



GRENADA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

**Fifth Session of the Tenth Parliament**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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**SENATE**

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2022

## Table of Contents

<b>Attendance .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Prayers .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Motions .....</b>	<b>4 - 9</b>
<b>Bills .....</b>	<b>9 - 33</b>
<b>Adjournment .....</b>	<b>33 - 41</b>

***Sitting of the House of Senate held at the Parliament Chamber,  
Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Friday May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022.***

***Attendance***

**PRESENT**

Mr. President

Senator the Honourable Chester Humphrey

*in the Chair*

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

**ABSENT**

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

**Prayers  
Motions**

**The Sitting of the Senate began at 11:09 a.m.**

**Mr. President:** Good morning Honourable Members. Senator the Honourable Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway:** Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning all. May we all pray?

**(Senate Prayer was said)**

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

**(The Lord's Prayer was said)**

**Mr. President:** Pray be seated. Honourable Members...

**(Gavel sounds)**

**Mr. President:** ...this sitting of the House now commences.

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 3 - Motions.

**Mr. President:** Excuse me a second. Okay, it's an abridged Order Paper. One second Honourable Members. I thought that there would have been an item for word from the President, so... Leader of Government's Business. Yes... well no you don't have to stand... Honourable Members, I was thinking that we were under the regular Order Paper **(laughter)** for a moment there. Honourable Members I would wish us to stand for a moment of silence as we pay our respects and tributes to the following: the untimely passing of Celia Clyne Edwards, QC, an illustrious daughter of the soil who has made a significant contribution to another leg of the State so to

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

**Motions**

speak in the area of jurisprudence. She unfortunately left us recently, as well as Ms. Judy Williams, an outstanding Grenadian social activist who has made an enormous contribution to the lives of countless numbers of ordinary Grenadians. She again left us rather untimely, and I think it's fitting for this House to stand for a moment of silence in recognition of these two outstanding citizens and the contributions they would have made to improve the quality of life of the citizens of this country.

Thirdly, of recent vintage, sometime last week, the people of Cuba, the Cuban Government suffered a horrific act in which there was an accident resulting in the loss of numerous lives. The people of Cuba have suffered quite immensely under the blockade which continues today, notwithstanding that the views of the vast majority of the world's people, is that such a blockade is unfair and ought to be removed, it's inhumane. The UN General Assembly has consistently over about 20 to 30 years, consistently every year passed a resolution calling for the removal of this blockade, and as a result of this accident a very prominent hotel landmark in Cuba was significantly destroyed, resulting in loss of life. I think it is appropriate for us who have benefited so much from the generosity of the Cuban people, as well as the world who has benefited from the generosity of the Cuban people, for us to also include them as we stand in a moment of silence, to reflect on the lives of those who have been lost and who are no longer amongst us in a physical sense. So Honourable Members, could we please stand as a moment of silence on this?

**(Moment of silence observed)**

**Mr. President:** Thank you very much. Mr. Clerk can you please get the appropriate condolence cards? One we would send to each of the surviving families of these two great Grenadian women and one we can send for onward passage to Cuba to the Cuban Ambassador here. I don't know if time would afford us if we can do it now, if we can get each Member, it will be better to do it that way, to get each Member to sign. And if those three cards can be procured now, so it could be done during the session I will very much appreciate it and the appropriate messages be appended as part of the cards when we send them out. Thank you very much. Leader of Government's Business.

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

**Motions**

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank...

**Mr. President:** For the time being Senator Norland Cox.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** For the time being. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to present to this Honourable House a Resolution standing in my name, in the Senate standing in my name:

**Resolution for the purposes of section 107 (2) of the Representation of the People Act Cap. 286A:**

**WHEREAS** it is provided by section 107 (1) of the Representation of the People Act Cap. 286A, (hereinafter referred to as that "the Act"), that the Governor-General may make regulations generally for giving effect to the provisions of this Act;

**WHEREAS** section 107 (1) (c) provides that the Governor-General may make regulations prescribing the symbols to be used on every ballot paper and the mode of allocation of such symbols to candidates;

**WHEREAS** section 107 (2) provides that regulations made under the Act is subject to affirmative resolution;

**WHEREAS** Regulations have been made to insert a new symbol to be used on ballot papers under the Representation of the People (Election Symbols) Regulations Cap. 286A;

**AND WHEREAS** it is now expedient that Representation of the People (Election Symbols) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations, 2022 attached hereto as a Schedule be approved by the Senate; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that pursuant to section 107 (2) of the Act, the Representation of the People (Election Symbols) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations of 2022 be now approved.

**(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)**

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** But I did correct it initially. I did make that correction, Mr. President.

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

**Motions**

**(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)**

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Oh in the reading...

**(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)**

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** I did, I did. I did come back and say the Senate. Yes, yes. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, as regards to the schedule before us, this resolution before this Honourable House this morning, Mr. President, is as we're in the season of elections, Mr. President, from time to time those symbols are so required for persons who may wish to partake in the general elections. And of course the Governor-General having the authority to insert such symbol, so that persons can be allowed to participate in the general elections. As you know symbols are part of the process and the symbol as part of this resolution is the "*smiling sun*", Mr. President. So, Mr. President, this is the Resolution that is before this Honourable House at this point in time for approval. Thank you.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. President:** There's no debate?

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion approved.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Cox.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to present to this Senate a Resolution standing in my name:

**Resolution for the purposes of section 107 (2) of the Representation of  
the People Act Cap. 286A:**

**WHEREAS** it is provided by section 107 (1) of the Representation of the People Act Cap. 286A, (hereinafter referred to as "the Act"), that the Governor-

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

**Motions**

General may make Regulations generally for giving effect to the provisions of the Act;

**WHEREAS** section 107 (1) (c) provides that the Governor-General may make Regulations prescribing the symbols to be used on every ballot paper and the mode of allocation of such symbols to candidates;

**WHEREAS** section 107 (2) provides that regulations made under the Act is subject to affirmative resolution;

**WHEREAS** regulations have been made to insert a new symbol to be used on the ballot papers under the Representation of the People (Election Symbols) Regulations Cap. 286A;

**AND WHEREAS** it is now expedient that the Representation of the People (Election Symbols) (Amendment) Regulations, 2022, to attached hereto as a Schedule be approved by the House of Representatives; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that pursuant to section 107 (2) of the Act, the Representation of the People (Election Symbols) (Amendment) Regulations, 2022 be not approved.

Mr. President, before us is another resolution seeking to do the same, as the Governor-General do have the authority to allow for the insertion of new symbols as part of the electoral process. And the Schedule is speaking to the new symbol that would be inserted, symbol number 36. Section 36 is the Osprey Bird, very interesting Osprey Bird. It looks a little bit robotic but that is the new symbol that is before this Honourable House for approval, Mr. President. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. And just to correct, this resolution is before the Senate for approval. Thank you very much.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. President:** One second... be approved. I'm trying to get this to move. Sorry... Just give me a minute... my computer seems to have stuck. Okay.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**(Gavel sounds)**



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

**Motions**  
**Bills**

**Motion approved.**

**Mr. President:** Leader of Government's Business. Oh Senator Garraway. Okay.

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 4 - Bills.

**Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway:** Mr. President, I rise to introduce for first reading a Bill, shortly entitled Mutual Exchange of Information on Taxation Matters (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

**Clerk:** A Bill to amend the Mutual Exchange of Information on Taxation Matters Act Cap. 202D to strengthen Grenada's Regulatory Framework for the automatic exchange of information by removing deficiencies identified during the peer review process, shortly entitled, Mutual Exchange of Information on Taxation Matters (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

**Mr. President:** Senator Garraway.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway:** Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. Mr. President, the Bill before us today, seeks to amend the Mutual Exchange of Information on Taxation Matters Act, Cap. 202D, to strengthen

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

**Bills**

Grenada's Regulatory Framework for the automatic exchange of information by removing deficiencies identified during the peer review process, which was mentioned not too long ago. Mr. President, implementing the recommendations made by the Global Forum during the peer review process, will bring Grenada in conformity to accepted Laws that have been established by this Forum.

It is critical for us to look back for a little while as to what brought us here, why are we here? And as we have said in the first amendment that was made to this Bill some time ago, the Economic Forum has responsibilities for quite a lot in terms of the members, largely European countries. And there is this move to ensure that members or citizens from those jurisdictions who have been investing in Small Developing States like ours, be it in the CBI, be it in other real estate business and so forth. They are on this move now to ensure that they're able to capture from their citizens taxation, or to get them to contribute towards their local economy, in terms of taxation.

So where are we today? We are here at this point to ensure that with this piece of legislation there will be an automatic transfer of information to those jurisdiction if they so ask. And they say it's mutual, so if we have citizens in those jurisdictions, we can make requests for those taxation information and vice versa. If their citizens are here, they can make that request but its automatic transfer. And one may say well, that's how the world goes, but there is a bigger problem here, Mr. President, a bigger problem.

I remember the last time I was here in this Honourable House, I said that every time Small Island Developing States make a move towards sustainable economic development, by introducing instruments, legal instruments that can provide them with resources to build their economies, those big countries, first world nations find a way to stop it. And I remember speaking about the Banana Industry and what they have done to it, and then I said what next. We said the CBI, and we had to come here and pass international tax regulations, because again if we didn't do it we were going to be blacklisted. And we are at the same place here today. If we do not pass this today our country can be blacklisted. And what does that mean, Mr. President? We will lose our correspondent banking privileges. So we have business people on the "Other Side", Senator De Allie, we have Senator Mc. Queen.

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

**Bills**

If you have to buy anything from outside, you have to use your local currency to buy foreign currency. If you lose that corresponding banking privilege you shut the economy down, because you would not be able to purchase anything from the outside.

So this is critical. We have to do this, but at the same time how onerous it is for Small Island Developing States who try to find a way to provide relief for their countries. We have to feel the pain. The CBI has been doing extremely well for this country and we've seen with the pandemic and we were able as a Government to provide stimulus packages and assistance for workers and some employers who have lost their businesses, and workers who've lost their jobs and so forth, got support because there was a little room.

But critically when the CBI was introduced, we created that contingency fund of 40% of the intake from the CBI, goes into this fund that will ensure that in the event of a natural disaster or a pandemic like we've had, a health emergency, we can tap into that resource to bring relief to the nation. So the CBI programme did a lot for this country during this two, well I almost, I often forget it... I'm speaking to people and like two years of my life lift away and I don't remember it, and I have to pull myself and say yes, the pandemic where everything was shut down. But during that time, we still had to pay salaries and do the necessities and we were able to do that because the CBI helped us in this regard.

Now you're seeing a pathway has been created and the European Union would have introduced legislation already, and by 2025 the CBI as we know it would be no more. Because they put the squeeze in, that one of the value of the CBI programme, because Grenada have this arrangement, this schengen visa with the European Union. So you have a Grenadian Passport, you have visa free access to all the European Countries, and they're saying okay if you don't change it you're going to lose that privilege, so then people who want to get into Europe wouldn't be so energised to do so, because it has been removed. So clearly there is an attack right now on the CBI. And, Mr. President, when I listen to some of the pronouncements by the parachuter as to what he is going to do for the young people of the country and so on and I am asking, have you taken time off to figure out where those money is going to come from? So if you would not be able to do it, it's just a

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

**Bills**

pie in the sky, idle chatter. And I just want to say to my people we have to be very mindful that the next few years are going to be turbulent. Based on what I am seeing and what we are reading from the economic forum, the next two years are going to be very turbulent.

I saw an article yesterday penned by one of our brilliant minds, Dr. Kari Grenade and she spoke of the stress from the external shocks, the stress that will be imposed upon small States, Grenada and others in terms of being able to provide employment because the industries that will fuel this will be under serious stress so Tourism, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, all these areas she highlighted. So then you have to start questioning what will happen in the next three years. Steady hands you need to make sure that you keep this economy above water. It is not just saying things as word come to your mouth and just jump out; you have to keep it above water. So, Mr. President, we are seeing staring us in the face difficult times.

So let's look at what the Bill says: Clause 2, amendment of section 16, paragraph (a) repeals and replaces subsection (2) in order to prevent financial institutions, persons and intermediaries from adopting practices intending to succumbent the reporting and due diligence procedures under the automatic exchange of information regime. Paragraph (b) says insert a new section (2B) which imposes a penalty of \$50,000.00 on summary conviction and a term of imprisonment for two years for making a false statement regarding information of self-certification. What this is saying is clear language, Mr. President, every measure has been put in place right now to ensure that the information is transmitted to the parties requesting it and if anyone, be it an institution, an intermediary or the citizen himself as an investor would make a false declaration, there are penalties, \$50,000.00 on summary conviction. The point here, Mr. President, this is as serious as you would think that we just have to make it do. I listened to the Minister for Finance in the "Other Place" and he said this prayer some time ago and he said **"Lord grant us the serenity to accept the things that we can change, wisdom to deal with those that we can't."** This one we need the wisdom to make the right decision and that is to pass it because the repercussion is going to be greater for the country if we don't.

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

**Bills**

Clause 3 amend section 21 (1) by repealing and replacing paragraph (h) to ensure that in cases where a reporting financial institution appoint a third party as its agent to carry out duties and obligations imposed on it by the regulations liability remains with the financial institution. So yes you can hire an agent to interface or to provide the necessary information but if that person makes a mistake and report wrongly, the financial institution is still liable. So you can't get away. But it is not all doom and gloom, we're going to find a way and we have to find a way to be able to continue to grow our economies. If we go back for a while and we think of when banana was king and I know most of us from St. Andrew's we went to school on the strength of the Banana Industry and the Nutmeg Industry. I can say of that and I can share of my story how on weekends I had to run through two and a half acres of land to pick up nutmeg and I had to do that in one and a half hours to be able to come back down by 11:30, clean it and come back 11:30 to sell it in the Pool because if I didn't do that the next week going to be difficult. And I did that for about 3 years and when circumstances changed a little I tried to do it thereafter and every time I came back down, Mr. President, it was after 12 the Pool long closed so I couldn't sell it but then the need was not as great as then. I see Brother Matthew laughing because you know what I am talking about. And then banana was king and you had to do the same thing and banana was removed. Ivan desecrated our Nutmeg Industry. We found CBI and this do well for you and now that is under attack. Where do we go from here? We need to have innovative leadership and a strong hand to take you through these next couple years that seems to be difficult on the horizon. Mr. President, with these... **(Inaudible comments)** safe hands, thank you very much for the correction my brother. With these words, Mr. President I present the Bill for its second reading. **(Applause)**

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. President:** Senator De Allie.

**Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie:** Mr. President, thank you very much for the opportunity and good morning to colleagues. Mr. President, I, like the mover of

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

**Bills**

the Bill, I know we have very little choice on this and if we don't they will find ways to pressure us in our own jurisdiction in many other forms. So the man with the big stick is enforcing as usual.

