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Wednesday 17th March, 2022

Senate Meeting
Held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 17th March, 2022

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Senate Meeting
Held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 17th March, 2022

Attendance

PRESENT

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

Prayers
Announcements

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

Mr. President: Honourable Members, good morning to all. Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

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

(Senate Prayer was said)

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

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. President: Honourable Members, pray be seated. Honourable Members, this House now commences its business.

(Sound of Gavel)

Mr. President: Honourable Members, before we actually get into the beef of today's business, I just want to take the opportunity on your behalf and my own, to welcome back Senator St. Clair. As you know he has been unavoidably absent from a number of Sittings because of some personal family matters. I am happy to have him back. I know you were in the thoughts of, and your family were in the thoughts of every Senator and we did miss your lively contributions. I think the farmers can be justly proud and I do believe they're justly proud looking forward to you. So welcome back and I trust that you are over the worst of your personal family challenges and I wish you and your family all the best. Full recovery; yes, so that you can enjoy the pleasure of having your family around. I speak of that simply because as a youngster I had a very

difficult traumatic experience when I lost my mum when I was around 8 years of age, so I know how family togetherness on this side of… so once again I take the opportunity to welcome you back and to express the concerns and support of every Member of the Senate, staff and everyone else who would have missed your presence here. So thank you very much, and we can then move Clerk into the regular business of the Senate this morning.

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

Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate, held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Tuesday the 8th of February, 2020, be taken as read.

Question put and agreed to.
Minutes taken as read.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate, held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Tuesday the 8th of February, 2020 be confirmed.

Question put.

Mr. President: Excuse me, Senator Garraway. Sorry I didn't see your light. It was being…

Minutes

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes I just wanted to make some corrections sir.

Mr. President: Yes, it was being obstructed by… yes. There is an amendment.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes, Mr…

Mr. President: …a correction…. Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, on page 12 of the Minutes, under Bills…

Mr. President: One second, let me pull it up. Page 12…

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Twelve, yes. So…

Mr. President: One minute.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: The Minutes…

Mr. President: I'm trying to… on page 12. Well why don't … rather than put the numbers of the pages at the bottom, so you have to keep scrolling. If you put it at the top, then it makes life so much easier for those of us, because it's the first thing you see. Yes, page 12.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Under the Bill was read a second time, it is recorded as Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it should be Minister of State in the Ministry of x, y, z.

Mr. President: Clerk, is this noted?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Also, lower down, we have the same problem being repeated.

Mr. President: And that's on the same page.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Same page 12.

Mr. President: Yes, Parliamentary Secretary, that's the penultimate paragraph.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes. Also…

Mr. President: So that needs to also be changed.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: …on page 13, page 13 it is repeated two times.

Mr. President: Yes, on page 13. You see the problem Clerk? You had to scroll to the bottom to find the number of the page, and so we have to just change the layout of this and put the number at the top of the page. It's easier for you to get that.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I also want to propose another change on page 15.

Mr. President: Page 15, yes.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: So after the, the various Clauses being read…

Mr. President: After the various what?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Clauses, before you go to, you went to Short title, the paragraph begins with Minister of State with responsibility for Disaster Management…

Mr. President: Okay, so that needs to be changed, which amounts to…

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: No it's correct, but it is repeated. So Minister of State with responsibility for Disaster Management being repeated there twice.

Mr. President: Okay, so, yes, yes, yes. There's a duplicity there that needs to be taken out.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes please.

Mr. President: Clerk you with us on that?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Those are my proposed amendments. Thanks.

Mr. President: I take it that all the amendments as being made by Senator Garraway have been approved without objection? Senator André Lewis.

Sen. the Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Under the roll call of Members, I'm not seeing…

Mr. President: You're going back to page 1 is it?

Minutes
Ministerial Statements

Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: Page 1, yes I think its page 1. I'm not seeing as either absent or present Senator Cathisha Williams. So I can't recall if she was here, but I'm not seeing her name listed as either present or absent.

Mr. President: Yes so that's a correction. From my recollection she was very much here. Yes. Okay. I'll put the question now.

Question put and agreed to.
Minutes confirmed as amended.

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

Mr. President: No I haven't … well… it wasn't an announcement, it was… anyway. We can proceed.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 7 - Ministerial Statements.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, as I rise this morning to give a brief update on two important projects, that is under the stewardship of the Ministry of Infrastructure Development, Public Utilities, Transport and Implementation. Mr. President, we are very pleased as we do have the privilege and of course also it is the desire of us to ensure that the public is updated from time to time on those key important projects, and so it's within that respect that I make these announcements this morning. Two projects that I would just want to update

House on, is the Moliniere Land Slippage Project and of course the second one is the Transport Sustainable Road Based Public Transport Plan for Grenada.

Mr. President, as regards to the Moliniere landslip, as we're aware, the nation is aware that we had this catastrophic slippage that has cut off the north of the Island on our main roadway on the western corridor, and that has significantly affected a number for livelihoods, businesses, interrupted transport from a normal stand point. Other roads, alternative roads that we are using are under significant pressure, and we have also responded by cutting a new roadway in the Mt. Kumar area to address this matter. We have been working speedily to see how we can get that area back up and running.

Mr. President, I'm happy to announce that we have received tenders. We had 13 expressions of interest, persons expressed interest but we only had five companies actually submitting after expressing interest for repair work at the Moliniere Land Slip. So currently those companies are being evaluated, their bids are being evaluated and evaluation is done in the context of a financial evaluation, in the context of the capacity of those companies to implement the work. So those are some of the key categories that they look for, in terms of evaluating the work.

We are very hopeful that within the next week or so, we should receive recommendation from the consultant who is charged with the responsibility to oversee this project, with a recommendation for a suitable contractor to implement this work, and thereafter we will move towards a procurement process so that it will go to the Procurement Board for no objections and for work to start there, or a contract to be issued and work to commence shortly thereafter. We believe that within a few weeks, we should be able to announce a contractor and a possible commencement time for the restoration of the Moliniere Land Slip area. This is a very important project. I know that persons who have been impacted negatively are going to be happy to hear that we are getting this back up and running.

Another important project, Mr. President, I just want to update the House on. As we are aware, we recognise what is taking place with the Transport Sector in our country, and as a Ministry, as a government, as a people, as a country, we must

respond, we must plan. And we always hear calls from colleagues within this Honourable space for planning, to plan for the future. As such, we are responding and we are working with our partner, development partner, the Caribbean Development Bank to implement a Sustainable Road Based Public Transport Plan for Grenada. Based on our data we have almost 40,000 vehicles on Island and that is continuing to increase as we notice on a daily basis, weekly basis, monthly basis, if you want to put it like that. Vehicles are coming in. So we have to plan and to prepare as we continue to develop. This study has been awarded to a Spanish company by the name of [1]Mcrit and they have commenced work, in terms of collecting data and will be consulting with all the stakeholders to ensure that we capture all that is necessary to come up with the best plan for Grenada. The approach for Grenada's plan is one that will be extremely unique. As you know we have our public transport system that is vested in private investment, so I think that is how the framework for Grenada's plan will be looked at, to see how we can incorporate what we have and to expand on it going forward.

Just to inform this House on some of the key focus areas of the study:

1. The study will review policy and regulatory structures to improve the operating and efficiency and quality of the public transport service.
2. Development of a programme of improvements with regard to management of the public transport system.
3. Development of a programme for a transition to electric or low carbon buses, in a well-structured way. And,
4. The development of a programme to improve the public transport facilities.

So as you see, Mr. President, this is encompassed not just for the development of the structure, but it also looks at the whole issue of climate change, it also look at the issue of the social aspect, in terms of how persons are engaged, especially our elderly and persons who are disabled. So, Mr. President, we are happy that this project is on stream and we do have some other projects that will complement this one. And you will hear more about these in the coming weeks as we prepare to roll it out.

[1]Mcrit – Multicriteria Planning - https://mcrit.com/

Ministerial Statements

So with these few updates, I want to thank this Honourable House for your indulgence this morning. Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Cox. Senator the Honourable Chris De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President, and good morning colleagues. I have two questions for Senator Cox. The first one regards to the Moliniere Construction and issue: How many of those five companies are local, in terms of the tendering and what kind of projected time do we have to start and complete the road. The CDB Project, Mr. President, through you, question regarding if the project is going to consider in its deliberation, the issue that we are seeing now with constant parking of vehicles on the side of the road and narrowing the road to single lane. And with the onset of the announcement by the International Car Companies in the world, that by 2025 there will be no longer production of gasoline and diesel vehicles and EV will be the vehicle of choice. We expect to see a greater dumping of these vehicles in our market and slashing of prices. Is the government taking any consideration in regards to how we handle that situation when it arises?

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much Senator De Allie for your question. As it regards to the first question, the Moliniere Land Slip, from my recollection out of the five, one company is local and I think that company is Kenny's Trucking that was submitted, but other local companies did express interest. There were some reasons, some pulled out at the last minute citing a large amount of work that they have on-going currently and decided not to take on that, because it's a sizeable project in itself. In terms of the time frame, I think from my recollection, I mean I stand corrected, I think it's between 8 - 10 months to have that area restored in full.

As it regards to whole issue of the transport sector, I think government has started on the whole issue of limiting the age of which vehicles can come into the State, is one of the first measures that are put in place to address that. In terms of the age of

vehicles coming in, from an environmental stand point, in terms of waste and being able to treat with those, that is the first measure. Discussions continue in that regard and through this study and the other studies that we have coming, where we will capture more information as to how best we can deal with this matter going forward. But that's a very important concern and thank you for raising that.

That is the reason why we are doing this now. We do not want a situation where, the whole issue of the Transport Sector get away from us and we cannot rein it back. So we have to start planning now. It is something that is very fluid; it's something that is moving very quickly, so that is critical for us. But one of the things that I recognise is that there are immense opportunities for us, because we are at a critical juncture, in that we're doing it now. If we wait too late, it might be more difficult to realise some of the things that we want. It's a clear opportunity for us to use technology, ICT now, as we are looking to transition, to move forward. We basically, we're behind in terms of age, computer age in the true sense of the word. We should be able to be doing things digitally. We all have digital devices, but we have not been applying it enough to those sectors, the things that we do on a daily basis and I think that is the direction which we need to go and we do have an appetite for that. So thank you very much for those two questions.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Mr. President, just one follow up question.

Mr. President: Certainly Senator De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Is there any consideration for reinstating traffic lights, the traffic light system back in the country because we're seeing a lot of issues with pedestrians and vehicles. And of course, is Planning going to be involved in anything dealing with the roads and how we give plans, authority. You know we have huge buildings being built in areas where no parking consideration is being given. I

want to know if there is going to be an engagement with Planning to deal with that issue and look at that issue, as we move forward.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much. I'll start with the second question first. As with regards to Planning, I am a little bit restrained in being able to speak in detail on Planning, as that falls under the responsibility of the Minister for Finance, but we do work closely, we provide from the technical end engineers to support their initiatives, but in terms of their plans, I would not be able to speak to that in detail at this point in time. But I do know that all those concerns that are raised and issues that are raised, because even through Infrastructure we do forward some of those concerns and challenges to Planning for redress.

As regards to the traffic lights, I am happy that you raised this because there is a discussion, a discourse that we probably don't need any traffic lights, maybe we should use those monies to invest somewhere else, because the traffic is flowing nice, if people giving way. But I beg to differ, that the traffic light is necessary and required for going forward. I myself almost ran into somebody on the pedestrian crossing because I couldn't see them, because so many vehicles were going backward and forward and it was a scary moment for me. And the last thing you want is to knock somebody down in the road. What are you going to tell their parents, their loved ones? I mean what will you tell them? So that is what we trying to avert. Traffic lights are there to prevent and to minimise traffic incidents and to control traffic.

In that regard we have already issued a contract to reinstate the traffic lights a few months now, and so what is happening currently is data is being collected. That is what is happening, so we are collecting data, we are looking at different moduling to ensure that it doesn't slow the traffic down, but it aids in traffic management and control. So that is currently under way. We have not been speaking much about it, but work is on-going. I believe, if I could recall, we have already started procuring some of the inputs required for the implementation of the lights. So you will hear more about that going forward, but just because the data collection is what is taking place right now,

from time to time, you would probably see persons monitoring traffic, collecting information. That is part of the project that is actually on-going right now. So thank you for raising that.

Mr. President: Senator Cox, if I may say, if anyone ever has tried or is trying or still do as I do, trying to navigate coming out of Belmont onto that road that comes along the Maurice Bishop Highway. For any sane person in Grenada to advance an argument that we don't need traffic lights, I mean I will totally disregard that. No modern society with the density of vehicles we have, can ever hope to function and regulate traffic without lights. I think what we have to avoid is the unplanned way in which we put lights where some places are not necessary. I think that's what you have to be careful in doing. But there are at least five places where lights… coming out of Food Fair is another miracle… You have to have a built-in radar to come out of Food Fair onto that main **(laughter)** highway there, that's Food Fair Grand Anse. And similarly, I almost had an accident about three weeks ago when an oncoming driver coming from the Tropicana Road, he just made a right turn trying to avoid having to go… you know when you're coming out there you have to turn all vehicle, all traffic has to go left, down the gas station and around the roundabout if you're hoping to go back, and he just cut straight out and made a right turn in the middle of three sets of lanes of traffic. The one coming down from the paddock area from Otway into town, the middle one that will normally cut into Tropicana and then the outer lane which would normally go straight and I happened to be in the middle lane trying to cut out to go onto the Kirani James Boulevard when this gentleman just turned right. All of a sudden, unexpected, yes. So I think that argument can easily put to rest. You cannot have a modern society with that density of vehicles, where you don't have traffic regulated by lights. It's an inefficient use of human resource, because these individuals who are planted there, now there are traffic wardens could certainly be assigned to do something else.

Stopping the preponderance of parking on the sidewalks; we no longer have sidewalks in this country, whatever little we have has all been taken over by drivers, and

people are forced to go into road. The other thing Minister that I think you need to look at is the small Micro Business Sector. It's popping up all over the place, it's a good sign, we have to regulate them, we have to structure them. But they put up businesses sometimes on the most dangerous part of a road. Right and then drivers stop to purchase from them and you have all kinds of issues with the grave potential on human life. And if we must consider anything at all, it must be human life. So I just want to draw that to your attention. I'm not part of the debate, but it gives me an opportunity to bring my observations known, that we have to control and regulate really these pop-up micro-businesses that seem to happen all over the place. Something that really needs… you can't eliminate them, they must be encouraged, there must be some kind of investment programme so that they can upgrade. Instead of using abandoned crates and rusted galvanise, there must be some sort of facility where they could go and either rent something or purchase something, you know or some resource based financing, right and have the thing regulated in a proper way so that the ambience of our country is not unduly disturbed or destroyed.

Senator Mc Queen sorry I didn't… I saw your light but for a moment my brain **(laughter)** didn't quite think that I should call you.

Sen. the Hon. Shirley Mc Queen: Thank you.

Mr. President: You have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Shirley Mc Queen: Thank you. Senator Cox, driving around I've noticed several of the roads have been, that has been restored have either stopped or on go slow. What is the reason for the stoppage or the go slow and what is the financial implication that will have on our economy?

Mr. President: Senator Cox…

Ministerial Statements

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr…

Mr. President: …just let me clarify something.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: I was just going to…

Mr. President: One thing Senator. I guess… well certainly I say on question time, because this is what it is when a Minister makes a statement, but your question has to be a little bit more specific. Because which projects are you talking about, where… so remember, he doesn't come prepared to answer a question. So, a question like that you will have to reformulate it and be specific, because in fairness to the individual, he would not quite know where you're talking about. Different projects will be in different phases for different reasons. Which one of them are you talking about? And so the question has to be crafted in such a way that there is clarity in asking the question, so that the person who has come unprepared for the question is not disadvantage because he then has to, and then you see, he has a responsibility for accuracy. When a question is answered in Parliament, the person answering the question is responsible for the accuracy of that question. And because it's a question in which he would not have anticipated because this is not the normal question time where questions are to be filed and so on. But it's basically asking questions on the report that he has given, you have to be a little bit more specific. So, that's the general guideline, you have to be specific. In other words, why is the road in Marlmount which started x days ago has stopped. You can't give a generalised question and ask him to answer because he don't know or would not know and certainly the Presiding Officer has no knowledge of what specifically are you seeking. You know such a generalised question to some degree, I wouldn't like to say it's meaningless, but it will create challenges. So, you may wish to be very specific in respect to the issue covered in the report, by the Minister who has the responsibility for that Ministry and is reporting to Parliament or you

may have to formulate that question in the standard question time, which will then have more specificity and not be as general.

So Senator Cox, I just thought I should lay those guidelines down if Senator McQueen was not aware. So, you decide how you are tackling with this.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, it's the same response I was going to give based on our standing operating procedures, in terms of questions, and the question was not specific and it wasn't really pertaining to what I actually presented as part of my report. So it's not a, you know, it's not an issue, but I don't want to go outside of the realm of the rules of the House in this regard because that can go off into 10/20 questions going forward. So, I will just ask that, you know, the questions be centred on what the two statements that I made for the two projects.

Mr. President: So that's why I intervened, Senator Cox because I sensed… I mean, she's doing, the Senator is doing her job, she's here to question you, but we have to ensure that there are certain procedural issues, yes. So, Senator McQueen, I'm not by any means trying to shut you down at all, you know, and you can always come back, formulate if you want to put something in writing and send it to the Clerk. But, if you have something specific to what he's saying, you know. So, I hope I'm clear.

Yes, two Senators, you want to defer to Senator St. Cyr. You know, we men these days always chivalrous you know, we give our woman first call on everything. Okay, so, we are changing the trend, then you have the floor. Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Pleasant good morning colleagues. Just one simple, quite a simple question. Bearing in mind Senator Cox that we presently have to employ a foreign entity to develop that system we're talking about in relation to transport and also bearing in mind that the Transport Sector, Public Transport Sector is always evolving. Also, traffic situation is always evolving. Would the Government be sending or thinking about providing scholarships or few scholarships to persons to study,

probably traffic management per se? Because going forward, I will not like us to be hiring a foreign entity again to the deal with such issues, if it happens. Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much Senator for your question and your concern in terms of capacity building for Grenadians, not only in the Transport Sector, but in all sectors, it could be fibre optic or whatsoever. Those are areas that we do have demand for, for persons. But as regards to specific plans for scholarship, I think that the Minister for Education might be more well-placed to answer such a question. But I don't have those details, but I can find out for you what specific areas, but I do know that there are wealth of degree of areas that are available for training. I think one of the biggest challenges that I've observed in terms of persons accessing those, is persons may not want to go to particular countries, where some of the real necessary capacities for those sectors are being offered. As you know, some persons have challenges with the languages and some of those countries who offered those studies; we have to learn a second language. That is one of the issues that I have picked up. But I do know that they have been from time to time, you know, from different European countries, some specific studies, but I cannot give any definitive, what is available now in that regard. But I've seen before in the past, such scholarships being afforded to persons in that area. Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Cox. Dr. Tessa St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: I always have my Cyr's and Clair's a little bit.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: I understand. That's not a problem at all. Senator Cox, you mentioned that already there were contracts out for the re-instalment of the traffic lights. And you also mentioned already procuring inputs. So,

my question is, in your report, you mentioned also that data is being collected. So, I would like to know, what data, particular, specifically are being collected at the moment?

