GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

First Session of the Eleventh Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

SENATE

Tuesday 11th October, 2022

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Senate Meeting
Held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Tuesday 11th October, 2022

Attendance

PRESENT

Senator the Honourable Dr. Dessima Williams	-	Madam President (In the Chair)
Senator the Honourable Adrian Thomas	-	Minister of State with responsibility for Agriculture and Lands, Fisheries & Cooperatives
Senator the Honourable David Evlyn Andrew	-	Minister for Education, Youth, Sports & Culture
Senator the Honourable Quinc Britton	-	Member of the Senate
Sen. The Hon. Jonathan La Crette	-	Minister for Health, Wellness & Religious Affairs
Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph	-	Attorney General & Minister for Legal Affairs, Labour and Consumer Affairs
Senator the Hon. Gloria Ann Thomas	-	Minister for Health, Wellness & Religious Affairs
Senator the Honourable Norland Cox	-	Opposition Member of the Senate
Senator the Honourable Katisha Douglas	-	Opposition Member of the Senate
Senator the Honourable Neilon Franklyn	-	Opposition Member of the Senate
Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis	-	Member of the Senate (Labour Rep)
Senator the Honourable Salim Rahaman	-	Member of the Senate (Business Rep)
Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair	-	Member of the Senate (Farmers Rep)

Prayers
Oath of Allegiance / Oath of Office

The Sitting of the Senate began at 9:10 a.m.

Madam President: Prayer of the Senate.

(Senate Prayer was said)

Madam President: Please join me in the Lord's Prayer.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Madam President: Pray be seated.

(Sound of Gavel)

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

(Senator the Honourable Norland Cox proceeded to the Clerk's Table)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: I, Norland Cox, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So help me God.

(Senator the Honourable Norland Cox signs the Oath Book)

(The Clerk shakes Senator Cox's hand)

(Senator the Honourable Norland Cox returns to his seat)

Applause

Oath of Allegiance / Oath of Office

Madam President: Welcome Senator Cox. Consequent upon the Elections which were held on the 23rd of June 2022, and in accordance with Sections 28 and 34 of the Grenada Constitution Order, it has become necessary to elect a Deputy President of the Senate for the Eleventh Parliament of Grenada. Honourable Members of the Senate, pursuant to Standing Order No. 4 of the Senate, I now invite nominations for the Office of Deputy President. Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I beg to nominate Honourable Norland Cox.

Madam President: Thank you, Honourable Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Madam President, thank you very much. I just wish to rise on a Pointof Order and your guidance. Consequent on Senator Norland Cox's swearing in, I heard him swear to a position or an individual I think who may no longer be around. And therefore should it have been to the Queen or to the King? Just as a Point of Order.

Madam President: Thank you. Thank you Senator. Senator Joseph, good morning.

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Madam President, good morning, good morning colleagues. I beg to associate myself with the matter raised by my learned colleague on the "Other Side", perhaps the Oath might be retaken.

Madam President: Thank you. Thank you, Senator. Senator Cox please indulge us.

Oath of Allegiance / Oath of Office

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: I, Norland Cox, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to His Majesty, King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors according to Law. So help me God.

(Senator Cox resigns the Oath Book)

Madam President: Thank you for your Oath and your patience, Senator. We continue. We have a nomination for the Deputy President. Do we have a seconder? Honourable David Andrew.

Sen. the Hon. David Andrew: Madam President, I beg to second that Motion.

Madam President: Honourable David Andrew has seconded. Is there any other nominations? There being no other, I now declare Honourable Norland Cox, Deputy President of the Senate.

(Sound of the gravel)

Applause

(Senator the Honourable Norland Cox proceeded to the Clerk's Table)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: I Norland Cox, do swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of Deputy President, without fear or favor, affection or ill-will and that in the execution of the functions of that Office, I will honour uphold and preserve the Constitution of Grenada. So help me God.

(Senator the Honourable Norland Cox signs the Oath Book)

(The Clerk shakes Senator Cox's hand)

(Senator the Honourable Norland Cox returns to his seat)

Madam President: Thank you, Deputy President and welcome to the Office. This is a relatively or overwhelmingly new House of the Senate and I open the floor for Maiden Speeches. Honourable Senator Gloria Thomas.

Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas: Madam President, I rise to address this Honourable House. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Government of Grenada and the people of St. Andrew North-West, for giving me this opportunity to serve. Let me congratulate my colleagues in this Honourable House on "Both Sides."

Madam President, I pledge my commitment and loyalty in ensuring that the trust placed in me is never betrayed. To God be the glory as he continued to provide the necessary guidance for this undertaking, and so, I continue to depend on him.

Madam President, I stand here as a humble servant of the people of Grenada. I am Gloria Ann Thomas, a daughter of the village of La Fillette. And when I say a daughter of the village of La Fillette, I mean just that, because I grew up in the era when the village raised the child. I was disciplined, corrected and reported on by many adults in the community. And so, I was expected as all children of my time to be very circumspect with my behaviour, and respectful in how I conducted myself. I use the word "circumspect" in honour of my father today, Cletus Michael Thomas, because as a child, this was one of his regular words. And although I did not know what it meant, the context and the way he intoned, I knew he meant that I must be on my very best behaviour at all times.

Madam President, my life has always been a life of service. I've always been involved in community life. My life of service began when my parents allowed me to run errands for the elderly in the community, and provide service, like fetching water from the standpipe and sweeping the yard. I joined the Legion of Mary at about nine years of age. My task was to pray the Rosary and assist the elderly in my community.

In my village, the elderly was keen on Cletus daughter to assist them because she proved to be reliable, quick and honest. I came back quickly from running errands

and brought back the right change at all times. Madam President, this is the integrity that I inculcated as a child and has carried it into my adult life.

Madam President, my primary school years, was St. Mary's Roman Catholic school, where I participated in sports, and was on the school netball team. I proved to be a very good goal shoot at the primary level. But, Mrs. Margaret Dowe, in her wisdom felt I could be a better goal defence, a position I played up until recently. I therefore understand what teamwork is and I can effectively function as a member of a team to get the desired results. I therefore bring this understanding and experience to my team here to ensure that we take Grenada forward.

At Primary School, I did well in academics, but was never selected for Common Entrance, until my parents made it a priority to question the principal at a PTA meeting as to why I was never selected. Unable to fully justify the reason for my non selection, the principal reluctantly accepted me into the Common Entrance class. Madam President, it was my last opportunity to write that exams and the exam was only three months away. With my father's close monitoring of my performance and encouragement, I know I had to perform to raise his nose as he often said. I applied myself diligently, took the exam and was successful. I learnt from that experience, that if you are serious about any undertaking, you can apply yourself to make it happen. This is the attitude that I have brought with me when I was appointed to serve as a Senator. And so, I pledged to work to ensure that I play my part in the success of this Government.

I was assigned to the St. Joseph's Convent, Grenville where I was actively involved in school life, netball, athletics, Club Español, Spanish Club, to name a few. Madam President, my life of service continued when I entered St. Joseph's Convent. I joined the St. Vincent de Paul and was the first Secretary of the St. Mary's Conference, working to raise funds, visiting the sick and shut-ins in the community and providing for their spiritual and other needs.

I was given the opportunity to write GCE O' level in Form 4 and since then, the St. Joseph's Convent, has never offered any other group of students this opportunity. Graduating from High School, I returned to serve as a Primary School Teacher at my

Alma Mater, St. Mary's R.C., 10 years shy of three months and then went on to work at the Ministry of Education, where I felt I could be of greater service to the education system.

I have been serving in the Lions Club of St. Andrew's for the last quarter century. Albeit that I have not been active for the last few years. Madam President, membership in the Lions Club has afforded me the opportunity to work, to serve, to fellowship, solve problems, develop tolerance, build relationship and grow. This experience, Madam President, has certainly prepared me for today, to undertake this task at hand. I serve as a Zone Chairman, and later as a Region Chairman, where I had responsibility of overseeing and guiding clubs in Barbados, St. Lucia, Saint Vincent, Union Island and Grenada. I was the first Grenadian to hold the position as Region Chair for Lions Club International. I served on the district in various capacities. Madam President, serving is what I do best.

I am here in this Honourable House today, because of my commitment to service and my pledge to make this world a better place, especially for the less fortunate. I am convinced that with the right support, services and encouragement, our people can become more self-reliant. I feel privileged to be serving in a Government that believes in change and transformation. I am of the firm view, Madam President, that our country can develop and become prosperous, if we invest more in our people and in income generating activities. I am dedicated in ensuring that the lives of our people improve. As a humanitarian, community organiser, child rights activists, and servant of the people, Madam President, I pledge to serve without fear or favour, to take Grenada forward. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Senator Rahaman.

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: Thank you. Thank you, Madam President. Pleasant good morning to my fellow colleagues, and our people here and in the Diaspora. I begin in the name of God Almighty, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful.

Maiden Speeches:
Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman

I'm grateful to Almighty God for His mercies extended to me, my family, the business community, and our society as a whole. To the Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce, to the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association, to the Grenada Employers Federation, to their Boards, Executive Directors and the Nominating Committee, I say thank you, for the confidence placed in me to represent you in this Senate. By the mercy of my Maker, I do intend to do my very best to you, the Private Sector, and my country. I look forward to your counsel, your ideas, your solutions and recommendations. We must realise that in service, it is impossible to please all, but my intention is one win at a time. If the Private Sector is the engine of growth, then Government is the octane that can help the engine to run better. Madam President, right now, we need some high octane fuel to make that engine perform.

Madam President, three months ago, I had no idea that I'd be standing here. I am humbled. Whoever is not grateful to the people is not grateful to the Maker of the people.

Madam President, a little bit about my family and I, by the mercy of God Almighty, I come from a family of farmers and business people. My fore parents on my mother's side came to Grenada, sometime in the 1800s, late 1800s. Their livelihood was primarily based on working the land. When my great grandfather James Bhola died at only 32 years old, my grandmother Joyce was taken out of Primary School to assist with the family duties and work in the land. My grandmother did her very best to raise her only child and send my mother Miss Claire Bhola to live with her family in St. George's, the De Allie family to go to school there. There she attended St. George's Anglican High School and then went on to work at the Grenada Cooperative Bank or Penny Bank as we know it.

Madam President, my father, Mr. Azam Rahaman came to Grenada at the age of 19, in 1967. He was brought here by his grandfather, SM Jaleel from Trinidad to work in the family owned business, Federal Investments Limited, otherwise known as Red Spot beverages, Red Spot soft drinks. Some years later, in 1971, my father and his older brother Bobby founded a Tyre Mart, on Tyrell Street, St. George's by the name of Bobby's Tyre Mart. In 1984, my father branched off on his own to open a retreading

tyre company, named Spice Isle Retreaders. His experience in service, business and my mother's experience in banking came in handy. Through service, my father came to know a man by the name of Mr. Ralph Dungan, a US diplomat during the JFK Presidency. Mr. Dungan asked my father to be the country head for International Executive Service Core in Grenada. IESC is a leading US non-profit organisation that fosters Private Sector development in the economically developing world. Through this organisation in the mid-80s, my father was able to bring in retired professionals and technical know-how to assist businesses, local businesses to scale up. Mentorship, Madam President, mentorship, is so very important. Businesses such as Blue Danube Bakery, High Tech Printery, Spice Isle Retreaders Limited among others were able to benefit from this mentorship at a fraction of the cost.

Madam President, Government must provide the enabling environment for businesses to grow. Case in point, Spice Isle Retreaders was given manufacturers concession in the mid-80s to bring in raw materials. But when Government changed, the next Administration took those concessions away. And that simple decision by Government caused the collapse of the entire retreading operation. The entire plant was shut down and never restarted to date; thousands upon thousands of invested dollars were lost. Oftentimes politicians may not have a business background and don't fully understand what businesses need to thrive. Other times it can be poor political decision making, made at the expense of business people, and the economy as a whole.

Madam President, my early education was at Westmorland School. I was fortunate to be taught by a very stern English lady, Miss Meryl Paul. And then in secondary school by Miss Lyndonna Webster, Principal of the Secondary School then, and other great teachers to whom I'm grateful. Unlike my brothers who attended PBC, my entire education was at Westmorland School, early education. After secondary school, I attended Caldwell University, a Catholic University of the Dominican tradition. During summers, I would come back home to work as a service technician in the yard, repairing tyres, installing batteries, driving the truck to the dump, whatever I needed to do to learn the ins and outs of the business, that allowed me to learn. I then worked as

a Clerk and then as Assistant Manager doing the daily banking and balancing on evenings.

Upon graduating from University with a degree in Business Management and Marketing, I was asked to return to Grenada in 1998 to join the family company. In '99, I was transferred to Grenville to manage our new outlet that was opened there. As manager, one of my duties was to open and close the business. So I had to leave from True Blue to get to Grenville before 8 o'clock, six days a week. I think that was my father's way of teaching me some discipline.

Madam President, young men need discipline, they really do. After almost three years in Grenville, I was brought down to Head Office in Frequente to head the Marketing Department. During this time, I began to serve on Boards and Clubs. Madam President, I learnt early that part of service to mankind is service to God Almighty. Also that service on Boards and Clubs were a shortcut to professional development, learning and networking with others even if it was for fun. I served on Clubs and Boards, such as the Grenada Motor Club for over five years as a hobby. I worked with others in the Auto Industry to bring race into Grenada, to take racing off the streets and bring it to the track at Pearls. We brought in cars from all over the region as far as Antigua. For years this had a positive impact on local tourism as hundreds of people would flock to Pearls over the weekend, several times a year. Grenada benefited from regional tourism as well, as we would host a regional event once per year, back then a ticket from Trinidad to Grenada was only $100 on Caribbean Star. Madam President, economic activity, the point is, booms when travel is constant and affordable.

I served on the Board of the Grenada Bureau of Standards for two years. There I helped to change and improve the regulation as it relates to tyre standards in Grenada, ensuring that all tyres brought into Grenada were first quality tyres and not blemished or second quality tyres. After noticing several accidents in the region, including a fatal crash in Guyana of a bus in Guyana, we worked to improve the tyre standards such that every tyre sold in Grenada today must pass international standards and must clearly bear international quality marks such as the E-mark, the European Mark or the DOT, the US quality mark.

Maiden Speeches:
Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman

Madam President, I've served on the Board of Management of Westmorland School for six years and also as its Chairman. My goals were three, to ensure that the school was in a strong financial footing. With limited income for schools, private schools, the school was burdened with significant debt after the result of rebuilding after Hurricane Ivan. Madam President, by the time I left the school, the loan balance was under $50,000 and the amount in the bank was tripled that. I believe like many private schools, however, after COVID they would have their share of difficulties currently. To ensure that the morality of the School's Constitution was maintained, an order of business was to get the sale of alcohol off the school compound during school events, for Sports Meets and for Fairs. I thought that it was wrong to have children winning a bottle of rum for their parents at a ring toss during a school event. Parents need to lead by example and three, to strengthen the education system to pay teachers as much as we could afford to, to attract the best educators for our children.