My concern of course is the fine, I see a fine here of \$50,000.00 and I am assuming with the reciprocity of this Bill the fine could be \$50,000.00 pounds, US or EC or Euro or whatever the case may be and incarceration could be in any country based on how this is written. So I say that just for clarity on my side to understand that reciprocity extends to that sort of engagement. You know, Mr. President, when we do these things and we have to exchange information we never say who meets the cost of the information exchange. When we did all the things years ago with our banks with <sup>1</sup>FATCA and all of that and they had to do all these back office changes and upgrades to their systems to provide the information and the necessary, nobody said to us, listen we will help you meet your cost in order to enforce these new amendments or regulations or whatever the case may be and Laws that insisted that we do.

In Grenada if you have to open an account in a financial institution, it may take you a week depending on the paper work and the checks and so on. You can walk into a bank in the US and in a few hours you get a bank account and that is the reality. And when you look at the disparity in how they do these things, we have more Laws against anti-money laundering and terrorism financing than they do and they are the biggest jurisdictions in the world when it comes to money moving and CBI Programmes. But yet still here it is they are looking to close down our CBI Programme as the mover said probably in 2025 because it's better to feed you, never to teach you how to feed yourself. And that is the philosophy and we talk about the reparations, Mr. President, but this is slavery in another form of colonialistic and other things. So I understand the intent of this Law and I understand what it requires but I cannot sit here and cannot say these things because it is egregious in the manner in which they do these things and we as Small Island Developing States have to just sit back and accept because if we don't, they use the big stick. And it is so unfortunate that... but I just want to quickly say in CBI to the mover of the Bill. I think we have an opportunity to engage deeper and wider

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<sup>1</sup> FATCA - Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act

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

**Bills**

because it is not only us that have a CBI Programme. We have to get people that have other programmes around the world to join in a common voice and in a common force and challenge these things and make it well known the dire effects it can have on the countries where they plan to suspend these things. And I just think regardless of what they do, because of COVID and what has happened in 2008 with financial crisis, high net worth people will find a way to move their monies and invest, I don't think they could stop that. The biggest issue for them and the challenge under CBI is the shift of funds from their jurisdictions to our jurisdictions and that is what pains them more so than anything else. So we have to find a way and I am suggesting that my colleagues on the Government Side try to find a way to get a number of parties engaged not only in the Caribbean and here but internationally as well who have other CBI Programmes around the world to come with a unified voice to fight this European suggestion and the American suggestion, understanding that they have some of the biggest CBI Programmes in the world and the questions would be are they going to apply the same rules to their programs, I am quite certain not. So, Mr. President, those few words I support the change that is being proposed. Thank you.

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator De Allie. If I may just add a word here Senator De Allie, unless we understand that all these measures are calculated to maintain the inequity in the world economic system then we would be as they say spinning top in mud. This is not an individual fight for an individual chamber, this is a fight for a new world economic order and many of our former leaders the person like Julius Nyerere, people like Quamme EnKumar, people like Michael Manley, Maurice Bishop, Cheddi Jagan and we can go on and on and on. Their politics was essentially a politics in a fight to reorder the world. What has happened to us in recent times is that that struggle has been derailed. We are no longer focused on these things and what we are witnessing now is a world within which those who hitherto had us as colonies and had us physically enchained are seeing a new dispensation in the world where new forces are rising and with the rise of these new forces in the world, there is now an on-going battle and that battle takes the form of opposition to the People's Republic of China. It takes the form of a new propaganda

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

**Bills**

offensive in which there is an attempt to maintain the old order, an order that has imposed perpetual poverty on most of mankind while concentrating wealth in the north. So we have to understand that this is what is at play here.

Unfortunately for some of us in the body polity we see a very narrow, very obscurantist view of these struggles so our CBI Programme is preached as though it is an obscene and inherently dishonest thing. But we are discovering in recent vintage since the war now being fought between the European powers in Ukraine, we are now learning that the country that has the largest reservoir of Russian Financiers who had all of the wealth in a particular country which at one time had a colonial and still has a colonial relationship but under a new form that they had the largest reservoir of Russian capital in their countries and we can't even begin to match that. A lot of their wealth was derived by the banking of wealth from Russia in their economies. But we have agents of them here who preach and try to derail every single attempt we make to confront our poverty, right. So I think we have to understand that, that is where we are and we will continue to be dictated to unless there is a concerted world effort for a new economic order based on fairness. Unless we do that we are forever stuck in this quagmire of continuous poverty.

We are poor not because we are ill disciplined; we are poor because a system has been imposed upon us which maintains that poverty because in the face of this ever increase in poverty is the accumulation of great wealth. So the problem that we have is not that the productive forces are undeveloped. The problem that we have is the distribution by the wealth created by human kind, that's the problem. So I just thought I would add those words, Senator De Allie to your own observations which are bang on. There was another light at one point. Senator Joseph you have the floor.

**Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph:** Fellow Senators, pleasant good morning. Mr. President, Clerk, Secretary, pleasant good morning to everyone. Mr. President, this Bill is a very interesting Bill. However I thought that the timing that was given to us between receiving the email and now was fairly short and as a result I think it was a little challenging in relation to do the research into the old and looking at the new. I am talking about what was there and the amendment. So I do hope that in the future



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

**Bills**

we can do a little better but, Mr. President, I get a sense that the state is under tremendous pressure to deliver those amendments between a particular period of time. It's like the teacher gives homework and the deadline is tomorrow or else is licks, so you have to find some means to deliver on it.

Mr. President, the name of this Bill speaks to mutual exchange of information and taxation. I am not going to go into the details of the Bill because I think personally that any Bill that comes into this House that will strengthen whatever situation; I think it is good and wise after the deliberation to support. I am not going to go into details of the Bill, I am looking at a broader framework in relation to that Bill. Mr. President, you uttered some very wise words and we grew up in the 70's and we saw things in a particular way because of the era and the context. It's a pity overtime the younger people didn't seem to fall into line and we allowed them to fall out of line. But the Bill speaks to in its name mutual exchange of information on taxation. Now, when we hear mutual and you see who you are dealing with you have to ask yourself, Mr. President, some very serious questions. Does mutual really mean mutual? There is something called the international Court of Justice, we refer to it as the world court and the same people who are saying that X should be tried under that particular jurisdiction are also saying on the other hand that their people would never be tried there. Now I am just saying this to make the point of mutual. The countries in the north feel they could ask us for anything and we must deliver to them but let us ask them and they are going to say to us, we're out of place. This little people in a backyard, what they talking about, that's the mind-set, that's the mentality.

Mr. President, these Europeans are the G7 in particular, they are holding us hostage. The question is are we going to sit back, roll over and accept. We are operating within a framework. I know and I understand the economic framework in which we are operating but there are things we could do to mitigate and lessen the little boy kind of way that they have us and stand up more like men.

Now, Mr. President, there are some organisations that I think have failed us as third world countries, they have failed us miserably. Let's look for example at the ACP. I think the ACP they are similar economy as ours. If the ACP come together and stand up, if CARICOM comes together and stand up, if the OECS comes

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

**Bills**

together and stands up some of the pushes that are coming from the north we would be in a position to resist them. You see, Mr. President, we have to understand, the aim of these countries is to keep us at the begging level, to keep us at the borrowing level and we saw exactly what happened to Libya. Libya had no foreign debt, now if a country has no foreign debt then the IMF wouldn't gather any interest from them so that becomes a problem. So anytime we are seen to be moving in a particular direction and out of debt dictates then, Mr. President, they will try to pull us back quote on quote in line. So we as countries ought to and have to come together to mitigate against those pushes. Mr. President, how can we as a nation...

