You go to GRENLEC, they give you a license, you sell to them for $0.36 per kilowatt and they sell back to you for $0.75 and you make all the capital investment.

Now we are saying, you make your investment, you generate, you use what you want for yourself and we buy the rest. What you can ask for, you can't ask for anything better than that. That is giving the local man an opportunity to be part of this process, and that is what we are doing. You can have solar fields as was discussed earlier on; that never happened before. So we have been consistent in what we say we will do and continue to do.

There was a comparison made between NAWASA and GRENLEC. Mr. President, GRENLEC is a public traded company. Currently the shares for GRENLEC is with the Ministry of Finance, while the Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities which I overseer responsibility falls within the ambit, the company falls under it, the shares is with the Ministry of Finance, because it is on the Eastern Caribbean Securities Market, the shares are listed there. So there is a joint management approach in terms of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities where GRENLEC is concerned. Unlike NAWASA, NAWASA is a Government Agency, it's a Statutory Body, it's not a public trading company, so the structure is different. So I just want to clarify that, I just want to clarify that, so that my dear colleague on the "Other Side" understands that it's two separate structures. **(Inaudible comments)** Well I'm just trying to help you to understand what is… **(laughter)** what is there, Mr. President. **(Laughter)**

Mr. President, we have said that we're working with the World Bank to help us to assess what is there and to come up with a prospective divestment of the shares. So this engagement is a very short term engagement, it's a short term engagement. We do not believe that, that should take more than three to six months, to help provide us with that information and to give Government the guidance to move the company forward.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Mr. President: Lunch is already available. I would rather think it's getting cold but I just thought I would make that announcement.

Public Business (Cont'd)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President, that is the reason why you see I am moving about quickly too. You see I am a little fidgety, yes it's a bit below subpar in here. **(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)** I was just about to wrap up, Mr. President. **(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)** Duly noted.

Mr. President, I close with one important observation and I think that, that is something that my dear colleague Senator needs to clarify at some point in time. What is being presented or what is being mentioned, it is insinuating or assuming that only a foreign company can come forward to purchase the majority of shares in GRENLEC. That is what I am picking up from this whole discourse. What if a local Grenadian company comes forward and say we want to buy the majority shares in GRENLEC, are we going to deny them as bonafide Grenadians on that premise? Mr. President, I said bonafide Grenadians. So I say this just for us to understand the context in which we make certain assessments and certain policy pronouncement. Mr. President, I believe that the path that we are on in terms of how we plan to address this is one that is correct and this amended Motion helps shape and present Government's plans as to how we address this company going forward. With these contributions, Mr. President, I further indicate my support towards the amended Motion, thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Norland Cox. Senator Matthew Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Yes, Mr. President. Mr. President, as the debate proceeded as I listened I get a little confused. I do hope by the time I leave here that confusion will evaporate. Mr. President, at one time the narrative was GRENLEC is a national asset and should be in the hands of Grenadians, I agree. I am getting the feeling now, Mr. President, that in some circles or somewhere there is a thinking that that national asset could be or may be in the hands of somebody else. I am very concerned. Mr. President, there is an old proverb which says that **"never trust…"** Galdin says, it's a bird **"never trust a dark cloud"** and I really hope that I am having an illusion.

Now a lot has been said but I just want to narrow it down here to two items on the

Motion. One says that majority shares must continue to be in the hands of the Government. A national asset and we are saying here that it should be in the hands of the Government, the majority shares. What is wrong with that? And as the mover of the Motion states he is referring to fifty plus one as majority. The Motion goes on to say that in the event that the Government decides to divest or to sell some of the shares, which in this case represent 20% because I think, what, Government has 71%? I stand to be corrected, sells 20% then the preference… and look at what it says, should shares be divested right, should any part of Government shares be divested then local companies, diaspora and nationals must be given preference. And this is a very interesting word there, must be given preference. It did not say must be sold to them, it says must be given preference and it is very important that we understand the language.