Madam President, I have served for nine plus years and continue to serve at the Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce. I currently serve as the first Vice President and I did not want to leave the Chamber to do this service because I wanted to be directly involved, not receive reports from the Private Sector but be involved so that I know first-hand what are the issues. The GCIC is the oldest active Private Sector organisation in Grenada. I have had the privilege to work with three Executive Directors; Christopher DeRiggs, Hazelann Hutchinson and Petipha Lewis-Smith. The initiatives and projects that we embarked upon are too numerous to mention, one such was the implementation of VAT… consultation on VAT and another was to build bus shelters across the country which would provide shelter for citizens and a means of income for the Chamber.

Madam President, I have served in charity events, the Grenada Islamic Foundation and the wider community. After Hurricane Ivan, we chartered an entire vessel; Ocean Princess to bring relief items to Grenada for the benefit of the people in Calliste, Frequente and so forth. Madam President, I continue to give some of my time and service in marriage counselling, by God's mercy I have been married for 20 years and counting and community service. I have worked with other religious leaders over

the years through the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs at the request of Government including during the COVID-19 period to discuss matters of burial, community service, mental and spiritual health.

Madam President, I became the Managing Director of Spice Isle Automotive in 2009 and I serve in this capacity currently. Although now much of my time is spent out of that company, change is constant. Madam President, I give these examples of varied service as a means of encouragement for us to get up and get us a people especially our men. Look at the example of the prophets of God Almighty; we cannot separate morality from leadership. God almighty did not do that when he sent messengers to mankind. Madam President, if we were to reflect upon some of the trials that we as a people has been through just in the last 50 years, our struggle for Independence 1974, the Revolution 1979, the Intervention 1983, Hurricanes Ivan and Emily, the recession of 2009-2012, the COVID-19 virus, the resulting world recession and the current inflation change of value of money, trial after trial.

Finally, Madam President, when a child falls down, even though the child is hurt that child gets back up. That, Madam President, is our determined spirit and that has been hardwired into us by our maker, our creator. God almighty never promised us that this life would be paradise, this life is hard work, and leading this country is hard work. The more we unite as a people for a common benefit, the more we can break down to artificial walls that divide us, the most successful we can become. In unity there is strength and when we do disagree in this House, it must be based on our differences on the issues and not disdain for one another and always with respect for one another. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: I thank Senator Rahaman and next. Senator La Crette you're at the mike, please deliver.

Maiden Speeches: Sen. the Hon. Jonathan La Crette

Sen. the Hon. Jonathan La Crette: Madam President, thank you. Senatorial colleagues in this Honourable House, good morning to everyone and to the citizens of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I want to draw the attention of this Honourable House to 1st Samuel Chapter 17. I want to draw your attention to that chapter because the narrative speaks of a shepherd boy called David and a giant called Goliath or better known as a Philistine. The microscope is not on Goliath this morning but the microscope is on David simply because his presence in the fight was questionable. His presence in the fight was questionable because David came at a very obscure time when Israel and the Philistines were warring against each other for territory, for dominance. At that particular point in time his father sent him to bring supplements to his brother and what David saw was army against army, the battle was in array. And at that particular juncture, David decided seeing that the army of Israel had no one to fight for their cause, he a shepherd boy was going to step in and defend his generation and defend his people and defend the cause. And rightly so, David said to his elder brothers, Madam President, is there not a cause? When they questioned his stature and questioned is motive for being in the fight, he said to them is there not a cause? And I say to you this morning, Madam President, and fellow senatorial colleagues that there is a cause for Parliamentarians, Senators like myself to enter into the political arena to champion the cause for the voiceless.

The microscope is on David this morning again because he dared to have a voice for a generation that would have died if Goliath had his way. Madam President, the voice of inclusion, the voice of equity and, Madam President, the voice of humanity. What I bring to the political arena is a recapture of humanity in politics. A son of the soil, proud son of George and Lauren La Crette and I am always proud to say that my mother is a Guyanese national. So I have a bit of a Caribbean mix going on where my heritage is concerned.

Madam President, this morning as I stand in this discourse of my Maiden Speech, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the people of St. George North-West who decided that they were going to ensure that they go out on Election Day and vote for me. I want to express sincere thanks to them and I also want to let them know that

by no stretch of the imagination will their representation be appointed in my candidacy for St. George North-West. As I bring humanity in politics, Madam President, I bring it with a sense of urgency, I bring it with a sense of pride and I bring it with a spirit of excellence to this excellent team that I'm a part of who have pledged to move Grenada forward. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: I thank the Honourable Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Katisha Douglas: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President: Senator the Honourable Douglas.

Sen. the Hon. Katisha Douglas: Thank you. Pleasant good morning to all. Madam President, it is with great enthusiasm, humility and courage that I rise in this Honourable House to make my Maiden Speech as a young professional and as a powerful woman representing the Opposition team led by Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell. However, I also feel obligated to represent every Grenadian who feels voiceless, vulnerable and the many who have lost hope. Madam President, I am extremely honoured to be allowed to serve as a Senator for my country and I chose the word 'serve' deliberately because service is the highest calling and must always be our watchword before self and before party. Madam President, I am sure that I am not the only new Member sitting in this Honourable House to have wondered at some point over the last few weeks or months how on earth I ended up in the political bubble. Madam President, please allow me to inform this Honourable House why I ended up in this so called bubble.

Looking back, reminiscing, I have realised that after serving in the capacity of a Manager in my chosen career and interacting with hundreds of employees for several years, I have since found my purpose and inspiration which is being a servant of the world's most valuable asset; people. Madam President, I am fully aware that politics

means or should mean serving people with the different ideals, expectations and aspirations and it is hard work; that is if we take the assignment seriously and selflessly. I also know that I have a lot to learn but I acknowledge and I accept that this is one of the major forums through which I can help to provide hope to our people.

Madam President, I come from humble beginnings. I have an understanding of what it is like sometime not having food on the table, not having proper shoes on my feet and being laughed at. Eating split peas soup with weevils and earning a salary as low as $800.00 a month before any deductions in my first job. Madam President, this is no exaggeration, this was my reality. I understand the struggle because I lived it and I have not forgotten my roots. Sadly, there are too many who are still in that position striking an endless circle of poverty. We must support them in every way possible and should never insult their callous state by broadcasting they're getting hand-outs. The Bible says that the poor will always be with us and we will be judged as people based and how we treat them. Madam President, I therefore intend to use my time in this Honourable House under the guidance of my leader, the support of team Members and any well-meaning Grenadians at home and abroad to help with formulations of policies, enhancement of ideas and implementations of structures in any area when the opportunity presents itself. I will always be open to meaningful suggestions and constructive criticism and I will always put my best foot forward.

Madam President, allow me to say with no apology that I am committed to supporting policies and programmes aimed at ensuring that our nation's children attain a better education through different learning concepts, partaking in current programmes geared at boosting their moral, character building, empowerment and development. The upliftment of our nation's children has a very special place in my heart and every opportunity I would endeavour to make a positive and impactful contribution in this area. Madam President, we cannot ignore the fact that there are a lot of broken youth in our nation today and as the great Nelson Mandela said **"education is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world."** Madam President, we all can agree that our education system should be geared towards producing world class human capital and should be combined with our

nation's financial capital investment along with improved infrastructure, that is what a 21st century new economy must look like.

Madam President, I enter this Honourable House at a time when we are faced with serious challenges as a nation and as a world but I can confidently say that with the right attitude and noble intentions, teamwork, humility, professionalism and openness I do not doubt in my heart that we will be able to get through whatever challenges we are faced with as a country for the sake of our people. Madam President, our people deserve nothing but the best and I will do my best to give them the voice that they deserve. I cannot promise them to win every battle but together with my team and the Most High, we will fight every battle on their behalf for as long as we have the honour to be serving in this Honourable House. Madam President, I therefore encourage my colleagues in this Honourable House to please let us promote and exhibit respectful behaviour and be good role models especially to our young people. Let us concentrate on what we can do together, let us use our energy, knowledge and resources constructively to build our nation. We must respect the people of our communities who are looking for and expect guidance and leadership to always tell them the truth, even sometimes the truth hurts and disappoints. Let us now look beyond the election and party colours in our decision-making and be authentic, decent and genuine in our intentions. Let us build trust and respect for each other, let us unite in partnership for the greater good, making a joint commitment to make this Eleventh Session of Parliament a memorable one. Let us be the change that our people in the past, present and future want to see.

Madam President, in closing I would like to leave two quotes, the first one is for the people who are trying to have a better life but everything seems impossible. This quote is from Chadwick Boseman the movie star of Black Panther and I quote **"the struggles along the way are only meant to shape you for your purpose."** Madam President, the second quote is for us leaders in this Honourable House who are charged to represent the people of our nation in different capacities. Let us lead like Princess Diana and I quote **"I lead from the heart, not the head."** Madam

President, despite the challenge of our age, with a broad back and a stiff spine and boundless optimism, I look forward working with everyone in this Honourable House and the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. May God bless us all. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you Senator Douglas, thank you. Honourable Senator Claudette Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Madam President, colleagues of this Honourable House, I rise today with great humility and indeed a well of emotion. I rise today first to thank God Almighty for life's journey that he has given to me so far which has been a blessing all along. To acknowledge and to say thanks to my family, my siblings but especially my mother of blessed memory who we lost last year, my big sister Ancilla and my other big sister Sharon, Janalyn, Jacinta and my brothers, Trevor, Fabian, my one little sister Lynette who actually incidentally is a Parliamentary expert of sorts serving the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

My sister Honourable Gloria Thomas mentioned that she is the child raised by a village, the same is true for me for my mother was a single parent raising on her own 6 girls and 1 boy, the other boy having passed at the age of 10. And she did that without a formal education and often times without a steady job. So it would have been impossible for all of us to have turned out the way we did without the support, material and in kind, of the village, the area where we were raised. And that is the area we commonly called "The Wharf" and I will describe the Wharf borrowing the description used by my neighbour in his book, White Frock, Coals Dust and that's my neighbour Lincoln "Toro" Depradine, he describes the Wharf as that area encompassing Tanteen, Archibald Avenue, the Villa, the Carenage, H.A. Blaize Street, Green Street, Lucas Street and anywhere that Angel Harps plays. So I am a Wharf girl and that village raised me and produced the daughter of the soil standing here today. Elders in the village like Ms. Mavis Fletcher, Mr. Carol Bristol and his wife

Ruth Bristol, Mrs. Beverly Steele, Miss Mary Depradine who we all called "Tan Cho Cho", Ms. Mona Depradine, Pearl Phillip, Cynthia Raymond, I can call a whole set. They all helped my mother to take care of us and to ensure that we walked the straight and narrow. And luckily for us we went, the girl's to the St. Louis R.C. Girls School and then the St. Joseph's Convent, those of us who made it to Secondary School. And in those two institutions we got great guidance and counselling in the proper and decent way to conduct one's self from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, particularly Sister Gabriel Mason and Sister Ann Keens-Douglas and of course the teachers, my second mother Louisa Chase-Lewis. I mention these names particularly and specifically so that they may be recorded in the Hansard.

These are the people who helped to guide and shape me. These are the people who assisted my mother when she was short on funds. **(Emotional moment/Member drank some water)** I remember when Mr. Carol Bristol realised that I did well in school, he encouraged me to borrow any book I needed from his home library. He guided me on the subjects to choose if I wanted to become a lawyer and Mrs. Beverly Steele who when it appeared that I would not be able to complete my studies found a way to help to ensure that I got my LLB degree. Because the difficulty was always, I performed excellently but my mother almost always didn't have the means and so I always remember these great people from around the Wharf area who saw something good in me and helped my mom to ensure that I attained my dream of becoming a lawyer first of all and serving the people of Grenada in other capacities. The community also engendered in us camaraderie either through participating in the NJM young pioneer movement in the community or being the youngest member of the music society or being part of Angel Harps, always something in the community and in the Roman Catholic Church, being an active member in the Legion of Mary and the youth group and other religious groups including Crescendo Choir, all these things helped to shaped me as an individual.

Service and helping people was always integral to my upbringing and so it was a natural fit for me to become an advocate, an advocate of the people through law, an

advocate through teaching, teaching at the secondary level, teaching at TAMCC, teaching at UWI and more recently teaching at the St. George's University. But that wasn't enough. I've always had a passion for ensuring that people were treated fairly, justly and that people who are in authority do what is right by those who are more vulnerable, the weaker ones. And that encouraged me to become very active in the Martial Arts and becoming the chief instructor of the Grenada Karate Federation. I am the National Coach. I still hold that position but I must confess I don't get to do it much these days, André, I guess bigger duty calls. But in the Martial Arts, you use Martial Arts to defend the weak, to build discipline, self-confidence, a sense of service and duty to others. And so being an advocate for human rights, justice, democracy, the rule of law, all of these things come quite naturally to me, because I always remember from where I came. And so, I am very humbled, proud and committed to working in this Honourable House. Working in this Honourable House, serving the people of Grenada signals that I have now transitioned from being an advocate for change, an advocate for the people, to now being a maker of change, and the real servant of the people, using this House, using my portfolios in the other arm of Government, the Executive Arm, to ensure that real meaning for positive change is brought to the people of Grenada, the kind of change that will permanently lift up people especially the people who are vulnerable. So I look forward, like my sister Senator Douglas on the "Other Side", I look forward to working with everyone, all Grenadians, no matter your political party preference, working with everyone in the interest of the people of Grenada. To whom much is given, not much but a lot is expected, so I am here to serve.

And, Madam President, I look forward to working with all of your colleagues here in the Senate, as we enact Laws of the land that will truly move our country forward and upward. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Maiden Speeches: Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn

Madam President: Thank you Senator Joseph. It's good to know that the Wharf is a village **(laughter)** and I can't resist telling you that Sister Gabriel Mason and Sister Ann Keens Douglas came from villages in St. Andrew's, so the national village has been built by so many everywhere. What a wonderful, wonderful experience of our stories. Next please. Thank you Senator Neilon Franklyn.

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, we often end by saying thank you, but I would like to start off by expressing my gratitude, similarly as I've done to you for acknowledging me to rise and address this House. I say thank you to Almighty God for his guidance, his protection and his Grace, for without it I would not be here today. I say thank you to my family and my friends, who showed love, guidance, counsel and support throughout my life and most specifically now upon my appointment to this Honourable House.