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, for your question, for such a difficult question. Mr. President, as you know, I'm not too connected with the project from a technical standpoint, but I'm well aware of some of the summary data that are going to be required. What you find happening and I should probably explain a little further. The data that is required is data that will we look at the frequency of traffic, at particular times of the day, and those areas of points of interest. And like, for example, the Food Fair area. They will also look at the type of vehicles that traverse in that area. They'll also look at the amount of people that traverse in terms of using the pedestrian crossing. They're also looking at data and how much vehicles that are in the country and how quickly those vehicle come in. What's the turnover time for vehicles coming into the country? So you will know how much your vehicle stock is growing by to anticipate how that is done. They are also collecting information on what happened in the past, they'll probably collect information, number of accidents at those particular points, what would have been responsible for those accidents. So, it's a series of data that is being collected. Those data are used for moduling. They will module the system, they will run it on a computer and then to see how well it works, what is the delay time for traffic, taking into consideration, if you have an emergency, an emergency vehicle or fire, how that interfaces with the traffic. So, it's a multitude of scenarios that are done for traffic lights. It's a very highly technical system because it has to be timed, that is what happened.

We have also been looking at the possibility of putting in red light cameras, but those are deemed to be extremely expensive. So we are just putting in the infrastructure for now with the hope of putting in the camera system sometime in the future to come. So, that is the way that we are thinking. So, if somebody were to run a red light, the cameras will pick it up, some accident, that will aid the traffic, the police in determining the cause of the incident, who were at fault and things like that. So, that is

what we're doing, the infrastructure we built in, but the system because of cost we are not able to do that now, but that is where we're at. But thank you very much for inquiring.

Mr. President: Dr. St. Cyr, I happen to know because even under the period of Revolution there was this data collection. So, when you're putting in traffic lights, take for example, the junction, Paddock area coming down Lowthers Lane, getting into town, and those that will be coming from Springs, plus Belmont. Now, you need to time the lights. And the timing of those lights will be a factor of the density of traffic at different times in a day. So, at the high point which is between I would say, twenty to eight and ten past eight when everybody is rushing to get, right, you want to move traffic in town, right. So you may time the light of allowing the traffic that is going in Town to move more than the traffic that is probably coming out of town. So, I think these are the considerations and then you have to take different days of the week, then you have to take different days of the month. Because we have a two week monthly pay cycle, you find that there's a massive amount of activity when the fortnight pay time comes for those who are fortnightly paid as opposed to when the monthly paid pay time has arrived. There is much more activity around the week. If the month end comes close to like say a Wednesday or between Wednesday and a Saturday or Sunday there are more people moving about because they now have money to spend and you will capture that kind of data and you will capture how the density alternates at different days and different times and what to do.

We also have an issue with goods vehicles. It happened to me this morning trying to get down Lucas Street. There was a goods vehicle which stopped on Lucas Street, hold up all the traffic going, trying to get into town, in fact, I passed Senator Stiell's vehicle, right. And if I was controlling traffic Senator, you would have to wake up early in the morning to move that vehicle from there, **(laughter)** right, but this is a goods vehicle in the middle of the rush hour, just stop on Lucas Street, narrowed the traffic, so the traffic can't get into town and those that are coming out of town has problems. Now,

when you do your data analysis based on that kind of movement, you may be able to say that on these days no goods vehicle can stop, wait or park during the hours of 7:30 to 9:30 and you'll be able to, and many streets now, some of which are two way will have to become one-way.

Coming down Lowthers Lane is a nightmare. Woe betides if there's a fire or something and that fire engine. People are parking where there are clear signs "No Parking", they disregard it and go into their business. One day it took me 20 minutes, 20 minutes to move from Anglican High School to Blue Danube Bakery. I had to come out, when I got to a certain business place, I had to come out of my vehicle and act as a traffic policeman because an individual just decided he's parking and he's not moving, right, and we had to go to appeal to him. Drivers were trying until I finally came, and the interesting thing was he was a shop steward in one place where when I was in the Union, I was able to appeal to him to get him to move. And it took 20 minutes for that traffic to move and this is a main throughway linking important parts. So the traffic assessment in my view will inform how we do these things, which streets we make one way, which streets we have dual carriage, but only for a limited time in the day. What time are the hours? So that's the data I think that they're collecting. Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. With your permission, I would like to express my appreciation for that explanation because somebody listening to Senator Cox's report may have those questions for us, so we needed to hear that explanation. Thank you.

Mr. President: Well, this is why I allow, on the patterns of the British Parliament, although it's not written into our Standing Orders, but on the patterns of the British Parliament because it's British Parliamentary Democracy we practice. This is why I allow questions on Ministerial Statements, but I have to ensure that the questions don't amount to an ambush. Because let's not forget that while we are lawmakers, we're also Parliamentarians and we have constituents. And our first interest is to impress our

constituents. So, as the guardian of the rules, I have to ensure that there's fairness. And this is why questions on Ministerial Statements are restricted exclusively to the statements made by the Minister and what he can reasonably respond to. In other words, while I'm exposing him, I also have the responsibility as the Presiding Officer to protect him, to maintain the integrity and discipline of the House. So, Senator St. Clair, now I have my Clair's and Cyr's, correct.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President. And you're right on the ball on the matter of constituents because Senator Cox raised an important point that has been toiling in my mind, maybe for many years on the issue regarding the age of vehicles, of course, and my constituents, you know, would say, why spend x amount to get a brand new or a more up to date vehicle, when they really have challenges even doing other things. However, what we do know is that sometime you have vehicles and we see them, they might be a more modern year, 2017. But you look at a vehicle on the road that is maybe 2010 vehicle that is in much better condition physically, the engine runs better. And so, I know in the more developed world, you normally do certain tests for environmental and emission and all of those types of things, to look at the standard. And so I'm concerned here about whether or not we should look at standards, in terms of the emission and the sort of robustness of those vehicles, versus just using age. I think age looks like a sort of easy way out. And particularly, for certain usage, particularly in my constituents, we may need to look at that in that context. So, I'm not too sure if that would be something that the Government and your team would be willing to explore when the debate comes closer, because this I think, is something that can be fair.

Mr. President: Okay. Senator Lewis, sorry.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Through you to, Senator Cox, I think you mentioned the aspect of the term, the social

aspect of transportation. And it is our hope in the Labour Movement and community as a whole that attention will be paid to the provision of transport or the availability of transport, recognising the challenge of private ownership providing public service where, for instance, quite a number of our workers, especially females, who works in the Hospitality Industry, find themselves midnight, one o'clock in the morning, two o'clock in the morning, yes, on the road. So, I'm making this request, that this be something that should be seriously looked at, to help alleviate those problems in an organised and consistent way.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Senator Lewis and certainly that is one of the key elements of this study. That has been discussed and even mentioned, when we had the project launch, that was mentioned as one of the key observations, in terms of particular times in the night when transportation diminishes. The availability of transportation diminishes for whatever reason, if drivers, the owners of the buses believe that it is not feasible for them, it's not profitable for them to ply that route at a particular time. So, all those matters are under consideration and that will form part of the final plan for Grenada when this is concluded. As I indicated, we are very excited about this approach, this project which lends itself for us to develop in a more sustainable way. It lends itself for us to take the advantage of the opportunities that is available now in the sector. We also have a couple other projects coming, we'll speak more of those going forward, that will look more…. targeting the whole issue of persons who have challenges, health challenges, the elderly who have physical challenges. So those project issues would be raised as we go forward, as we flesh those two projects out. And then we have the e-mobility project, which is also a very important project. The whole issue of emissions that Senator St. Clair spoke about will not be an item for discussion, with electric vehicles there are no emissions. So we ought not to even be talking about emissions in time to come. So that is the direction in which we're going. And so, I just want to thank, Mr. President, my colleagues for their

feedback and happy for the opportunity to provide some clarification as we move forward.

Mr. President: But Senator, if I may again and I want Senators to bear with me. I really miss the floor; it's something I keep saying. I think Senator De Allie's consideration, got to be, there are two things here, one, because of the rapid transitioning, move over to electric vehicles in the developed north, there will be significant dumping of old time technology very cheap. And Government will be under pressure not to regulate that valve. Because everybody now wants to have a car, it will become cheap, $9,000 will put a fairly good old time technology. So, unless we, and then we become a graveyard, a dump yard, as is already happening. I mean, you can see these vehicles abandoned all over the place. Right! I go walking, at times, and places that were pristine, natural environments with a beautiful ambience, now you can see derelict vehicles of all sorts just parked up there. So, it is a problem that we have to address. And with the new technology is the question of price because if I could get a fairly good car with a big name brand, if I could get a three year old BMW for $9,000, I'm not going to go and buy an electric vehicle that will cost me $170,000, it's outside of my range. So, you have that pressure on Governments not to close that valve that is coming. I think what Senator De Allie is saying in terms of the transport strategy, what incentives do we give people here to begin to transition? Right! I looked at the Budget delivered by Prime Minister Mia Motley a few days ago and there is a very significant strategic orchestrated incentive to move to electric vehicles, and so on, in addition to moving for renewable energy in the Electric Sector. I think that's where his question was sort of going for you to get thought.

A good idea maybe is to have a clinic, in which we invite importers of vehicle, you invite some consumers and Private Sector and have a discussion on the issue. Right, the environment, electric vehicles, transitioning, right, and what do we do with that valve that is opening up now to flood our country with the old technology and how do we

manage it from an environmental point of view? So just something for you to think about really. Senator Garraway, you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I stand to give a short brief on one of the areas that I'm responsible for within the Government. And just to inform this Honourable House that last Friday, Grenada was in receipt of 2 40-bed field hospitals from the United States Southern Command Stabilization and Humanitarian Assistance Directorate. These donations amount to just over US$1 and I'm pleased to also inform that one of the field hospital will be stationed on the Mainland and the other will be stationed in Carriacou for our brothers and sisters from Carriacou and Petite Martinique. The beds come with wheels, patient rails, IV poles and mattress and generator to run the entire facility. It also includes a HVAC system, per shelter. Each shelter is stored in individual metal cases. The donation is a significant boost in our capacity to provide emergency medical relief to our people, as they can be deployed at a moment's notice, in the very likely event of an emergency. Training on the setup, configuration and dismantling of the field hospitals were conducted during the period March 8 to 11; a total of some 23 persons or stakeholders from various groups that were deployed in this regard.

It is extremely important to note, Mr. President, that in the event of any emergency, all that you need is, big enough space where you can deploy these hospitals and in terms of the configuration, if there is need for a segregated compartment for people who might be probably respiratory problems, contagious issues, you can segregate that section, therefore, the HVAC system, the cooling system will not be integral throughout the entire facilities. So, it is extremely important for us and given what we have, well we are still in, in a period of the pandemic, and looking at all that we have endured during this COVID period, and who knows, God forbid, what else will come, this donation is very timely and extremely important. And as I said, our personnel that we selected from the various stakeholder groups to be trained, they will be given an opportunity not too long from now, because we will journey up to Carriacou

to set up the field hospital there and to ensure that the information exchange would have been well received and they can now pass this onto other people in the area that they can build capacity to function those field hospitals. It is our responsibility to ensure that as with all gifts that we receive to make sure that they are protected and we continue to get value for money. And I'm overjoyed and of course the Government is overjoyed that you have 80 additional beds that can be deployed for emergency purposes when the need arise and if the need arise. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Senator Tessa St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I must ask a question because you know, this addresses health. Senator Garraway mentioned that one of the field hospitals, and I must express appreciation to the donors for those hospitals. The Senator mentioned that one would be deployed to Carriacou, the Sister Isle and one would be on the Mainland. However, I am curious as to where exactly they would be located, and what determinants, what factors would influence their location? Thanks.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thanks very much Mr. President. Thanks for the question. As we've said, they will be stored in containers until there is a need for it. You will not establish it and have it up at this point in time. So, in the event of emergency, we had the case of Ivan and our hospital may be overrun, we will deploy it at a convenient location where access will be granted to all those who need to use it. And as I said, all that is required is a large enough space. So a playing field will be ideal, because it come with all the facilities to run a hospital. So, you have your system for medical waste, biological waste, human waste, and so forth. All these will be taken care of within that whole facility. So, as I said, where the need arise, you'll find a

location and you establish this. Of course, in our Sister Island of Carriacou and as I have said, all overjoyed that every time we ask for something, we ask for two at least. We also received, as you know I've said it more than once a here, three emergency operation centres, so one on the Mainland, one in Carriacou. Now you have field hospital, one on the Mainland, one in Carriacou. Our brothers and sisters in Carriacou will always be, have always feel good when this Government is in office, we always looks out for them. Thanks.

Mr. President: Senator De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President. And through you, my question to Senator Garraway is the HVAC system that is part of these field hospitals, is there any consideration for setting up a surgical unit to do minor surgeries, one? And the second question is, is there a proper maintenance system in place? I understand the tents and whatever and how it's set up would be in storage but the generators because that is critical. The hospitals cannot operate without the generators. So is there a system that is going to be set up to constantly ensure that the generators are operational when needed?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thanks Senator De Allie for those important questions. Yes, the facility as it is right now we can operate and do minor surgeries in there so that is yes. As it relates to maintenance, that was part of the training. So we had all the various stakeholders from the electrical department, from housing component, the medical department, all the stakeholders were there to get a full training over a 3 day period and it was conducted by the manufacturer of the facility. And as I said when we set that system up in Carriacou soon to be, we would see how much that information sharing would have been received by our trained personnel to take care of the facility. But I want to reiterate, it is always and very fundamental with every gift that we receive to put a system in place, to ensure that we get value for money, the donors

will be proud when they look at what we have because we want to ensure that our people to function those systems are well trained. Thanks.

Mr. President: Senator Mc. Queen.

Sen. the Hon. Shirley Mc. Queen: Senator Garraway, are the equipment new, and who donated it to us?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thanks very much Senator Mc. Queen for your question. Yes the equipment are brand new. As a matter of fact we were expecting to receive them since last year but they were being manufactured at the time, that's why it took that period of time for us to have it. So they are brand new and they were donated by the United States Southern Command Stabilization and Hospitalization Programme, a humanitarian programme. They are the ones who would have donated it to the value of just over US$1 and we are so thankful to the United States. They too donated to the tune of over US$6.5, the two emergency operation centers and warehouse I spoke about before. Thanks.

Sen. the Hon. Shirley Mc. Queen: Can I just ask one more question?

Mr. President: Sure.

Sen. the Hon. Shirley Mc. Queen: Seeing that we have lack of beds at our hospital, wouldn't it be a good idea to put some of the beds there rather than leaving it until we have an emergency?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I am not sure we have a lack of beds in our General Hospital at this point in time. It is not true. We do not have a lack of beds at this point in time. The hospital has the beds that they need, the field

hospital beds are designed for them, we will not use them elsewhere. They will not be used at the General Hospital. If however there is a need where the General Hospital do not have beds and we have to deploy the field hospital then of course we going to deploy it and use the beds in it but as it is right now I have no information that there is a shortage of beds at our General Hospital.

Mr. President: Thank you. Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Just a couple questions to Senator Garraway. The material that we have received; the field hospitals, presently I guess they are in storage, is there a so called shelf life for that facility. But just in case there is no need for it re an emergency so is there a shelf life for it? Secondly, bearing in mind the stress of the health system in relation to nurses, if there is an emergency, where are we going to draw staff from to have this thing functioning as it supposed to be functioning, that is the field hospital. Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you, Mr. President. Thanks Senator Joseph for your questions. Mr. President, as with everything that is manufactured on earth today, there is a shelf life, so this building they give you a life of this very facility that we're in. I remember when the US was about to donate the first two emergency operating centre and warehouse, they told me the shelf life was going to be 20 years because they were steel panel buildings and I said no, the people of Grenada desire something that will be more durable, something that will give them a longer lifespan and I submit that we will prefer have a concrete structure. That took them back to the drawing board and as a result of this the price went up and they came back and said ok, we will give you what you requested. As I said everything have a shelf life. At this point I cannot say if it's 20 years, 15 years for the shelf life but I promise you when we come back here I would tell you what is the shelf life of the facility.

The second thing in terms of human resource, where we going to find nurses to staff the field hospital? We are going to find those nurses where we currently have them. We have nurses who are currently being trained; we have nurses who are on the job. As you remember we operate a rotating system and so you have nurses available. If the need arise, I am 100% guaranteed and assured that our staff will do what is necessary to make sure that we provide the critical health care to the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, that is what is important here. What is important if there is a need for additional service providers or health care practitioners to staff whatever, we will pull from all our reserve; volunteers and so forth but let us not forget we are talking about providing service for the people of Grenada, health care service and there will be no stone left unturned to ensure at all times that our people receive the best care possible. Thanks.

Mr. President: Could we move on please?

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I'll just give a very quick update on a couple of activities that have taken place within Climate Resilience and the Environment. In the beginning of this month, Grenada participated in the UN Environmental Assembly which took place in Nairobi, Kenya and the Environmental Assembly, this is the highest decision making body on issues relating to the environment. And it spoke to critical issues; it spoke to the triple planetary crisis that we find ourselves in, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. But the significant thing that came out of this particular meeting was a global agreement to develop a legally binding agreement which will effectively put an end to single use plastics.

An intergovernmental committee has been established that between now and 2024, will establish the rules, the laws, the protocols, the regulations that will achieve this. So this was really quite an historic event. And that international conference took place at a time where there was a release of the latest IPCC Report, the intergovernmental panel on climate change. This is the leading scientific body that

reports on where we are with regard to climate and this was the starkest report yet. Every report that comes out of these international groups gives more and more dire warning as to where we are and the lack of action that is being taken by industrialised nations and highlighting the extreme vulnerability of regions such as ours. It also spoke to the interdependence between biodiversity loss, climate change, human interaction and the economy. It also spoke to the importance of adaptation and resilience building which is a critical component of the work that Small Island Developing States have as a critical priority.

So, Mr. President, these are challenging times coming out of COP26 in Glasgow heading into COP27 that will take place in Egypt later this year. Notwithstanding some of the key agreements, pledges, commitments made by developed countries, we're still a long way away from where we need to be. But Grenada continues to provide advocacy on behalf of the region, on behalf of Small Island Developing States in terms of pushing the agenda and the actions that need to be taken to address climate change. I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Stiell.

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

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move the following Report be laid on the Table: Report of the Grenville Commercial Complex Limited financial statements for a 17 month period ended December 31, 2020.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Papers / Reports

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Just a quick observation on the Director of Audit's Report on the House of Representatives on the Financial Statements of the Grenville Commercial Complex Limited for the year ended 31st July, 2019…

Mr. President: It is 2020…

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: What I am reading on top says 2019. I am reading a document…

Mr. President: One second. Clerk there seems to be something else on the Order Paper that's on the electronic one. In fact my secretary….

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I put on my glasses and I am still seeing 19. **(Laughter)**

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. President: The Order Paper I have before me it's 2020. But you are standing on this because… you're just seeking a correction of the date.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: No, not in correction to the date. The observation will still stand but that is in relations to the comments made by the Director of Audit in relation to a breach although…

Mr. President: One second, one second. This item, the Papers are laid without question. So you will have to come with a Motion of some sort to deal with it. Under this item there is no debate.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Ok, thanks.

Papers / Reports

Mr. President: The Papers are laid on the House. Once the Papers are identified and by order of the Chair they are laid and no debate ensues. If you wish to debate…

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: It wasn't a debate.