So, Mr. President, also in relation to the trading, I am not too sure what the framework with regard to trading is. I am speaking about the policy as it regards to trading of shares. But whatever it is the Government should have something in place to control and to manage the amount of shares that should be traded so that we don't lose that control over that national asset. **(Applause)** I think we need to very cautious, very, very cautious in terms of how we deal with that. Mr. President, I don't know but I continue to support this Motion as presented here. Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Matthew Joseph. Senator Simon Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, in wrapping up the presentation on the amended Motion, Mr. President, I think… first of all I would like to thank colleagues on All Sides for their contributions. But I am still at the point where I do not see the fundamental difference that Senator Lewis has described within the context and it's the context that is important. The issue over ownership is too narrow an issue for sole consideration at this time. As is outlined in the Motion, it may be the best option but there are multiple options and what we have heard from Both Sides are the multiple permutations, dozens and dozens of permutations that are

possible. I don't think it is right for us here in the Senate to resolve this highly complex matter especially when we broaden the context beyond just the ownership. It is about the terms and conditions, the valuation, the price, the operating environment, adherence to the extensive regulations that are in place and it is those terms and conditions, it is the pricing, it is the valuation, it is all of those things that will determine whether an offer of purchase and investment is in the best interest of the company and the country.

Just from our relatively short discussion, many different permutations were presented by the Senator himself that was moving the Motion. So how can we at this time narrow the discussion and set a policy directive? As outlined in the amended Motion, Government has started that process. We have engaged our development partners, the technical expertise that understand those permutations, that understand those complexities to provide Government with the different options, the advantages, the disadvantages, the costs, the benefits. It is not until that work is done. So to bind ourselves to a particular principle when there are many principles involved would be irresponsible, it would not be the right thing at this time which is why Government side has put forward an alternative Motion which takes into account the position Senator Lewis has proposed but keeps it open to all other principles.

Mr. President: Senator I don't have before me… **(Inaudible comments)** what I have before me is an amendment to the Motion. So, make up your mind on what you are saying because….

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: The amended Motion.

Mr. President: There is no alternative Motion.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: The amended Motion. So what is before us, the amendments before us factor in why the complexities that Senator Lewis's has excluded but reiterates principles that none of us can dispute in terms of the process that needs to be followed, that makes commercial and operational sense for the

company and for the country. And that fundamental point that there will be full consultation in addition to the technical advice that we're given from our development partners, our own work that will be carried out but the full input from our development partners including the Labour Movement. So at this particular time, the amendments that are put before us and the construct of this amended Motion reflects precisely where we are and as the months progress and more information comes to the Table, those principles and the tenets of any model moving forward will be refined in a very transparent way with the input of all. And it's for those reasons, Mr. President, that I present the amendments to this Motion to this Honourable House.

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

Mr. President: There is one other Motion and that's to you Senator St. Clair that's the crop compensation schedule for farmers and again I remind that lunch is here and it's getting cold. **(Inaudible comments)** The coldness wouldn't affect me as I have access to a microwave in my office. I am not proposing to warm up everybody else's lunch. **(Inaudible comments)** Senator St. Clair with this brief humour, you now have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you I would say to the rest of our Members for agreeing to… I cannot say forego lunch but to put lunch off for a little while. The Motion **(inaudible comments by Mr. President)** Ok, let's see how long I can go without it.

The Motion before us I read: a Motion standing in my name on Crop Compensation Schedule for farmers who suffer crop loss it reads:

WHEREAS farmers have been experiencing increased incidents of crop damage from man and livestock;

AND WHEREAS the Agriculture Crop (Compensation) Act No. 9 of 1967 and

amended by SRO 32 of 1995,

(a) makes provision for the amount of compensation payable for damage to agricultural crops and other trees; and

(b) Section 4 gives the Minister, (that's the Minister for Agriculture), the power to amend the Schedule by Order if he or she considers it expedient to do so;

AND WHEREAS it is over 25 years since the Crop Compensation Schedule was revised;

AND WHEREAS the cost of inputs for the farmer has increased significantly over the past 25 years;

AND WHEREAS farmers deserves just compensation reflective of current realities of costs;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT that the Minister for Agriculture be caused to act immediately in accordance with the powers vested in him under section 4 of the Agriculture (Compensation) Act of 1995 to review and update the Crop Compensation Schedule of 1995 so that farmers can be justly compensated when they suffer crop loss or damage. It goes on to say;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that section 4 of the Act be modified to protect our farmers' investments by specifying a time by which the Crop Compensation Schedule shall be amended instead of relying on when the Minister considers it expedient to do so as is currently in the Act.

That is the Motion before us, Mr. President.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, I beg to second the Motion so moved.