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

**Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph:** ...how could we as a nation now and this is the next question, how can we as a nation or what can we as a nation do to reduce those impacts that are coming from outside? And again we have to revisit our economic policies and our economic programmes. We cannot continue and we are seeing the risk... look for example, Mr. Deputy President, the CBI Programme is very successful, no two ways about it in terms of finances. It brought in over \$100m to the economy in the last budget cycle, over \$100m so the country is benefitting. But it's fed from external sources because we have people from outside coming in and being part of that programme. What if the carpet is pulled from under our feet? Then we are left with probably hundreds of millions of dollars that we would not have. So we have to look at our economic policies and examine the risk and try to mitigate.

Now, Mr. Deputy President, we have to start seriously after the election with the new administration, we have to refocus, we have to redirect and we have to start looking internally. When your country is strong economically and built within that particular country, you know what you do, you develop a whole self-esteem of the country. Mr. Deputy President, let me say this. I am not a very young person but I have a lot of experience. I went to school years ago and I always repeat it, in Moscow, I was there. I was in Moscow and when I got there people from all over the world were greeting us, we were like celebrities. A Grenadian travelling to Trinidad

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

**Bills**

back in those days or St. Vincent, we knew they had respect for us because we were doing things internally and we were doing things that were right back then and people looked up to us. We have to reconfigure and get back into that kind of mode.

So, Mr. Deputy President, we have to look at how we can grow our economy internally. I am not saying that everyone in this country should go plant nutmegs, I am not saying that but what I am saying in another breath is that every nutmeg on a tree right now we can find market for it, every grain of nutmeg we can find market for it because there is demand but there is low production. We have to look internally and it's not difficult. This country over the years in recent past has focused too much on borrowing, some people might say you borrow and you pay back but you pay back with interest. Borrowing and begging, yes we borrow and we beg and we depend on the CBI a little too much. When I say beg I am talking about grants, we ask, we get. So we have to change that mind-set and go into solid production and then these countries cannot just simply tell us what to do and we must do it because if we don't do it we're finished. So we have to wake up as a nation, Mr. Deputy President, we have to wake up as a nation and smell the coffee and do what is right. As I said an election cycle a new period is coming and we can't do things the same way. As somebody said how you define insanity doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.

So, Mr. Deputy President, I thought it important to just make these few points. We are between the devil and the deep blue sea in relation to that, we can't say no because if we say no we're in trouble and at the same time we don't want to say yes but here we are. So, Mr. Deputy President, thank you very much.

**Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie):** Senator St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy President and good afternoon to everyone. Mr. Deputy President, as I stand to speak on this Bill before us, Mutual Exchange of Information on Taxation Matters, a few things keep going through my head and some of the words were "do nothing, 'fraid nothing." As they say if you do nothing why should you worry and I am hearing worry and panic. I

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

**Bills**

was told and heard that the CBI Programme is a very strong programme and sorry to start with CBI because that seems to have been the stepping stone for bringing us to this discussion and I was kind of shocked because I didn't really see the connection between CBI and mutual exchange of information and tax matters. I couldn't see it specifically because I see it as tax and in my own research from the OECD at the same time speaks more about secrecy of banks in sharing information globally and of course we speak about the corresponding banks etc. So for example I have an account maybe in Singapore and maybe one in China and one in Japan and the Government in Grenada is not aware of my investments in lucrative stocks there and I am yielding high interest. At the end of the day when I full up my income tax in Grenada nobody knows about that. And to me this is what this Bill speaks about, when you look at the whole Bill this is just part of it.

The whole Bill speaks about and not just an individual but entities and so the Government of Grenada can say Japan let me see what's going on in your banks with my local citizens and they can provide such information. Likewise you might have US citizens maybe living in Grenada or maybe they get their passport by Citizen by Investment or other forms of naturalisation and of course the US or Canada or whoever they are citizens of can request similar information from the local banks about their citizens in terms of off shore monies etc. So this is what I see, I see it beyond. So for example our brothers and sisters who may be living in New York or in Canada and have their accounts over there that this country can inquire as to what is going on with them. They may have lands and buildings in Grenada but they are living and so on overseas and they have their own accounts and this country can request information through the banking system as to what is going on with Tom or Mary who is a Grenadian citizen. This to me is what this whole Bill speaks about. Of course you can have maybe a CBI or some other Grenadian or Trinidadian as the case may be who has investment business in Grenada that their countries may want to find out if they are hiding funds in Grenada. But as humans we are free to invest to me anywhere we want in the world but of course whatever the Laws are we all have to abide and that is why I say do nothing, 'fraid nothing. You cannot want to be generating wealth and if there are taxes to be paid, you know if you go back to the bible they speak about paying all of those different taxes and

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

**Bills**

tithes, they have to be paid. So we should not be worried about that, I think what we have to do is to ensure that the regulations are correct.

So for example when I look at what the previous Bill spoke of in terms of this same section, there was one section that spoke about the same 16 (2) I think it is, speak about if a lawyer didn't provide information. And so, I see this upgrade here meaning that whoever is presenting information on behalf of that individual is liable. This upgrade I think makes sense because you know before normally you would get your lawyer or your agent to do business for you and the lawyer or the attorney privilege they may hide certain information. So this I think in terms of making it stronger makes sense but in terms of whether it is for a CBI or whatever it is I don't really buy that.

In fact, Mr. Deputy President, doing some research there is an article here I received it online not someone sent to me. "Cross-border Tax Information Exchange is a game changer August 18, 2020 by one Sanjeev Shamar and he is the Principal Director of Income Tax at the India Income Tax Department and he wrote a long paper. But what was interesting in the beginning and this is why I was sort of lost in the original presentation of the Bill. It says **"the G20 that's the Group of Twenty countries declared that bank secrecy was over for tax purposes in 2009 and committed to taking action against non-corporative jurisdiction including tax havens."** So what this is really saying to me in this whole context of this Bill is that we have to ensure that our banking system is strong enough such that it doesn't create problems for this country. We have to ensure that the banks comply, that it provides the sort of key information. So whether it is CBI, whether is... in fact what it says.... What is the type of information we are talking about? Is like balances on your account, the name and address where the people living, if they have any special interest they got on special insurance accounts and so on that they would have invested, this is the sort of information. So if you are doing proper investment, you expect to make profits and you expect to do... I don't see we should worry about that. I think what we have to ensure is who have to give information is provided, that our banks do the correct thing because as it was rightfully presented if we don't have proper corresponding banks in this country, our whole international trade and everything must be in a big chaos. So I fully agree with that.

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

**Bills**

On the other matter because this was introduced in the debate, Mr. Deputy President, the issue of finding a way to grow our economy. I thought that the economy was growing through those different CBI and I am sorry if I always have to go there but that was the flagship of the presentation. But of course the other subsection of the presentation spoke about agriculture when banana was king and of course nutmeg also was king. That's what I heard. I didn't hear 'is king' but 'was king', so I don't know who is king now. **(Laughter)** But the point I am trying to make, Mr. President, is that we should not be worried because if we have a proper mixed economy that is well developed and focused, we should not really be worried. As they tell us before our fore parents said "don't put all our eggs in the same basket or don't only have one egg in the basket". And so I say this to say that the focus on Agriculture, we have lost it and Senator Joseph spoke about that, in '79, how our economy was developing along that line. And you would have heard me speak all over the place about this, that our focus on agriculture in all the different parts is more talk than real action. Because if we were putting money there, we would not have to worry about this, we would have been worrying about foreign exchange coming back to our country, not worrying about...