Thank you to the people of Brizan who have all contributed to my growth and development every day for the last 24 years. Thank you to the people of St. George North-West who have made and have been rather a major pillar of support in my life, not just by way of an overwhelming support on my acceptance of this appointment, but throughout my entire life. I say thanks to them this morning, Madam President, and I give them the reassurance, I was born amongst them, I grew amongst them, I currently live with them and I will never leave them.

Thank you to Doctor Keith Mitchell and members and supporters of the New National Party, for acknowledging the need to continue its efforts of ensuring that youth representation is ensured. I say thanks to them for seeing me as a worthy choice to augment the efforts of the party in ensuring its contribution in the balance of power and a thriving and ever changing parliamentary democracy.

To my former teachers at the Happy Hill Roman Catholic School, the Grenada Boy's Secondary School, lecturers at the T.A. Marryshow Community College and ironically the Honourable Member mentioned Miss Louisa Chase-Lewis, who was instrumental in my growth throughout the college. She has contributed to

my life similarly to how she has contributed to the Honourable Senator Joseph. And I've singled her out specifically because of that, a powerful woman, a mighty woman, indeed a champion, a national hero, even to mention. To my lecturers currently and past at the St. George's University, I say thanks for their contribution in establishing and fortifying my academic foundation. Thank you to the young people across the Tri-Island who have given me and shown an overwhelming support for my acceptance to this Honourable House.

Thank you to the media workers I worked along with while I was at the Grenada Broadcasting Network, who expressed heartfelt love, support which contributed significantly, Madam President, to who I am today. I am to remember Mr. Levi Benoit; the Honourable Member would know Mr. Benoit. He took me under his wing. I remember when I was leaving GBN to work at the Customs and Excise Division, that was the first time I saw Levi cry and he passed too soon, I have to say. And I know that he'll be proud to see me here today, because he always said to me, where you are now is not where you're supposed to be.

To everyone else in the media fraternity who has groomed me, shaped me and contributed to my development, I say thanks to them. To the law enforcement men and women of the Customs and Excise Division and also the Royal Grenada Police Force, specifically the Immigration Department, the Drug Squad Unit, the Financial Intelligence Unit and the Prosecution Department, all of whom I worked along with in my capacity as a Customs Officer, I express my gratitude to them for reinforcing the principle of hard work and sacrifice, ensuring that no matter what happens, no matter the circumstances, country is always first.

Madam President, I am no stranger to service for at a very young age, I felt that my purpose in life would be service and service to people through sacrifice. I stand here this morning having resigned a permanent job, to accept the call to service. I do not regret this because I have known from long, from a very long time, that my purpose is service.

Prior to my appointment to this Honourable House, I was a young Customs Officer who gave of myself daily, alongside the other men and women, hard-working

men and women of the division, to ensure that the country's revenue was collected, its borders were secured and a vested interest in preserving our country's economic position, a testament of sacrifice to service, Madam President. My service to the State in my capacity as Custom Officer has ended, and now my service as a Member of the Legislature has begun. For I believe in representation, not of myself but of others for whom their voices may not be heard. I give the reassurance that I will act as a vessel for their voices.

Madam President, it is an honour to stand in this Honourable House as the youngest currently sitting Member of this House. I give my assurance that throughout my tenure in this Honourable House, I intend to champion the cause for the young people across the Tri-Island, to be their voice, represent their collective interest and to ensure that sustainable development is not just a nice term thrown around when we want our speech to sound fancy, but when used in this Chamber, it is a reflection of genuine intent to ensure and secure the ability of the young people to live a fulfilling life now and in the time to come.

I do intend also to fight not physically **(inaudible comments/laughter)** for the less fortunate amongst us. I grew up from humble beginnings, in a single-parent household. I saw my mother work daily to ensure that her three children had at least the basics to ensuring that we lived a decent life. I am a testament of her hard work, a product of her hard work and the hard work of others like her will not go unforgotten or unseen. So I offer myself now, as one who would champion the cause of other single mothers across the Island, for people who grew up in circumstances like my own, to ensure that they do not have to endure some of the things that I endured while growing up. And I say while growing up, not like I'm the oldest person here but… **(Laughter)**

Madam President, I do intend to debate and engage my colleagues on the "Other Side", not for sparring purposes but so that the people's business remains our priority. And we will do what is best for the holistic development of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: I thank the Honourable Senator. Senator Quinc Britton. You have the floor sir.

Sen. the Hon. Quinc Britton: Thank you, Madam President. Members of this Honourable House, fellow citizens in the gallery, viewers and listeners, I rise here today to give thanks, first of all to Almighty God for giving me the strength and the courage, the wisdom and the understanding, because without him nothing is possible.

Also, I rise here to bring you greetings from Sunset City in Victoria. Madam President, permit me to humbly declare today as inauguration day. You may be wondering what context that I speak of when I make such pronouncements, and I will briefly explain. Madam President, in the recent past we've had representation in this Honourable House from Mr. Christopher De Allie, a son of St. Mark and today we have representation from Senator the Honourable Salim Rahaman whose maternal roots is from St. Mark. However on this auspicious day, Madam President, premiering here in the Senate, we have a born, bred and residing Senator from St. Mark in your humble servant Quinc Britton. **(Applause)**

Madam President, as this inauguration unfolds I hereby thank you profoundly for this opportunity to introduce myself, not just to the people of St. Mark, who probably I did not get the chance to meet during my short campaigning, but also to the people who possibly didn't take interest in who I am or who did not have sufficient opportunity to learn about me in the heat of the recently held General Election, including the diaspora. I am Quinc Britton of Victoria, St. Mark, the son of working class parent, Fossil Charles, a teacher by profession and she has been a teacher for the past 38 years. She's now the teacher in charge of the Victoria Pre-School. And my dad Sydney Britton, he's a refrigeration technician in the United States.

Madam President, my early education from pre-primary to secondary, all was achieved in St. Mark, so I'm a real son of the soil. Madam President, at age 12, I began developing a consciousness about my constituency of St. Mark and participating in its politics. Yes at an early age, 12. In my interest in the region's development I saw a natural gravitation to involvement in various academic, sporting,

religious, cultural and community groups and organisation that saw the continued implementation of our Annual St. Mark's Day celebration and our monthly Sunset City Food Festival among others. It is these character building initiatives and although vastly insufficient, that have molded me and solidified my continuous growth and interest in serving our nation.

Madam President, with the strength of Almighty God, and through the support and encouragement of my family, friends, community members, the call was answered earlier this year, when I made the decision to step forward under the transformation agenda of the National Democratic Congress, to seek for my fellow residents of the St. Mark Constituency, better living standards, improved healthcare, academic and skill-based opportunities, growth and expansion of our Agriculture and Fishing Sectors, increased focus on our sporting and cultural ventures, better use of our natural resources, eco and community tourism, infrastructural development, business opportunities, or business entrepreneurships and much, much more, all geared towards breaking the cycle of poverty that have plagued the majority of the constituents.

Madam President, although I was unsuccessful in winning the Parliamentary seat, Madam President, thanks to the constituents of St. Mark and my hard-working campaign team, all other objectives were met, including that of a higher voter turnout and a significant decrease in the gap in the vote count between myself and my then opponent's. I acknowledge that this is just the beginning and there's a lot more work to be done. In fact, there's a lot more work to be done throughout the Tri-Island State and that it would take a collaborative approach to bring the all-inclusive transformational agenda to fruition, to which I pledge my commitment as a team player under the leadership of our distinguished Prime Minister, Honourable Dickon Mitchell.

Madam President, it is with great honour, humility and noticed privileged that I stand here proudly on this history-making inauguration day among my fellow Senators, who are new to this responsibility and among the experienced ones. Madam President, through you I would like to recognise Senators the Honourable

Norland Cox, André Lewis and Roderick St. Clair, and to say to them, that I look forward to building capacity, growing capabilities, spirited debate and well researched recommendations, with the public's best interest at the forefront, and most of all to learn from them, as they have the experience. So I expect them to lead by example.

As a Senator without specific portfolio, I plan to contribute towards every debate and to ensure that the best decisions are taken within these prestigious walls of this principled House, with Grenada at mind and at heart. Madam President, as leaders in this noble House, we must use these opportunities to serve, to improve the lives of all Grenadians. We must be people focused always, through partnership with the people.

As I close, Madam President, I would like to quote the great Oprah Winfrey. She said and as I quote, ***"Leadership is about empathy, it's about having the ability to relate and to connect with people for the purpose of inspiring and empowering their lives."*** And so to my fellow residents of St. Mark, you have known me over the many years, advocating on your behalf. Now that has to be translated into working together, building that partnership, so that we all can help develop our constituency. So I look forward to your continued support, let us work in harmony with each other, to eradicate the scourge of poverty. Let us be involved in the decision-making process to improve our communities. Let us embrace the endless possibility that may exist and ensure that they bear fruits.

Lastly, I implore on every resident younger and older, to take notes of this inauguration of a born, bred and residing citizen from St. Mark constituency, as a Senator, and to ensure that this is not a one-off achievement. That St. Mark will be always represented fully in this House moving forward and together we will make our mark in St. Mark. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you Senator Britton. Senator Andrew. Honourable Senator Andrew.

Maiden Speeches: Sen. the Hon. David Andrew

Sen. the Hon. David Andrew: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, Honourable and distinguished Members of this House, fellow Grenadians observing in this Chamber, and Grenadians following on live feeds both at home and in the diaspora, good morning.

I am privileged, honoured and humbled to stand in this Honourable House this morning to deliver this maiden address. I am privileged because God has kept me in the land of the living, and my life consists in him. I am honoured because I have been bestowed the opportunity to serve my country and my country men and the citizens of Grenada in one of this country's highest offices.

I am humbled because I have been given the opportunity to shape the policies and the direction of my country at this time, for my children and for future generations. This at a time when I believe our country needed it most. It is my humble view that our country could not have continued in the direction it was heading, and so I am particularly delighted to be a part of this rescue mission and rescue team.

Madam President, humility is not a strange word for me because I was born from very humble beginnings. I was born in the village of La Digue, home to Senator André Lewis, home to guys like the Black Wizard, multiple calypso monarch champion, home to folks like the Mc Guires and home to the great grandparents and grandparents of Malcolm X. My parents Eversley and Selina Andrew had 11 of us children in their lives together. And right now my wife and I of twenty two 22 years plus, we have three children of our own, and because of that I give full credit to my parents for their job in raising us, all eleven 11 of us. We are all alive and all contributing citizens to this country.

I grew up with the luxury of having five brothers and five sisters. **(Laughter)** Madam President, I say luxury because this family configuration taught us out of necessity to be creative, to be cooperative, to be combative even, to be collaborative. We learned our own languages, we learned to share, we learned to develop our own codes, we learned to be resilient in that family structure. Madam President, my father was a farmer and a builder, a mason to be precise and my mother was a homemaker.

And God knows I could not ask for better parents. They may not have had all of the material things and riches that we wanted at the time, but they were rich in the fundamentals. We knew that we were loved. We had a regiment of good values, hard work and education. We had a regiment of good values, hard work and education. So even though there were days where the food was not enough, and even though there were days when, like our Sister, Honourable Douglas when we walked without shoe and the shoes were not ideal, or they were the cheapest on the market, or we had to share clothing, hand downs from those who were bigger and older, we made it. Thank God we made it. And so if there is any young person out there who can identify with the story that I've just shared, I want to encourage you out there, Madam Speaker, I want to encourage young people out there that they too can make it.

As a student, I attended the Holy Innocent Anglican School at the primary level, little school in the area of La Digue, and at the secondary level, I attended the St. Andrew's Anglican Secondary School, a school that taught me roundedness. So I got to play cricket, I got to be house captain, I got to be a debater, I got to represent my school and represent Grenada from school, had the world of experiences. I got to be involved in the Science Club, I got to be President of that club, I got to be involved as the Head Prefect and so I got a very rounded experience for which I'm very, very grateful even today. And then that followed with my education at the Grenada National College. It was then called the Grenada National College, now TAMCC, and then I followed with university studies at the Caribbean Nazarene College in Trinidad and Tobago.

I started my work experience, Madam Speaker, as a Secondary School Teacher at the Grenville Secondary School. A place I spent ten years teaching, and I taught areas like French, which I still speak fluently, Science, History, English B, Geography, in fact, I taught probably almost everything in my ten years. But during that period, I served as the Modern Language Head of Department. I served as Housemaster in Athletics Championships, Debate Coach. It was a most fascinating period of my life; I think one that shaped a lot of my foundational and key skills that

have served me since. Within that time, I became a qualified teacher, pursuing the Teacher Training Programme jointly offered by the Grenada National College and the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus.

I then left later to pursue studies in Trinidad and Tobago at the Caribbean Nazarene College, and completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree in General Studies with concentration in Psychology. I completed same with the highest honour, summa cum laude. I went on to complete a Master's Degree in Counselling, and that too, I completed with honours, magna cum laude. I took the opportunity to gather much experience in Trinidad and Tobago, and so I worked with the Government there for a while with schools as a Guidance Counsellor. I worked as a psychologist to one of the leading employee assistance provider firms in Trinidad and Tobago, Elder Associates. I worked as a lecturer at the college in areas of psychology, developmental and lifespan psychology, and abnormal psychology, as well as interpersonal relations and conflict resolution. Key skills that still served me very, very well and have served me in all of my journey so far.

Upon return to Grenada after completing studies, I resumed my service in education as a Guidance Counsellor to schools. Eventually I became a School Counselling Supervisor serving the districts of St. Andrew partially, and all of St. David, District 4, giving clinical supervision to the counsellors in that district with the Ministry of Education. I spent 10 years in that capacity.

Then I was called upon to serve as the Chief Education Officer, I was appointed to serve as the Chief Education Officer in the Ministry of Education. Following which, I served as the Director of Student Support Services, the Student Support Services Unit at the Ministry which gives oversight to all of the Counsellors, the School Feeding Officers, the School Attendance Officers, and the Student Activities Coordinator at the Ministry. All of these experiences have been very, very service oriented and I'm absolutely proud and pleased to have served in those capacities.

My service wasn't only limited to inside the Education Sector, although I spent 28 plus years in the education service from the classroom, right to my last position before I retired earlier this year. But I was also involved in community service. And so,

working with sporting teams be by way of motivation or developmental sessions, be it footballers in St. Andrew or the under 15 cricketers, or the under 19 teams, or probably even commentary in some of those games and sport meets. They've always been passions of mine, or doing developmental sessions with some of the youth groups across the Island. They've always been things that I've engaged in, even playing music. In fact, I still play music, and I'm deeply involved in the Music Department of the church I currently attend. So, community service is something that I've been always involved in.