Question proposed.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, and fellow Members as we know and if you have been following the news in particular in the last few time, farmers have been going through a lot of losses from damage from

animals going onto their farmlands and I think it even had one case where there is a gentleman in the north of the country who was actually damaging people crops; cutting down trees and so on. And so that has been a matter that has been increasing publicly but it's not something I would say that is even new today. It's been happening through the years but I guess now with more media and all of these different communication tools and of course more persons involved particular in the short crops where we would find this sort of damage and also where you also have a big issue where folks are tending to livestock and they hardly have any lands to take care of them and that's a big issue too that we have to address in the Agriculture Sector. All of those cause those sort of damage to our farmers and when we look at what is happening in 2021 in terms of the rise in the cost of inputs, the cost of labour. So for example I have been speaking to some of the agriculturist, in 1995, even 2004 a seedling that you would pay 0.20¢ for or 0.15¢ is now 0.60¢, 0.70¢ cents. A bag of fertiliser was $20.00, $30.00, now it's one hundred and something dollars, labour, don't even speak about it. Sometimes farmers could hardly get labour much less.

So this is a very short and realistic presentation meaning that, that difference in cost through the twenty five years or so, if we continue to apply that which was used back in 1995, it really is not adding up to the efforts and the inputs that farmers are putting. So for example we know of the famous gentleman in Sìmon when he explained the amount of damage he had with his watermelons and all he got was I think $600.00 or $700.00 and one melon we know can weigh easily 25 pounds selling on the market for at least $1.50, $2.00 a pound. Having most of your plantation damaged $500.00 for his effort, a crop that will take three months plus irrigation and all of those and even those investments. So that is the context of this and what we are saying is that when this damage happens, you would get… we call them an appraiser to be able to assess the damage. So this appraiser is going to use that schedule so that at least there is a reference point to know… otherwise it's arbitrary, I put my price, you put your price but there is a legal schedule that is being used and it defines how the different, whether it's one year old, two years old, whether it's a bearing tree for the different range of crops. And in fact interestingly our green gold soursop which of course was not even featured

on the list in 1995, we know the cost of soursop today, $4 and $5, it's not even on the list. So I think even pineapple, I don't even think it's on the list and pineapple is another high value product.

So I just put all of this in context and the purpose of the Motion is to say, one, we need to review and update the figures. When I look at the Act, the Act doesn't specifically say how that is done. It says the Minister cause it to be done, is there a Committee within the Ministry of Agriculture, is it a wider space community that is involved, not only the Ministry of Agriculture but the farmers and other technicians. So even this is something that we also need to look at, how this is done. So that is one aspect, so either way we are asking the Minister and the Government to please review this so that damages that will happen to crops can be of a more just price, that is one aspect.

And the other aspect of the Motion goes to say what I call the discretion you know when the Minister feels like. How it says it… it says the section of the Act actually says… because this Act is an Act that make provision for the amount of compensation payable for damage to agricultural crops. So even if you go to a court of law, this schedule still applies and even if the farmer can negotiate and the person says well I don't really want to go to court, I will pay you then this still is the legal reference point unless they can negotiate somewhere differently.

Section 4 of the Act says **"the Minister if he or she considers it expedient to do so…"** and that is what strike that next part of the Motion. Twenty five years we know is really long for this consideration to be moved. I can hear whispers saying well you could improve the Motion and put a time and say well maybe we can say five years, ten years and I thought that in the Motion itself I wouldn't specify there because I think this could have some discussion but I will offer in the region of three to five years, from where I sit is a reasonable time to do this. Now when I looked at a copy I got from the Ministry of Agriculture which would have been circulated with the documents, it wrote on it and I don't know where that instructions came from, **"to be reviewed every five years"** and it was dated 1995 also.

So I am trying to figure out if it was really reviewed those times because it didn't

say, well last reviewed and a signature dated saying that it was done in October 1995. Or if it was reviewed and maybe, not because you are reviewing something it doesn't mean that you have to change it. So I am not too sure if it was reviewed but just not changed and everybody agrees how it was. But what I want to put to the Table is that we do a review and also we specify a time and of course the Act can be such reworded to reflect that, maybe like, **"not more than five years."** I think five years is good enough, more than five years is a lot. I think 2 and 3 years I think it's a little bit too soon. So this is the Motion, Mr. President and fellow colleagues.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, from Government side we are wholly supportive of the Motion that is presented but we do put forward a couple of amendments to the final two paragraphs which I can circulate if… Sergeant-At-Arms can circulate these and those changes… **(The Sergeant-at-Arms took the documents and circulated them)** …as he circulates them I will talk to them because they are stylistic than, it doesn't change the material content.