Mr. President: …you will have to bring a substantive Motion…

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: It was just a recommendation; would that be considered a debate? In other words based on the observation made by the Director, I was recommending… **(Inaudible comments by the President)** I can't, through you, Mr. Chair…

Mr. President: You see once you start that process then you open a debate because once you… it leads to a debate because I am assuming that the "Other Side" may… the safest way to go in accordance with the…

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I don't think so, Mr. President. I don't think based on my knowledge on what I am about to say and my experience in the House in the Senate here I really do not believe it will lead to a debate. It is just a recommendation.

Mr. President: One second please… please everyone just address the Chair, yes.

(Inaudible comments by a Member)

Mr. President: Senator Lewis as you know, I am guardian of the rules. The rules do not allow a debate or expression of an observation because once that is done it will trigger a debate. So I prefer to err on the side of caution. However if you wish to

raise the matter at any other time one of two things can happen. If your intention is not a debate then a quite note to the Leader of Government's Business or whoever on the matter could be done or you can bring a substantial Motion and then that debate would be ensured. But once I allow an examination of the Report because under this item the House does not examine the Report. It is just an announcement that the train has arrived. Whether you board the train or not will depend on whether you buy a ticket and that's another kind of operation in a separate place. So all we are doing is announcing that these Papers are laid on the Table. Once it is laid on the Table then you have the possibility of introducing a debate or introducing an observation but on a subsequent matter. It can't be done now and I don't want to start that ball rolling because I am going to lose control of it.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I am so guided, Mr. President. Thank you very much.

Mr. President: Once we get into individual contents because in fairness to all sides, I am assuming that they would not have been prepared by way of reading the individual Papers because remember these are Papers which by Law have to be reported to in the House. So all we are saying is these are the Papers that have been reported to the House. If you want to have a debate, you bring a substantial Motion on it and then everybody have an opportunity to prepare for that debate. But I can't allow a potential ambush to take place in violation with the rules. I'm sorry but these are the rules.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I am so guided, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Ok, thank you. So we understand each other.

The Report was laid on the Table.

Mr. President: Again I urge Members as I have been consistently in the past that this is a very important component of the proceedings and activity of the House because these Papers amount to the Constitutional duty of the Executive to report to Parliament. The Constitution clearly lays that out, that the Executive is answerable to the Parliament and these Papers represents the answer of the Executive in so far as the fiscal and other operations of State Enterprises and other arms and businesses of the State reporting. For the time I have been sitting in the Chair fully, Senators have been failing in their duty, you have been failing in your duty and Senator De Allie could tell you that in our time we read those Reports, came with a number of questions, sometimes some resolutions to deal with these matters and I am not seeing this happening here at all. There are dozens of Papers laid and nothing happens. So we can move on, Mr. Clerk. **(President reads a note)** Thank you Senator De Allie. And just may I before we proceed, announce Senator Cadet did indicate that he would be late, he has another important appointment that conflicted with this. I should have informed the House that I did receive a note of his absence. Senator De Allie since yesterday when we were in another House in another place did indicate that around this time he will have to take his leave. Let's continue please.

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

Mr. President: Dr. St. Cyr

Sen. the Hon. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. This question is directed to the Leader of Government's Business and it reads as follows:

As it relates to the types of employment contract being used by Government, can the Leader of Government's Business:

Questions

a. Explain the difference between Contracts of Service and Contracts for Service, including duration or length of contract?
b. What criteria are being used to determine who gets Contracts of Service and Contracts for Service?
c. What is the difference in remuneration and benefits of the above-mentioned contracts?

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. An oral answer is not indicated on the Order Paper but written responses are available to this and the following question from Ms. St. Cyr. So if I can have the Sergeant-at-Arms circulate these. Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: Mr. President, with your guidance…

(Sergeant-at-Arms circulating written answers)

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, can we proceed please?

Mr. President: Yes, I got taken away reading the… yes Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: Mr. President, with your guidance, the Honourable Leader of Government's Business did say that the package which is circulated answers to both questions so should I go ahead and read the second question?

Mr. President: Sure, yes

Questions

Sen. the Hon. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: Question 2 to the Leader of Government's Business:

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?

Mr. President: And the answer to that is contained in the bundle provided by Senator Stiell. Clerk? Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: I'm sorry I was reading answers. The question to the Leader of Government's Business on scholarships awarded to Grenadians in the field of Agriculture and Fisheries and their related fields over the past 10 years and there Bachelor's, Master's, PHD and Post Doctorial levels and there are several parts to this. It says: provide the number of scholarships in Agriculture and its related fields by the following criteria in the table below for the past 10 years. Mr. President, I am not too sure if we want to go through the different headings.

Mr. President: I don't think that's necessary.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, correct. And the (b) says: provide the number of scholarships in Fisheries as it relates to the fields by the following criteria in the table below for the past 10 years. So one was for Agriculture, one is for fisheries. This essentially is the question.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator. Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Once again, Mr. President, written responses are provided so the Sergeant-at-Arms can distribute please.

Mr. President: Thank you.

Questions

(Clerk and President conversing in private)

Mr. President: Senators on the "Government Side" for our purposes, we would need electronic copies so when you have questions that don't require oral answers, you need from the Ministries to send us because we will have no report of what the answer is. So just a tidy administrative matter, you can send to the Clerk the electronic version of the answers provided. Could we move on? Next question, the Honourable André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Question number 1: could the Honourable Minister advise the House as to whether the Gravel, Concrete and Emulsion Company has disposed of any of its fixed assets, by way of sale, lease or otherwise, within the last 24 months and if so:

a). Which specific asset or assets was or were disposed of?

b). What is or are, the name or names and nationality or nationalities of the legal entity or entities to whom those assets were disposed?

c). When did this or these transaction or transactions occur?

Question number 2; if the answer to question 1 is in the affirmative, that is that an asset or assets of the said company were disposed of during the period mentioned, then can the Minister tell us what are the terms of that disposition, in particular:

a). If it is a lease, then what is the term of the lease, for how long, and what remuneration has the company received or is going to receive over the term of the lease and in what manner?

b). If it is a sale, then what is the sale price and when and in what manner is the company to be paid for the asset?

c). Would the Minister provide the House with a copy of the contractual document or documents pursuant to which the asset or assets was or were disposed of?

Question number three 3, if the answer to question 1 is in the affirmative, that is, that an asset or assets of the said company were disposed of during the period

mentioned, then can the Minister tell us whether the standard procurement procedures provided for in our laws and regulations were followed, in particular:

a) Was any invitation to tender published in relation to the disposition of the asset or assets, and if so, in what publication or through what medium and for how long?
b) How many expressions of interest were received from different entities?
c) Were these expressions of interest or tenders evaluated by the Tenders Board, or any other body or committee specifically charged with the mandate of evaluating such tenders on behalf of Government or State Owned Enterprises?
d) Was the contract given to the entity recommended by the Tenders Board or other body or committee specifically charged with the mandate of evaluating such tenders on behalf of the Government or State Owned Enterprises?

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Again, Mr. President, written responses have been provided, if the Sergeant-at-Arms can distribute these. Thank you.

Mr. President: Just to report that all questions have been answered, and the answers are now being circulated. Thank you. Yes we can proceed.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 13 - Personal Explanations
Item 14 - Motions
Item 15 - Bills

Mr. President: Senator Stiell. Oh Senator Garraway. Sorry.

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

Bills

Clerk: A Bill to amend the Companies Act, Cap. 58A shortly entitled, Companies (Amendment) Bill 2022.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I wonder if you're enforcing the rule that if I'm going to remove my mask, everybody else should have on theirs.

Mr. President: Say this again?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: If I remove my mask, everybody else in the Chamber should be wearing theirs.

Mr. President: Well I haven't done a roll call, but I assume they are based on…

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: No not everyone…

Mr. President: …on the existing regulations.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Not everyone is wearing theirs. The Deputy is not wearing, so, well… so, but that's the rule, Mr. Chair.

Mr. President: Clerk. Yes, well could you just as you're through put it back on… **(Inaudible comment)** Clerk.

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.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Bills

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. Mr. President, before us today is a very, you will say short but very important Bill. And I just would like to take us back a little into some history. Just a few years ago, Mr. President, you may recall when we came into this Honourable House to introduce Legislation that brought into the scope, when in the fight against anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing, when we had NGO's, non-profit organisations and churches were brought into the scope and was required to be registered and to report. And while the churches took umbrage to this, because as we do know, the church is primarily an establishment that follow Laws, rules and orders, and now to be insinuating as it was believed that they were involved in some illegal activities. While this may not be the case in Grenada, but elsewhere it was happening, churches were used to involve in illicit activities, financing terrorism activities.

So the churches were brought into this scope and I must say the Financial Action Task Force, the vanguard that is responsible for putting Laws in place to protect States and to protect institutions and the likes, are the ones responsible for this. And the local chapter, the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force will do the necessaries to ensure that States fall in line. And in June last year when we had our mutual evaluation report, a mere report, in Grenada it was cited that the companies… just a little distraction… the companies were brought under their microscope and was looked at and we are here today to look at this amendment.

So, as the company is being brought under the microscope and they have been in the past probably two, three years, today we're looking at specifically a bearer share warrant. You know my biggest concern, Mr. President? What next, or who is next? We

have seen over the years, Small Developing States introducing legal measures to develop their economies, and in so doing the Developed Countries, because what the small States will do is create an enabling environment where foreign direct investment will be had. And who primarily will come to do this are people from developed countries. Invest into your economies in varying forms of investments. And what we have seen in recent times, the Developed Countries start introducing measures to debar their citizens from, in such investments, because they normally would look at the Small States, those jurisdictions as tax havens.

But really and truly what we're doing, Mr. President, is to introduce measures so that we can survive. That's primarily what we're doing. You will recall years ago, the Banana Industry, how severe wounds were inflicted on it and as a result our economies suffered tremendously because at one point in time, most of our economies heavily depended on the trade of bananas to survive. A lot of us from the rural communities, our families, get us to school by selling those crops. Today and as I said, who and what will be next? And this is a very serious question that we will have to answer, because if in this dispensation Small Developing States introduce measures to bolster development in their country, and the developed countries is cutting those off, you will have to question how we will survive. Hence the reason why, Mr. President, we will always need an experienced hand and a strong hand to lead any economy in these challenging time.

And given that, the ravages that COVID would have inflicted on our countries, in particularly we speak of Grenada, we know the difficulties that families are faced with at this point in time, because so many businesses went under. And added to that, this war that we're seeing currently between Russia and the Ukraine and probably the entire world, the war has the ability to cripple a lot of small economies. Because in some cases, in some countries 80% of their wheat import comes from either Ukraine or Russia, and if it has wars in those areas, agriculture produce will be destroyed. There are sanctions so you can't trade. We're in for a rough time, Mr. President. The world is in for a rough time, hence the reason why we need strong hands, experienced hands to continue to move this, because you can't put a weakling to lead in this world at this point

in time. And we have a lot to do, and I am very concerned and I guess as much from your articulation in the past, Mr. President, you are very concerned as well. Because we have seen that the changing times, we have seen the difficulties that States are being faced with, we need to continue as one body to fight those international developed countries who come after those productions or those mechanisms or initiatives that we start in this country to keep economic growth and development going.

So the Bill before us today seeks to amend the Companies Act Cap 58A, the primary objective of this Bill are: to introduce a mechanism for a regulatory authority to determine whether a person is a fit and proper person to acquire significant ownership or significantly increase their ownership in a company; two, to introduce the requirement for each company to disclose its beneficial owners or ownership information and to maintain a register of its beneficial owners; three to clarify that issuance of Bearer Share Warrants is prohibited.

So we have at this point Bearer Share Certificates and Bearer Share Warrants, so this explicitly is saying that Bearer Share Warrant is prohibited. And you can ask, well what is a Bearer Share? And we know it; a Bearer Share is an instrument that companies will provide to investors who will receive the bonuses from the Bearer Share when the time so arise, but most importantly there is no register of a name of the person who owns the share. So I can sell shares to x individual, and that person, well, he has the bearer share and he will sell it on to any other person. What the company is responsible for is, whoever comes with the bearer share at the so given time, they will receive the profits or the profits on the investment. So there is no register, but this amendment here today is to ensure that every person is so identified, the name is there, that in the event there is illegal activities you know who to pounce on, you know who you can pull in.

So Clause 2 seeks to amend section 29 of the principal Act, in subsection (2) to expressly prohibit the issuance of bearer shares as was said. So no company may issue Bearer Shares or Bearer Shares Certificates. Clause 3 provides for the insertion of new section 127A to 127D to the principal Act to establish a regulatory regime for approval of increased control in a company. So under this, no regime before a person

can acquire share amounting to 10% ownership, the regulator or regulatory authority must conduct a fit and proper test. So if anyone wants to purchase shares in a company amounting to 10%, the regulator will have to conduct a fit and proper test. And the regulator here, Mr. President, is the Grenada Authority for the Regulation of Financial Institutions (GARFIN); they will have to conduct this test. Similarly, before a person can move from one category of control to another, the regulatory authority must examine the purposed threshold and conduct a fit and proper test and the following are the categories. So from 10% shareholder control with a percentage of 10 or more, or less than 20 or you can move from, you have 20% but less than 30; 30 but less than 40; 40 less than 50; 50 less than 60; a 60% share hold or control with a percentage of 60 or more but less than 75% and a principal shareholder is one with a percentage of 75% or more.

GARFIN will do the fit and proper test on the investor to ensure that there is nothing adverse about that investor and GARFIN will then issue a no objection to that person. But firstly that individual who is interested in purchasing the shares must make the application, and GARFIN will do the necessary, as I said fit and proper test, no objection is given and then the company can sell the shares to investor (a), (b), (c), (d) as the case may be. It is extremely important for us to follow through on this, but as I said GARFIN has that responsibility to ensure that this is done in conformity with the rules that has been so established.

A person who acquired the ownership without giving the requisite notice commits a summary offence with a maximum fine of $5,000. Hence the reason why I'm saying this is extremely important at this point in time. Gone are the days when a company will decide to invest in another company because when they did the market analysis, they realised this is trending and you will get a good return on your investment. So a name would not be there, just a company. That is no longer accepted. This is no longer what is required. A name must be given, so if a person obtain shares and didn't have the no objection report from GARFIN, has committed an offence, and as a result on summary conviction, can be fined up to a maximum of $5,000, Mr. President.

So GARFIN serves a preliminary written notice stating that it's considering serving a notice of objection and specifying the reason. So that's the process that we'll follow. The person may make representation to GARFIN within 28 days if they want to challenge the objection that GARFIN would have presented. Twenty-eight days to challenge GARFIN's objection. But if you choose not to, well the GARFIN will issue the report and you will not have that opportunity to invest in the company. If GARFIN is not satisfied with the representation, GARFIN issues a notice of objection. The person may appeal the decision to the High Court if they feel the objection GARFIN would have produced is not justifiable, they can appeal to the High Court for decision.

Clause 4, Mr. President, provides for the insertion of a new Part 6A to the principal Act to create clear obligations for companies to declare all beneficial owners through the maintenance of a beneficial ownership registry, subject to the inspection of the Registrar of Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property. There it is interesting, so companies right now may have on their books Bearer Share Owners, as certificates of Bearer Shares, or Bearer Share Warrants. You have a period to settle this to ensure that you correct that arrangement to have named individuals as the rightful owners of the shares. And there is a period of six months to do this. And as I said, the company has that obligation to fix this.

In my opening I said, what next or who else? One may say this is onerous because to go make those amendments a company will have to incur expenses. Mr. President, that's what it is all about. And as I've said before, we question why, but can we really go and object to it? No we can't. Because if you object, if you object to this, before you know it, you'll be blacklisted. And usually when a country is blacklisted the first thing they remove is the corresponding banking, so you cannot do business with the International World. So Grenada does not have a choice at this point in time, but to ensure that we follow through. And as I said onerous as it might be, but that's what we're seeing, and we have seen it, and we have passed Legislation in this Honourable House to comply. We have had a very good track record in recent years or after the period of when we were placed on this automatic review, every time the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force do their review, we have to present, because we didn't

comply at one point in time, but in the last seven years I would say, Mr. President, Grenada has complied to all the requirement or regulations that has been established by the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force. And we will ensure that we continue to do this, because to not do it, the consequences are dire and great, and given where we are at now, coming out of the ravages of COVID-19, and probably to face the other monster, global shortages, we would have to ensure that we follow every bit of requirement that has been given. With these few words, Mr. President, I want to commend the Bill for its second reading.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, I took quite a few hours to go through this Bill. Very interesting, very interesting amendments recommended or asked for, or dictated and, Mr. President, I ask myself again, are we quasi-independent or are we really independent? Mr. President, in politics it is said that there are no true friends, there are no true friends in politics, what we have are interests, what we have are interests. And, Mr. President, some countries appear or seem to believe that they have interest and smaller States like ours have little or no interest. Mr. President, in my humble opinion we have a Companies Bill, a very long document, quite a number of sections that to me takes care of our situation. Mr. President, the question here, how did we get there? Where someone from outside could say to us, certain things and we have to comply or else we are going to be whatever listed? This is bullying, Mr. President. This is bullying.

Now, Mr. President, we don't have a terrorism issue, we don't have money laundering issue, but what happen? Look at what happen, the International Oversight Committee have decided that they are going to visit our Island and similar jurisdiction, examine our Laws and say to us that they want x, y and z. As a matter of fact, Mr. President, we had a visit from the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorism Organization,

and they would be back here, and what they have done to us as a nation is to give us, dictate to us that by a certain period of time, when they return, if things are not as they expect, Mr. President, then we may have some serious problems. Now, the main issue here in this Bill is the deals with the bearer shares. Now, the new legislation, and again it's based on dictates, says that all shares must be in the name of someone. Not only that, it goes on further, if I want to buy 10% shares in a particular company, then GARFIN has to vet me, 10%, GARFIN has, between 10 and 19, they would have to vet me, between 20 and 29, vet. You know what is interesting is that I was thinking, what is the criteria, in terms of the vetting? What's the rubric? Because I'm vetted 10 to 19 and now I decided I want some more shares. So, I have to be vetted again.

Also, Mr. President, I would ask, now that GARFIN has an additional responsibility, so to speak, who pays for that, who pays that bill? Because GARFIN must spend time and there is a cost to it. Who foots that bill, bearing in mind that the instruction, so to speak, comes from somewhere else, comes from somewhere else?

Mr. President, in addition, you have to register, you have to register within a certain period of time. Companies have six months to comply. Well this thing is heavy handed. This thing is extremely heavy handed. But, I do understand one thing, when you weaken your economy, when you weaken your economy, you have less trump cards. Certain things you're not happy with, but you virtually have no choice.

Mr. President, let me just say this, if we are not careful in this country, I'm in my senior years, my oldest grandchild is 17. We have to be thinking about them. And if we are not serious, you know what is going to happen? Our country will be run from outside, first it has started; we need to strengthen our economy. When you strengthen the economy internally, what you do, Mr. President, is that you lift the self-esteem of the country and you could take certain actions, because your economic realities could support the actions that you take. Mr. President, look at it. Who instruct us in relation to our finances? We are tied on to the IMF, and IMF comes and they reports and they say you have to do this or you ought to do that and if you don't do this or you don't do that, then certain things will have to happen. Also, the World Bank is the same thing because we are always leaning on them, not for guidance, not for guidance, but we are

leaning on them for financial support and as a result, they pay the piper, they call the tune, they call the tune.