A couple of the things that have really stood out to me… two things that have stood out to me, Madam President, in my years of service. One, in 2010, I served as a French Speaking Mental Health Service Provider to French speaking Haitian survivors of the then devastating 2010 Haitian earthquake. And even as we celebrate Mental Health Week, this week, evident by the green corsage you see me wearing, I'm happy to have been a part of what was then a real global crisis. And that humbled me then, because I was a little boy from the back of La Digue, who was able to feature with the skills that I received in the education system in Grenada to serve in a world crisis. That humbled me, and is still one of my landmark achievements, even to date.

And then in 2017, I received the Clinical Network Award, which is given to an alumnus of the college where I studied, an alumnus who is adjudged to have positively impacted the helping profession and impacting the lives of others, in his community, most profoundly. And so, from all across the region, submissions were made, and in 2017, I received that award. Something I treasure dearly.

But, Madam Speaker, my disclosures today is not so much to point out that I have achieved, because my achievement is in no way, much greater than many persons, but it's more so to encourage and to inspire that young man, that young woman in Telescope, or that young person in Grenville, or Soubise, or Post Royal, or Marquis, or Hope, or Grand Bacolet, or Cafe, or Mama Cannes, or Crochu, is to inspire those persons who feel things are not as ideal as I want them to be, I don't have as much money as I want, I don't have the ideal brands that I might like. I don't have the latest phone that I might want and sometimes they value

themselves simply based on the possession of these assets or the lack thereof. But my disclosure to this House, Madam Speaker, is more so to encourage and inspire those young persons to let them know that they too, just like I came from humble beginnings with material lack, they too can climb to positions of influence, they too can climb to positions of national, regional and international acclaim.

Madam Speaker, to this effect, I want to advance that education is the single most liberating, empowering and transforming tool that they can look to. Even though things were tough, education was part of the regiment. And I'm sure all my colleagues here will affirm likewise. So education, I'm saying to young persons out there is the single most empowering, transforming and liberating tool they can have.

Work is another important element, in that regiment my parents taught, Madam Speaker, there were good values, hard work and education. And so, Madam President, hard work, work is important, the dignity of work must be emphasised. And if we are going to transform our fortunes, if we are going to transform this country, like we certainly intend to do, work has to be a big part of it, finding it, keeping it, pursuing it meaningfully. And as a Member of this House, Madam President, I commit to genuine quality service. I commit to working diligently in the interest of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, all of our citizens. I want to put on record, my gratitude, and thanks to those who have gone before us, those on whose shoulders we now stand, those who laid the foundation for us that we are able to sit and stand in this Honourable House today, to debate, to discuss, the business of this Nation. And so, I put on record, sincerest appreciation to those who have gone before us.

So, as a Member of this Honourable House, Madam President, I commit to genuine service in the interest of this people, all of our people. I believe that if it is worth doing, Madam President, it's worth doing well. That's my commitment as a Member of this House. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Maiden Speeches: Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas

Madam President: I thank the Honourable Senator David Andrew. And I offer the floor to the Honourable Senator Adrian Thomas.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you very much, Madam President, I rise to give my Maiden Speech. And I want to thank you for that opportunity. First of all, I want to say good morning to my colleagues in the Senate, it's a pleasure to be here with you. And I also want to say good morning to Grenada, Carriacou, and Petite Martinique and my friends and family in the Diaspora, North America, Europe, or wherever you may be.

I want to congratulate my Senators, first and foremost, for accepting the appointment to be here. I think that this is a very important institution. I think we need it in Grenada, it's not a matter of wanting it, but a matter of needing it and the House of Parliament can be the hub for the development of this country.

Madam President, I want to establish here what I call my political guide, and I've taken it from a very great author, his name is John Hagee, and he says, **"*The measure of a man's greatness is not the number of servants he has, but the number of people he serves*."** And I've adopted that as my political guidance for my political career. Madam President, this is not a career that has started here today. It's a career that started a long, long, long time ago.

Madam President, I stand here a very humble son of the soil, ready to serve the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique with a special eye for the farmers in this country.

Madam President, I want to thank the Almighty God for having me here today, giving me the health and strength. I believe that he is very important in terms of guiding you throughout your life, and the work that you do, if you have His blessing, I believe that you will go places.

I was born and bred in the parish of St. David, in a little village called Mt. Tranquille, close to Vincennes, Windsor Forest area. Madam President, in my early days, we used to call this village "Child Island." And the name speaks for itself, a lot of us and a lot of us means that we had the opportunity to do all sorts of things,

play hide and seek, fishing, playing cricket, playing football, interacting and a lot of other things, maybe I will not speak of here today. And I can see the Senator is laughing. **(Inaudible comment by one Senator)** Yes, that was part of it. **(Laughter)**

Madam President, I was born from two humble parents, at the age of 18, my mother delivered me. My father was only 17 years and he didn't mean any harm, but when the news reached him, he couldn't settle, didn't run away for long, but he couldn't settled and I could understand that. Unfortunately, at the age of four years, my mother passed away. I was only four, she was 22. And she had myself and my little sister, at two. I had the privilege of being taken up by, I don't want to say adopted, by my great grandmother, her name was Darlyn Bailey, and I spent the next thirteen years of my life, nine years of my life with this lady. Whatever you see in me today, is what she has instilled and I've learned from what appears to be bad, come into good. So, I'm very grateful to her for what she has done in designing, modelling my life. And I will want to leave with you, the reason why I want to serve. I can always remember her saying to her daughter, who was my grandmother, we were all in the house, nine of us, nobody have a formal job, we all lived on the farm. So, that's why I'm very grateful for agriculture, from a little boy, come right up to today, agriculture is very important and I will encourage people to get involved in it. She always said to her daughter, **"Cook enough, you never know who's going to pass."** And as a matter of fact, when I share that story with a lot of my companions, they can associate themselves with it. And it means that this was the kind of lifestyle we had in the past. And we're going to need that lifestyle today. And if you're not practicing it yet, practice it from now because Senator Lewis, when I pass by your home you can't tell me, you don't have anything to eat, put something in the pot. No meat. Well, we'll talk about that thereafter.

I want to thank the National Democratic Congress for inviting me to be part of this team, this noble team, this noble institution. It was not an easy decision when I was visited in my home by some good friends of mine, and I have no problem in calling their names today, people like Shane Ross, people like Nazim Burke, my good friend, Peter David, Halim, those guys visited me and said to me, **"We are on a**

recruitment drive for the National Democratic Congress." I said to those guys, **"All you crazy or what, form all you own party, that's part of NNP. I don't want to be part of that."** But they came back and they said to me, **"We are here to serve Grenada, we need your assistance."** And I succumbed and I joined the National Democratic Congress, I have no regrets and I will encourage people to join this Party because it's a noble institution. And while I was involved in politics at an early age in regards to going to school and being part of the… during the Revolution, when we had the Student Council and a Student Vanguard and the Militia and the CPE and the NYOU and all those organisations, I was part of it. And I'm proud that I got the opportunity to serve in those areas. So I really want to say thanks to the National Democratic Congress for accommodating me.

I also want to say a heartfelt thank you to the Prime Minister, Honourable Dickon Mitchell for offering me a position in his Cabinet, for putting the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Forestry, Fisheries and Co-operatives into my hands. The confidence that he has displayed in me, Madam President, it's quite a lot and he's asking me to take up the responsibility to move this important sector. And as he has said, this sector has to be one of the main pillars of the new transformational economy that we want to bring in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Madam President, the people who have served this Honourable House in the past, I had the opportunity to sit in the Chamber and listen to them and learn from them. It's not everything that was discussed or debated here that I agree with, but the exposure is what I'm grateful for, and to the people who sat there before, a heartfelt thank you to them. From 1984 come right up, I had the privilege of listening to people like, Francis Alexis. I had the privilege of listening to people like George Brizan, Winty, as we called him, Honourable Ben Jones, Herbert Blaize, former Prime Minister, and the list goes on and on, up to today. I think we owe them quite a lot for preserving that democratic aspect of our community.

And last, but not least, I want to thank my family. Madam President, they had it rough and tough. And I must confess that they did not get the best of me. I could have done much more for my family. I was always in a dilemma, wanting to serve country,

wanting to serve people and want to serve the family and with due respect, sometimes the latter suffer.

When I started to sing calypso, I immediately started to be in the administrative, do the administrative work of the Calypso Association and that took me around the Island, took me from Tent to Tent, practice session to practice session, going and going and going and at the same time, I started my family. So, here is a young family, a young, beautiful, talented wife, with a young child in her arm and I'm not there. At hindsight, I owe this lady a lot. Madam President, my three beautiful children, today they have grown up and I remember, during the COVID lockdown period, they used to tap me on my shoulder, **"You're not going anywhere today… (Laughter) "…you're home early tonight."** And I smiled, but the message is, they were taking notes. And today we can sit, I must say the COVID period gave me an opportunity to sit and mingle with my family more than any other time and I learned quite a lot from that. So having said all of that, and thanked all these people, Madam President, why am I here standing in the Senate? I want to serve.

Madam President, my activities, my service in the community in the past, football, cricket, both players and administrator; scouts, I had the opportunity to run three Scout Troops in St. David, 1st Vincennes, as Comb Leader, 1st St. David R.C. and 1st St. David Secondary Scout Troops, serving people. As I said before, I was very active during the Revolution in the Youth Groups. I taught for two years at the St. David R.C. School. As soon as I finished secondary school, signed up to go to IFE in those days, this young man may not know about that (referencing Senator Britton). But nature's plan just couldn't take me there. And so the weekend before I was about to make my first day at the IFE, I got a call, from a very distinguished principal, may her soul rest in peace, Sister Dawn Lett, the wife of former Parliamentarian, Dennis Lett and in local parlance, **"You want a work or what?"** Madam President, I had no choice but to accept that job. And I taught for two years at that school, until I realised, well coming straight from secondary school and having to have children in your hand, you need to train, you need to be a trained teacher. I realised my shortcomings. And so, I started to go to Teachers College, but it was not too long

after that, I was given the opportunity to obtain a scholarship and to Trinidad where I did agriculture. Having returned to Grenada, I spent 20 years in the Ministry of Agriculture, as a Plant Protection Pest Management Officer. And then working along with quite a few colleagues of mine, lots of colleagues around my same age, I realised that I need to make some more progress. And I'm going to give you a story here. The little money I was working for, could not have built house, take care of family, buy vehicle and further your studies. Having trained in agriculture, I decided to go back to the land and I started doing farming. I am happy to say today, that my First Degree in Law, and my Master's in Law was finance through farming. And I would not say I was a big commercial farmer, just subsistence farming in the backyard. And therefore, I cannot turn my back on this very important subject, feed yourself. I was feeding myself and I had excess to feed others.

Madam President, I consider this Honourable House, a golden opportunity to continue on that road of service. I encourage every Senator, to put country first. Madam President, I have experienced the good debates in this House. I've experienced the bad debates. I've experienced the greatness and the flaws. And I think we as Senators have a golden opportunity to fix the elements that are wrong. It is not an easy task. We are under the microscope. The people are watching us, the people not only here, but in the region, and in the wider community. And therefore, we must rise to the occasion and make sure that we correct the wrongs, so our children and our children's children can look upon us and see us as some form of inspiration as my good friend just outlined.

Madam President, it's a golden opportunity for us to advocate positiveness inside here. We must not be the architects of victimisation, and vindictiveness. We must not be architects of corruption and favouritism; discrimination must be pelted out the door. And therefore, I appeal to each one of us to take up our responsibility, be the guiding light, be the figure that the kids in school want to say, I want to be like Senator La Crette. I want to be like Senator Quinc. I want to be like Senator Andrew. And if we go in that direction, Madam President, I am sure that our country

will be in a better position. And I want to ask every Member of the Senate to please, support the Government in the transformational agenda.

We have outlined what the transformational agenda is all about. You have listened; the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique have listened. The people in the Diaspora have listened and the feedback that we are getting, it is a good programme. It is a programme that should be well executed and Grenada will be in a better position, our country would move forward.

I wish all the Senators the very best in their endeavours as we move forward as a Nation. And before I leave, Madam President, I want to leave this little verse from Jeremiah 29:11 with the Senators and the Nation **"for I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."** I thank you Madam President.

Madam President: I thank Honourable Senator Adrian Thomas. We have come to the end of Maiden Speeches it appears. Thank you, thank you all, you are a marvellous representation of our people individually and altogether and our people's nobility this morning shone through you. Their nobility despite their many struggles, struggles I heard of being immigrant, of being single parent, of what I would call split peas soup poverty, I didn't know split peas was a poor people's food. We've been through as a people just an enormous range of disenfranchisement and you this morning, your stories, your lives of service, you have honoured them. Through your generosity to your parents of which you all spoke, your gratitude to your mentors of which you all spoke and I think your main message that has come through to me is that you know something, you don't know a lot of other things, you feel deeply, you care more powerfully, you are resilient, your people from whence you came have been resilient and taught you that and thus they prepared you for leadership today, that's what I heard from all of you who spoke altogether. And that you're now… your lives so far has been a great training ground for the ark of your service which is on-going but it's clearly at a pinnacle in the Senate. And thus it is a story of Grenada that has risen up from so much disadvantage but so much grandeur, the story of faith, finance and belief from the

Wharf for example, from Child Island where I worked as a volunteer. Stories from La Digue that I know so well have all said to me, our people are grand. I wouldn't have imagined the depth, I see it every day in St. Andrew's and I come from that and I know that but to hear you each recite some version of that reminds me who Grenada really is, the capacity of overcoming.

In my case, I am a female, I am a rural Grenadian in origin and mostly cosmopolitan in experiences, I am an older person. I am revolutionary in my world view and I believe that in my heart I am a democrat. I imagine that all of that and more would come to bear on my exercise as your chief servant in this Senate.

Honourable Members of the Senate permit me then in my capacity as President of the Senate to welcome each of you and to wish you a highly successful tenure of service to our beloved Grenada and I beg of you to work together as a legislating team. I am sure that our people, the ones you said sent you here and our organisations support you and are happy to see you here and indeed so am I. So let us build trust as our most fundamental and abundant resource for this team. The immediate past President of the Senate is here with us today, a special welcome to you Citizen Humphrey and thank you for your decades of service in this institution and elsewhere. Thanks to all former Senate leaders, three of whom I also would also like to put into the Hansard record by calling their names; Joan Purcell, Margaret Neckles, Leslie-Ann Seon and to all Senators from our multi-Island State and many parties. And finally let me give a very warm welcome to the public in the Chamber, you are few and all persons participating online especially students, the media, the technicians and other workers, thank you and thanks to the diaspora viewing in.