The amendments that are proposed is **"BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate recommends that section 4 of the Agriculture (Compensation) Act of 1995 be reviewed and the Crop Compensation Schedule of 1995 be updated so that the farmers can be justly compensated when they suffer crop loss or damage."** So the essence of that is still maintained and then the final paragraph, **"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate recommends that section 4 of the Act be modified to protect our farmers' investments by specifying a time by which the Crop Compensation Schedule shall be amended."**

So the material essence of the original Motion is unchanged, it's just for the

Senate to recommend rather than the construct that was originally presented.

Mr. President, I wish to commend the Member on the "Other Side"; the Representative for Agriculture for bringing this this to us. There is, as I said high value in this. This is an issue that has been vexing our farmers for quite some time now and to have twenty five years since the value of the specific crops has been reviewed and as the Senator outlined with the increase in cost of inputs, cost of production etc., it is only fair, it is only just that such a review be carried out. And as I said with the amendments proposed this will go… the recommendation is that the Ministry of Agriculture the Minister for Agriculture will review this, discussions have been had already and again the sentiments fully, fully taken on board. So to revise those prices, bring them up to speed and up-to-date and a review of the period between reviews.

There was a recommendation that was made back in 1995. We are unsure whether that has actually been adopted, formally adopted. So the suggestion about the five year period will be looked at, and again if that's viewed as being practical and unreasonable I see no reason why that could not be adopted. So, Mr. President, with the amendments presented, and the acceptance of those amendments we… **(Inaudible comments)** …as I put forward those amendments, I will ask for a Member on my Side to second those amendments.

Mr. President: …the Honourable Roland Bhola.

Sen. the Hon. Roland Bhola: Thank you, Mr. President. Just by joking since this morning, Mr. President… I stand actually to second the Motion put forward by the Leader of Government's Business, but it was Senator Garraway who started this morning by telling people that they're coming too fast. I recognise Senator Stiell not waiting to get seconded, so… **(Laughter)** I don't know what's happening today.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: I'm hungry.

Sen. the Hon. Roland Bhola: Oh you're hungry. **(Laughter)** I stand to second the Motion and just to advise probably in the review, that wasn't said in the amendment, that there are few crops and I think Senator St. Clair had mentioned them, for example soursop, pineapple and there are new crops that are coming on. I know there are some Grenadians getting now into the production of dragon fruit and so, so we probably need to do some inclusion of additional new species and put the price in. Thank you.

Mr. President: Just to try and speed up this, just let me make an enquiry of you. Do you have any reservations or objections to the amendment proposed here?

(Senator St. Clair indicated in the negative)

Mr. President: Okay. I'm just trying to speed up the debate, because if you do then I'll open up a debate on it. Yes. So Senator Matthew

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Joseph. Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, you know I sit here and I was just smiling. I'm looking across the table and I'm smiling, because the former Minister for Agriculture **(Laughter)** is right here and apparently he didn't know about this. Twenty five years **(laughter)**, about twenty five years this thing sitting there and nothing happen, but I think this Motion is a very simple one to me and very instructive. It says that "the Minister if he considers it expedient to do so…", subjective, "…may by Order amend the Schedule," and I just want to point out a couple things here. This thing is, this thing is Stone Age really, it is dinosaur. We need to look at it as everybody agreed, but let us just look at two crops here. Now a nutmeg tree that is over fifteen years old, if someone for some reason takes a chainsaw and cuts it down, the compensation based

on the Act is $160. Now an avocado tree, mature tree, a mature plant, if it's destroyed the compensation according to the Act is $200. Now one crop of avocado…

Mr. Speaker: What tree? I missed that one. The $200 one is which tree?

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Avocado. Now I'm saying just one crop of avocado would give you much more than $200. So, Mr. President, we should really run with this one in terms of bringing it up to speed so that farmers can be, can be justly compensated. I must say that this one is very close to me, Mr. President, because as a retiree from the Government Service, I am now into full time farming.