Mr. President, this thing here, this Bill is not happening in a vacuum. We need to strengthen our economy or else as I said, we will be run from outside. Mr. President, I want to conclude by saying, I really don't know how to vote on this Bill. I would like to vote one way or the other. But, you don't get the amendments in, then your country is strangled or can be strangled. You get it in, to me, that is compromising your independence. So, I'm very, very concerned. And this is a pattern that we are seeing evolving, Mr. President. Mr. President, we all grew up in the seventies, in a different era to quite a number of folks inside, Senators inside here, and we got to be careful.

So, the amendments are very concerning to me, very, very concerning to me. I hope by the end of the discussion, I have a position in relation to whether I support or I don't support, but is very, very, very concerning, concerning to me. And I do hope that whatever our conclusions are, is to the benefit of this nation of ours. Mr. President, thank you very much.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Joseph. Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. I want to make a few comments on this matter. I am new to this business of law-making in this country and I may have information on Laws in different parts, particularly, agriculture where I'm involved in. But it's interesting, I didn't realize that you can really have shares, companies issuing shares and you really don't know in whose name these shares really belong. That is, to me the most striking part of this whole Bill and the purpose. We are trying to put a gap, put a pin, if you want to say, put a stop. Some elderly may say, well after the horse is out of the stable. But I don't think the stable is fully closed. I think as Senator Joseph mentioned, we are in a global space and what we are seeing and I remember some of the earlier debates we had, remote work, the bitcoins issue, and we had some regulations around there. And so, it's sort of bothering me now that we went there, and we had this here, which we could have dealt with maybe a while now and

even before my time. And so, I welcome this change to know who, because there is a lot of talk we hear about this person and that person and where they're from and which country they're from and they have, we don't know, this offshore business in particular. We are concerned as nationals, as like home-grown nationals, who really own part of our companies whether it's a new start-up, or whether it's existing companies and being able now to track this, I think give us a lot more opportunity to safeguard investment. Look at what happened in CLICO and BAICO. And maybe if this sort of regulation was in place, a lot of us today might have been in a better position financially, because we would have seen what is going on. I know GARFIN is trying their best. And I trust that with this initiative, GARFIN is given the proper staff, independence and authority to ensure that this is done properly.

The scare is not only from the foreigners who may eventually maybe have a Grenadian Passport, and they can move back and forth, it's about our own home-grown Grenadians who want to invest and do better and you invest and you're not too sure what happens, because you might think you have 5%, but then you didn't realise that Tom from some other country get 75% and they make a decision and a buyout and you end up with nothing. This to me is the worrisome part and so, we have to use this opportunity. I trust that we do, to provide more protection for our local persons so that they can invest, we can invest with more confidence. We can go to the bank and take a loan maybe and invest and the bank feels more confident that that risk is reduced. That is the light I'm seeing it. And so my question really is why it takes so long to get here.

The other part of my concern relates to the issue of fit and proper test. I guess that might be the sort of accounting and legal jargon and it would have been very helpful for our Senator Member to provide some clues as to what is fit and proper. Now of course, the Act mentioned some minimum requirement like nationality and so on. These are, what I call basic, but fit and proper, does it mean that you need to see how much assets I have, such that I can, only shares, just in case there is an issue that we can be able to compensate those who have been affected, you know, those type of things. Because I might have 20% shares, but your wife or your son or your brother or

somebody else may have certain interests in your assets and how that is tied up could influence a lot of things down the road. So, these are some of my concerns. I think it's late, but it's in time, meaning that, it's good that we're trying to do that now, we as in the Senate. I would like to really understand this fit and proper because it's like agreeing to something without knowing what the conditions are and then when you reach you say, "wow". So this could affect me, in how my mind is and realise, oops, we agree, but I didn't realise there were some loopholes for fit and proper. So, these are my comments Honourable President.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator St. Clair. Honourable Members. Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I just want to just make a couple of very brief comments, but I lend my support for the Bill, the amendment that is before us. And just as a context, I listened to Senator Joseph and he's uncomfortable, he's unsure as to how to vote on this and questions of independence. I mean, regarding the technicalities of the amendments that are before us, there isn't anything overly controversial about it, whether it speaks to the fit and properness of a shareholder, of persons investing in businesses is a reasonable thing, that they are law abiding, no criminal record, etc.

The treatment of bearer shares or the inclusion of bearer warrants, again, there isn't anything controversial about that. Bearer shares, bearer warrants are probably the least transparent of investment, vehicles investment instruments, and the opportunity to abuse the use of these instruments is extremely high. So, you know, there is a responsibility in ensuring the bona fide in nature of any potential investor share holder. And all of this speaks to, from a technical level, it speaks to integrity and transparency of financial investments, not just here in Grenada, because this legislation is being applied universally.

The piece that Senator Joseph spoke to, which I have sympathy for is a deeper principle in terms of the application of and the process behind this, the whole AML

process and the consequences. There is a heavy handed application of this. So yes, we have inputs into this, we are working with our neighbours within the region, identifying best practices, how to apply these regulations, how to bring them into Law and bring them into practice. So, we're all in the same boat and we're all figuring out how to do this in compliance because the consequences as Senator Garraway outlined are so severe. So, it speaks to the geo… I was going to say "geopolitical", but it's "geo economic", if it's geo economic, it is geopolitical environment that we are in. And that piece in terms of the heavy handedness and our vulnerability is a little distasteful.

So, I agree, but, Mr. President, it is reflective of the world that we live in, the economic environment, global economic environment that we live in. And we have no choice in the matter, as with all other, certainly our neighbours within the region, many, many of us. But as I said, from a technical perspective on what is presented before us, just focusing on that, because that is the piece that we need to we need to vote on. It does speak to transparency; it does speak to integrity, which is something that we should all uphold. I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Stiell. Honourable Members, the question is that the bill be read a second… Senator Lewis, sorry.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. When we look at, through you, section 127A, that is under notification of new or increased control, especially (b), 1(b), it says that someone who makes an application to increase their share control, unless within a three month period, there is a notice, written notice of objection, after three months, you'll automatically, my understanding, will become a controller in the new category. Bearing in mind that it is normally difficult to try to undo that which has been done, section 127B allows for revocation of what is existing. Yes, I agree with that, but bearing in mind that it is normally difficult to undo that which has been done, section 127A, 1(b) demands of us to make sure that the necessary resources have been there to address those issues of application to determine the suitability for the controlling issue to be granted rather than having to

come from behind. So, I'm making this request bearing this in mind and the fact that this is not just to Grenada, right, we are dealing with international companies; we are dealing with international interests. We are aware that from time to time we hear of people or companies with questionable characters. It is important therefore, for us to give the necessary resources to ensure that before the three month period elapse the relevant investigation has been done. Just thought I should flag that rather than having to come from behind to rely under section 127B. Thank you.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, Senator Garraway, is that you, no, I saw your light. Okay.

Question put.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Sorry, I should have gone before you present it for the second reading. I just wanted to acknowledge the contribution of my fellow Senators, Mr. President, and just probably to make it easier for my fellow Senator Joseph on the "Other Side". Sometimes we don't see eye to eye on a lot of things, but we see eye to eye on this one, of course. As I've belaboured in my presentation, this is what has been imposed and in the global village that we are in, we just can't run away from it. We just cannot run away from falling, if you want to say in this case, you say, dictates, yes. As you suggested, build your economy and so forth, but you still would have to import items into your country. And in order for you to do this, you have to get foreign exchange and in order for you to get the foreign exchange, you must have a correspondent bank relationship. If you've been blacklisted, and they remove that corresponding bank relationship, you cannot do anything. You have to get things through the back door. And if who come in through the back door is found out, they will be sanctioned just as well. So, it's a Catch-22, we just can't run away from it. But I agree with you and as I've belaboured, it's onerous, but that's what it has been.

When we asked the churches to come on to register and to do those things, those NGOs and so on, you were saying, a church, yes, because churches elsewhere

got involved in illegal activities. So they're pooling it, one bad apple spoil all in the box, they're pooling it.

The other thing is, Mr. President, as it relates to the question that was raised by Senator St. Cyr, St. Clair, sorry, **(laughter)** my good friend.

Mr. President: You are like me, you're missing up the Clair's and the Cyr's.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I am taking, I'm taking over from you, you know, I'm not, I'm not going to take over, is sister St. Cyr and brother St. Clair, Senator St. Cyr, Dr. Senator St. Cyr. The issue here, I want us to move to 127B, section 127B, it said, "Where it appears to the authority that a person who has given notice under section 127A is a shareholder controller." And when we move down to 2, "a person is not a fit and proper person to be a controller of the company if the authority is satisfied that (a) the person is mentally incapacitated by reason of unsoundness of mind, (b) has been convicted of an offence from which he or she has benefited for the purposes of section six, subsection (9) and (10) of the Proceeds of Crime Act of 2012.

So, I'm seeing, on-going, the point here is, it has been so prescribed based on the Laws as to who would be considered not to be a fit and proper person. Mr. President, I again want to thank all Members for their contribution. And then to say, it's a global village, a small world and we all are in this together, we just have to bind ourselves to work for the common good of this little rock Grenada. Thanks very much. I so commend the Bill for its second reading, Mr. President.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Bills

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate resolve 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 Bill was considered by Committee of the whole Senate and passed without amendment. Senator Garraway.

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

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.

Mr. President: I'm seeing your light on Senator Garraway, you… no...

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

Bills

Mr. President: Thank you. Who is piloting the…

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading, a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, the Legal Profession (Amendment) Act, 2022.

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

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 stages at this Sitting.

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

Mr. President: Senator Williams.

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

Mr. President: Senator Williams proceed.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Mr. President, the Bill before us, the Legal Profession (Amendment) Bill, 2022 seeks to amend the principal legislation, the Legal Profession (Amendment) Act No. 25 of 2011, which was further amended by Act No. 27 of 2012.

Mr. President, the principal Act provides for the regulation of the legal profession for qualification, enrolment and disciplining of its members and other related matters. And the importance of the legal profession cannot be understated, Mr. President. It

involves the study, development, and application of the law, which forms the bedrock or foundation of any modern civilisation, any modern society. Every aspect of our lives, Mr. President, every aspect of the administration of a society involves some interaction with the Law. It is the basis upon which we regulate the provision of our public services, the basis upon which we regulate private activities, it is the basis upon which we administer justice, upon which we maintain peace and order and that applies in a local, regional and international context, Mr. Speaker.

Our very functions today as Members of this House are based upon the law. The branches of Government, Mr. President, the three branches, their functions are defined with respect to their relationship with the Law; the Legislature of which we are a part is responsible for making the laws, the Executive, the Cabinet of Ministers is responsible for executing the Law and the Judiciary is responsible for interpreting the Law. So, it permeates every single aspect of our existence and the legal professionals they are responsible for facilitating these processes, for facilitating the making, execution and administration of our Laws. It stands to reason therefore, Mr. President, that such a vital profession should be subjected to a regulatory framework that may be more stringent than other professions. And I believe this is the context within which the principal Act was first passed. It is similar to other Acts throughout the OECS and we have been a bit tardy in the full implementation and execution of this act, and this is where this Bill seeks to assist us, Mr. President.

Now the principal Act contains provisions for the enrolment of Attorneys, admission to the bar, it provides for the continuance of the Grenada Bar Association which we are acquainted with. And it provides for the formation and the functions of the General Legal Counsel which many may not to be acquainted with but that counsel plays a crucial role in the performance of this Act, Mr. President. The General Legal Counsel is concerned with upholding the standards of professional conduct in accordance with the legal code of ethics which is also a schedule to this Act. It comprises a former Judge appointed upon the advice of the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General or the Solicitor-General, three members from the Grenada Bar Association and two members of the public. And some of their functions include hearing complaints or

grievances from members of the public and also more importantly carrying out investigations, making orders, determining whether there was professional misconduct and also recommend certain remedies and those remedies include reprimanding Attorneys, making applications to the Supreme Court for more severe penalties such as the removal of the Attorney from the role or the suspension of the Attorney from the role. And it also is empowered to suspend or revoke the practicing certificate of that Attorney. So the functions of the General Legal Counsel are crucial for the maintenance and upholding of the standards of the legal profession. So it's very important that we empower them to the fullest extent to be able to execute those functions. And this is where the amendment Bill comes into play.

The amendment Bill is very short; it contains five Clauses, Mr. President. The first Clause, of course the short title; the second Clause amends the definition of "member", there was a typographical error. The definition of "member" refers to section 7 (3) of the Act when it should have referred to section 5 (2) so that's a simple amendment. It also inserts a definition for the term "practice of law" and it includes a more comprehensive definition of practice of law. The previous definition merely defined the practice as that which is exercised by barristers, solicitors etc., but this definition of the "practice of the law" describes aspects of practice such as representation before a judicative body, the preparation of legal documents and the provision of legal advice. So it is much more complete than the previous definition.

Clause 3 of the Bill allows the General Legal Counsel to hold virtual meetings. At the time of the principal Act that may not have been within the contemplation of the drafters but because of how our society has changed and moved especially in recent times with the COVID pandemic and the drive to conduct activities digitally and online, this is quite relevant and pertinent. Clause 4, Mr. President, deals with an amendment to section 26 of the principal Act and section 26 deals with the application issuance and removal of the practicing certificate. Now, Mr. President, when an Attorney is admitted into practice after applying to the Supreme Court and paying the prescribed fees, that Attorney's name is entered on an official list which is kept by the Registrar, which is the Roll. So those are the list of Attorneys at law but an Attorney cannot practice Law

according to this Act unless in addition to being listed on the Roll, that Attorney also has a practicing certificate. And that is the part that has not been in effect… has not been implemented since the passage of this Act. So it is the intention of the General Legal Counsel to invoke their powers under the Act to issue these practicing certificates and in the case where there are penalties to Attorney's for professional misconduct, they can revoke or suspend those practicing certificates. So the amendments in section 26, that's Clause 4 deals firstly with the insertion of the words "in the prescribed form and accompanied by the prescribed fee." So that section basically stipulated the process for obtaining a practicing certificate, which is that, the Attorney must submit the application and so this amendment simply acts in the prescribed form, accompanied by the prescribed fee. The Clause also changes the duration of the validity of the practicing certificate from two years to one year. I think that is just allow for greater oversight, a lot can happen in two years and with how quickly the Law is changing, it would have been more I guess effective for the purposes of the Act in terms of holding Attorneys responsible to shorten that period so that there can be no allowance for I guess adoption for a laisser-faire attitude or the relaxing of their responsibilities. So it's now from two to one year.

The third part of this amendment repeals subsection 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 to remove references to the renewal of the practicing certificate. So there is no longer the renewal of the practicing certificate. You are issued a practicing certificate and it terminates at the end of that year, therefore you reapply every year to be issued with a new practicing certificate, so all references to renewal is removed by that section.

Clause 5 of the amendment empowers the Minister in consultation with the counsel to make regulations to prescribe the fees payable for the issuance of the practicing certificate. And the regulations accompanying this amendment Act has already been prepared and there are some prescribed fees that are listed. And that is the extent of the amendments prescribed by this Bill, Mr. President. As I mentioned before it simply seeks to empower the General Legal Counsel to fully perform their functions in upholding the standards of this hallowed legal profession.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Williams, very comprehensive.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, I stand in support of the Bill. However there are there are a few concerns that I do have and I would choose to raise at this time. Mr. President, I think that the first section is very basic. It deals with the amendment, the definition, very straight forward. My concern is the certification of lawyers. It appears, Mr. President, that when it comes to lawyers in this country, rules and regulations and ethical values in relation to lawyers is like, is not a joke, is like a paper tiger. We have never heard or I have never heard a lawyer dragged before an ethical committee or any committee because of bad practice… I don't want to say malpractice, malpractice sound so bad, bad practice. It just doesn't seem to be happening in our culture. I do hope, Mr. President, that the General Legal Counsel, we call it the GLC, see it fit that whatever work they put into the guidelines for the legal practitioners have some kind of teeth so that whenever a lawyer steps out of line they can be swiftly dragged back into line.

Mr. President, I am not too certain as to why the period or the life of the certificate, we are recommending that it moves from two years to one. I am not too sure why we are reducing the time, one year goes very, very swiftly and we cannot reduce the years based on other countries doing this, so we need to do it too, no. Our context and our circumstance can be very, very different and as a result we act with what we have… what our circumstance really is. So I am not too sure why the reduction. Also with the reduction you will need, the committee itself with the more active because of being active re the rules governing the legal profession, every two years now they will have to be active every year. Now these people are normally very busy people. Now where are the resources going to come from, personnel probably otherwise to fulfil that obligation every year? So this is a concern I have here. If as it is now, two years, the

legal fee for this certificate is let's say for argument sake, Mr. President, $100.00, if the certification is now done every year, would it now be $50.00 or would it still be $100.00? I am making the point, I don't know the total amount for the certification but whenever there is a cost incurred by professionals we know what happens, Mr. President, the cost is passed on to the client. So we should be doing things in such a way that life for the client or the persons seeking that professional advice or whatever it is, is made easier.

Mr. President, I also want to say that I was very pleased with the last section of the Bill, that is the power to make resolution that is 59A and it says that the Minister in consultation, and honestly I personally, I love that item here. With your permission I am asking that I read "The Minister in consultation with the Council may make regulations prescribing the fees that are payable in relation to issuing of Practising Certificates". The Minister is a politician and I guess he is going to seek the interest of the wider populist or the client. So, Mr. President, as I said at the beginning I support the Bill and the intention of the Bill. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Joseph. Honourable Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. While it may sound in some ways reflecting some of Senator Joseph's comment, I think it's important that some of the comments that I have come from my voice. With your permission I am very happy to see we're working on this matter because as we go around the country we hear a lot of comments by the ordinary citizens you know about lawyers and them and so on and even if they might not… it might be ok … there is this sense of I wonder if they're getting things right, if the lawyers colluding amongst themselves and so on. So this council that we are taking about, I think it needs to be more visible to show that they exist like a watchdog for the standard of practice and customer service as Senator Joseph is mentioning for the public. I think that visibility as our dear Senator presented for a noble profession.

As we look around, almost every other day we have new lawyers I would say in the market and having those regulation in place is very important to manage that

growing number of persons. My real concern is down to the administration and moving this thing from two years to one year. A lot of places in the world now are trying to reduce transaction costs, reduce the cost of doing business and every time we increase the frequency of these transactions, we increase cost of course. Maybe the lawyers can have some automatic credit card that reflects that and you get a certificate print automatically and in the e-business time, maybe. But there was a sort of gap in the presentation that has me wondering, because the most significant part… I think maybe we need a Clause to speak to that and maybe it's there because I don't have the principal Act, specifically speaking about monitoring… how do we monitor? Do we just wait on complaints, do we wait on a media release that somebody goes in the media and say they have a problem with a particular lawyer or a particular law firm. Maybe it's there; if it's there it would be good to hear that monitoring. Because that monitoring would give us the feedback that would trigger whether or not that license or certificate to practice need to be withdrawn, reviewed or continue because it's not just as it was presented, it's not just renewal anymore, you have to apply. And to apply there has to be a set of criteria, past performances etc., etc.

So we are giving this Committee more work to collect data so there must be some basis increasing this cost of monitoring to issue that every year. If you have it maybe every five years, all you do is monitoring and revoke and sometimes you know if you have something for five years you will guard it. Like if you have a Visa for 10 years, you don't want to lose it but if you know it's every year when it expire you say well I try to get it again so maybe that is a lack of incentive, we have to also bear that in mind. I believe the two years or maybe even five years it should be. Because it is a profession, you spend thousands of dollars and you study and I can practice for five years, these individuals… I am not arguing for the lawyers but they may have gone to take a loan in the bank to establish their firm. Now that increases their business risk just by the nature of enacting such a Law. But if we have monitoring which has to deal with their own personal behaviour, they cannot then say well look the legislators are creating problem and reducing the ability to get financing for their business.