So for example as I close, typical example, we have the Belle Vue Estate when nutmeg was king that is leased by Government to a foreign investor. You're hardly getting any production there; in fact it is in bush. It is a very sad situation, so this investor who is from Trinidad, the information is public. The Trinidad administration could say let us find out about tax information about this person, well maybe they have no tax or maybe they do but at the end of the day what is happening, nothing is happening in Belle Vue Estate, no production, no food security. So I say this to say that I hope that this matter here create a wakeup call for us that whilst, yes, we want to pursue other areas of development, let us not forget. As I say we cannot eat money, money would not give us energy, would not give us life; food does that.

And so we should be worrying here about how do we find \$5m, \$20m to create a strong food security programme for our nation which is in a serious threat bearing in mind the whole issue of Ukraine and all of those things that is happening

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

**Bills**

to us. To me this should be what we're discussing here today, Mr. Deputy President. Thank you.

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

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Mr. Deputy President, thank you very much. Mr. Deputy President, I rise to make my contribution in support of the passage of this Bill before this House. Mr. President, I just want to make a short contribution more so in response to my colleague on the "Other Side", Senator St. Clair and I think what is being missed by this Bill and the presentation by the mover of the Bill is what is not in this Bill. And I think that is what is missing and I think that is what he misunderstood, the implications of the CBI Programme because of recent events that took place in the European Parliament where a number of investors originate from or who forms a significant component of the CBI Programme. They recently passed a resolution forbidding new persons going forward to participate, to invest in such a programme and closing off existing ones by 2025. And what is not said is... because the question you have to ask is why do the investors, what is the purpose, why do persons seek a second citizenship, I think the Bill doesn't speak to that. Why do persons seek a second citizenship because of certain travel easement or certain travel opportunities and currently we have a no visa requirement for accessing those territories. So what we have seen is if there is noncompliance on our path, it is easy for someone to say look, we moved a resolution in the European Parliament to say that visa waiver is no longer is no longer allowed and once that is done that means there is no need for persons to seek our passport because it would not have that benefit and that value that it had before in terms of a visa waiver. That is basically what the mover of the Bill was speaking in terms of how the CBI is going to be affected; so not just Grenada but also other CARICOM countries that have similar investment programme.

However, Mr. President, I think fortunately for us in Grenada is that our programme, the funds that are generated from our programme is not pegged towards to our recurrent expenditure operations in Government. It is pegged to the Transformation Fund and it is pegged to Capital investments. So what it will do, it

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

**Bills**

will have impact on that significant investment, those capital investment that is used to drive economic growth. Like for example those projects that we have on-going right now, significant infrastructure projects that we have on-going right now where there is a significant demand for lumber material, cement, steel, labour and of course food will come into play. Once you have more people working, there is more demand for lunches on a daily basis, that is where we are going to be impacted not on the recurrent side but for these countries that are using those funds for both recurrent and capital, they are going to be impacted significantly. So that is those repercussions, that is what we are speaking about in terms of what the implications have for us going forward and what it means is that we as a people, as a Government, we have to continue to work towards finding ways in which we can get our economy to grow.

Yes, my colleague Member spoke about agriculture, agriculture has its value and will continue to have its value and play its role in economic growth and development of this country but at the same breath agriculture presents a significant degree of volatility. So just as how it can be beneficial in the morning, by noon it can be wiped out and create a similar situation that we are proposing. That is something that we always have to be cognisant of so hence the reason why we are always looking for ways to have a mixture of support initiatives, growth initiatives, economic initiatives to support the economy and not so much in one way but to have a mixture that if one was to fall or one were to get hurt another would support. So I just want to make that to say that, it is not in any way to say that agriculture is not important but as the old saying goes, it is not always good to put all your eggs in one basket. So it's within that context that I am making this statement.

So I think it is important, Mr. President, that I stand and to help bring this clarification and what happens is something new. You have noticed from time and time again we have those Bills, those regulations, those Laws coming to use because we are, for what it is... the reality of it is that we are in a space where we are impacted by the ripple of the boat that is passed by. We do not make the ripples but we are impacted by the ripples from the waves and we have to always remember that within that context.



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

**Bills**

We have a war that is going on overseas and we see what is happening and we are just a small portion in that whole equation, the entire world is being impacted. I was speaking with someone last night and someone who works in a company in Grenada and they export products to Barbados. So sometimes people talk as if Grenada don't export stuff but that is a different conversation, Mr. President, for a different time and they were saying look, every time when the changes come in terms of their cost for the raw material and every time they have to call their customer in Barbados to say look we have a change in price, they feel bad that they have to go and keep changing the price but it is a consequence of the global economic situation and we as a Government would have made some interventions on the electricity side in terms of taking some on the fuel side. We have made some adjustments; the question is, is that enough? And the question is how far can we go without creating more problems for the country as a whole? I think those are the ramifications before us. I see other countries taking some giant steps but some of it is not sustainable and one of the things that you have to be careful is, in terms of saying we can remove everything and ease all this burden on consumers but the question is what is it doing at the backend and can we sustain it and by the time you catch yourself you create more problems for the entire country as a whole. So those are the realities that are before us. That is where we are and every country have to deal with that reality of things that we are not in control of or situations where critical resources and services that are impacted by a cost or even because of shock or shortage you have that impact as cost being a consequence, that is the reality of the world, that is how things play out. All we have to do as a country or as a people, we continue to find ways for us to diversify...

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

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you, Mr. President. ...to diversity to ensure that our economy grows and we continue to provide the necessary service for our people to thrive successfully and faithfully. So thank you very much for your time.

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

**Bills**

**Mr. President:** Senator Cadet.

**Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I would give a short presentation on this Bill. And, Mr. President, yes I rise to support this Bill understanding of course the consequences of if such Bill doesn't get the acceptance of this Honourable House. Mr. President, to me as a young person, in looking to the future and you ask yourself, some of the opportunities that we probably would have had in the past, we may not benefit from them in the future. And I say that to say you hear people talk about agriculture in the 70's and those times you had preferential trade. We are not going to benefit from that in this modern era, it no longer exists. As you said unless there is a change in the global order or there is a new world order, maybe we may benefit from such. We tried offshore banking, you know again we were told that we need to shut it down and, Mr. President, as a Small Island Developing State with limited resources and a great demand to service the needs of your people, you have to find the resources, yes we have to think outside the box to find those resources. And sometimes I think we don't accept the fact that we are linked to the global economy, we are linked; we have to trade, we trade with the outside world. If you have to buy stuff you have to link with the outside world and we treat it as if we can do it all alone as a small economy.

People are talking about we need to find means that we can grow for ourselves but even if you try agriculture locally, you have to look at the external market which we were doing in the '70s, we were doing in the '80s like bananas and what happened? What happened when we were doing well with it, we lost preferential trade and that shut the Banana Industry down. And now we trying with CBI, a very successful programme and I am happy to hear my dear honourable friend, Mr. Joseph said that it is indeed a successful programme. Over the years we know we have gotten a lot of bashing for having the CBI Programme. Some said at one point prior that if they had gotten into Government last election they would have closed this programme down. Now the same organisation will be utilising, hoping that if they miraculously wins the next election, will be utilising that programme to do a lot of the financing of their initiatives. And now, Mr. President, we are learning that

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

**Bills**

by 2025 the possibility exist that we may not have a CBI Programme. And we as a Small Developing State again have to find the resources to how are we going to sustain this economy, how are we going to grow this economy.