And before I conclude, I must say that farmers are really distorted right now in relation to praedial larceny. I was at a meeting recently of nutmeg farmers and the sentiment there is that some more farmers they need arms, they need guns. Nobody asked for cutlasses, they need guns and it speaks to the frustration, frustration of those farmers. So I do hope that if we upgrade this document here, this Act, then the compensation could be much more just and fair, and as a result we would have less persons, less farmers asking for firearms. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: The country with the most guns per capita is the United States. I dare say that has resolved or done nothing. It hasn't provided greater protection, it hasn't reduced the amount of gun crime as, on the contrary the countries with the least amount of guns per capita has a higher level of personal security, less gun crime. So I just thought I should just make that point …

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: I think the farmers…

Mr. President: …in respect of your…

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: …are just expressing their frustration over what is happening.

Mr. President: …your refrain that what the farmers need now is more guns.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Yes

Mr. President: I'm not sure about that, but that's not on the debate menu, so. Yes. Alright, if there no other contributors, Honourable Members… Senator St. Clair, you just want to wrap up and then I'll put the question. Well no, well you said you accepted the…

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. President: You accepted. So Senator Stiell, you were the mover of the amendment. Is there anything you wish to add, or else I'll put the question directly and we'll just take the vote.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: No, I think everything has been ventilated so…

Mr. President: Okay.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: …it's for the Motion to pass.

Question put and agreed to.
Motion approved as amended.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 17 - Adjournment.

Mr. President: Are you rising to move the adjournment?

Adjournment

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: No, I just wanted to, just speak something on the adjournment, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Lunch is definitely cold.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes, Mr. President, yesterday the country would have recorded its first homicide for 2021. It's one to many…

Mr. President: Hello?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: …and…

Mr. President: I missed it…

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I say, I say it's one to many, the first homicide and it's one too many. And only Saturday I had a very instructive discussion with someone from the Child Protection Authority, because someone sent me a video and showed violence between a woman and a man, where the lady strike the guy with a cutlass and he had a fan in his hand and beat her with the fan in her head, and her 7 year old son came and recognizing the mom was bleeding while they were struggling for the cutlass and he got between both of them to stop the fight. And I mean this thing was painful just looking at it, and I had this discussion with [4]CPA to see how we could advance this move to work on, one, providing some support for the child, because he would have experienced this. So we had this long discussion on Saturday and then yesterday to get this information of this gruesome murder and the daughter of the child was right there, and having to see her mother succumb to this, it have to be painful. And I stand to speak because this is something that we all as a nation have to rally around to get people to recognise, that violence is not the answer to our problems. We

[4] CPA – Child Protection Authority

have to find other ways and means to deal with our issues, and this is a death that should not have happened. But we have to, as a nation, and I'm calling on the churches, calling on the social partners, let us do what we can and every opportunity to advocate against the violence that we're seeing creeping up. One say well people stressed and heard a lot of excuses, COVID and so forth, but that's humanity. We have a role to play in reaching out to our brothers and sisters who are experiencing difficulties, and find the medium where we can help them to cope. Thank you.

Mr. President: I agree with you that there is a disturbing and worrying trend, but I would also say this. Male on female violence has seen a serious uptick over time. Secondly, the society has been progressively becoming less outraged over acts of violence, not only male on female violence but male and male violence, as well as, violence against children. I could recall, it might have been sometime in 2019 I think it was, when a significant adult committed a sexual act against an infant. The infant had to be around three or four years old, when that sexual assault was committed on that infant child. What shocked me and disturbed me more than the act was the fact that the entire society was silent and attempts to get people to demonstrate outrage openly by myself, failed miserably. What was worse, the matter went before the court, and what was heart rending and heart wrenching and depressing is that the judicial system, when the matter went before the court, did in my assessment, nothing. The judicial officer who heard the case, in which the significant adult, so it was not just somebody just out of adolescence, I'm talking about a significant adult, a man who was somewhere in age of his early 40's or late 30's committed this act on an infant. And rather than the courts mete out the justice that's required to send a message, that these acts of violence will not be tolerated, imposed a measly fine of $1,500.00 and allowed the adult to walk free. Senators I recall even the act of the judicial officer did not provoke outrage. The society accepted it and the judicial officer continued to function.