So I think somehow, I mean there might be different thinking on the ground but somehow I think that need to be more enabling, have more monitoring and I would like to know what the fee is as Senator Joseph asked for the current two years and what will be the fee for this one year? As a Driver's License, you give me an opportunity, I pay for one year or I pay for three years. You know I think… I don't think our lawyers are so bad that they need to be managed in that tight way, Mr. President. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator St. Clair. Senator Cox I think I see you.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I stand to give my support to the Legal Profession (Amendment) Bill, 2021 that was before this Honourable House. Mr. President, I think I want to come to a little aid on behalf of my colleague; the presenter of the Bill. Just on the last commend that were made by Senator St. Clair. In his presentation he did accede to the support in terms of the importance of the treating with the likelihood of somebody may have someway contravened the Law or some bad practice by a lawyer so they should be reigned but at the same time you cannot want that and not want a tighter time for monitoring. So I think it's a little bit contradictory in that regard because we have lawyers who may be coming or passing the Bar on an annual basis and so there is nothing wrong with a yearly issuance of a certificate. I don't see any difficulty and he also indicated the likelihood of doing it digitally so there is no issue… persons can stay where they are and just make their application or have their administrative staff, their secretary of somebody as part of their routine work to ensure that all the necessary certificates and just as how the bills are paid monthly or quarterly. So it's just an administrative item for the office, so I don't see an issue but at the same time I don't think it is fair to want or get an opportunity to ensure that the legal profession or persons who practice behave in an acceptable manner but at the same not wanting to put structures in place to monitor. So I just wanted to make that.

Bills

The substance of my contribution, Mr. President, is centred on the whole issue around the amendment to include virtual meetings, virtual proceedings. I think this is progressive, I think this is important in the context of a number of things, not just the pandemic. But I think more so in the context of the length of time that persons wait for proceedings for judgments. I think this has helped. We have heard the feedback from the legal profession that they are able to run through the court cases a lot faster than previously to help remove the backlog. So I think this is something that I am very much excited about in terms of having that virtual space albeit it will require a significant monitoring to ensure from a security stand point. But we believe that this amendment is very significant and in my mind probably the most significant amendment for this Bill because it opens the doors for the court to move laterally and also virtually. You can have proceedings where one party at any part of the world would not have to travel, the whole issue of expenses, the cost for operating for different proceedings that also too can be treated with the whole issue of virtual proceedings.

While with technology there are always issues, one missing, sometimes you have a break down, sometimes it just don't work, sometimes they give problems, those are things you have to monitor, that's the little downside to it. But we have seen in recent times that the virtual proceedings have really played a significant role in advancing the legal system, in advancing timely judgments for persons who have matters before the court. So with these contributions, Mr. President, I want to again give my full support to this amendment and I think that my colleague did an excellent job in giving a detailed feedback, a lot more. She did a better job than I would have done and maybe that's why she is a lawyer. So thank you very much for that, Mr. President.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. It's useful contributions that have been made, my concern is more of a practical nature. Certainly with the ability to conduct those transactions virtually, it will also be good to see if we can move to a stage of scheduling Hearings. So for instance rather than someone having to be told that your matter is on the 20th of March for instance and it is from 9 but you may sit from 9 until 3 in the evening, it also impacts people's time. And

what we do find is that in some instances quite a number of working class people having difficulties in getting time off from work sometime lose interest in the matter. So as we seek to address those matters, it is important to address… there's no reason in our view as to why one cannot be told that on the 20th of March your matter is at 10:00 rather than having to be there from 9:00 or 1:00 so that's a matter I want to raise.

Also the issue…

Mr. President: I am trying to figure out how that relates to this Bill. I'm kind of a little bit lost.

(Inaudible comments by Senator André Lewis)

Mr. President: …attached to the bill, I am lost.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: No, what I did because the issue of time management etc., was addressed, I just thought it was a point I wanted to raise and that is also an element that can assist. The aspect of time management to the virtual networking was addressed by the Senator on the "Other Side". I figured it was a matter that needed to be brought to the fore to. Secondly…

Mr. President: But this Bill does not have anything to do with time management, no so I am really lost.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Ok, I stand down.

Mr. President: This has to do with the Practising Certificates for the lawyers etc. Where does the issue of time management appear anywhere in this Bill?

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I stand down, Mr. President. I stand down on this matter. I need to make another. And I hope that my understanding of what has

been advanced by the presenter of the Bill allows this contribution that I am about to make now. I will be guided accordingly.

My understanding is that the Bill seeks to address the issue of addressing the conduct of the legal practitioners and therefore from a practical point of view, I know that some of the challenges that we have had in the past is the ability to get our local legal practitioners to assist in matters that may be of concern against another legal practioner and sometimes it creates challenges for us. So I just wanted to flag that as an issue to my good colleague on the "Other Side".

Mr. President: Senator Williams.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you to the other Members of the House for their contributions and I will like to express my appreciation to the Members who have expressed concerns for the workload of the attorneys, the demands on their time, and what they would have perceived as another onerous obligation placed on the shoulders of Attorneys. So I appreciate your concern but perhaps you may be more comforted to know that this amendment was circulated to the members of the Grenada Bar Association and they found no fault with the suggested amendments. So I take that to mean that they believe that they are capable and able to handle the additional responsibilities.

Let me just say that the General Legal Council has been operating, this Amendment Bill does not activate them. They're an operating body, they have been operating, effectively they do hear complaints, they have disciplined Attorneys. I forgot to mention in the presentation that one of the powers of the Council, in addition to suspending Practising Certificates, revoking Practising Certificates, is to award compensation to aggrieved persons.

So they have been functioning and they have a discretion to determine their procedures. Section 12 of the Act says that the council shall meet at such times and as may, sorry… the Council shall meet at such times as may be necessary or expedient for the transaction of its business, and as such a meetings, sorry shall be held at such

place and times and on such days as the council may determine. So they can meet at whatever time, whatever place that's convenient to their schedules. It's just that we have amended it so that place can include a virtual setting. So the virtual setting that we're referring to is for the meetings of the Council, Senator, not procedures, not the normal procedures of the Supreme Court which I believe is what Senator Lewis was alluding to. This is not what the amendment concerns.

In relation to the one year duration of the Practising Certificate, this is in line with the practice throughout the Caribbean. In most of the other jurisdictions the duration of the Practising Certificate is one year, so we are just aligning ourselves with the practice in the region. Further, as I briefly mentioned in my presentation, the Law changes rapidly. Every year there are new decisions, positions in the Law, some decisions are repeal. The Law is ever evolving and a lot can happen in a year, and there are many, I don't want to say many, but there are a number of conferences and activities organised by the local Bar as well as the regional Bar to educate Attorneys, keep them abreast of developments within the Law.

So I think that the narrowing of the life of the Practising Certificate also has to do with facilitating the continuing education of Attorneys. So Attorneys may be incentivised to engage in activities throughout that year which will enhance, supplement their legal knowledge. And I know for a fact that the General Legal Council is taking some initiatives to make the continuing education aspect of the profession a permanent fixture. So I appreciate the concern but I think that this is something that the legal profession welcomes, otherwise there would have been objection. The profession is something that they love; they've dedicated their lives to it.

The procedure itself is not that onerous. I have seen the draft regulation, the application form is very simple, so it just needs to be filled out and submitted with the prescribed fee. So I do not think that it will be too onerous on the attorneys, but we appreciate dearly your concern. So I hope that I have addressed the concerns raised by the Honourable Members, Mr. President. And with that I commend the Bill for its second reading.

Bills

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. President: Senator.

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 Bill was considered by a Committee of whole Senate and passed without amendment. Senator Williams.

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.

Public Business

Mr. President: Thank you. Honourable Members just a brief announcement that lunch is at the pleasure of the President. It's an incentive for us to wrap up this morning's session. Senator Stiell, I noticed your light.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: I would suggest we actually adjourn for lunch and we cover the Motions straight after.

Mr. President: Oh you want us to take…

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes we want to wait for Judd Cadet to arrive. He's on his way here now. So I think…

Mr. President: Say again let me hear.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: If lunch is ready that we adjourn now and resume after lunch.

Mr. President: Okay, so you didn't want us to go straight. Oh okay. So my incentive didn't work. **(Laughter)** Alright. Honourable Members it's now 12:15, this House now stands adjourned for lunch. We would resume at 1:30.

(Sound of Gavel)

Mr. President: Honourable Members the House now stands adjourned for lunch.

Senate adjourned for lunch at 12:16 p.m.
Senate resumed at 1:30 p.m.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 16 - Public Business.

Public Business

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair.

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

Mr. President: I think there are two Motions in your…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: In my name.

Mr. President: …name.

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

Mr. President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, thank you, Mr. President, and good afternoon all fellow Senators. I present here my first Motion for this afternoon and this Motion is on the need for government and its related institutions to design and implement a comprehensive and robust approach and strategy to fight praedial larceny. And it reads:

WHEREAS praedial larceny is a major risk to Grenada's food and nutrition security and acts as a disincentive to farmers and agricultural investments;

AND WHEREAS despite several measures that are put in place to reduce incidents of praedial larceny over the years, farmers continue to be negatively affected;

AND WHEREAS Parliament enacted a revised Praedial Larceny Act of 2020, farmers continue to suffer at the hands of thieves on their farms;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate support the need for government to design and implement a more robust strategy to fight praedial larceny, to result in more relief to farmers, improved food security and improvement to the economy.

That's the reading of the Motion.

Mr. President: Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, I stand to second the Motion.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator. Honourable Members the Motion has been seconded.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Mr. President, and Members, I rise to speak on this Motion. For some, not only within this Chamber may say it's a broken record but I wouldn't say it's a broken record, I would say it's another version, okay. In that whilst previously for my representation we'd have addressed different aspects of this big issue of praedial larceny for our Agriculture and Fisheries Sector. We see it fit at this stage to look at a broader approach, an approach that is more encompassing, an approach that is more holistic and one that is more integrated. Because when we look at what is happening right now, there are efforts and we cannot say no there are not efforts, there are efforts, but these efforts are disjointed. As we say sometime the right hand don't know what the left hand is doing, and I could give you an example even very quickly. Only a few weeks ago I was following up on a matter for a farmer who had situations and it was well publicised where he had to end up using his firearm. And so I was following up with the Commissioner of Police and to the point where he said, you know there is the Court System, there's the police system and he's doing all on his part and whether or not the Court is doing and so the farmer had to call the Court, you know to find out what stage is this matter at, a matter that was there since in August 2020. So if we have a more holistic approach, where the parties are coming together and speaking together, then we can see some movement I believe.

Now in 2020 we had a revised Act, which the Act speaks about, which the Motion speaks about, yet whilst there is a committee, the committee speaks, management committee speaks mainly about managing a specified product, soursop which is one item. Of course I saw some praedial larceny officers in Sauteurs only recently and they said, Senator we're worried because now soursop coming on, they know it's a lot of

work in front of them. I say this to say that this special committee which speaks about a reinforcement in the Act is a committee that is very limited. Very limited in terms of the people, you know in terms of the sort of different persons in the supply chain, also in terms of the sort of resources that they may be able attract, it is difficult for this committee to… it's outside of their scope. So that's another challenge.

Then I know we spoke and I spoke previously about how do we improve the resources for the police. Of course we recognise there was an allocation in the second half of the year of $100,000. I'm not too sure how it was used specifically towards that, maybe the police would have gotten some out of it maybe, but the police also needs, they need more human resource. I saw again some other IMANI and they say, you know but we're restricted. So when 9 o'clock or 8 o'clock they have to go home. I don't think the Commissioner don't want to have persons on the ground, but where is the support? And so I go back to 20.., I think 2007, 2008 somewhere there when there was a revamped approach in the Ministry of Agriculture with praedial larceny. There was a broad inter-sectorial committee that was appointed by Cabinet at the time, Cabinet appointed committee and it so happened I was Chairing this committee, so that's why I have a lot of knowledge about a lot of things. The Commissioner of Police that exists today was also part of that committee and you had the supermarkets, the MNIB, different people and so we were able to find ways and strategies. But even that, Mr. President, sort of fade away. I don't even know if the committee exists still. I don't think it exists actually, but Cabinet would have taken a decision to establish that committee, and I don't think Cabinet took a decision to disband that committee either. I say all of this to say that maybe this has to go beyond Cabinet.

Maybe we need to have within this whole Legislation, have this built-in just like how we have this committee for the lawyers. So we know it has a legal presence and legal existence that can be staffed appropriately and resourced appropriately, so that the different needs at any one point in time can be made available. So for example, if we see what is happening, whilst yes you know a general budget, we may say praedial larceny is $10,000 or $100,000 as the case may be, it shows up under the Ministry of Agriculture. And when you look at the emphasis where this money would be spent on,

with due respect, it's mainly promotion, pay some salaries of the persons, but not to address praedial larceny as a national. And then when you look at how the police operate and I want to go there, most of us driving on the road, we'll see the police road blocks, they will stop you, your driver's licence, your tires, insurance. Did they check to see, are you carrying produce? Do you have a memorandum that to show where you got that produce? So that is when I speak of holistic. Now maybe the police, the traffic that's their focus, it's just to deal with the traffic part, but if there is that general coordination with a purpose then those things can be incorporated. So for example, with my fellow exporters who export soursop and other items, mainly they do that Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, so from Saturday to Monday, Grenada is very active with vehicles moving, harvesting, but where is the police? Nada! No road block, no checking, but Monday morning at 7 o'clock, 7:30 all of us on the road, we may see them stopping us, where is your driver's license, where is your… all this soursop gone already.

Now it was amazing, as I do my research for this here, Mr. President, in Trinidad there was an article only last year, sometime in 2020, 2021 where there was a joint initiative of what they call the Praedial Larceny Squad, squad alone make it look very scary, that is based within the Ministry of Agriculture in Trinidad along with the traffic police and some other thing that deal with lands. And they had joint operations at major highways and the report said that they held 21 vendors and about twenty something farmers, that they were able to charge because of this operation. The question is, are we considering this, how can we do this? I'm not seeing that happening, because of the disjointedness.

I want to compliment of course, the Commissioner has an activity sometime next week where he's meeting with the farmers. It's good, social, meet the farmers, but him meeting farmers is one aspect but we have the judiciary issues. There is a case involving nutmeg, about two years ago, up to now that case is still waiting to finish. In fact the, one of the solicitors… and it's government you know, the prosecution called to collect data, because I'm within that system, prepare my workers to give evidence and up to now, I don't hear a phone call again, so that sitting somewhere. So as the

Commissioner would have said, maybe rightfully this part is not functioning. So I just happened to be the messenger trying to talk about all of these things, so that some awareness and consciousness can be brought to look at a holistic. But the question is, whose responsibility? That might be the question and of course government is the fitting person and institution to lead, which they already started in certain ways, but it's not coordinated.

For example, Mr. President, further to that, we have a case, and I would have mentioned it in the Budget, the debate session in December, Brother Bedeau at the Trade Centre, he has invented if we want to say, as a local inventor, local entrepreneur have a system with the camera and light using solar, so he's not even using electricity, he's using solar power to monitor fields, he could monitor, it can connect to the internet and all of those things. So in discussion with him, I say but what is the discussion with you and the government? Of course the farmers can purchase those items, it's about $500, $600 for one, but if we also have manpower issues, if we can invest even if its $100,000 and we can purchase some of these equipment and make it available to the Praedial Larceny Task Force. I'm not even saying give the farmers you know, I'm not even saying to buy it for the farmers. You can put that as additional arsenal that the Praedial Larceny Officers can use and in fact it's not even my real idea, it's they even gave me that idea when I met them in Sauteurs on the street a few weeks ago. And they now would know the different spots and that would also further help them in capturing on the farm. So I'm not even speaking about going in the supermarket and monitoring and on the highway, but that could also further.

So, in fact I'm not too sure, Mr. President, you may, I'm not on commission receiving commission but this is what we're speaking on. It's water proofed, it can stand whether five years as he mentioned in his declaration, can be used and it can light up many areas and he has a camera that can bring real-time feed as to what is happening. So what I'm saying is that we have certain things already present, but someone, well the government I would like, to lead and create that body, which can really help our farmers. And someone said to me, everyday farmers are crying, everyday no matter what, and we go say well praedial larceny is all over the world, so what happen. When I

read, I think it was about 2012 somewhere there, I think it's Dr. Estwick, he was maybe the Agriculture Minister in Barbados, and it was amazing because I'm reading backwards now. I'm doing research and he spoke of the need for an integrated approach, the judiciary, the police, and the supermarket and so on. I say wow, but I don't know what they did. But when he mentioned that, I say well it's exactly, we were there already. Cabinet, which is a major body of the country set up something like that and it just went astray. So maybe it need to happen maybe at this level where we could have more accountability and more continuity and we could be able to secure better resources to make sure this thing happen.

But our food security, as I close is very important. Of course I know the whole issue with the Ukraine war and Russia war, everybody talking about food security. But outside of that food security is this now, a lot of farmers are scared to farm, and they are losing items. One farmer sent me some photos where he ended up with about, the value of almost about $600 worth of soursop that remained after the thieves take. So you could imagine the amount of monies that this farmer would have lost just from that. This could only lead you to break down and to cry, but you know we are resilient and I believe that we are conscious enough to know what is right from wrong. I thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, we've studied the Motion in detail and listened to the arguments put forward by Senator St. Clair and we are in general agreement. However there is a proposed amendment that we would like to present to this House, and it speaks to the final recital. We're in agreement with the substance of the Motion that has been presented, with one exception. So if I could ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to circulate this, then we can go into explaining our rationale. Thank you.

Mr. President: The Chair always gets the first copy. I'm saying the Chair always gets the first copy. You have to give the Clerk. So, Senator, the change is not in the recital, but in the resolution. Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes. So, it's the final the "Be it Resolved" piece.

Mr. President: Yes, but that's the resolution.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes.

(Amendments to the Motion were circulated)

Mr. President: So, I'm just giving him an opportunity. Well go through with it.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes, I'll speak to it. So, just going through the recitals, that are set unchanged, "Whereas praedial larceny is a major risk to food security," wholly agree with it. That is affecting the seriousness of this matter. And praedial larceny is something that isn't just a scourge here in Grenada, but throughout the region. This is a major, major issue for our farming communities. And despite the measures that are being put in place we're still having issues, agreed. Where, Mr. President, we wish to make a slight amendment is in the final Resolution. And it will read, the amended resolution would read, "***BE IT RESOLVED*** *that the Senate continues to support the Government's design and implementation of more robust strategies to fight praedial larceny to result in more relief to farmers, improve food security, and improvement to the economy*." This subtle change, Mr. President, is to reflect all of the work that has been done. The Senator on the "Other Side" outlined some of what we are doing, but he spoke…

Mr. President: We don't have an amendment yet. We don't have a seconder yet for the amendment. So we can't enter into debate until because remember this is not a Government Motion. This is a Private Member's.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: No, I agree. So, if I could ask for a Member on "Our Side" to…

Mr. President: Unless you get it seconded, we can proceed with the debate.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to second the amended Motion put forward by the Leader of Government's Business, amendment to the Motion, sorry.