Honourable Members we are here to serve in the Senate and it's an awesome responsibility and an equally awesome opportunity as many of you has said. In preparation for today to preside over this Honourable institution, I invited all Honourable Senators to meet with me one and one before this sitting. I wanted to get to know each of you and to let you get a sense of me so we can start the team building. Let me publicly thank all who came in amid your busy schedules, some of you came with your families, all of you charged with enthusiasm and full of

ideas. You all have helped and will continue to help shape the agenda of this first Session of Grenada's Eleventh Parliament. Thank you. The invitation of course remains open to those of you who were not able to come in yet.

In your own way, each of you helped answer the question that I posed but has not been posed by the Leader of Government's Business in the Senate why are we here? One of you summed up our purpose for all of us when he said that he is in the Senate and we should be too, to do something good for Grenada. That's all he said, "I want to do something good for Grenada". Another gave the suggestion that the Senate should educate the public more and get the citizenry to be more involved in governance and still another advised that we should work closely with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to share the wider agenda that they pursue for example on climate change, gender equality and democratic institution building and so on. All of you pledge to work hard and I heard again this morning. So thank you, thank you all.

Honourable Senators whether we represent the ruling party, the opposition party or an interest group, we are here as Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell told a reporter on the day of the Ceremonial Opening of Parliament on August 31 and I remind us of that today. He said **"to put and to consider as a basic development priority, the dignity of the Grenadian human being," there** is such a person. I buy into that as a Grenadian and as a manager of the Senate process, I am sure you all do too. We have an opportunity in this House, this Senate House to lift the dignity of each other as a public servant and as a country. So let us work and manage legislation toward that end, building up dignity to build up development. As we are starting our work now in the month of October, may I remind us that this is a memorable month nationally and internationally.

On the national front, we will have a week long recall and commemoration of the national disasters of October 1983. We continue to pray and work for the healing of our people, the building of our institutions and the sustainable development for our country. Globally, this is child month opened by Her Excellency Dame Cécile La Grenade, Governor General just a few days ago. We in this Senate pledge to do our best in our homes, in our villages, in our churches,

schools and organisations to promote the theme **"Children's Care and Education Matter, Let Children Grow, Glow and Flourish"** and as you spoke I saw the child in each of you. Each of you took us back to your childhood and I could envision it. I could envision going to school, I could envision sitting in a house with eleven brothers and sisters, I could envision a young teacher, I could envision it. I want you to know that the real deal is there with you every day, help them grow, help them glow and help them flourish.

Elsewhere I have issued a statement in which I have named a very painful experience that children have in their homes; sexual violence particularly incest and I have called then and I call now for all of us not just to work against it but to fight against it. Let our children grow, glow and flourish. Today is international day of the girl child; it's now in its 10th year. It was put on the international agenda by African Mothers, the concept of the girl child and we celebrate that today under the theme **"Our Time Is Now Girls, Our Rights And Our Future Matter."** Let us combine these pledges to children as a whole and to the girl child to care for, to protect and to educate our girls so that they can find their true good selves and flourish. I want to therefore thank Macheala Charles and Tazia Charles of the Girls Guides of St. Joseph's Convent Grenville, my Alma Mater and to thank their ranger leader and teacher, Abby Jones for coming by to celebrate girl's day with me two days ago and to listen and to hold hands and they had me jumping and eating ice-cream remembering my own girl hood. Three generations of girls in an afternoon, thank you girls.

October 5 was International Teacher's Day. On behalf of this Honourable Senate, I greet all teachers, past and present and that includes parents, the first teachers of children. I offer you a salute of gratitude and pride, good teachers impart knowledge but far better a great teacher unleashes the innovation and creativity of his students and molds character in a young person, that's what a teacher does. Grenada teachers, continue to shine your light in our nation trough the students you nurture and teach. October is Cancer Awareness Month led by the Grenada Cancer Society. Many civil society organisations are mobilising the

public to raise awareness and to take active responsibility for a cancer free, healthy population.

Trade Union week is this week October 9-14. Like the Women's Movement, this movement, the Trade Union Movement has given us the valued concept of solidarity. Solidarity between workers and solidarity so badly needed in a country for positive industrial growth, solidarity is needed between worker and employer. This year World Mental Health day falls in October. Good mental health as we heard from the Minister yesterday is yet another foundation pillar of a society of a people of dignity. October 16 is World Food Day under this year's theme **"Let Us Each Contribute to Domestic Food Security and to Good Health through the Garden of Healthy Food."** Let me repeat myself, we are here as a legislating team so let us agree as the Africans say that we are sisters and brothers from different mothers only. The people of Grenada have agreed that they want transformation; we are here to be part of that so let us get on with that work. Thank you for your indulgence and I crave the indulgence of the Senate for a very short break since we have had our long two and a half hours spell. I intend to run a healthy institution, five minutes to compose ourselves for the next phase. Thank you.

(Sound of gavel)

Senate adjourns at 11:30 a.m.

Senate resumes at 11:36 a.m.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Ceremonial State Opening of the First Session of the Eleventh Parliament held at the Parliament Chamber on Wednesday 31st August, 2022 be taken as read.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I beg to move the confirmation of the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Ceremonial State Opening of the First Session of the Eleventh Parliament held at the Parliament Chamber on Wednesday 31st August, 2022.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 5 - Messages from the Governor-General.
Item 6 - Announcements by Madam President.
Item 7 - Ministerial Statements.
Item 8 - Presentation of Papers and Report from Select Committees.

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I wish to move the following Papers be laid on the Table:

1. The First Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure 2022.
2. 2022 Mid-Year Review Report.
3. NIS 2021 Annual Report.

Papers / Reports
Petitions
Questions

Madam President: Honourable Members the First Supplemental Estimate of Expenditure 2022, the 2022 Mid-Year Review Report and the 2021 NIS Annual Report are now laid on the Table.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 9 - Petitions.

Madam President: Senator Roderick St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Good morning, Madam President, good morning fellow Members of this Honourable House. I present the text of Petition:

"We, the undersigned farmers of the State of Grenada hereby petition for the amendment to the Agriculture Crop (Compensation) Act No. 9 of 1967 to enable farmers to receive a fair compensation for crop loss. We therefore seek the support of the Legislature. And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

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

Madam President: Honourable Roderick St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. Question number 1 addressed to the Leader of Government's Business: Please inform this Honourable House on Government's lease arrangement pertaining to the Bellevue Estate, in Bellevue, St. Andrew pertaining to 5 subsections:

1) To whom or which company is the Bellevue Estate in Bellevue, St. Andrew leased?
2) What is the duration of the lease and how much more years is remaining on the lease?
3) How many acres of lands are covered under the lease?
4) What are the monetary terms and conditions pertaining to the lease?

5) Is the lease's performance of the terms of the lease satisfactory?
6) If not, what are the plans of this governing administration to deal with this situation?

Madam President: I thank the Senator. Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you very much, Madam President, and thank you very much Senator Roderick St. Clair for the question. Madam President, we welcome the question and we believe that this augurs well for the important debates that we intend to have in this Honourable House. And I want to also acknowledge and recognise the level of calmness that we have in this country, the ease that the people have at this point in time. Madam President, people feel free, they want to talk, people want to offer advice, they want to help in the process and a question of that nature, Madam President, I think will help all of us.

I am very happy to say that we are no longer living in fear in this country. People feel a sense of relief and therefore what I am observing outside of this House on a day to day basis I expect some of it to come across to this House. But, Madam President, let us be reasonable. This is our very first sitting as Senators, as a matter of fact save and except Senator André Lewis, Senator Norland Cox and my good friend Senator Roderick St. Clair, I think all of us here are sitting here for the very first time. And from the feedback that I am getting, the general public welcome our presence and they are happy with our performance so far. But apart from this being the first sitting of the House, Madam President, many of us may not have been exposed before but here we are today.

I think that the general public was very reasonable since June 23. They have given us at least 100 days honeymoon period and we welcome that and the general public I think they mean well because they understand what it is when you just fall on a job. And therefore I will expect my good friends to exhibit that kind of courtesy to us.

Madam President, I will like to inform this House on June 23 when we assumed Office, this country was not in the best condition it ought to have been. Many of our institutions has deteriorated beyond repair and therefore what we have done as a new Government is to analyse the situation in the country, find the ills and

the shortcomings and we have listed them and as a responsible Government we have prioritised. And I am saying all this, Madam President, to say that we want to offer the people good governance, we want to take our time, we want to make sure that what we are doing is in the best interest of the people and we are itemising and going along pretty well for the first 100 days.

The question that has been submitted by Senator St. Clair will be answered and therefore we have done everything possible to put a system in place, to put a mechanism in place and we have channelled the question to the relevant personnel and the Ministry to make sure that when we are giving Senator St. Clair an answer and the Grenadian people, we give them the most appropriate answer, and the answer must help in the developmental process.

Madam President, I kindly and humbly… as a matter of fact, Madam President, I have looked at the Order Paper and I am seeing two other questions there. I want to kindly and humbly request of you, Madam President, leave for all the questions to be deferred to a later date, all three questions posed by Senator St. Clair. I await your guidance, Madam President, as I seek your permission.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Thomas. Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President, and notwithstanding the comments made by the Member, I want us to not lose sight of the need to have these questions read into the Hansard. I just wanted to share this so that your guidance in this process.

Madam President: Thank you Senator St. Clair. I take it you are referring to the…

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Well yes, I'm…

Madam President: …the three questions.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: I'm indicating here, I'm suggesting or requesting that the other two questions for which the Member speaks, is read by

myself into, on behalf of the farming and fishing community so it's in the record for when it comes to the next… answering of the questions.

Madam President: Thank you, please proceed to read them.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. So question number 2: Please provide this Honourable House on Government's lease arrangements pertaining to the La Sagesse Agro Processing Facility located in the La Sagesse, St. David. And it reads:

- To whom or which company is the La Sagesse Agro Processing facility, located in La Sagesse, St. David leased?
- What is the duration of the lease and how much more years is remaining on the lease?
- What are the monetary terms and conditions pertaining to the lease?
- Is the lease's performance of the terms of the lease satisfactory?
- If not, what are the plans of this governing administration to deal with the situation?

And if I may continue to question 3, it says: Please inform this Honourable House on the status of the Praedial Larceny Fund, pursuant to Section 17 of the Praedial Larceny Act, Act No. 5 of 2005. It reads:

- Is the Praedial Larceny Fund in existence and operational?
- If yes, then on what date was this fund operationalised?
- What is the dollar value in the Praedial Larceny Fund as of August 31, 2022?
- What is the dollar value of the last deposit that was caused to be paid into the Praedial Larceny Fund and on what date was this transaction?

And the fourth part:

- What was the dollar value of the last monies that were caused to be paid out from the Praedial Larceny Fund, and on what date was this transaction?

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President: I thank the Independent Senator, Roderick St. Clair for presenting and reading these questions. And I thank him also for his gracious acceptance of the response of the Leader of Government's Business that these questions, all three of them in the detail that you have given, will be answered at a later time. Thank you gentlemen.

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

Madam President: Leader of Government Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to move the Motion 14 (a) standing in my name, which reads:

WHEREAS debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the First Session of the Eleventh Parliament on the 31st August, 2022 was deferred to a date to be fixed;

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

Question proposed.

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, the Address by the Governor-General normally encapsulates Government's priorities for the next appropriation period. Currently, Madam President, we are engaged in consultations for this period, which is for the year January 1 to December 31, 2023. In the accompanying debate, the anticipation is that all the policy positions of the Government, as stated in the Throne Speech will be debated. It is against this background, Madam President, that we are proposing that we accept the Governor-General's Gracious Speech, with the understanding that the contents of the Speech will soon be debated in this House.

Therefore, Madam President, in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Senate, Section 32 subsection (1), I now propose an amendment to that Motion, which would read:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the said Address be now accepted.

Madam President: Thank you.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Gracious Address accepted.

Motion approved as amended.

Madam President: Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President. I rise to read the following Motion standing in my name:

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 63 (1) (a) of the Senate's Standing Orders, provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the President as Chair, and two other Senators to be known as the Committee of Selection;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable Senate doth now appoint the two other Senators to the said Committee.

Question proposed.

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I beg to nominate the following persons: Senator Claudette Joseph and Senator Salim Rahaman, with the President as Chair.

Madam President: Thank you Senator. Is there a seconder? Senator Gloria Thomas.

Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas: Madam President. I rise to second the Motion.

Question put and agreed to.

Members of the Committee of Selection appointed.

Motion approved.

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I rise to read the following Motion standing in my name:

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 63 (1) (b) of the Senate Standing Orders, provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the President, as Chair and two Members, to be known as the Standing Orders Committee;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable Senate doth now appoint the two Members to the said Committee.

Question proposed.

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I beg to nominate Senator the Honourable David Andrew and Senator the Roderick St. Clair, with the President as Chair.

Madam President: Any seconds?

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: If it pleases you, Madam President, I rise to second the Motion as moved by the Leader of Government's Business.

Madam President: Thank you Senator Joseph.

Question put and agreed to.

Motions

Members of the Standing Orders Committee appointed.

Motion approved.

Madam President: Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I rise to read the following Motion standing in my name:

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 63 (1) (c) of the Senate Standing Orders, provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the President as Chair, and two (2) Members to be known as the House Committee.

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Senate doth now appoint the two (2) Members to the said Committee.

Question proposed.

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I beg to nominate the following two (2) Members with the President as Chair: Senator Gloria Thomas and Senator Norland Cox.

Madam President: Is there a seconder?

Sen. the Hon. Jonathan La Crette: Madam President, thank you. I beg to second the Motion as moved by the Leader of Government's Business.

Madam President: I thank you Honourable Senator La Crette. The following Senators have been nominated and duly seconded: Senator the Honourable Gloria Thomas and Senator the Honourable Norland Cox.

Question put and agreed to.

Members of the House Committee appointed.

Motion approved.

(Gavel sounds)

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I rise to read the following Motion standing in my name:

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 63 (1) (d) of the Senate Standing Orders, provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the President as Chair and four (4) Members to be known as the Committee of Privileges, which shall be elected as soon as may be, after the beginning of each session;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Senate doth now appoint the four Members to the said Committee.

Question proposed.

Madam President: Senator Honourable Adrian Thomas, Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I beg to nominate the four Members with the President as Chair: Honourable Jonathan La Crette, Honourable André Lewis, Honourable Katisha Douglas, Honourable Adrian Thomas.

Madam President: Honourable Members the question is that: **WHEREAS** Standing Order No 64 (1) (d) which we've now had… So is there a seconder? Senator Quic Britton.

Sen. the Hon. Quinc Britton: Thank you, Madam President. I beg to second the Motion moved by the Leader of Government's Business.

Madam President: I thank you Senator Britton.

Question put and agreed to.