So when you see or witness what has happened yesterday, we didn't arrive there overnight, we arrived there by a systemic series of steps in which the institutions of State have failed and continue to fail in a most glaring manner before all of the cameras,

so that people no longer have any restraint, simply because there are no sustained consequences for the actions that we are engaged in. And Senator, I take your point and I am as worried as you are, simply because I have already lived most of my life, I doubt I will be fortunate enough to live into the future as long as I've lived into the past. But what I see being revealed before me worries me, deeply, because it is one thing for an individual to do something, but when the institutions and a comparative arm of the State, we are the Legislative Branch but when the Judicial Branch fails, the message that society receives, "*I ain't bothering with that man. I go do what I have to do and I will go up and spend".*

I remember as a kid growing up, if you want get a youngster in line and that would be reference to myself. My grandmother, an elder one would say, boy I going and call the police and all of a sudden, discipline and everything and people pull up. Now if you make that statement you're going and call the police, the person would encourage you. "Yea well bring the police nah." **(Laughter)** And I'm saying, and let me just recognise something, that our society is better than most in the Caribbean, is better than most, but we are swiftly unravelling and I can join your view Senator that we have to find ways, but that the institutions of State which seem to have adopted a philosophy that those who commit acts against the Law, are to be more protected than the victims. So, there is only one judicial officer on the bench who treat criminal matters with the seriousness that it deserves. Other people walk away with ten years, fifteen years for manslaughter. In the case of the senior adult that committed that sexual act against an infant, he got no jail time. He was charged $1,500.00, which is a measly amount of money, because that individual as I understand is resident and living in the United States, so it's less than $700, and there was an afterthought, the judicial officer asked for a smaller sum to be paid to go to the infant and the parent in some attempt for psychological reconditioning for the damage that will accompany that little infant, and it's an infant I'm talking about. Yes, and as I say there was absolutely no outrage.

So colleague Senator I associate with your view but I think we have to make an appeal to those institutions of State, especially the co-equal branch, that it does a serious injustice and disservice to the rest of the community, when the liberalism which

seem now to possess that institution fails to discharge justice in an appropriate manner. So as I said we didn't get here overnight, but we get here by a series of steps that we have taken, steps of omission and steps consumed in a liberalism which sends the message "No big thing". That saddens me. Thanks for your indulgence Honourable Senator. Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move the adjournment Sine Die.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you, Mr. President. Just wanted to just address a matter briefly on the adjournment and I must raise how concerned we are with a development that took place on the 24th of April, 2021, when the President of the Grenada Union of Teachers was called in by the Police for questioning on matters, that in our opinion, certainly based on the questioning was linked to his and his Union and the Public Sector Union struggle in relation to the 4%. This for us is a very worrying sign, is a very, very dangerous development and in our view it was calculated to also send the principle of intimidation amongst the workers. We are very concerned about this development, it will not intimidate us, it will not intimidate us. As a matter of fact the opposite has happened, it has deepened the resolve of workers, it has deepened the resolve of the comrade president Jude, it has deepened the resolve of the Grenada Union of Teachers, and it has deepened the resolve of the Public Sector Unions. But the message, I mean, to have this colleague's family be subjected to the police driving up at his home on an evening, on a weekend, on a Saturday is not sending, and has not sent the right message.

We also want to advise workers that if at any time for whatever reason that any employer is seeking to change their terms and conditions of employment, unilaterally

and you are not in agreement, even if they give you a deadline to do so, you ought not to resign, you ought not to resign your position of work, allow the employer and this is mainly for all workers but in particular the un-unionised workforces that may not have a union to advise them, so I'm using this opportunity. Because there is a sense of panic and concern amongst workers outside there, that wherever any attempt, for whatever reason, is being advanced to give you any deadline for any matter and you do not agree, whatever it is, you ought not to resign. You should allow the employer to institute whatever action that they want institute and then the grievance process or industrial process will kick into play. So this is extremely important for there.