Mr. President: Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes, thank you for that guidance, Mr. President. So, Mr. President, so as I said, in the main body, the thrust that was presented by the Member on the "Other Side", we wholly agree with and there is no change there. But the change that we are proposing in that the final resolution is to reflect the work that is taking place. In Senator St. Clair's presentation he kept speaking of broader approach, integrated approach and the word "holistic, holistic, holistic".

Mr. President, since 2020, a significant amount of work has been done, that's notwithstanding the challenges that we still face. So that broader perspective is the complexity of this particular crime. And it is a crime that is endemic throughout, throughout the region, throughout the sub-region, and there are loads of statistics that speak to those challenges. Whether it is, there was a study done by the [2]FAO and it states that praedial larceny is the most extensive amongst all crimes committed within the region, in terms of the number of persons and families affected, not unique to us here in Grenada. Ninety per cent of all producers within the region have experienced loss of produce through theft. More than 90% of producers regionally agreed that the single greatest disincentive in the sector is praedial larceny. And it's estimated and this is a conservative estimate that 18% of the value of farm output regionally is taken through praedial larceny, through theft. And this frustration that farmers feel throughout the region is also, it results in low reporting rates. So, this is a very, very complex problem. But it's one that this Administration recognises, it recognises the weaknesses,

[2] FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization

it recognises those areas that need to be strengthened, which is why we came to Parliament with a significant overhaul in this very Chamber in 2020, to amend that Legislation, which originated in 1992, amended in 2005, but successive Governments failed to implement.

What is different this time around with the 2020 amendment are those measures, those fundamental changes that were included in the legislative amendments, and then the action which is holistic, which is an integrated approach, there is a strategy in play, there is more investment now in tackling praedial larceny than there ever has been and a more joined up approach. So, whether it is the establishment of the Praedial Larceny Management Unit, and recently a senior officer within the RGPF has been appointed to head that Unit and that linkage and that integrated approach that Senator St. Clair is talking about will be achieved, at least in part through the senior appointment. Whether it's the 36 officers, we had an issue of officers leaving the service, but there is a drive to recruit more. There is more investment in vehicles, in equipment, in technology, he spoke of those cameras, and that has real value. But so have the 300 cameras that have already been deployed to farmers. So, we are moving in that direction.

So, the operationalisation of the legislation of this strategic plan is a key priority and the establishment of this Unit, the appointment of the right people is the start of that. And then that more broader stakeholder group and there's also the setting up through the Legislation of the Praedial Larceny Committee, which is looking at non-ministerial/non-governmental elements, as the Member spoke of that was needed.

So, I say all of that to say, Mr. President, that the weaknesses have been identified. The Legislation has been strengthened also through the imposition of stiffer penalties. The enforcement, the RGPF piece, those boots on the ground is a critical element to that, but that is being strengthened. But the four critical areas that have been identified that are being strengthened and the Legislation speak to it, is improved data management, it's intelligence, it is that data that will drive decision making, that will feed into the public education, public awareness piece, whether it is vendor registration, farmer registration, so those systems, the enforcement piece critical elements.

I spoke already of the public awareness and public education, and then improved administration, and management. I'm pleased that the Senator recognised the additional resources that we put in last year as part of the Supplementary Appropriation, the increased budgetary allocation this year, the increased resources in the police, in GIS, in public outreach, joining up the dots.

So, Mr. President, there is a holistic plan in place, there is the supporting Legislation. The amendments gave that Legislation teeth. The challenge is operationalising it which as I said, we have started and I think the Senator will recognise that. But the critical question is, does more need to be done? And the answer is yes. Does that more need to be done faster? Yes. Does it need more resources? Yes. But that plan, that approach is there, we are pulling this together, to try and tackle something that is extraordinarily complex and a problem, the region over.

Senator St. Clair spoke of the social that the Commissioner is having next week. It's not a social. It's a serious consultation with stakeholders, all stakeholders and it's to share with stakeholders some of the new ideas, some of the new thinking, the approaches and to test them. So, there is engagement with the stakeholder community. We are taking this seriously. There has been a review within the Ministry of Agriculture, as to, again where some of these other gaps are and some of those will be shared on Wednesday. And I hope that the Senator is part of that.

So, Mr. President, so the change in the proposed amendment to Senator St. Clair's original Motion doesn't take away anything, in terms of the seriousness of this, the need for more, the need for more, the need for more. But I believe this is fairer and more balanced language, in terms of, we don't have to go back to square one. We don't have to start at first, from first principles. Those have been established, a foundation has been built. There is a clear path forward, but it needs the effort of all and it's not just about Government. And that again, speaks to the complexity of this issue. It speaks to us as consumers, those of us who are feeding this problem by purchasing goods that we know are stolen, we're perpetuating and feeding this. And those of us who purchase and consume these products are just as guilty as those who

steal, even in these difficult economic times. There is no excuse for this. So this is a deep, deep issue.

So I ask this House to accept this few changes to the language, which calls on the Senate to support Government's efforts and supports Government's efforts in their design and implementation of a more robust strategy. The strategy is there. It needs to be strengthened, work needs to be done to implement it, but I don't believe the language as it stands now is appropriate and reflective of all that has been put in place. And it's for those reasons, Mr. President, that I commend this amendment to this House for its approval. And I don't believe it takes away from what the Senator, and I think this is the third Motion on this subject that you're bringing to the House. So it's showing your seriousness, but I think from your experience at the MNIB, the entire career, that you know the frustrations of dealing with some of the institutional challenges, and the enthusiasm, the ideas, and all that's required to address those chronic and systemic issues or at the GCNA. So we ask you to lean forward with us, put your shoulder to the wheel, roll your sleeves up with us, and see how we can enforce and operationalise the plans that already exist. I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, just by my own observation, I would like to take, have as the lawyers would describe it, a side bar between the mover of the Motion and the mover of the amendment to the Motion because I think we could get through this. But I would just want to take a brief adjournment to have a dual discussion, because there is just a language issue here and an interpretation issue. It's not major, because I think "Both Sides" are saying the same thing, but it's a certain nuance in the language that I just want to discuss with both of you so we can then approach this. So, the House is adjourned for five minutes. And Senator St. Clair and Senator Stiell, could you attend at my Chambers as they would say. Honourable Members, the House now stands adjourned for five minutes.

(Sound of Gavel)

Public Business

Senate adjourned at 2:07 p.m.

Senate resumes at 2:19 p.m.

Mr. President: Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Good afternoon, Mr. President and afternoon Members. Regarding the amendments to the Motion presented by Senator Stiell, as he presented and also as I looked at what it says, the issue of the Senate continues to support, the issues regarding the design and so on of the praedial larceny, of Government design and implementation are more robust, I recognised that in my presentation. So we're not hiding that. There have been efforts that have taken place. And what we are saying here is that we're asking the Senate to support the continued effort, but not just the continued effort, because you would continue to support an effort, and as we say sometime you're spinning top in mud. However, the important point of implementation "of more", "of more" as I told him, is the getaway clause. "Of more" means that we expect, we expect that we will have more robust implementation, more robust execution and, of course, if the farmers are not hearing that they expect more to protect, and more to assist then, of course, you know, I can't leave this hall here because they will be waiting for me outside.

So, your commitment, I will say on the "Government Side" in suggesting and not just suggesting and saying and committing, committing that we're asking the Senate to continue to support and to support implementation of more robust strategies against the fight of praedial larceny, I will accept that. And there is the next part, Mr. President, we will look at the results, to result in a more relief for farmers, improve food security and improve economy. So in the next two months, three months, four months, of course, we would want to know, what is the result? Are we better off in the future? So, with that said, we accept this suggestion of Government's commitment to do more for praedial larceny.

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

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yeah, well, I'm glad we've come to an agreed understanding. Something I want to underscore, more is sometimes mistaken as well, that means more money, and everything's about throwing more money at a problem and that's not what we're talking about here. We have invested more; $100,000 in the Supplementary Appropriation is a demonstration of that, the more in the Budget for this year is a demonstration of that. But what we're talking about here, is applying, is about application, it's about putting the necessary systems in place. It's about the necessary coordination and cooperation that is required, support from our farmers as well, our farmers have a major part to play in this. It's not about looking at them as victims. They also have a part to play in the enforcement of this, and vendors and consumers. And Senator St. Clair, you are in a unique position. The farmers are your constituents. And we all agree there needs to be better coordination amongst our farmers. And part of that responsibility rests on your shoulders. So you have work to do. They have work to do. We have work to do. And what this is calling for is let us come together. The plan is there, it needs refinement, it needs input, and there is an opportunity on Wednesday. It's not a social on Wednesday. It's about getting that input. It's about sharing those ideas and it's about developing this approach together. So, I'm glad we're able to reach a common understanding and understanding the rationale of the amendment that has been put before us. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you.

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

Mr. President: Second Motion Senator St. Clair standing in your name.

Public Business

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, the second Motion standing in my name. This Motion is a Motion on the need for Government to act urgently to secure improved financing for agriculture farmers and fishers and it reads:

WHEREAS farmers and fishers require financing to either start up or to continue their business operations;

AND WHEREAS accessing financing for agriculture and fishers is very difficult;

AND WHEREAS Grenada National Sustainable Development Plan 2035 recognises this challenge and has identified a series of recommendations to reduce this difficulty;

AND WHEREAS a significant part of Government's annual agriculture budget is financed by grant funding;

AND WHEREAS funding for the recommendations in Grenada's National Agriculture Plan 2015-2030 can be realised more from a medium term guaranteed financing and funding mechanisms;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

a) Government act swiftly to facilitate access to agriculture and fisheries financing by farmers, fishers and agri-related enterprises; and
b) Government lead the development of appropriate financing mechanisms including specific legislations that are devoted to fund agriculture and fisheries development such as the Grenada National Development Plan speaks of.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to second the Motion moved by Senator Roderick St. Clair.

Mr. President: Senator Roderick St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, and fellow Members, this Motion is to bring into focus a key matter, a key factor that I have also addressed in our Budget Debate in December. But it's a matter that is, I would say, some people say it's time immemorial, meaning that it exists for many years, the challenge of financing for agriculture. And you will say, well, maybe there are challenges for financing for tourism, there are challenges for financing for health, there are challenges for financing for many things. But my job and my responsibility are to deal with agriculture and fisheries related. So, that is where I would focus. Someone else will deal with the other ones.

I'm not speaking here, Mr. President, about getting money to put in farmers' pocket, so you come and get $20, get $40. That is not the level of this debate and this Motion. Again, it's a sort of similar approach; we need to look at the holistic approach to things. Not I believe, but when you look at how agriculture is funded, in particular. Someone said to me, it's transactional, meaning that it happens now and it's done. It's not programmatic. It's not properly organised. We have several activities, several strategies, several plans, about doing things, but 90% of those things that need to be done, not even at the farmer level, at the national level. The funding for this is in suspense. We'll get to the farmer level in a while.

So, for example, when we look at our Budget, our budget cycle, we say we wanted this for salaries, we'll have this program and when the year up, that's it, and we plan and see how we do the next year. Well, we didn't finish this, so we carry it over the next year. We cannot plan our own food security like that, otherwise anything happen in the world we get scared and worried and we have all big topics about food security and food security. If agriculture is what gives us food, we need to plan better. And in this planning, we need to have resources. There are many types of resources. I am not a student of Economics but I know one of the resources they always speak about is financial resources and when that is not readily available it creates problem. I understand the Government's problem sometimes. You have major projects that you want to get done, you have major plans that you have established but then we have to develop project proposals and hope we get financing. So sometimes the need that we

have today, now, it may take us three years. Sometimes how do we access these monies? So if we try to plan our food security, plan our agriculture like that, we will always be living in anxiety.

We are not sure where we will get the next day and so we ask ourselves why our food import bill is so high? It must be high because the institutions, the organisations and businesses that involve in the selling of food and food products to keep us alive they will continue to ensure that they can bring items in so the Real Value Supermarket will tell you, I spoke to a farmer only this week. He said he have about eighty something sheep and goat, he gave them four. They said they need more. He said if I sell the rest for you how will I continue breeding and increasing? They say well you know, we will have to import in the meantime. So they will continue importing these items and we say well why we have this food import bill? I am not saying the Ministry of Agriculture doesn't want to have a big livestock programme and maybe they have a plan. I have never asked for the plan but maybe there is a plan but the sort of resources that they would need to make that plan work to have the impact, it's not available. So the question is in all of this it brings the point of how do we get these funds at that level?

We have at the same time the Grenada Agriculture Plan 2030, it's a nice plan. Only last night I was reading the plan again and when you look at it BNTF, Ministry of Finance, who will do what but it never say we have $20m that we would need and this is how we will get it. It still depends on that transactional every year budget cycle hoping to do a little piece, a little piece, a little piece. So this plan was since in 2015 and where we are now, I'm sure maybe 10% of it is done. It is not because sometime it is not the will but they don't have the resources.

So what I am saying, Mr. President, at that level, is that we need to have some legislation to guarantee and to support the Government such that the adequate funding that are required for the sort of agricultural investment and programmes that are needed… transformational ones, the monies are available for them in such a manner that it can happen. It may involve permission to secure loans, it may involve different allocation from the central budget but we are not speaking about a one-year programme. We are speaking about almost like in the US where they have the Farm

Bill and the Agriculture Improvement Bills. You have a five-year programme over which you know where the money might be coming from. You might even have some money in a trust that is building and supporting these programmes, so you don't have to worry when December come whether the budget pass where you're getting money to continue that programme. That is at that level.

Then at the farmer level or the enterprise level, if I may say, we also need now to support that but if we have those programmes, that securing of funds and other mechanisms then it becomes simpler. Now if we followed the recently CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting Inter-Sessional, I think they call it, and the President of Guyana speaks about the allocation of over US$100m to support agriculture in the Caribbean where different Governments can access funds to support agriculture developments. They didn't say farmer groups and farmers, the Government. But if the Government doesn't have a programme and the Government does not have a mechanism to take this money and use properly then the money may end up in budget ad hoc programmes. We have programmes; we have agriculture programmes that involve farmers. So at the farmer level, let me give you another example, Mr. President. We also have farmers who want to do activities to support this programme, different agriculture programmes but they have problems accessing finance. The National Sustainability Plan speaks that that is a major issue and we know that, we don't have to debate that. One of the commitments within that plan which I think the plan is adopted and finalised is to be able to look at financing mechanisms that would support our farming industry. Because many times financial institutions are very scared of the farming community and one of the key factors that we have to look at in any programme and any financing is the whole issue of markets, this is very key. Because the market is what is going to guarantee finance and the market will either give you a purchase order which is money or it will give you a contract which is equal to money and this now could be able to drive and support a lot of the other programmes that is happening. I say this to say that as the National Sustainability Plan speaks about, we need to have some action there to not give a farmer money in his pocket but to work and ensure that enabling environment is there. Because for example someone may be planting, let's

say tomatoes, it will take them three to four months, five months to start collecting monies. So they may not have money to service that loan to start with so they need a moratorium. There is moratorium given to all types of loans in this country for all kinds of things but to the Agricultural Sector, to the farmer, if you go to even our own home-grown GDB to get a moratorium for that it become difficult. I don't even want to deal with this at this stage here. I don't want to go there right now, not yet.

So I say this to say that what I am asking for here is for two things, one, for us to support the need for some Legislative, I will say approach to assure there is financing for agriculture. Not our budget for the Ministry of Agriculture programme but for the national agricultural development and transformation, that whole thing. So you have a programme where you know where there are funds, you know how this is going to happen and it's transformative, that's one and we have plans already developed for those. And then, two is how do we create a more enabling environment that would involve better access to finance for supporting.

So for example, sometimes, we make things difficult. There is some irrigation project going on right now and it's a grant where farmers have to spend and then they will get a refund afterwards. We know the farmers we have. Mr. President, I represent the farmers, they are all different size, all different capacities but an irrigation system is $25,000.00 - $30,000.00. Where a farmer could be able spend that to start with to get a rebate? And if you're sure he is going to get this refund, why force him to… many of them may just not get involved. **(Inaudible comments)** Yes, but coming together with 0+0+0 is not going to be three you know, it is going to be zero or minus zero too. **(Inaudible comments)** No. No, no, no I don't want to go to the GDB factor and the banks factor, I don't want to go there ok.

So this, Mr. President, is where we seeing… and then the connection to the market. You might say the farmers have to find their market and that's ok, that's not a problem. The issue is respect or acceptance of those instruments. So the same instruments we spoke about today about the bearer and all of those different shares, how do we use those instruments and take it to a bank and say I have a purchase order, how can I get $10,000.00 now to get some input so I can be able to start

producing something because Real Value and Marketing Board give me a contract to supply and the National Development Plan speaks of its commitment to facilitate that. So all I am asking here is how do we invoke and start implementing aspects of those and that will reduce the anxiety that we have for our own food security. Ok.

Mr. President: Alright, yes. Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, once again I listened to the arguments put forward by the Member on the "Other Side" which studied the Motion that has been presented and wish to offer up some amendments which I will distribute through the Sergeant-at-Arms.

(Sergeant-at-Arms distributing amendments)

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I will run through the amendments. They are more significant than the last, but the arguments, which I will go through shortly, is based on the same principle. So the first recital remains unchanged:

WHEREAS farmer and fishers require financing to either start up or to continue their business operations; remains unchanged. The next recital is a change;

AND WHEREAS accessing finance to agriculture and fishers can be challenging, rather than difficult and I will explain that particular change. The third recital remains unchanged;

AND WHEREAS Grenada National Sustainable Development Plan 2035 recognises the challenge and has identified a series of recommendations to reduce this difficulty. The fourth recital is a change to:

AND WHEREAS Government's annual agriculture budget is financed by external and local resources, I will explain that too. The fifth recital has been deleted because it's actually addressed in the final resolution but I will explain that further too. So then the resolution itself (a) and (b) have been changed. So (a) will now read as:

BE IT RESOLVED the Senate supports:

a). Government's on-going programmes that better facilitate access to agriculture and fisheries financing by farmers, fishers and agri-related enterprises; and

b). Government, as it continues to lead the development of appropriate financing mechanisms and policies that are devoted to fund agriculture and fisheries development as outlined in Grenada's National Sustainable Development Plan.

So those are the proposed amendments. I request a seconder on our side.

Mr. President: Senator Judd Cadet.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to second the amendment to the Motion put forward by the Leader of Government's Business.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. So in Senator St. Clair's, even in the title says Government must act, Government must move swiftly and Government must lead with appropriate mechanisms and we are acting, we are moving swiftly and we are leading appropriate mechanisms. So the bias of the Motion as presented is as if nothing is happening and all of these issues, again we are starting from first principles. So the first recital as I said remains unchanged, the second, it speaks to… the original wording is very difficult… Those difficulties have been identified by Government and I will go through Government's response to some of those difficulties. So we're moving from difficulties to challenges but as I said those difficulties are being addressed. The third recital as I said remains unchanged.

The fourth speaks to… the original recital speaks to the annual budget is financed by grant funding, that is incorrect. Government's annual agricultural budget is financed by both external and local resources. The 2022 budget, 20% of that budget is

funded by grants; the other sources are local or other external resources so the statement isn't correct. I understand what the Member is trying to say but what is proposed as the amendment is an accurate reflection of how that budget is constructed.

The deletion of the fifth recital… Mr. President, what the Member speaks of and he spoke of it extensively in his presentation. The focus of the Motion as presented is on the financing element that he recognises. We recognise the challenges that exist within the sector go far beyond just access to finances and I will speak specifically. The reason for deleting that portion is because it is included in the final resolution. But we spoke of some of the chronic issues again and the fundamental issues that hinder the development of the sector. So he spoke to access to markets, that is a critical piece and there are programmes in place, which I will speak to which seek to address not perfectly but address the issue of access to markets.