Luckily for us, Mr. President, the interesting thing about this in Grenada while CBI has contributed profoundly to our growth and development, unlike Dominica which contribute just about 50% of their revenue. So imagine in 2025 if their CBI Programme eventually goes down what this means for Dominica. In Grenada yes we will feel the pinch but I think with good management and good governance over the years we have shown how we can manage our resources very well. But we have to ensure, Mr. President, that as a Sovereign State that is looking at initiatives to ensure that we maintain and continue to meet the needs for our people, Mr. President, we have to sometimes push back. And I agree with my friend that we need organisation and cooperation because I mean as a small Island it is very hard to push back alone but you will need to be united in the effort in pushing back and saying no, this initiative is important to our survival and our development because if we don't do that, the possibility exist that we will continue to be in the same situation for generation to come.

And yes I hear the talk about agriculture but look at what CBI has done. CBI has brought several projects and development to this country and it is going to benefit the farmers. The hotels in La Sagesse, the two hotels that would be built in La Sagesse, what does this mean for farmers? It means more market. The same local economy that you're saying need to grow more and more initiative, this is what is happening here you know. You no longer will have to search the market or go on the outside but you will have more people to feed here in Grenada and CBI has caused that. The fact that you can have the resources, you can raise the resources to build infrastructure and hotels and create jobs and help grow the economy is CBI. And so we must not operate that we must give up these initiatives and think like we can do it all on our own, no we are hinged on the global economy and we must understand that.

So, Mr. President, I am making the point for what it's worth for the fact that I heard several points being raised as it relates to growing on our own and not being fearful and what are we worried about. It is not about worrying but understanding the

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

**Bills**

impact or the effects that can have on our economy. So in doing so, Mr. President, again I will support this Bill as I said but I am only supporting this Bill understanding the consequences that will come if we do not give this Bill the passage. So saying, Mr. President, I give this Bill my full support.

**Mr. President:** Thank you. Senator Mc Queen.

**Sen. the Hon. Shirley Mc. Queen:** Mr. President, listening to the other Senators, I feel quite sad. As a people we have travelled the world building other people's countries and I cannot believe that we are held hostage. When are we going to say enough is enough? Our ancestors fought so hard just down the market they were hanged. I think if we are not careful, the younger generation is going to be recolonised. The Senator said when banana and nutmeg was king that is when we were colonised, we can do it. We can do it again, we have to have courage. You can never survive if you haven't got courage. It makes me sad to know that in the next couple of years we will be recolonised because we have people I believe that are weak. Thank you, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Short and sweet, got the point. Somebody else's light is on? Senator Phillip.

**Sen. the Hon. Victor Phillip:** Thank you, Mr. President. I stand to support the Bill and just to share a few tips as we discuss this here. What I have to say is that some of the points made here by various people are very valuable but I think what we need to look at is that the point was made before the Revolution that we had the slogan things like "eat what you grow, grow what you eat" and it worked well. Now we have to emphasise, we cannot stay back in that period of time. The period at that time communication was very small, was nil, we wasn't communicating with the outer world that much, we didn't have marketing strategies through the internet and stuff like that bombarding our children, bombarding our individuals. Remember we are living in a Democratic State and we cannot force people to do certain things, they have their own minds and not only that we start looking outside because we

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

**Bills**

now see before few people used to travel, few people used to see things but now we have the internet. They are seeing, they are travelling, things are better and they now are making up their minds on what they want.

We have the most nutritious things here, yes of course but how much of us want to eat it? How much of us prefer to eat the foreign things that come into our countries. So what it is, is that when there was a time when we were told what we could do. We didn't have much to deal with, much to see or compare with so we use it and it is the best and I will always agree that we should continue using those things because it is better for us. But when you have freedom of choices that people make... not only that, let's talk about the labour cost, if we have to manufacture these things here, could we handle it? Just the labour cost alone, the amount that we have, how could we produce to sustain ourselves in terms of that or to export as compared to the other countries that have it themselves and could do it cheaper. We hold a lot of tuna here for instance, people eat tuna, it come back in can and we talk about that. We wish we could have been doing it here but how much would it cost if we were doing it here? I mean we have business people here they probably better... I don't know anything much about business and that but I think I have the sense to know that there is a cost to everything in production. So when we are talking about those things, all these things, what we think we need to do is to use some of those ideas that we have but not to condemn....

**Mr. President:** One second Senator. I'm kind of a little bit lost here you have to help me. How does this connect to the current Mutual Exchange of Information Taxation Bill?

**Sen. the Hon. Victor Phillip:** Mr. President, I was just replying to what was said before.

**Mr. President:** No, no, no, you reply to the Bill, the bill before us...

**Sen. the Hon. Victor Phillip:** The Bill is such that it talk about the fact that the exchange of information and stuff like that, we were depending on that, not so

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

**Bills**

and the CBI Programme and the effect of the CBI Programme and that we should use... agriculture should help to export and stuff like that. So I was just relating to that so I don't know if I'm wrong. So all I am saying and just finalising.

I think the points made here, I am supporting the Bill because it helps and now that we see that it may have a problem, now it makes us again try to be innovative and look for other means of making sure that we can go forward and that we can help our people and ourselves. So I just think that what we are saying here, stay in touch and let us keep together and let us use our ideas and our brains to try and see how we can settle those things and do the best for our country. Thank you.

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

**Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, through you I want to thank all the Members who contributed to the Bill and it was articulated clearly that Small Island Developing States can't do it alone and we need to collaborate with all the like-minded States towards putting pressure on those bigger countries... those first world nations to at least have a heart and that has been done but we still have the problem. Let me give one casing point, the European Union came with this issue of classifying or ranking countries and they said that they're going to do it by GDP and as a result of Grenada's GDP, it was looking that good, we were classified in a higher ranking and as such we were precluded from getting concessionary loans and the likes and so forth because of the classification. So the Governor of the Central Bank took this up, representing all of our countries of course and they fought. Because the OECD and you're talking about the... the Member mentioned about the G20 countries and you had the G7s and so forth. When we work with the IMF and the World Bank, they are creatures of these institutions and they came back and they said we fought on your behalf but we lost and we're still in the condition today. The point here, I agree collaboration multiple States coming together can apply the pressure but this is institutionalised, we ain't going to see that changing.

The first world nations recognise the power of control is through the mighty dollar and if you have reason to the point where you could stand almost on your own

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

**Bills**

two feet, that is obscene to them and that is attacking their power base. So they don't mind you coming and ask for debt forgiveness and asking for grants and so forth, they don't mind doing that because they still have that control and we spoke quite a lot, Mr. President, of... I did say banana has been king, I didn't say nutmeg because nutmeg is still king today, so I was misquoted by you guys. But in any even the point is it was taken away. In the 1970s banana was king because why? Our colonial masters provided, Mr. President, preferential treatment on the European market but those who control Chiquita and Dole, those multinational companies producing bananas decided this was not right and fought in the European Union to get that removed and preferential treatment was taken away and obviously we cannot produce bananas... while we were producing bananas at US0.25 a pound Chiquita and Dole was producing it at US0.06 cents a pound, we can't compete, that's the problem.

I listened to my good Senator representing Agriculture, my good buddy but your response to this was a little bit myopic because this thing is bigger than what you're saying. Our CBI based Programme is attracting these people citizens who are investing here and they're not hiding their money under the bed, it's in banks and that's where they want to make sure that they see a trail of everything that is happening. So you missed that point but I agree with some of the other things that you have said. Yes, we have to work together and try to see how we could apply pressure but, Mr. President, every time you raise your head that big stick is coming down, big stick. And you talk about yes, grow the economy and we should try to look within and change our economic policies, this is a global market. With just one strike of a button and you transit and you work with all around the world. One of the beauties of COVID is to show us that we don't have to travel to do meetings, we could stay in our homes and do it and transact all our business that we want to do virtually. The point here, we cannot do it alone and when my Senator friend spoke to don't put all your eggs in one basket, that's what we have done. The economy is totally diversified, agriculture is a main player, construction is another, fishing, tourism, education just name it. Why you think we are doing better than the others in the region, because of how diversified the economy is, but more than that the stable leadership. So we have to see it from a global world view not little nuggets and

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

**Bills**

make a big thing out of it, a little nugget, no take the global picture of it and that's where my good friend from Agriculture failed the constituents.