I want to use this opportunity also, to encourage all of us to, in the fight against COVID to follow the protocols, to use all the available means that is out there to fight and to commend the Ministry and those that have even gone to the communities to vaccinate and to make the facilities available to people. So I'll use an example, so for instance in La Digue, I saw them in La Digue so that is highly commendable, and other villages, and to ask all of us to play our part. And that's just what I want to raise on this adjournment and wish our workers and Members all the continued best.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Yes, Mr. President, I just want to touch on one issue here before we wrap. That is the issue of Florida Government School. Florida Government School seem to be having some structural challenges right now. I visited the site, I visited the plant and I was taken around, so I actually saw first-hand what their situation is. There are severe leakages coming through the concrete roof. Inside of that concrete roof, there are electrical conduits, as a result the children are now cramped into one section of the school. Some of them have to be home. In fact I have a grand-daughter, she's home because of that situation. I want to ask and humbly so, the Minister for Implementation probably, I don't know, see what can be done, in relation to rectifying the problem at that school. The students are under tremendous stress, the parents are under stress and the teachers more so. Mr. President, this is a matter that should not be taken lightly. It's the education of our young people being disrupted, and this matter should be treated as a matter of urgency. I know there is a temptation to say

that the vacation is coming up very shortly, so we can put everything on pause until such time. Whatever that pause may mean, plans should go into place immediately so that we can rectify that matter. It's a very, very troubling, troubling matter. So I do hope that those who have ears, Mr. President, would hear. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Alright, thank you. Honourable Members the question is that the Senate. Yes, Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. It's one minute or less. I want to use opportunity here to, in addition to other expressions in other medium, to recognise and to give voice to the committee, or the grouping or whoever would have made the recommendations for two (2) of our farmers to be on what we know every year as the Queen's Birthday's Honours List, to receive the British Empire Medal for services to Agriculture. I will say it, it don't have to be agriculture, it could be other things but to have agriculture being recognised, it's very significant for whoever is the selecting body. I know last year we also had two (2) of our farmers, and I think an boat builder who was also involved. This year, at this time, we have, Mr. Lennard Joy Peters from the La Sagesse area, he's a veteran farmer, I've known him for over twenty years, in my dealings from the MNIB, and I describe him as a very serious farmer. If he's going to travel, he will tell you I'm going to be out of State, so don't expect any items from me. When he returns he keeps his quality and his quantities and he, I say this award to me is one that has been long in waiting for the amount of years he was in farming, even before I even know him. So I commend him and so on. Mr. Evans Goodings of the North-East Farmers' Organisation, that's another significant player and it's one of the more recognised Farmers' Organisation, not only locally, regionally and internationally, by the FAO and all of these different organisations, would have interfaced with them. They lead a very professional group I would say, they have a lot of innovation in there, they're involved in composting and many other things.

In fact I've travelled on many occasions with Mr. Evans and even some of his other members through the region and international and they have given good display and support, in terms of the way they presented Grenada, and so this award to me for these two noble farmers should act as an encouragement for many other farmers. Whoever the committee is though, I believe that the committee should look at a young person like youths in this process because we do have them and we cannot only speak of them but we need to incentivise them.

To end what I want to say here and at some point I maybe would use the office of the Parliament to assist me that sometime within the next month or so I would want to… it just happened that the Goodings and that team, I actually was speaking to him before, to have a visit to their farmers and their area. And I'm prepared and ready if there are any other colleagues that would want to join me, I could coordinate through the House, through the Parliament and we can announce what date and whoever want to join, it's not a long trip in the Willis area, I would be very happy to have some colleagues coming. There would be no food, just carry your water and that's it. It's serious and it's an initiative that I want to work on if it's every such time we go and see because sometimes when we go and we see and understand, it gives us some more appreciation and encourage the heart of our farmers. So this is what I want to offer at this time, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Roderick. Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, quickly I just want to offer, it is important that I offer a response to the concerns raised by the Member, Honourable Joseph regarding the Florida Government School. Yes the Florida Government School has some serious structural issues, we have made a decision, the Ministry of Infrastructure to build a new school. Currently the designs are being done for the school and we are working towards having that project started in August of this year, Mr. President. So more information will come as we continue to roll out the project. So we understand the challenges and that is how we respond, these are some of the things

that happen, that come up sometime unexpectedly and that we have not really planned for but we prioritise and the school is something that we are working on right now. We are fully aware and we empathise with the community for the inconvenience caused. Thank you very much.

Mr. President: The Senate now stands adjourned sine die.

(Sound of Gavel)

Mr. President: And of course, lunch is served.

The Sitting of the Senate adjourned sine die at 2:35 p.m.

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