Members of the Committee of Privileges appointed.

Motion approved.

(Madam President converses with the Clerk privately)

Madam President: We have the suggestion to break now for lunch and continue with the Motions and so after lunch. I see one nod; **(laughter)**, I see two nods.

(Gavel Sounds)

Senate adjourn for lunch at 12:05 p.m.
Senate resumes at 1:03 p.m.

Madam President: The Honourable House resumes.

(Gavel sounds)

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to move the Motion 14 (f) standing in my name, which reads:

WHEREAS it is necessary to provide for the services of the State of Grenada for the year 2022, by means of a Supplementary Appropriation Act;

BE IT RESOLVED that Supplementary Act 2022 for the period 1st January to the 31st December, 2022 be approved.

Question proposed.

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, since this is a Money Bill, I would like to submit that I have the Speaker's Certificate to proceed.

Madam President: Continue.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, we are here in Parliament today, to ask for the approval of this Money Bill, Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2022. Madam President, since assuming office in June 2023, we have examined the State of Affairs in this country and we believe there are serious matters that have to be dealt with. Some has to be dealt with now and some could be dealt with in the future. There are some immediate ones that cannot be put on hold. Despite the last Administration budgeting for many of these activities, changes within the year would have made it difficult, for even the past Administration to implement some of those things. And being a very concerned Administration, in regards to putting people first, it is even more difficult for us to achieve some of the goals that have been set for the year 2022.

Some of these matters they are very, very important and it's difficult to ask the people to hold on until 2023 budget. So in order to get them off the ground, in order to continue the service to the people we are here today seeking that approval. Since assuming office, Madam President, we have been able to achieve some of the goals that we have set. The general public is aware of even some of the things that we campaigned on, the general public is aware of some of the promises that we made.

Madam President, the issue of paying docked salaries, is something we promised while we were on the campaign trail and something that the Grenadian people needed, something that the public servants and the teachers needed, something they were grieving for, something that brought about work to rule, which really and truly was not helping our society going forward. And, Madam President, those promises was made, not knowing when the election will be. So it was all good for the former Administration, maybe not to have paid that, and then it would not have been a problem to come to Parliament and ask for Supplementary Budget. But the fact that election was called in June, and we have to listen to the people and pay money like that, in regards to the docked salaries, then we have to be here today.

The issue of pension that we have been talking about as a political organisation since 2013, Madam President, the day is finally here. And we make no bones about that. The people, the workers in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, who have worked for 20, 30, 40 years in the service and left the service

quietly, having to resort to poverty, we are here today to seek the approval for this Bill, so that these people will have a different life and a change in terms of changing their lifestyle, in terms of going forward.

Madam President, there are other programmes that we wanted to implement from June to the end of December. I am sure that every parent that has a child or children going to school, pre-primary, primary, secondary today as I speak, they're enjoying the privilege of not having to pay school fees and school charges. Madam President, my good friend Senator La Crette will definitely indicate the whole question of trying to put the new hospital wing into operation and implement other programmes. It is against this background, Madam President, that I'm asking for this approval.

Madam President, in the Ministry of Finance we are asking for $26,440,000, to deal with a number of issues. The whole issue of security, Madam President, the whole issue of working hand in hand with GDB, to make sure that some of the programmes we had there to accommodate IMANI's and contract workers are being carried through. Madam President, the question of providing credit facilities for our young people who want to go abroad and study, and the whole question of making sure that the service providers in this country are being paid.

On the question, Madam President, of the pension and gratuity, over $60,000,000 will be placed in the economy of this country. We can anticipate what will happen around the end of November, December, and the kind of Christmas season that the people in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique will be having. Madam President, despite everybody will not get, or get part of the $60,000,000; rest assured that the spending power of that will have the rippling effect in the hardware stores, in the supermarkets, in the banks, the car dealers, the farmers. They will be feeling the rippling effect of this $60,000,000. And the lifestyle of the people that will be affected directly will be transformed, and this will be a perfect example of the transformation that we want to see in our society.

Madam President, another area that will be much affected, we have just established the Ministry of Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation. This is a brand new Ministry that we never expected and we never catered for, per se, because we came in in the middle of the year when budget was already running. So we need to get that Ministry in order. And that Ministry is important to our society.

With an implementation rate in many areas of 30% or less, we cannot afford to be going outside there asking institutions and other nations for assistance, and when the assistance is being approved, we cannot implement. And sometimes we have to pay back. This Ministry, this new Ministry, Madam President, will answer some of these questions.

Madam Speaker, Madam President, (I haven't reached there yet) **(laughter)** the Ministry of Infrastructure will be taking up most of that money that we are asking. Out of that $194,702,991, the Ministry of Infrastructure, Physical Development, Public Utilities, Civil Aviation and Transport will be taking up a big chunk of that, over $88,000,000. And this is necessary because the refurbishment and extension of some of Government buildings, must take place, Madam Speaker.

The Debushing Programme is a programme that some people look forward to. It's a programme, it's not the best for our people, but at this point in time, on a short term basis, it is necessary. But rest assured, it is a programme we will transform. It is a programme that this Administration will transform.

Madam Speaker, there are a number of… the Molinere road which was catered for maybe a couple of years ago. Today, the cost of material has increased significantly with the war in the Ukraine that has affected this project. And therefore what you have anticipated cannot work today. So, we need to beef up that.

Madam Speaker, drains have to be addressed, the repair of schools. We were happy to visit, to have visited all the schools on the first or second day, this Administration made sure that our presence was there. But that does not mean to say that they don't need repairs.

Presently in David, the good Alma Mater of the Prime Minister has to be housed in a Community Centre because of the repairs. So while these works are going on, and we don't know how we're paying them, because we have not approved the Bill as yet, but I trust by the time we leave here, the workers will be happy to know that the Bill has been approved, and we are ready for them.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing Affairs and Gender Affairs will also be affected. And over $8,000,000, they are requesting in order for the work to be done. Madam Speaker, the question of agriculture, the question of the Feeder Roads. Presently on my desk as I speak, there are request from farmers in this country that they need access to their land.

Gone are the days when you could have tote your donkey up the road and put two/three bags of nutmeg and come down with it. Gone are the days when you could have come down with a bag of nutmeg on your head and you're not holding it because you balance yourself and two under your arm. Farmers have advanced and they are making the progress and the issue of access roads to their farms is of crucial importance.

Very important to the people of River Road and the continuation of this very important project. Those projects, Madam Speaker, that have started long before the war in the Ukraine, and have not been completed as yet, again, the cost of material, the freight charges, is important. And therefore, I think we can justify why it is important to make sure that those things happen.

As you know, Madam President, we are new kids on the block, new faces, but I think many of us are learning quite quickly. And it is important when you're dealing with the business of our people, you want competency. And therefore, this new Administration has taken on their own without anybody making any demands to train ourselves and we will have continuous training. And I must mention to the Prime Minister, we may not want to just limit that training to Government Ministers, but we may have to extend it to Parliamentarians. At the end of the day, we all are here to serve the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, but rest assured colleagues, we will be, as the Executive of this Government will be extending that kind of training to the legislative in its entirety.

Madam, last but not least, we have come to the conclusion that the Police Force needs a lot of manpower, if they have to offer this country the kind of security that we deserve. And immediate steps will be put in place to train at least 75 policemen. Immediately, Madam President, we will be addressing, the fire truck service in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. We cannot afford for that service, not even adequate in Grenada, but really and truly not even present on any level of efficiency in our Sister Isle, people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. So we will be making sure that those people, the people in Carriacou and Petite Martinique, are given the kind of assistance that they need.

And finally, Madam Speaker, as a new Government, it is our responsibility to make sure that the Ambassadors that are stationed in some of our friendly countries need to come home, so that, that will give us the opportunity to reappoint or appoint

new people. And therefore, there is a cost fixed to that. And it is important that we have sufficient funds, so we can make sure that this happens. Madam Speaker, I rest my case for now and I await good debates on the matter.

Madam President: I thank the Honourable Leader of Government's Business in the Senate, Honourable Adrian Thomas, and the floor is open for debate. Honourable Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to make a few contributions on the Bill before this Honourable House at this point in time. As the mover of the Bill indicated, this is a Supplementary Bill to meet further expenses for the operation of Government for the remainder of this fiscal cycle.

Madam President, I just wanted to touch on a few of the matters that were raised in particular areas and also to bring some more information and some more clarity to what was presented. And also maybe to put forward some questions too, as well, maybe, so we can get some clarification as we dive into this matter, for this appropriation.

Madam President, a number of comments were made by the Leader of Government's Business and I think the first one, one of them, I just want to touch on and it had to do with the schools. And we understand the importance of investing in education, investing in our children, and hence the reason why significant investments have been made and must continue to be made in our schools system going forward. And as presented in some of the documents it's over 100 schools and one of the challenges that this system have is that there is extensive work and some of the schools do take a beating. You have hundreds of kids utilising the facility on a daily basis and as such, there are going to be wear and tear. And so hence the reason why those investments were made in our education system and some schools in its entirety has to rebuild and that is a continuous activity, from time to time.

Mention was made on the removal of the school fees. I don't know, if in its entirety, that that is the case, but maybe, I can just raise some things that maybe the Minister for Education may need to address because as you know, all schools

operate differently. They have their own policy, their own little operations, ways of raising revenue to sustain for certain expenses that may occur, that will be difficult to treat it based on how monies are to be expended from Government. And so schools find creative ways of meeting those finances. And I think it's within that context, some of those fees have evolved. But I just say for what it's worth there are still some that the Minister or the Ministry may have to look into. I know for a fact, if you want to wear a different jersey, you have to pay $5 to wear a different jersey. Some schools have, if you meet a minute late, they take $2 from the children, lunch money; they have to pay $2. So a number of things take place. I don't know if those are things that they will want to address as well going forward. But I understand the context in which the leadership of the schools may be doing some of those things. And a number of reasons, if you forget your tie, there is a charge for that and a number of things. So those are, I think operational matters, that they may want to look into with the view of letting the public know, giving the public the feeling that there is no charge at all, at the school system level for persons. So I just raise that for what it's worth.

As regards to the GDB loan initiatives, the one for full time workers, the special loan for full time workers, and of course, the loan for, low housing income. We, Madam President, at the time in Government see these initiatives as very critical and as such, hence the reason why those decisions were made after our initial appropriation for the 2022. Because of things that were taking place, you have a number of issues, with inflation and other issues with COVID and that were impacting persons in a real way. So as Government, you will find at times, you have to take initiatives to address matters as they arise. And so, when you present a Budget, it doesn't necessarily mean that that Budget can't stand and your Budget should not be rigid in such a way, but it should be able to reflect what is taking place in the country at the time. And so, adjustments and changes are going to be required.

So, I hear that we're being knocked as if we didn't appropriate for certain things, or we failed to appropriate for certain things, but that is not the case. And so those are things that my colleagues on the "Other Side" will have to contend with because I'm certain, I'm quite certain that in every fiscal cycle, an Appropriation Bill will come, a Supplementary Appropriation Bill will come to this House. I am quite

certain about that. If there is anything I'm certain about, is that. So, I want to ask early, what justification would my colleagues come, when they come with the first Supplementary Appropriation Bill sometime after June, next year please God. **(Laughter)** So, let's see how that goes. Let's see how that goes. If they don't come with any, well then I think that will be good for the country.

Madam President, the issue of pensions and gratuity has been a long standing issue for this country and I think almost every family or homes have been affected in some way by this. And this issue transcends beyond political parties and it is something that is, that has to be addressed and my colleague from the Labour Movement on "This Side" has continued and also the former President, is one of those persons who championed the cause for this issue. This is a vexing issue and I am proud to say that the New National Party Government is the only Government that took any action to address this matter. **(Applause)** And the facts are there to bear that the New National Party Government did take action in that regard. While we have not gone far enough, but we did make an initiative to get this addressed. So I just want to underscore that to say that we have always supported addressing this issue. So, we look forward to the Government addressing this issue going forward. We are going to provide all the support that we can, from our end, to support this initiative, because it's not going to be an easy task. Not at all.

On the matter of infrastructure; Madam President, infrastructure is a critical sector for this country as it impacts a number of homes, number of families, businesses, through every sector. And, we have been raising concerns of some of the critical projects, and I don't want and sometimes you get the feeling that there is a feeling on the "Other Side" that we are nitpicking and knocking. But in one breath, Madam President, you cannot tout success in four months. And then afterwards complain, when we ask about certain things that are not done. I mean, it goes, you can't have your cake and eat it. So that is something that we need to underscore. And the whole issue of the Molinere Landslip area is one that is much more than that. It's the impact, the negative impact that it has had from the time it occurred to this day. And, projects are dynamic and we have followed the project cycle, in terms of getting to where we are now, significant work has been gone into for us to get to this point and we have worked speedily as much as possible as we can. So our call is not a call to, in any way, talk about what we have done, but our call is a call to

speed up, to ease the burden that road users have to contend with on a daily basis, especially the busmen, because as we know, cost of living, parts, is a significant cost. There is also a major issue with persons living in St. Patrick. After a certain time in the day, when the bus goes up, they don't come back. So you have workers who are finishing late in some of the business places, some cases they are stranded. And all because when the driver, when you get passed through Mt. Moritz and they get up to St. Patrick, you feel so comfortable that thinking about going back down, having to pass through there and then come back again, we have that issue with the Transportation Sector. So, I am well acquainted with it and I believe it's within that context, that's the reason why we are raising the concern of moving quickly as possible in addressing that road, the Molinere road. So, I don't want any notion to believe that we are doing that in any malicious way, it is a genuine concern.

Madam President, the issue of the health. We have been the leader, the New National Party has been the leader in investing in health in this country and the records can bear that. When other Governments failed to implement certain key projects, we would have gone ahead and done it and we can speak proudly of the new hospital wing where we have significant and the Minister for Health can bear that we have serious upgrades, really good upgrades in terms of the services that are going to be coming out from the hospital wing. And we're talking about a new emergency area, Casualty and we're also, most importantly for this country the issue of dialysis being provided at the hospital in an upgraded way. I think those are significant achievements. Madam President, if those initiatives are not transformational I don't know what is. **(Laughter)** So, I say this to say that those are things that we want to underscore as being very significant as investment in health in this country.

I hear my colleague on the "Other Side", Madam President, spoke of training for Ministers. I saw in the document that the training is for the next four months. I'm not sure if the training had commenced as yet. I know that we have a Budget being presented in November, I think based on the schedule. So I don't know if this training would be, realistically, would be able to conclude this for this year. So I am just thinking that maybe there might be a suggestion that those funds should move on into the next fiscal cycle, as the Leader of Government's Business indicated that this

training is so important as “newbies” for want of a better word, which was used by him.