So, Mr. President, we are at a place where we just have to confirm to some of those things where all of them because the repercussion is significant if we have to loose correspondent banking and for this we have to ensure that we confirm to the rules. I would end by saying, Mr. President, you remember we were blacklisted by the OECD at one point, why you think it happened? We came and we passed the Bill you know, we passed on the information and one of the bureaucrats in their chain of command didn't pass it on to where it was supposed to be and we were blacklisted and you know why? Because one member of the European Union came up and spoke of their citizens who are doing business in those small countries and they are not reporting and they said that we have to pass the Legislation to ensure that is captured. That is part of this Bill in the first amendment and we were blacklisted for a few months when we conformed, embarrassment to the State, shut down a lot of things. We ain't going to let that happen anymore. We have to do what we got to do and I agree with you it came in rushed, in a short space of time, I agree. We would have loved more time too but this should have been on the Order Paper before and it was missed. So we have to take responsibility, all of us and to fix that. But really and truly, Mr. President, I want to thank all the Members who contributed and we're going to move forward working together to ensure that Grenada continue to remain strong and stable. With these few words, I want to commend the Bill for its second reading.

**Question proposed.**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Garraway.

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



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

**Bills**  
**Adjournment**

**Question proposed.**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**House in Committee.**

**Senate resumes.**

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

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Garraway.

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

**Question proposed.**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time and passed.**

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 5 - Adjournment.

**Mr. President:** Senator Joseph.

**Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph:** Mr. President, I just wish to say a couple things here on the adjournment. First of all I want to start with the last one I have listed here, something the Honourable Senator said that Grenada is doing better

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

**Adjournment**

than the other Caribbean countries, that's myopia. I want us to take a close look at the economy of St. Kitts for example right now, I would just call St. Kitts as an OECS country and I will like us to take a look at Guyana and see where we are placed. That's just not a correct statement; it's very erroneous, just not true.

Secondly, Mr. President, somebody was described here this morning as a paratrooper, I really wanted to interrupt in relation to clarity and I really did not know and still do not know. So the communication was not there when the term paratrooper was used, so I would like in future we avoid these terms at this level. I don't think it's appropriate to refer to anyone by a nickname, that's my opinion, in this House.

Mr. President, you know it was said that we do export and that's true we do export and the question is how much do we export? If we take a close look and I did of the Port Authority's Report that was laid before this House, I went through it. Take a close look at it and we are going to see in relation to the volume of cargo that was handled on the Port for that period, we are going to see the percentage that was exported and this is a wakeup call. We need to take a look at it, I am not going to quote the number, let us do some homework.

Mr. President, something I've been thinking about for years, probably very shortly the Parliament will be dissolved but I want to make that point here just before this happens. Now, Mr. President, we have a national animal, I'm deliberately using the word animal... we call it a national animal. I really wish that someday we would also have a national plant and I will really like... **(Inaudible comment by Mr. President)** ...a national plant...

**Mr. President:** ...a national plant?

**Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph:** ... now we speak to the bougainvillea which is a flower but I am trying to go a little beyond that. I know **(inaudible comment by Mr. President)** of course I know, but our focus there is on the flower. I am speaking about something... it is probably connected but it is different. Yes, Mr. President, and my plant here that I am thinking about is the nutmeg. I think the nutmeg plant has served this nation since 1943 and it has continued to serve this nation and I

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

**Adjournment**

want to assume that for the next 100 years it would be there. So I will like to see us giving that particular plant some more prominence.

**Mr. President:** It's on the flag.

**Sen. the Hon. Matthew Joseph:** I know it's on the flag but I am trying to go a little beyond that to give it the status which it deserves and that is the national plant. I am going to leave that here for now, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I probably should request your permission to just extend my sympathy to the family of Sister Judy. She is a lady I knew from 1977 and we were very close because I have been very close to GRENCODA. And she was a special lady, she was a stalwart. This lady had passion for the down trodden, the under privileged and the poor. She was like the mother Theresa of Grenada and we all know that we can't or we won't live forever but her life was exemplary. These are the people I think who need state funerals because their contributions were remarkable. **(Applause)** I understand she would be buried next week and I do hope as many in the Executive as possible should attend that funeral. People like these are not made very often. So I want to on behalf of the Opposition Senators extend our deepest sympathy to the family especially to the husband of Sister Judy. She did it her way but in my opinion her way was just the right way. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Senator St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Mr. President, and I just want to make some quick points during this moment and of course with Senator Joseph the issue of Sister Judy Williams. This is someone when I got into the whole Agriculture Sector over two decades ago I've met and I've worked closely in all different ways. Even in a last year or two all during the COVID she would call me and say the nutmeg farmers, make sure you organise because they need the purchasing... we had that sort of discussions and she had a lot of confidence in me as I spoke with her that we would do something and make sure that no one suffers.

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

**Adjournment**

So I really express a lot of sympathy on that because she has worked a lot in Agriculture, she and Mr. Langaigne and the others in GRENCODA. Even when I was in the MNIB she had a programme with the students during summer. It was really... we need more persons like this. She did so selflessly without looking for anything but goodness so I also share.

At the same time on the issue of sympathy, Mr. President, the death of young Bell out at sea in that incident with the Coast Guard and so on, one of my constituents, the fisher folks. I have done on another programme express, but inside here in this Chamber I want to also express the sympathy for the mom and the rest of the family and of course the whole community because it was Bell but it could have been anyone else. And of course the issue of safety and all of the users of our waters, it could have been a swimmer and so on because I know there are persons who are swimming and diving who also got affected from just regular boats moving around. So that is something very important that we need to pay attention to.

I want to close, Mr. President, with two things, the issue of nutmeg. Nutmeg whether it's king or queen or whether it's on the flag or not but March of this year 1947 through this Parliament but not in this location of course would have passed the Act for the existence of the Grenada Cooperative Nutmeg Association and its establishment, 75 years so this is a very important year and moment for the Nutmeg Industry and the Grenada Cooperative Nutmeg Association as the one charged for that responsibility has a series of events and activities for the rest of the year which is being rolled out and of course the general public will be kept abreast of that. So I wanted to share this on behalf of the nutmeg farmers and of course the rest of the nation.

And of course the last part has to do with the whole issue of food security. I would have mentioned a little bit earlier, that I don't want us to lose sight of this because all of us, we need to ensure that we are doing things for food production. Whether the Government is doing, whether the Government is not doing, we need to ensure in our own way, do what we can because when the crunch time comes, if it does when we look at what is happening not just about the rise in prices but the dependence on imported products for our own existence. And I think Senator Garraway and Senator Cox and Senator Judd also spoke about that. It is not about

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

**Adjournment**

which colour and which this because our body, our mouth, our tongue, all it know is food. It needs healthy foods, local foods, that part and all the other persons within the Food Sector for us to really bear that in mind. And inside of that, not only the issue of Ukraine war and all of those supply chain challenges but of course we are right within the national disaster period. Hurricane season is right here coming on us so we have to look and see how we do our different food supplies for that period. So I just wanted to use this moment as that sensitisation to not only farmers and fishers but us as a nation because when food supply gets scarce everyone turn around and say the farmers not producing, oh where is the food? Let us all ease the burden on the farmer for this part. We will continue doing what we are doing but some of us... most of us can do some bit in the meantime and let us get our taste buds for local because this is the best. Thank you.