There is the issue of agricultural practices that need to evolve. A lot of the agricultural culture that is conducted today is identical to that of 100 years ago or 200 years ago. The industry has changed, the market has changed, the demands have changed, the technology has changed, the economics have changed but our practices still remain in the past. That needs to be looked at, how we evolve. Our farmer population is aging, how do we attract young men and women back into the sector? That is a fundamental issue that needs to be addressed and there are programmes in place to at least start to address that. The small size of our farms, something you spoke of Senator St. Clair speaks to the lack of economies of scale. Why we struggle to do so many things, why small loans cannot be repaid? Why there is the demand for free money, grant or subsidising the sector? How do we bring economies of scale to the industry?

The high cost of external inputs, how do we address those? So what we are talking about goes beyond what the Motion… how the Motion is presented, there are some far more deep rooted issues that need to be addressed. And as I said, there are programmes that are either in place or being developed or being introduced and some of those are just scratching the surface but I believe our focus cannot be as simplistic as just saying access to finance, finance that might not be able to be repaid. It has to go

much deeper than that and we talk about investment in the sector and your opening statement, Senator St. Clair was Government must… Government, Government, Government; this is more than Government. And we talk about the viability of the sector, we talk about investing, that investment in the environment, that enabling environment and there should be an enabling environment that is able to attract, for example, CaneCo, a $50m private investment… not Government. Government provides concessions; Government provides the enabling environment for an investor with deep pockets that can invest in transformational projects that employ dozens and dozens of Grenadians, maybe hundreds of Grenadians that revitalises and reenergises the Sugar Cane Industry that puts hundreds of acres of agricultural lands to productive use for value add purposes, for a market where there is demand for that product, is commercially viable, is sustainable. How do we replicate that at scale? These are the conversations, Mr. President, that we need to be having. These are the types of programmes we need to be putting in place.

So coming to the resolutions; resolution (a) speaks… **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Senate Supports; Government's on-going programmes that better facilitate access to agriculture and fisheries financing by farmers, fishers and agri-related businesses and then (b), that the Senate supports Government as it continues to lead the development of appropriate financing mechanisms and policies that are devoted to fund agriculture and fisheries development as outlined in the National Strategic Development Plan.

Mr. President, Government recognises the challenges that our farmers and our fishers have. Senator St. Clair you talk about… there are two different levels. So one is the level of major investments, so the CaneCo's, how do you attract an investor with $50m to invest to revitalise the sector? And Government clearly has created that environment to at least attract one. We need to attract 10, we need to attract 20. So how do we replicate that? What lessons have we learnt from that that can encourage further investment? Then you have at the enterprise level and that's what I will speak to now and it is not about the $20.00 in a farmer's hand or putting money in his pocket.

So starting with… and you did not want to go to the Grenada Development Bank, he seems to have an allergic reaction to that institution. **(Laughter)** I have a very

different view, Mr. President, because it has a role to play. So there are two funds that have been created, that is the Small Business Development Fund and the Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprise, the MSME Fund. So for the Small Business Development Fund, an additional $13m.; so we're not talking about just a few dollars and a few cents. Thirteen million dollars additionally has gone into that fund since the middle of last year and $12m into the MSME programme. That Small Business Development Fund is highly concessional, 1%. Where can you borrow in this day and age at 1%? One per cent with a grace period of three years, you talked about moratoriums, you pay nothing back for three years, that moratorium is there. One per cent, the first three years, pay nothing back and then you pay that 1% plus principal over the next 10 years, so a 13 year window. You can't get softer than that, Mr. President. That is as close as you will get to free money and nothing in this world is for free and it can't be because farming should be a business. And if you're struggling to pay back with a three year moratorium at an interest rate of 1% then there is something more fundamental that is wrong and our counter support is providing to help with the viability of our farmers and that is up to $40,000.00. So it's not $50m but $40,000.00 for a farmer with one and a half acres or an acre or two acres. They can get an irrigation system for a couple of thousands of dollars or whatever that might be and can deal with the farm input to get if that farm is viable, that is a good kick start that this Government is offering to our farmers.

Then there is the MSME Programme, that is up to $300,000.00, again 1%, three-year grace period, a total payback period of 15 years. So for those farmers who want to do something more ambitious, I think you can do something at a micro small business level that is transformational within that MSME bracket that is significant, that's more than just buying a truck. One per cent for 15 years, three years grace period. That's what this Government is doing, Mr. President. So when we talk about access to finance, this makes a massive difference and there is also the other support facilities through the GDB that have supported, I think to date, over 1,300 loans have been provided at those concessional rates. Supporting over 2,000 jobs and many of those are within our fishers or our farmers or our agro-processers. So to date somewhere in

the region of 400 farmers and fishers have accessed these facilities. This is significant so whatever aversion there is and I know you have spoken in the past about the bureaucracy, the due diligence. You know there's also a history of repayment delinquency. How do we address that? Is it just Government just keeps, just writing off, writing off, writing off? It can't be that, that's the easy answer. So what Government has done is put facilities in place, with substance, with scale, with high concessionality to do some of the things that you are calling for.

And then on the back of that, Mr. President, is the support through the GIDC, in terms of working with those borrowers, working with our farmers and our fishers, looking at the viability of their businesses, working with them to ensure that if they were to access those loans, but first of all helping them to access those loans, in developing their business plans, to qualify for the loans, but to hand hold them. So it's not only that they are able to honour the repayments that are required, but they can also make a success. It's not just about paying off a loan, but they can transform their businesses on however small a scale, but to make them successful, so all of the support facilities that are provided there.

And in addition to that, and I'll just continue under the GIDC, as well as that advice, providing training, so the business plan development, providing relief in terms of customs duty exemptions. So whether it's 100% duty waiver on machinery, equipment, spare parts, whether it's waivers on raw materials, on vehicles, on customs service charges for raw materials for manufacturers, tax credits for training, tax credits for research and development, investment allowances and carry forward of losses provisions. These are all tools that are there to assist our farmers and our fishers. So that's GIDC.

But in addition to that, through SAEP, the Climate Smart Agriculture and Rural Enterprise Programme, this is a six-year programme funded by IFAD and the Caribbean Development Bank with input from the Government of Grenada, which is focused on assisting farmers, improving their livelihoods through skills training, investment in agriculture and looking at some of the new agricultural practices in this changing climatic conditions that we have, improving their production capabilities, introducing new

technologies to fit the changing circumstances. And then through the AGRICOM Programme, and this is a US$4m loan from the World Bank, which again is about improving the livelihoods of small producers. It's looking at creating new markets, it is about how to work within the Private Sector, in terms of the viability of their programmes and again a grant facility, assisting with project development and providing grant funding for them to start.

So, Mr. President, when I look at the original Motion that's presented, it's very limited in its focus which is access to finance and what I believe I have presented is an outline of some of the comprehensive measures that this Administration has put in place to address the very thing that the Senator is asking for. So again we're not starting from first principles, which are why the amendments are worded in such a way, but it's also recognising that wider issue, creating that enabling environment for more investment, investment at scale, investment that is transformational. And it goes far beyond what is presented here. But also those issues of access to market, technology, practices, scale, which programmes I've outlined also speak to. So it's for those reasons, Mr. President, that I believe we take the sentiment that Senator St. Clair is presenting. But I believe what is presented as amendments are more reflective to what is in place and programmes that Government has already put in place. But it's reflective of the challenges that the market faces, that our farmers and fishers face, but as said the measures that are there, that we need to continue to support, that we need to continue to build on. The foundation is there, it's more than a foundation, it is a solid start and if we can continue to build on this, I believe we're stepping in the right direction. Mr. President, I thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion passed as amended.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 17 - Adjournment.

Adjournment

Mr. President: I'm in a disadvantageous position because I have no incentive. Senator **(laughter)** Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Mr. President, can I go on?

Mr. President: Sure.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Okay…

Mr. President: I was only indicating that I have no incentive.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Okay. Mr. President, I would like to raise a couple issues here on the adjournment. The first one, Mr. President, deals with a bridge that is being constructed close to my area. This bridge is on the snake road, which is the road shortly after you get past St. John's Christian and it turns left and leading into my community that is Florida. Now that bridge to me is a basic bridge, I'm not an engineer, started, and I'm subject to correction here, about 18 months ago and it appears that it's a start stop bridge. Right now, based on my observation that bridge is about, maybe about 40% completed. There's a lot of work to be done. I don't know the reason or the reasons for the situation, but it is creating a lot of concern in the area. In fact, a number of folks are saying that the Government is just simply throwing money down the drain, and there are a number of opinions. I'm not going to state any one here, in relation to why that bridge is at that state. I am looking forward, Mr. President, for some immediate action to be taken with the intention of getting that project completed as soon as possible.

In addition, Mr. President, what is happening, as the bridge is not functional the road on the inside, there is no traffic and no gangs on the road, so the road is going into decline. That road serves homes, families and also some agricultural land, so I would like some action to be taken to expedite the whole process and have that bridge completed.

Adjournment

Mr. President: While you're on your feet Senator Joseph, have you thought of writing a letter to the appropriate Ministry, trying to find out why the construct of the bridge is in that way and have you brought it to the attention, the effects that it's having on the community? Because…

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Well I'm…

Mr. President: …you know we don't meet every day, but certainly a letter could have gotten going and, had you had that information instead of coming here to tell us you don't know, you should be saying well this is the reasons given, but I don't agree with those reasons at all. Those reasons are not… so you put yourself at a disadvantage by not being a little bit more proactive.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Okay, thanks for the advice, but Minister of Implementation is right here. Another issue, Mr. President, is one dealing with a young man, Doctor Roland Glean. Now this doctor has been of tremendous help to a number of young people in this country. He at one time was associated with the Midwestern State University and now he's associated with the Illinois University, and he was able to access scholarships, a number of scholarships for young persons in this country, both academic and sports scholarships. I just want to put on record our, on "This Side" here our gratitude to this gentleman, and I know that he will continue to assist, because to me he's a very patriotic Grenadian. Now I mention this because of the fact that there are times people who contribute tremendously to this nation, they fall under the radar, they fall under the radar. So I do hope that whatever is due will be given to this gentleman, because I think he deserves a lot from this nation.

Mr. President, I would like just take a couple minutes to deal with the dialysis crisis that we are facing in this country in relation to kidney issues. And this one is a heart breaking one, Mr. President. I just want to relay two very simple stories. My wife works in the community and she deals with people with these issues, health issues and a lady who had kidney problems, dialysis was recommended, and she said that the

most she could afford to do is to put in the shunts, I think that's the name of it. This little attachment here, and after that she cannot pay for the treatment, because as most of us would know one cycle is about $700 and some persons would have to do three per week. So she said she cannot afford and as a result she placed everything in the hands of God. About a week after she was gone, she was gone.

Mr. President, also there is a young man presently at the hospital and he's 34 years and he's going through that problem, financing. His mom was supporting him or is supporting him. Now, Mr. President, the mom is diagnosed with kidney issues. She has a choice now, to continue paying for him and die, because she does not have the resources to handle both situations. Or pay for herself and allow him, because she was a civil servant, all her monies are gone, all, and she finally made the decision, a very hard one, that she's going to pay for him. She's going to pay for his treatment and a matter of time, because she would not be able to, she can't afford to pay for herself. This situation as I said is a crisis. We need some form of intervention as soon as possible, serious intervention. We've been hearing about kidney issues and kidney issue this and kidney issue that and dialysis here and dialysis there for years, but people continue to suffer and they continue to die. We all are sitting here, Mr. President, one visit to the doctor can change the lives of anyone of us. So I really would like some definite action to take this in terms of providing the facility and reducing the cost to assist. I understand the economic situation but one life going through the lack of dialysis is one too many.

Mr. President, I think I have 10 minutes. I would like to raise an issue here that I raised in the past, not at this forum, not in this House, that is in relation to our ex-soldiers, Mr. President, our ex-soldiers. Most of them are now in their sixties and these are men who were part of our army, the national army, these are men who served, these are men who fought, some of them fought bravely, some of us would remember the Battle of Beausejour, the Battle in Dusty Highway, some of these men fought and they are entering the twilight of their age. Some, once the army was defunct they lost it, because that's what they knew as teenagers and people in their early twenties. Some of them have become destitute. I am asking that these folks be looked into and if they

can be added to the SEED Programme and given some form of relief. And I'm speaking in particular to those who have issues supporting themselves. There are some ex-soldiers who are in good positions, but I'm speaking directly about those who have issues, and need some form of help. Because I think if you serve this nation in whatever capacity and you serve it with distinction and honour you should be rewarded at the end, if you cannot take care of yourself.

Mr. President: Can I make a suggestion to you Senator?

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Yes.

Mr. President: That is why don't you come with a Motion to that effect?

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Okay thanks.

Mr. President: Research it a little bit more, maybe you might be able to identify names of people who are critical and bring a private Members Motion in your own name.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Okay thank you very much for your guidance.

Mr. President: That way there is a Parliamentary record and …the Motion is a little bit more than just an appeal on the debate for the adjournment. You know? It's substantially more, so I would suggest that you contemplate bringing a Motion to that effect. And as I said you can begin to document the persons who you think, and a letter from you to the appropriate authority spelling out and anchoring that in the Motion that you've brought. I've brought a Motion and the Motion was supported. I'm now following up on the Motion, because these are the names of the people who in my judgement I believe ought to be resources and it's really heart rendering the way in which as a community of people we treat our history. Right, and it's right across the board and it's

one of the learnt behaviours. As an oppressed people, we've been taught to forget our past. If you pass by the grave monument in the La Tante Junction and in that junction was one of the battles in the 1951 revolutionary uprising. And if you see the desecration that is taking place there… you know, so we are a people who have been taught to desecrate our own, we don't respect our own, we don't preserve our own.

You can find stamps of Elvis Presley, you cannot find stamp of a single prominent Grenadian who have done something for us in several fields. The first black member of the House of Lords, and I stand corrected on this, is Sir Pitt of Hampstead but you could find no postage stamp of him. As I can tell you, you can find a Grenadian postage stamp of Elvis Presley, right and it's just the way over time. We have been taught to treat our selves. Right, we have been conditioned in this way and it's really, really sad. It is something I don't know how we can correct this. I mean you go to Israel, you don't even have to go to Israel, post something that any Jew believes is an offence to the memory of their suffering in World War II and you will see the uproar worldwide. Well there has never been a human experience in all of the civilisation of mankind to equate to our slavery, yet there is no place in Grenada you can find a symbol paying homage to our fore parents who went through this excruciating… I mean I hear people crying and so on and yes Ukraine and so on, and I can understand that, but as a people who have come out of slavery or partially out of slavery, because this, the world is set up on the order of slavery and this is why we have perpetual poverty in the world economy as a whole. There is not a single symbol anywhere in Grenada of what that represents us. Right.

There's a little symbol of our Amerindian ancestors and you know **(laughter)** you know what, you know what is so troubling about that? The narrative of how our Amerindian forefathers met their end is a narrative based on lies. They didn't jump over any cliff, right. They were all murdered. Genocide was committed against these brave warriors who stood up to defend their land. They were murdered and we need to correct these things you know. As I said no where you can find, there's not a single symbol, there's not a single monument, there is absolutely nothing, like if our fore parents' enslavement never occurred. I mean you go to the places in Europe and they

have shrines and monuments showing how the Jews were gassed and chambered and it's on the news. And for African people there's nothing.

So in the context of that, this is what I'm saying to you. I'm suggesting for your consideration, you come with a Motion. Because whatever we may think about that event, they were Grenadians who believed wrongly or rightly, and I cast no judgement on their belief, but they were Grenadians who heroically fought the most powerful army on earth. And you may conclude that they were foolish, you may conclude that they were stupid, you may conclude… but at least we have to honour their memory, because that's our history. Whether we like the history or not, that's our history, this is what occurred and we need to do that as legislators. So I suggest that to you. Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph: Yes, even March 13 and October 19, we need to do some work here to. Just a minute to wrap up, Mr. President. Mr. President, I have some concerns again in relation to the trafficking in Trinidad, the Trinidad traffickers. I know there was an issue with some boat, but I'm not going there. Mr. President, I asked myself on many occasions who benefits, who really, really benefits from that trade? I sell stuff almost every weekend to the traffickers, I make a change, but who benefits? Does Grenada benefit at all, as a nation from that trade? And let me explain where I'm coming from. Mr. President, I am a trafficker, so I take $100 of my money, EC$100 and I go to Doctor, Senator St. Cyr and I purchase $100 worth of goods, provision or whatever, and I go down to Trinidad. So that $100 is transformed into the goods. I arrive in Trinidad, go to the market, sell that $100 worth of goods and realise TT$1000. What happens after that? I am going to take that TT$1000 and shop in Trinidad, Mr. President. I am going to shop in Trinidad, so the money initially, that was Grenadian money is now spent in Trinidad, because the money generated, but it is spent in Trinidad and I am going to come back up, Mr. President, on a boat full of Trinidad goods and then sell.

Now I am saying this to make the point, Mr. President, that I think something should be done in relation to dealing with CARICOM "foreign exchange". I think at one time we accepted the TT dollars in our banking system, we do not accept it anymore. In

Trinidad there are challenges in relation to buying and purchasing EC dollars and US dollars. If the banking system could be of such that they could accept the Guyanese dollar and the Trinidad dollar, it will facilitate and help a lot, in terms of benefitting. Because as I see it right now, I'm not a banker so I don't understand the fine prints of currency movement, but as a lay person, I think if they can do this, then the trafficker could probably spend 50% of his monies down there and come back up with the other 50%, and invest in some other area. But right now, to me and based on how I see it, the benefit goes into one direction and that is business for the people in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. And I think we need to look at it and see how probably we can benefit from that trade a little more. Okay, Mr. President, thank you very much for your indulgence.