So, Madam President, I just wanted to underscore those as some critical issues and to say that the work of Government will always continue. And the issue of appropriation should not be one that is seen as if there was a failure on the part of the Ministry of Finance, and the previous Government to allocate properly. And I could probably go further and say more, but I think I’ll leave that for your facilitators to handle at the training. I don’t want to start the training beforehand. All I can say is that that is something that you will contend with going forward.

Madam President, the last thing that I want to raise, the issue of the debushing. And I think there is a serious misconception of what is the purpose of the programme and how the programme is perceived. And I say this, and oftentimes, I hear comments and the presenter of the Bill indicated that that is something that they want to transform. I don’t know how wanting to clear the streets to make sure our side, our drains and things are cleared properly, just for safe traverse as something significant to transform. I don’t know what about the programme, that is found or seen as being ill to this Nation, I don’t know. It’s just ordinary people providing a service that is critical. I mean, I can tell you, I pass on roads right now, within the next week or two, the bush from both sides will converge on some critical roads right now. And I say this, that the work of the programme is very direct, is very simple, and is very necessary. And I don’t know why there is this notion that there is something demeaning of having somebody clear our roads. I know that there are always talk about having community work, community efforts. Those are all good and well, but the practicality of it, in terms of keeping our roadways clean and safe. The only next best thing is probably to give it to a private contractor to be done but the fact still remains our roadways have to be cleared and maintained. That is a simple fact. How we call it, whatever you call it, the fact still remains that it has to be cleared. So I say this for what it’s worth to again reiterate that our contribution in this Honourable House towards the development of this country has and continue to be one that is meaningful. And our presentation here will reflect that in every way possible.

I think there was one more thing that I wanted to touch on, Madam President, and it has to do with the whole issue of, mention was made of a fire engine for Carriacou. I think that is excellent. We welcome that. The last fire engine there is

probably close to living out its useful life. I think that that is how it should be good. But we, the National Party Government have led the initiative in terms of improving the fire service and Leader of Government's Business can say for a fact that right now, we're probably soon to open St. David getting a new Fire Department and a fire engine, it should be coming to St. David soon. I thought probably you might take the opportunity to mention that, but I think he singled out Carriacou, I don't know, probably because I'm here, **(laughter)** that is why he singled out Carriacou, Madam President. But nonetheless, nonetheless, you never know sometimes he's already there. Nonetheless, Madam President, I just want to say, to underscore the fact that we have been investing in those critical. And it is has been a mandate for us to ensure that we have proper fire response throughout this entire State. And that is something that we have endeavoured to do. So, I'm happy that this initiative is continuing, because in the interest of every single person throughout this country. So, Madam President, with these few contributions, I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to do so in this Honourable House. **(Applause)**

Madam President: I thank the Honourable Senator Norland Cox, thank you for your contribution. Other Speakers, I see the Honourable Senator Gloria Thomas has requested the floor. You have the floor Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas: Madam President, I rise to support the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. The Appropriation Bill is essential at this time for the effective functioning of Government. Coming from the COVID situation, we are all aware of the impact which this dreaded pandemic has had on the lives and the livelihoods of our people. Many people have lost their jobs and their livelihoods, their income. This has been severely affected. SEED has served to assist people to cope. There was also a Stimulus Package that was put in place to offset some of the fallout of the COVID. The package, we believe, was not evenly distributed. And so, many persons were still left out of receiving support. With the war in Ukraine, there has been increasing prices in goods and services, the world over and the effects we have also felt here in Grenada. And so, the Government has decided that there must be an increase in the assistance given to families to help them to cushion the effects. This Government is a caring Government that has pledged to put people first and

provide opportunities for all. And so, Madam President, of special interest and concern is Carriacou. Over the years, Carriacou has been left out of the SEED Programme, but the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs has decided to include Carriacou and Petite Martinique at this time, so that residents on the Sister Isle who are in need will get some form of financial support, just as people on the Mainland. And so, Madam President, a total amount of $9.1 million is requested for the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing, and Gender Affairs; $8,000,000 to increase SEED benefits, assisting burial, medical and transportation, and $1.1 million to accommodate payments to SEED beneficiaries in Carriacou. Madam President, with this structured plan in place, I fully give my support to the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. Thank you.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Thomas. There could easily be a migration into Carriacou Senator Cox. They're getting a fire engine, they're getting social development in the tune of $1 million; Carriacou is on the agenda. **(Inaudible comments/Laughter)** Other contributions, yes, Senator Rahaman, I see correctly. Thank you. Honourable Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: Thank you, Madam President. I rise to ask about some clarification on the St. John's Flood Control Project. First of all I would like to say that I recognise the importance of this Supplementary Budget seeking the assistance because we know in the Private Sector that the prices of materials have changed. And a large portion of this budget is for capital projects I've noticed and for example we've noticed that steel the price has doubled, so it is expected that they would have to ask. But my particular question is with regard to the St John's Flood Control Project, that $11,500,000 if it would see it to completion and if that completion would be along the cemetery? Because I noticed that at the bottom of the cemetery, I have a property that is adjacent and I noticed that when it floods the water comes in at the bottom of the cemetery there and no work has yet commenced on that part, so I just like to get some clarification on that.

And one other thing if I may with regard to the GDB (Grenada Development Bank), I want to know if the project for the small businesses which is the 1% loan or concessionary loan that was given under the last Administration and supported

during this administration as well even through they're only 4 months in office. I want to know if there is provision for that programme to continue. I thank you.

Madam President: Thank you Senator. Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, thank you very much. On the issue of the St. John's River, that $11,000,000 should complete the project. I cannot guarantee you that the concern that you are raising in regards to the end of the project there, I cannot give you that information. But as I said to you when I was dealing with Senator St. Clair's issue, we are trying to analyse the situation and we are trying to gather as much information as possible. A lot of the information is not hands-on, we have to at least put it together and look for it. Some are in disarray, some are you know reasonable but I would not be able to furnish you with that information at this point in time. So, Madam President, I promise as soon as we have the next Sitting, we will make sure that we have that information and give you all the details that we can put our hands on to make sure that the "Other Side" of the House is fully aware of what is going on with the St. John's Project. The Senator in the Town of St. George, I am sure that she will want to talk about that project a little later on in the debate.

The question of the GDB issue, again I will have to sort that information for you and I promise at the next Sitting I will furnish you with the details but I cannot give you that at this point in time.

Madam President: I thank the Honourable Senator. Debate continues, Senator La Crette.

Sen. the Hon. Jonathan La Crette: Madam President, Honourable Members, I also rise to support the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2022. I am in support of the Bill simply because it forms an integral part that is of Government's budgetary allocation as we seek to lay out a transformational agenda. I also support the Bill simply because my Honourable Prime Minister has seen it fit to ask me to sit over as the policy maker; the Emergency Sector or the sector that never sleeps. Much work to be done in that sector, re all of our institutions across the Tri-Island

State. Therefore the categorical representations of one, Princess Alice Hospital, Princess Royal Hospital, Community Health services, General Hospital and also General Administration, begs a little bit over $2,000,000 appropriation that we received. Seeing that a number of our capital projects are funded, we are well on our way in some areas to ensure that the infrastructural development that is needed on many of our facilities is done, one or two by the end of the year and there are some, Madam President, it will go into 2023, it's just the reality and beyond based on our medium-term and long-term strategic imperatives. So as a result of that, the appropriation for the categories is quite huge simply because, for example General Administration, the human resource capacity, Madam President, if anyone of us fall down here right now, God forbid and have to be rushed to the General Hospital, based on your condition I am not quite sure whether or not if it's a heart condition or some other condition, we will be able to maybe stabilise you but at some point you may have to fly you out because some essential specialist services are critically missing from our Health Sector. It's the reality and it's the truth.

So as it relates to general administration, Ministry of Health, Ministerial Complex staffing as well as outsourcing the specialist professionals so that we can fill those capacity gaps, it's going to cost us some. But we must go back to some degree of training of our nurses which is being done currently at the St. George's University and we have to ensure that in other specialist areas we build the capacity so that we can have the human resource buffer that we need for the Health Sector to be robust moving forward, 2023 and beyond.

So I rise to support the Bill from and infrastructural perspective, from a human resource capacity perspective and also from an institutional strengthening perspective where the Health-Care Sector is concerned. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President: Thank you Senator Jonathan La Crette. Senator Neilon Franklyn you have the floor sir.

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to ask a couple questions. It is not unfamiliar for a sitting Administration to request an appropriation as indicated by my colleague Senator

Cox. However it is important to ask questions about the content of the request and that is what I seek to do at this point. In the approved Estimates for 2022, the fiscal year 2022, there was an initial budgetary allocation of $333.8 billion for capital expenditure and the major review document shows an estimated outturn of $300.9 million, in essence indicating a savings of $32.9 million, a difference of $32.9 million. It is on that premise I ask the question, of the $117,000,000 being requested for capital expenditure in the Supplementary Bill, is it necessary given the $32.9 million savings? Additionally, Madam President, there is a request for $77,000,000 for the current expenditure side. The Mid-Year Review document also indicates that there is an estimated saving on four line items there; employee compensation, wages, salaries and allowances, goods and services and interest payments, each having shown a decrease of 2.6, 3.1, 6.2 and 6.3 respectively, so in aggregate that accounts for just about $28,000,000 in savings again. And I ask is it necessary for the request of the $77,000,000 on the current side or the current expenditure side given the fact that these savings are in some respect significant.

An interesting observation of the request of the Supplementary, the new Ministry; the Ministry of Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation (MIT), it has a nice abbreviation. There was a promise of removing contract work and what not but we see an opportunity here for contract work to be removed or eliminated as promised and there is a significant allocation under that Ministry, a request rather, for contract work. So I will like some clarity on that. Also before I close, there was… on the capital side, the Honourable Member indicated that there just over $88,000,000 request. For the sake of it, I would ask the question, a couple weeks ago I saw two members in the community of Brizan where I am from discussing the issue with a road there and they indicated that, that road… they don't want that road to be that of Molinere. So I ask the question, if that initiative is also considered in the $88,000,000. It would be good if it is and I would be happy and I am sure the people of Brizan would be happy if that has been considered.

Lastly, as it relates to the removal of the school fees as indicated, it is a good initiative but one would think logically that if the schools no longer have that opportunity to collect, Government would have to step in to buffer. And I ask the question, of the $2.21 million dollars requested for the recurrent side of the budget

for the Ministry of Education if that was considered to buffer the removal of the school fees there? Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President: Thank you for your questions, Senator Franklyn. Perhaps we can get other questions and consolidate those. Senator Douglas you have the floor madam.

Sen. the Hon. Katisha Douglas: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to support most of the content of the Appropriation Bill, 2022. Madam President, with your permission, please let me first take the opportunity to compliment the Government for continuing most of the projects and programmes that were conceptualised and initiated by the NNP Government, thank you for that. We can all agree that the NNP Administration did an exceptional job managing the finances of our country **(applause)** because as the current Administration honestly said and again I commend them for that, they met a substantial amount of funds in the Treasury which is now contributing to the continuation of the country's development and the payment of recurrent expenditure.

However, Madam President, please permit me now to comment regarding the funds requested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to recall our citizens who have been serving abroad as diplomats. Madam President, here we are today allocating $1,000,000. That's a lot of money you know, in these hard times, it's a lot of money. And we have so many important things to do in our country today to continue building and developing. Asking for that $1,000,000 to recall our diplomats, couldn't we use that $1,000,000 or some of it to provide lifesaving medicine or other vital needs especially for the poor and the vulnerable? I'm asking.

Madam President, grant me the permission to please ask and I want us to think about it deeply as colleagues here, is it really necessary? And maybe the answer is yes, I don't know but we need to ask ourselves the question, is it necessary to spend that $1,000,000 now to bring back diplomats? It is an undeniable fact that over many, many years, this recall has been a practice. We could all agree to that because somehow every new Government does not feel comfortable with its own citizens, our own people appointed by another Government to continue the work and we need to ask ourselves the question why. Some say they might sabotage the

new Government but if you sabotage the Government you sabotage Grenada, you sabotage the entire nation so what benefit it has? Others may say that they must be rooted out and isolated but why? It's about nation building and representation of our nation; our little Grenada that is just a pin on the map.

Madam President, the question to us as Grenadians right now and I am very passionate about that, whether or not this policy was done in the past, whether it is still necessary of if it makes it right, is it worthwhile? When will this practice end because it cost us as a nation? We all agree that a Government has the right but what are the implications in this exercise or non-exercise of that right in a small country as ours where everyone is almost related and knows everyone. I further ask, Madam President, please allow me. What yard stick is used or measurement or historical analysis that advises this practice which instructs that diplomats whether politically appointed or those who are called career diplomats cannot work under several Governments? So we need to assess ourselves, we need to make sure that we are assessing our diplomats and making the right decision, not just for them but for our country. Why are they now labelled as indecent people with no common sense? And I would further state, why are they insulted and referred to as people who were picked up by the side of the road and put into a microwave then came out and called diplomats? So when I listen to these things, you know, and other people are listening to this, it hurts because words are very powerful and we have to be very mindful of the words, am I asking who said it? Yes, it was said in one of your meetings in New York by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, it's there.

So, Madam President, again I just want us to think about this and see if it really makes sense, you know, and if it makes sense as I said, the Government have to do what they needs to do but we're talking about monies here. So let's make sure that we spend wisely because time is going to get tougher. Thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

Madam President: I thank Senator Douglas for your questions. Senator David Andrew.

Sen. the Hon. David Andrew: Madam President, I rise to give my full support to this Appropriation Bill but even before I expound on why I do so from the figures

themselves, I take the opportunity to respond to a few of the questions and concerns raised by Honourable Members on the "Other Side" that pertain to the Ministry that I have the mandate to give policy leadership to. Let me start, I think Honourable Cox raised some concerns about student fees and we are happy to indicate that schools are not debarred from using all of the methods that they have traditionally used to raise funds whether it's through the alumni associations, past pupil associations as they have been accustomed. What we want to make sure and what this policy position emphasises is that these funds will not be raised via the medium of charging the students, their parents or guardians, right, so that part is eliminated. What we want to emphasise too is that schools are indeed authorised or in fact it's expected and that was communicated to schools, that in the case where a particular deliverable is supposed to be given to a student as in a branded P.E uniform and the Senator did make mention to a particular jersey or shirt or something of that sort, then the anticipation is that a fee will be paid and borne by the parent or guardian. But in relation to general fees that we call security… over the years we've grown accustom to hearing about security fees, lab fee, games fee, these fees that have been traditionally approved by the Ministry of Education have now been withdrawn. And so, yes, we anticipate that if there is a particular deliverable that the school will make available to our students that there will be a charge.