**Sen. the Hon. Shirley Mc. Queen:** Thank you. Mr. President, this might be my last speech as an Opposition Senator. I thank Mr. Tobias Clement for giving me the opportunity to sit in this House. I also thank my family and supporters and all the others who made it possible for me to attend by the way of encouragement and support. Mr. President, for the past few months I sat in the front row with a first-hand look at the operation of the seat of political and Law-making power in this country. I had a look at the body and people who run this land. I have asked many questions that remain unanswered. I spoke about things I saw as I moved around the country, matters of importance to our people, to this day I have been ignored. Mr. President, I leave this Senate sad. I am saddened to know that men crawl out of the rum shop morning, noon and night constantly drunk, drowning their sorrows in alcohol. I am saddened by the homelessness and our elderly people begging for relieving and pension.

Mr. President, 60% of our prison population are there for sexual offenses. Our children continue to be sexually abused. This House has failed to address this matter in an organised way. Mr. President, we play lip service to the environment while our nature reserves are being invaded. Our beaches are unkempt and we fail to promote and protect our lands. The shortcomings in our health care remains.

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

**Adjournment**

Mr. President, I asked about the performance of our contractors on the road, both Claboney and La Borie. The contractor is working without a plan, they are spinning top in mud, they cannot finish a single part of the programme. Mr. President, I am not attacking anyone. In my opinion, I came to this House to represent the people of this country. I have tried to raise the affairs of the people. My role was to highlight areas that needed improvement. There is no need for anyone to take my comment personally or politically. I learnt a lot when I'm here. I intend to continue to work on behalf of the people regardless of where I am sitting. I wish I had the time to do more.

God Bless you, Mr. President, God Bless this Honourable House and God Bless Grenada.

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator Mc. Queen. Senator Lewis I think I see your light on. Senator Mc. Queen just take your light off.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you very much, Mr. President, and I too on behalf of Labour wish to identify with the sentiments expressed in recognition of Sister Judy. I will just refer to her as Sister Judy. I know we took a minute of silence in her honour but it equips us individually to pay tribute. And for us we remember this towering quiet giant of a person who was steadfast in her service and contribution to the underprivileged and the marginalised. Whereas organised labour has been able to represent members of the working class in the workforce and other related areas, Sister Judy found herself together with her other colleagues in the trenches to go to the places that didn't have paved roads, go to the places that just had tracks and go to the people of the country that many times felt as though they were forgotten. And for her contributions that spans decades, for those of us who certainly did a little study of her history even during her time that she was on earth here with us. Those of us would remember the stories of the 70's and regardless of which administration was in office she will stand up to the administration in the defence of the poor and marginalised in the country on a whole. And for this we salute our dear comrade and sister once again.

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

**Adjournment**

Mr. President, I cannot end today without acknowledging the decision of the Government not to appeal the Court ruling on the pension matter. And to immediately while acknowledging their pronouncement that they will not appeal, we call for the implementation from January of this year for people who have retired as of January this year and going forward while we sort out whatever back log that there may be. So a tangible way that one can demonstrate the genuineness of that position is to begin that payment of people who have at least retired as of January 2022 and going forward. In the same token, the pension warrior, the sister and comrade that gave us that foot to stand on, Sister Hermilyn Armstrong we make a special call for her matter to be immediately resolved by the Government notwithstanding what their interpretation may have been. I want to repeat this, notwithstanding what their interpretation may have been but to immediately resolve the matter with Sister Hermilyn so that she can reap the fruit of the bravery that she demonstrated in 2010, 2011. This cannot be too much to ask for.

Once again we acknowledge the decision of the Government and call on the Government to demonstrate in the most practical term the immediate implementation of the pension payment to workers who have retired as of January and going forward. One cannot overstress what that will mean for our economy for ordinary rank and file workers, what that would mean to the communities in the rural areas. The rural areas that have witnessed the decline of Agriculture, the rural areas that has witnessed an increase in unemployment, the rural areas with our small shops, as we will say our corner shops, what that will mean to our rural economy. And also significantly important, the fact that we are coming to the end of a school term when people or working class people have to be hurting their heads as to find resources to pay for exams, that will be of significant benefit to our people. And as we start the new school term it will also allow our people to know that they can plan for the TAMCCs and for the SGUs and beyond the shores of Grenada. And the most practical way that we can demonstrate this is to put monies in the hands of our people and that will be the most practical way that we can demonstrate the decision taken that we acknowledge. Yes it is said in words but put some action into it and make that payment to people who have retired as of January this year and going

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

**Adjournment**

forward while we sit in very short order to address the issue of the outstanding amount. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Thank you Senator Lewis. Senator Cox.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I too want to offer a few contributions on the adjournment before moving the Motion to adjourn. Mr. President, I just wanted to bring into context response from my fellow colleague Senator Joseph regarding the level of exportation and bringing the context of where we are in relation to the impact of the global pandemic over the past two years and to indicate that, that pandemic would have and continue to have significant repercussions and implications on our ability to perform as significant as we used to prior in the area of exportation. So I think it is important to bring those numbers into the context of the situation that we are and the space that we're in as it regards to COVID.

But I want to just close Mr. President, and to offer my own personal condolences that were raised initially. I think it's important that I do it personally for a number of reasons and I'll explain as I go forward and to start first with young lad Kimon Bell from Woburn who lost his life through this unfortunate accident. I met with the family, it's a very emotional time for them, it is not something that one can really explain and how someone feels when you lost a love one especially so young and I think that is one of the most difficult thing that any parent would have to deal with. And it's something that sometimes you do not want to talk too much about it because it brings a lot of emotions and other persons can also think about their own experiences or friends or families who would have gone through the same. So it's a difficult time for the Bell family and we ask that their family and friends continue to support them during this difficult time.

Mr. President, also Sister Williams, I met her a few years ago doing climate change work. She has that level of confidence and certainty in what she does and you can see that spirit in touching people's lives. And so I had a personal interaction with her. We were working on a project together, I think that was the last project I worked on as well.



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

**Adjournment**

I also want to speak about Queen Counsel Cecilia Clyne who I had acquaintance with briefly but very impactful. Sometime in 2020 when I took up the appointment as the Minister for Infrastructure she was representing a client who the Ministry of Infrastructure had some outstanding matters with and so I received this letter from her. I think knowing her stature in the legal fraternity, I kind of sat up in my chair upright to ensure that I read everything properly in the letter and to make sure that I respond appropriately likewise. And we were moving back and forth but with your permission, Mr. President, I want to read her last email communication with me and it was something that stuck with me for quite some time and her last communication with me, an email was on Wednesday February 3, 2021 and I read **“Honourable Minister your email on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2021 refers. Thank you for your prompt and decisive action. Permit me also to say that this is one of the fastest and most effective actions I have seen from a Governmental Department in a long time. You have a reputation out there for being nonsense and getting things done. It is a pleasure to see that I had first-hand that your reputation is justified. With thanks, Cecilia Edwards Q.C.”** (Applause)

Mr. President, I just think it was important to read that. You know through everything I just recalled that we had that interaction and I just thought it was important to share that side of her. She was clear in what she do and she would say how she feels based on her interaction with her. So to her family and to the family of those that have lost their loved ones I extend my condolences and also Members on “This Side” we share the same loss in terms of their contribution to the State of Grenada. Mr. President, with those few words I want to say thank you and to move the Motion to adjourn this sitting of the Senate ***sine die***.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**The Sitting of the Senate adjourns at 1:20 p.m.**

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