Mr. President: (Inaudible comments) Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to respond to some of the concerns raised by my colleague as regards to, I think he mentioned something about a bridge. While I'm not acutely aware of this specific area that he's speaking about, I'm still a little bit disappointed, Mr. President, because myself and Senator Joseph we do speak bilateral on matters of that nature. You know he will reach out and say, such is the case, we have this issue here. So I'm a little bit surprised that he raised it on the floor here today. Coincidentally, when there was an issue with a roadway, you know passing his home going to where the farmers were, I mean we spoke about it and today that road is under construction. You know, so I thought something like that, he would raise it with me on a one and one, but nonetheless we are going to respond as how we usually do. We're going to look into it and we're going to address it as quickly as possible. So thank you very much for raising it.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Adjournment

Sen. the Hon. Tessa Alexander-St. Cyr: St. Cyr. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to speak to a matter that has been spoken to quite often before and continues to be spoken about. In fact we got a report and it was placed on the Table in this Honourable House this morning, that of the Grenville Commercial Complex. Now, Mr. President, from the time I heard of the project, the Members in this Honourable House would remember that I raised a number of concerns and I continue to raise concerns. And in fact, the report that we have in front of us, causes me to raise even more concerns. And I wish to read an excerpt from the Director of Audit's comments from the Report this morning, with your permission, Mr. President, and it reads:

"*Director of Audit's Comments- Section 9 of the Audit Act CAP. 22A of the Laws of Grenada permits me as Director of Audit, to delegate my responsibility and power under the Act, other than the responsibility…"* *and it goes on*. But, Mr. President, the part that caught my attention was the section that was bolded and italicised, it says "**Breach -** ***However, it must be noted that due process was not followed for the Grenville Commercial Complex Limited, covered entity as per section 3 of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), in that financial statements were prepared for period ended 31st July instead of 31st December as required by section 5 of the PFMA No. 17 of 2015."*** It further states, ***"In addition, this audit was not delegated to BDO by the Director of Audit for the period ended 31 July 2019."***

And it continues, but what it does not state, Mr. President, was the reason for the non-compliance. And this drew my attention and I went to the document and I know this is the adjournment, so we can speak to issues that are of national interest. And that Grenville Commercial Complex does hold the interest of the people of St. Andrew. We've been hearing about it over and over. I've raised it in this House before that the proposed location of the Grenville Commercial Complex is one that is flood prone. We've heard the Honourable Member for Implementation speak to an EIA or Flood Mitigation Study that was going to be done. And you know, Mr. President, I went into this document and I took my time, you know, this is what I normally do, make notes, writing, you know, ask questions to myself, and I noted that in 2019 under the PFMA

No. 17 of 2015, the Government invested $510,000 into the Grenville Commercial Complex for 51% shares of stock. And the Grenada Co-operative Bank owns the other 49%. I also noted that the Minister for Finance, in presenting his Budget Statement, estimated that that said project will create an estimated 60 construction jobs. And I went down, the Minister for Finance indicated in the 2021 Budget that Government allocated $8m to the complex for preparatory work and that that work is well advanced. And I tried to figure out what was really going on, because based on the Audited Financial Statements that we were given this morning, I think you said, Mr. President, you had 2020, we had 2019, so it shows 2018/2019.

And for 2018, the statements are showing that this Grenville Commercial Complex Ltd. has a loss of EC$111,976. It further indicates that the same project has a loss for 2019 of EC$117,320 dollars. So that's a total of EC$229,296. We have not yet seen the Report for 2020. And I'm asking myself, what is really going on with the Grenville Commercial Complex, because people have a lot of interest in it, a lot of interest. And we keep hearing that it's going to start this year but we still have not seen a report from the EIA. And we still have so many questions about this Grenville Commercial Complex. So, Mr. President, I stand here today to raise some concerns, to raise some concerns, to ask for some more transparency as to what is going on with the Grenville Commercial Complex. And if I am misspeaking, Mr. President, I'm misspeaking according to the Report that was handed to us. So, I want to raise some concerns about that and ask those who are responsible to maybe give us some more information on that.

Mr. President, I also wish to speak to the issue of an emerging trend and you might think, well, every time Senator St. Cyr comes here she speaks of an emerging trend. And we're seeing some emergence of youth violence, particularly amongst our male. Being a mother of boys, I have to, I see it as my responsibility. First of all, to use this House, this platform to make a clarion call to our young men, not just to respect law and order, but to respect themselves, to respect those who teach, who interact with them, the communities that they are living in, and to respect their families. And I'm not condoning any behaviour, any negative behaviour of youths, Mr. President, but I grew

up with a statement that was impressed on me, "the only thing that you have is your name." And that stuck with me, "the only thing you have is your name." At the end of it, you don't ever want to bring your name into disrepute. So again, a clarion call to young men to behave in a manner that is appropriate. But also to ask us as leaders, as adults, to reflect on our own behaviours that may be influencing others to behave negatively. Because you see, Mr. President, while we like to point fingers, and I've heard it, the young men this, the mothers are not doing this, the fathers are not doing this, the schools are not doing this, the churches are not doing this, this person isn't doing this. And I stand here, and I make no reservations and no excuses, in saying that, we are all complicit, we are all complicit. All of us, we pass them; we observe that they're doing negatives and we conclude, these are not my boys, these are not my children and so we pass them along the way. We observe them needing a little help and we pass them straight. And you know, I had a conversation with a group of young men, Mr. President, I smiled because I remember in my Maiden Speech in this Honourable House, I said, "I have a thing for young men." And I remember some of the Members on the "Other Side", watched me and smiled. But I have a thing for young men. And so, I went to speak to a group of young men. And in having this conversation with them, one of them said to me, Ms. Tessa, this is how they call me in the community. He said, "Ms. Tessa, you know something, they…" and the "they" he was referring to was Government, he said, "They are giving us what we want, but not what we need." And I went home, and I reflected. And I continue to reflect, because that's a very profound statement. They need guidance, they need support. Some of them come from homes that are broken. Some of them have no father figure. Some of them have no male role models. And I remembered a couple years down the road, I don't believe he was doctor yet, but he is now Doctor, Dr. Didacus Jules spoke about our boys being in crisis. And over the years, in my humble opinion, we had not taken notice of that, our boys being in crisis. And so, I did, you know, a little bit of research, because I hate to talk off my head, even though sometimes when I come here, you know, the Members on the "Other Side" would make it look as if I am not able to do research. In fact, they challenge my ability to do proper research. And I did some research and there was this forum that was held,

organised by the Ministry of Education, and St. George's University, that focused on boys under achievement. And a major assertion was that there was a tendency towards simplistic solutions. And there was a need for holistic solutions. So we tend to look for some simplistic solutions to addressing the issues and not using this holistic broad-based approach. And sometimes we, you know, focus, yes, on the peer pressure, on the school environment and so on, as I said, but really and truly, the issue that we're seeing is multifaceted. There are lots of pulls and tugs, there are lots of pushes and pulling in dealing with the issue. So much so that leading scholars on gender argue that real crisis does not reside with boys per se, but instead, it's a crisis of masculinity. **(Time bell rings)** And so, Mr. President, I wish that we would, you know, sit back, reflect and do some serious soul searching and have some serious conversations, deep conversations. Because you see, if we do not arrest this problem now, Mr. President, what is going to happen, is that down the road, it will not just be affecting our boys where they will be openly aggressive to just people close to them, but they would also have impact on others' lives, the ladies they get married to, the children that they have. And so, it is imperative that we, as a nation, look carefully at this issue. It may seem simple. It may seem as if there is a low prevalence at the moment, but the impact is far reaching. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: I was rather astonished. Well, maybe that's a wrong selection of language, not astonished, when the incidents occurred a week or so ago and was circulating on the media and it prompted the attention of the nation. I had to ask myself where I was at the moment because flashing on my television screen was a lawyer who presented himself as being so shocked by the events. But in an earlier video, that lawyer himself was seen brandishing a gun, using a set of expletives and curse words. And let me point out, as you know, the use of obscene language is a criminal offence, it's a chargeable offence, you can be fined and convicted in a Court of Law. But here was this goodly gentleman pontificating when just a few weeks earlier, he was the worst example of what every parent would dread. He had a gun, he was pointing the gun and using a stream of curse words, in the presence, I think there was a police officer. I

haven't heard what has happened to the case since. But if on the one hand, he can then come and condemn the action of young people who are fighting, but he himself was not only in breach of the Law, totally disrespectful to the police in authority, by using a string of obscene words in the presence and hearing at the top of his voice, the most despicable form of behaviour, young people don't have to travel far. And so he's presenting himself now as this meek and mildest… you know, we can't live these double standards, you know, we can't live these double standards. He should be the last person to have spoken because he has set an example, in breach of the Law, in breach of authority, and in breach of respect and he's an officer of the Court. I say no more on this issue. Honourable Members… sorry.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I am just somewhat compelled to respond to some of the concerns raised by my dear colleague, Senator St. Cyr, basically, regarding the Grenville Commercial Complex. Mr. President, this is a very important project to the community and people of Grenville, and St. Andrew, wider St. Andrews, and as such, we have taken a structured approach to this project and hence the reason why we have this partnership between the Grenada Co-operative Bank and the Government of Grenada. But from what I deduce from my dear colleague Senator presentation, there seem to be something nefarious going on, I don't know. Currently, the Chairman of that Board, the Grenville Commercial Complex Board is the Manager, but is just outgoing Manager of the Grenada Co-operative Bank. I don't want to go into that, but I just want to mention that.

So, secondly, the project is currently at the Procurement Board for its final approval from no objection. We had a meeting scheduled this week with the Board to trash out the final details before that, that didn't come off. So we're looking to have that meeting next week. So, within the next week or two, a contractor will be identified for the implementation of the Grenville Commercial Complex Project, and that is a fact.

Mr. President, as regards to the Flood Mitigation Study; that study has commenced and contracts have been issued to a suitable firm and that is on the way. So I don't know, we have said also, the Sìmon Cultural Centre, a contract have been

awarded to Kenny's Trucking where he will start in the coming week or so you see construction work. So I do not know, what is… the whole issue of the breach from my reading of the comments, it's not a material breach, it just had to do with time or so. It's something that we will raise with the Board, so that they can tidy up going forward. So, I don't want, I don't think…

Mr. President: (Inaudible comments) …successive things of losses, that's what they were reporting. I don't know if there's an explanation for it. But then again, there's the Public Accounts Committee, of which the Leader of the Opposition is Head of that Committee. But I think the questions that you, one of the critical questions and I don't know if you missed it, is that the Director of Audit, in the Audit Report is reporting that in one year they lost one hundred and something thousand dollars. I think she was seeking an explanation for those losses.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Sure. Let me let me explain. Now, we're talking about a company, that's an initial start-up company, alright, so in terms of information, and whatever losses that can be made available, alright. So the whole fact of the matter is there is nothing irregular going on and that is what is being purported, that something nefarious is going on, whatever. That is not the case.

Mr. President, companies go through challenges, companies do have losses. And the fact is being presented here, the project is an important project. We're going to move forward and the whole idea of the project is that it's a Commercial Complex, spaces are going to be rented, revenue are going to start generating once the project is completed. It's an investment. So, what is happening right now, the company, yes, minimal activities taking place. Hence the reason why those losses are represented in that manner, because you have administrative matters on-going. But I say this in this Honourable House, that there is nothing that is irregular, or improper that is being tendered with this Board. I say that with all the confidence, not only just of the Chair, but of the Members of that Board. And I say that with that strong confidence, because of who is there. Mr. President, the Speaker of this Honourable House is a Director on

that Board. Yeah. So I say this, just to bring that clarity for the public so we don't leave here…. Yes. The Audit indicated that, in terms of the time for which the reports was supposed to be submitted, that is an issue and we have seen this with other Statutory Bodies, where we have late submission of Reports. But I think it is somewhat a little bit disingenuous to insinuate that. And I think it's important that we do not leave here this evening… I do not want the public to get that impression in any way whatsoever. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to speak on two key matters. I would take any one first. The first one I will take is the issue of airlift out of Grenada. You may recall, I may have mentioned this a few times and may have spoken in the media about this matter, would have had communication also with the Minister for Agriculture, to see and also meeting with the exporters of fresh fruits, and also the fisher folks, because that is a key way to increase our revenues and contribution to the GDP and that has been affecting us very sadly.

I must say that we have made great progress. And I will say, to me from where I sit, I want to commend the Minister for Civil Aviation, Honourable Clarice Modeste-Curwen for her intervention, sometime in late November with a phone call I got unexpectedly, Senator, Senator, we have to, we have to come and together, we have to get this thing, let's see what we can do, we must do something. And so, I want to make special recognition of her effort. **(Applause)** First time I've worked with her in that way and she was able to call together quickly, the Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Fish, and of course, the exporters meeting seven/eight in the night, along with her PS, which has been doing a great job, and we were able to craft some approaches and with the support also of Mr. Ince. You know, he don't like to talk a lot, but he's a good man of action, out of the Spice Isle Fish House was able to sort of play a lead role in this whole process, such that we are able now to have a chartered flight for the next 10 months, which is basically underwritten by him in that whole collaborative partnership, such that

exporters can have up to 50,000 pounds of additional space for fish and produce to leave this country at least once a week. So this is good news for farmers and fishers, and it's good collaboration. And, that is the sort of collaboration when I speak about earlier on that can bring results to this country. And so, we really commend the Minister and her team, of course, commend also exporters for understanding that whole tripartism. And of course, we have some other negotiations that are taking place in the back end, with the service providers to improve efficiencies and so on. But this is a done deal, I would say. So, this is a good day for our farmers, agriculture. This Monday was the second trip out and they were able to reach close to the 50,000 pounds, which helped to reduce and keep the costs down for that charter. That's the first comment.

The second comment relates to I will say, an opportunity that we had, now have again, and it needs to be maybe brought here. I know I also would have had some questions and also some statements in the Budget Debate pertaining to Government… I must call Government every time, they are the ones who are supposed to be doing, as it relates to Treaties pertaining to enabling and facilitating, leveraging more value for our agriculture, and our whole biodiversity. And in particular, in this case, I want to speak to the issue of geographic indication. Geographic indication in a nutshell, basically speaks about products or services connected to a specific origin, because of particular, characteristic of the people, how they do things, what we refer to as the terroir, which relates to temperature, the condition, all of these things, make something something. So they speak about champagne, they speak about the Sea Island cotton out of Barbados. And in Grenada, sometime again 2007/2008 there was a drive towards getting this geographic indication for soursop, nutmeg, cocoa, and bee, honey from Grenada. And of course, I know there were some feverish activities connecting to having the Bill, the Geographic Indication Bill, it was drafted, to get to Parliament. It's still in waiting. I learnt recently it would be in the AG's office in about three weeks. This is week one, which have already gone. So I'm looking for two weeks and I'm monitoring closely.

You may say, why? Why is because in that whole process of those products identified, the GCNA would have then, before I got into the organisation, would have been working on their end. I was working on soursop on the other end from the

Marketing Board side and GCNA would have advanced, very advanced stage. We had a meeting about two weeks ago with some of the regional persons spearheading this, and the specification is what they call it. You write up how, what makes the nutmeg so special. That document actually is in a state to be presented within the EU within this whole arrangement with the CARIFORUM and the EPA and all of those things, such that it can be registered. And, we can say, the nutmeg from Grenada, Grenada nutmeg is special not just because we say it special, now you have evidentiary and it's validated and it's global and that in itself can add more value to your product immediately. It's like a new fresh air and that is significant. However, Mr. President, the challenge we face right now is that normally even if it's in the correct stage because we don't have… it is a mutual arrangement. Because Grenada doesn't have the G.I. Bill in the Parliament and passed here, there would be difficulties in having it registered. So essentially the value or the potential value is still latent, it's held back because of the lack of that Bill coming to the House and Houses.

So this call here is to do two things, to alert Grenada and our Nutmeg Farmers in particular and of course the potential that lies ahead of us. And also speaking to the Government because they are the ones that have the Bill, they started it already. And may say well in your language why GCNA didn't spearhead the Bill, it's a good point too but the Government was spearheading it. And so we need to have this Bill move very quickly and so we are calling on the Leader of Government's Business and his team to do some nudging. The Minister for Agriculture is also nudged on that so that we can fast track this process and be able to have this. So this doesn't even involve much money. It's a process so I wanted to make note of these two key factors. Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I just want to use this opportunity just to make a brief statement or comment as it relates to the issue that we would have seen over the past few days, spate of violence that was circulating on social media. I too want to add my voice to that, Mr. President, because as we know, Mr. President, these things as we know is a light spark that can get into a

heavy blaze and we must nip it in the bud and I want to add my voice as a young person speaking to my peers, speaking to other young people out there that we must respect each other. Respect is important, respect for each other is important in building a society that we want to live in because there will always be conflicts, we will never agree on issues or on things but we have to respect each other whether it's our opinion on issues, our differences on certain things, we must respect each other.

But, Mr. President, this thing was circulating and it was circulating on social media and people was sharing it and people was commenting and people was giving their commentary and opinion on it and that's what happens in a modern society where you have gadgets and where people… the first thing that happens is that instead of throwing water on the fire, you add gasoline by taking out your phone and hyping up the situation because you want to be relevant on social media. You want social media to see what's trending. Now, Mr. President, yes in a modern society we may say this is a modern society but in a modern society we must keep very strong our traditional values. Our traditional values, Mr. President, as respect is important in a modern society. We're talking about a future for ourselves as young people, if we don't have respect, if we don't carry some of those traditional values, Mr. President, what happens? This modern society that we're talking about will never happen it will be dystopia state, it will be chaotic. So we must ensure that mutual respect for ourselves, respect in general for ourselves, for our friends, for people in authority, for families, for communities must be held very dear to our hearts.

But, Mr. President, I also want to say this and my friend made the point as well, through you, Mr. President, the Honourable Senator Dr. St. Cyr, we need to reflect on our actions, all of us, she made the point. Yes, Mr. President, and if we are very honest with ourselves some of us will see that there were actions that we should have also condemned and we never did. Actions such as, Mr. President, when we said no Carnival and young people took to the streets… children and some of us, Mr. President, I have seen with my own eyes celebrated on social media, some of us never condemned it. We have seen it, Mr. President, with our own eyes, Mr. President. Leaders, Prime Ministers contributing to people breaking the Law basically, we've seen

it with our own eyes, who condemned it? So yes you are right, we need to reflect on our actions, Mr. President, we need to reflect on some of the things that we are condoning and these sometimes, Mr. President, as my dear friend mentioned, these are some of the things we see and these are the light blaze that starts and we don't put them out and then the fire starts. And then people wanting to point fingers.

Mr. President, you are right as well, double standard. Some things, Mr. President, we need to recognise it as double standard. Mr. President, we also need to reflect, Mr. President, because when we see Government is doing their best with initiating certain programmes and we're not encouraging young people to take those programmes seriously but instead we discourage our young people. Programmes such as the M-Power Programme, let's reflect on the number of young men lives that this programme is touching, taking away young men from on the blocks. Young men, Mr. President, that all they want is a chance so that they can have a shot in life. But some of us are not encouraging them to take these programmes seriously, some of them call it hand outs and we try to create that dark cloud around those programmes so that young people don't feel encouraged to be part of it. Yes, we have to reflect, Mr. President, on our actions. How our actions are contributing to young people becoming sometimes complacent, how our actions are contributing to young people not accessing and harnessing the opportunities…

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Mr. President: …It's outside of the Chamber but it is within the presence of the Parliament. From here where I sit, I can see a young lady wrapped in a bath towel, could you have the police officer eject her off of these premises, please. This is Parliament man. Sergeant-at-Arms could you move immediately and have the police officer eject this person from on the perimeters of our Parliament? Completely off the premises of the Parliament, could she be put into the public road? You may continue Senator.

Adjournment

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you again, Mr. President. I hope I can get my trend back… **(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)** …certainly, Mr. President. So I just want to say this that we must certainly see those signs in our communities and in our country and when we recognise them, Mr. President, we must call it out, we must put that water on those small fires and so, Mr. President, they will not be ablaze.

My direct words to the young people of this country is that let us be the role models that we… let us build the society that we really want in this country. We don't want a society that is being entrenched in violence. We don't want a society where we have no respect for our people in authority. We want a society where there is mutual respect, where we love and care for each other and the only way we can do that, Mr. President, not just saying it in words but exhibiting it in our actions. And so, Mr. President, I want to make those few comments on this issue. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Senator Mc Queen.

Sen. the Hon. Shirley Mc. Queen: Mr. President, thank you. I was not going to say anything but after listening to Senator Judd, I just want to make a comment on the gambling houses that is popping up in every street corner in our communities. And I would like to say today, if we do not do something about it, it would be one of the biggest cancers Grenada is going to suffer and I do hope we are putting in place facilities to help these young men when they get addicted to the one hand bandit. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, this House now stands adjourned.

The Sitting of the Senate adjourned sine die at 4:13 p.m.

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