On the matter of having removed the fees, I think Senator Neilon Franklyn asked whether or not the State would step in, that has already been done. In fact we took time to consult with our principals, to consult with the school fraternity and to ensure that we did not leave any school in a worse off position that they were in prior. So the Ministry in previous years had approved the games fee, lab fee, security fees and in Primary School it came up to about $15.00 a Term and at the Secondary level it came up to as much as $25.00 a Term. And so we have moved to have that payment made to schools per child based on the number of students registered to the schools. As I speak… in fact the Cabinet Conclusion have already been made, the Submission was made, the Conclusion has already been given and we have moved to pay those fees calculated as I have outlined $75.00 per child at the secondary level per annum, $45.00 per child per annum at the level of the primary school students. And I am pleased to indicate that we have also started to do that at a rate of about $30.00 per pre-schooler and along with that I am very pleased to

report to this Honourable House that for the first time in the history of our school setting in the Education Sector, we have introduced the payment of a subvention to unattached pre-schools. That has never been the case before, we've had primary schools and secondary schools receiving subvention from the State, that's been as far back as we know but for the first time we've introduced a subvention for unattached preschools. We recognise how important early childhood education is and we want to make sure we give our educators in that setting the best opportunity to deliver quality service that will see them starting their best possible way. So we are happy to report that to this Honourable House today. **(Applause)**

I think Senator Cox asked about the Molinere Project and I am aware that the project if I am not mistaken should have started this week so the call for haste and urgency has been heeded probably well before it was made because the project is on the way.

Let me shift my attention to the issue of why I support the Appropriation Bill. There are two major sections in this Bill under the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture that merits our support. So we are aware that we have a long standing TAMCC issue where lecturers, there were outstanding fees and there was industrial unrest related to one, retroactive payments and two increased salaries. In fact reports were that the lecturers and officers at TAMCC were functioning with salaries from 2012 levels and this we know with TAMCC being our premier tertiary level institution on the Island, we couldn't afford to have that kind of industrial unrest continue. **(Applause)** And so we moved with negotiations with the Unions, we instituted the council, meetings with the principal and other stakeholders at TAMCC we moved to resolve this. There are still some outstanding issues and timelines to be dealt with but we moved to have a measure of the payments made and to facilitate the increase. We move to have the increases paid but to facilitate the increases on-going, there is a need to increase the subvention to the college because what we have just done, we have increased the payments and that means additional expenditure would have to be put forward towards TAMCC and that is reflected here in this appropriation to the tune of $2,217,248.00. So we indulge your support for that.

Additionally, there is the figure of $2.5 million to facilitate the construction of the Seamoon Cultural Centre. Now we are happy to admit, that was a project that

started under the former Administration and Senator Douglas did commend us for continuing many of the projects and by all means as an Administration if it's good, we keep it, if it's working well and in the interest of the country, we keep it. And we have no doubts in our minds that the Cultural Centre is a necessity. Right now most of our major cultural shows and festivals take place in our sporting grounds. Either Kirani James Athletic Stadium or Queens's Park or somewhere else and that result in significant damage to much of the sporting infrastructure across the Island. So we want to see the completion of this project to create a home for much of our cultural activities. And so we are happy to support the $2.5 million to facilitate continuation of this project, hopefully it brings it to completion. I am not sure I can tell you what the exact budget is at this point but we are happy to advance these figures. And so having said that, Madam President, I offer fullest support to this Appropriation Bill. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Madam President: I thank you Senator Andrew, thank you. Senator Roderick St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. I rise to make some contributions on behalf of farmers, fisher folks to whom I represent in this Honourable House. From a snapshot bearing in mind of course you would have uncertainties and re-budgeting and all those circumstances as explained by the presenter of the Bill. I have some comments…

Madam President: Excuse me Senator, I have heard you in the Senate before, I can't hear you now.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: You're not hearing me?

Madam President: Not audibly so kindly if you get closer to the mike.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: …maybe at the angle. Ok, sorry

Madam President: Thank you so kindly.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: That's why I am hearing myself instead **(laughter/inaudible comments)** If I'm intimidated? No, no, no, no, no. **(Laughter)** I feel at home very much. So a few things, one, the issue of the Nurses, I think that pop out to me because we know the situation with our healthcare and we have been losing a lot of our Nurses and so on. So I was happy to see there is movement there, I was happy for that. I was also happy regarding the issue of the fire tenders and so on; I think that is good to act swiftly because we can lose much more for that. And even if I may be silent on some, it doesn't mean I am unhappy but I am just raising those that I am extra happy about.

The issue of course with the pension and we don't want to speak too much on this because we know our labour Senator would expound more but of course understanding the far reaching effect of this, and if you look at, and I always say, you know a lot of teachers in particular, public servants used to be retiring because most would start working maybe at 18, 19 and by the time they reach 45, 50 maybe they're already retired, they would go into fishing boat, into some farming, some other activity whilst they're still active. And of course coming this time, with the pension of course most of them might, maybe a little bit extra aging, but the point is that, they would get something in their hands and of course others who are, can see the opportunity can now take this and we can see an influx of new entrepreneurs, particularly in those… So I think that trend, not just for now $60,000,000.00 now but sixty plus more million in 2023, so that others who want to come and involve in the Productive Sector can so do. So I wanted to comment on that.

Regarding the police, you know **(laughter)** I always like to… I've been a… issue of the police, because when it comes to praedial larceny, that is perhaps one of the biggest problems we have in this country. And I see an allocation for new recruits and uniforms and other things. It's nice, but the issue we still face is the farmers continue to lose. And whilst this is good, by the time these recruits finish training in the next six to eight months, the money that we're even investing for this year, might be lost many times by our farmers. And so I say this, to say that when you look at all the budget and all the balance of payment at the end of the year, it's projected to be a loss of I think $1.5 million. So meaning that in the scheme of billion dollar budget, that is miniscule and I believe that some consideration could have been given. Because when you listen almost everything is about this praedial

larceny. And whilst yes, we see the urgency to train new recruits of seventy something, I believe that we can still go back to the drawing board and find another hundred thousand somewhere to help to fight this cause towards the end of the year.

I don't think it's a big asking and I would tell you why. Because we have lost significant number of recruits, sorry not recruits, Praedial Larceny Task Force Officers, (you see I get confused sometime), to the police, because I would tell you, Madam President, don't be surprised that at least 25% or 30% of the current Praedial Larceny Task Force members might apply to go in the same training, to be a police officer, such that their benefits, their pension and all of those things can be guaranteed as a police officer. So I've been saying over and over, and you cannot do it right now in the supplemental, but we need to have a restructuring of the police force, such that, as in Trinidad and Jamaica, the Praedial Larceny Task Force, they are regular officers from a regular unit, where we can really act and protect our farmers from the losses that they continue to suffer. So, this is very important.

In fact, I see the issue of uniform and I smile, because a few weeks ago I was in Sauteurs, right in High Street and I saw a praedial larceny officer looking nice in her green uniform, but she was… I think donned in the correct name. She had on her a nice reflective vest calling traffic 3:30, 4:00 in the afternoon. I looked around and there were no farms, there was no praedial larceny going on around there, there were persons crossing the street.

So I bring this in that thinking for us to really think and see how someone… In fact, I say this to say that many, we must not lose sight, Madam President, that if we take the budget document of 2022, despite all the changes and circumstances, which we all understand. There are several other initiatives that should have been started, that have not even started yet. So where is this money, we know budget sometime, it doesn't mean that the money is there, but if I say let us suppose the money was there, where is that money? So there should be some pool of money sitting that we can use. Because we are not asking now to be using those monies for those supplement. We're asking for new money. So I'm staying, in that whole context, they should have been able to still go and find some money somewhere that might be able to cross, show some warrant or something. It's not too late.

But in light of that same discussion, Madam President, the fact that as the Leader of Government's Business clearly stated, of 33%, if I heard that right,

implementation rate, and I could understand that you know, because my questions earlier could not have been answered, because of the same issues. As he said, things are all over the place to put it together and I understand, it's true. So I also was looking, well hold on, the Ministry of Fisheries, Madam President, the Ministry of Agriculture, Madam President, and maybe there are other Ministries too, but I don't keeping eye there, I am looking at my business, have vacancies that need to be filled. So I was looking at maybe, we can also find some of… because these are positions that exists, they are not filled, some of them have nobody in it, so that money that might have been allocated is not even spending. So if we could have at least find to fill some of these between now and December, so we can able to get some of these things going. I would have liked to see this in here. And I don't think that is new money. Right, you would say well it's not supplemental because the money was there, so then we would end up with maybe an extra surplus downstream because it was never used at all. But we are worried about that.

Also, I believe and we believe the issue of not feeder road, I want to make this clear, because feeder road is what caused the rise of real estate. They are main roads, hardly of them; few of them go to any farm. They would bring you may be close to what we call a farm road, whereby and well explained by Leader of Government's Business. It's not necessarily a… you have some vehicle that could go there, a four wheel drive could drive on that road, so you don't need no fancy asphalt, some binders and those things like that, and I believe that notwithstanding the heavy rains that we're having now, bearing in mind all of those, some consideration again could have been given to, able to at least address some of these roads so that we can know where we're getting food come December. That's a different discussion I will talk about later on.

So with this said, I would… these are my basic contributions to this and it's well placed and I understand the context of the request. And whilst we do have, and I would say whilst you do have my support and our support, these things will still have us with a heavy heart. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you Senator St. Clair. Other contributions? Senator Joseph, Claudette Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Madam President, if it pleases you. I rise to lend support to the Bill proposed, and to say that the passage of the Bill is necessary to carry out the functions of Government for the remainder of the year. As Senator Norland Cox indicated, Supplementary Appropriations are quite common in our system of Government, but particularly so in this case given the event that occurred on June 23, and the resultant change in dispensation.

Also considering and my friends on the "Other Side" will agree I am sure, considering the spending spree that occurred immediately prior to June 23. They will no doubt agree that some expenses were incurred which were not allocated for in the initial presentation of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2022. You know when those dates are announced humans tend to go a little crazy. So, there was a change after the people spoke and since Government is a continuum we are obligated to make good on the contracts entered into immediately before June 2, including some contracts which were actually not formally entered into, but which both parties began performing and it felt to me in my role to advise Government on what happens when the formalities are not yet done but the parties mutually begin to act on what is agreed in principle.

So that ties Government's hands into honouring the obligations of our immediate predecessor, and that is particularly reflected in the sum requested under the Ministry of Infrastructure, which in total compute to $88,575,533.00. Some of that would be as a direct result of the works undertaken in the final months the immediate past administration. In fact some of the works are on-going, some of the works or a lot, in particular are works that should have been done a long time ago and that the public was calling to be addressed, but were not attended to. And… well we know the nature of Government, so all the calls, there was an attempt to answer as many of the calls as possible and to deliver on as many of the promises as possible. So here we are with a bloated Supplementary Bill, particularly for the Ministry of Infrastructure.

But, Madam President, that's not the sum total of the request made under the Ministry of Infrastructure. There are some initiatives of this administration, because we are serious about the pledge we made to the people of Grenada to transform our country. And we invite and call on our colleagues on the "Other Side" to join with us and support us, and work with us in the transformation effort. I guarantee you such

posture will not be inimical to your desire or your quest to once more form the Government. It will reflect well on you to buy into the transformation agenda, because that's what the people of Grenada favoured. **(Applause)**

So in that regard, we will undertake such efforts as securing the fire tender for the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. And by the way let me say to you the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, in the Honourable Tevin Andrews, you could not have picked a better advocate. **(Applause)** He comes religiously to the Cabinet every week and fights for Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Sometimes we have to tell him take it easy man, there are 14 other constituencies. **(Laughter)** So you have a great advocate to the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique in the Honourable Tevin Andrews.

There are other efforts including some that were not inspired by the June 23 event but that was started before. And as my brother and colleague Senator David Andrew indicated, if it's good we keep it, if it makes sense, we continue it. And so, for example, the renovation of some of the Government buildings, these are matters that we are obliged to continue, because the reality is, in relation to some Government buildings there are issues of the health and safety of workers, and we want to do right by the workers of Grenada, to stand with the workers of Grenada and to ensure that we provide for them, a safe system of work in all regards. So particularly in the Government buildings around, the older buildings you find there are issues with mould and that kind of thing. So a lot of the Government buildings do need repair work, so that the environment is better for the workers.

Then we have, another example is the Flood Mitigation Project that's on-going at the St. John's River, and both sides committed to the people of River Road and surrounding areas, that we will take steps to alleviate that problem. And I know in particular, I campaigned among them very heavily on that topic. The flood mitigation effort is quite, in some respect a sad story, because as I understand it some forty nine or so million dollars was secured way back by the previous NDC administration in 2012, '11 or '12 thereabout to undertake that project. And it would have been a more aesthetically pleasing, a more comprehensive project, but the project was not pursued. Our implementation rate being as it is, that was one of the projects that was not implemented by the incoming administration of 2013, and therefore the funds were lost.

Because you know with the external donor and some lending agencies, if you don't use the funds within a specific time you lose it. So those initial funds that were secured between 2011 and 2012, those funds were lost, and that project could not go on. And the previous Government, sometime last year or 2021, early '21, '22, not 22, late 2020 early 2021, I'm sorry, Madam President, the river came down and I recall putting out a short video and a statement as the then NDC caretaker, and calling on Government to do something, account for the $49,000,000.00 and shortly after that, some months after the work started. It appeared to be a reaction to the call I made. For some reason the people of Grenada have not been told that this project is in fact locally funded, and it is funded now, in part by the National Transformation Fund, so I understand it, in part.

So this Appropriation now, seeks to complete the project. Not in full, there are a couple other phases to go. There are two bridges to be done and yes, Honourable Senator Rahaman work has to be done in the area by the mouth of the river that is affecting private property, including property belonging to your family. So that is something that has to be taken into account. As my learned friend indicated, I believe, but I cannot say with certainty that the $11.5 million sought here now will cover that, but I know within the scope of works going forward that issue is under consideration.

We also are asking for approval for a sizeable sum, $60,000,000.00 to pay retroactive pension. And that means people who have already retired from the service and have not been paid their pension contrary to Section 93 of the Constitution. The court made pronouncements on the constitutionality of a Law passed in 1983, the Pension Disqualification Act. The court made pronouncement on that law declaring it unconstitutional in 1988, not 1988, 1998 and then again in 2010, but unfortunately the workers of the country, they were forced to again drag, literally drag the State to court, for the court to pronounce a third time that the Pension Disqualification Act was indeed unconstitutional. And, it means that people joining the service post April 4, 1983 are entitled to be paid their pension under the 1958 Law. And we indicated while we campaigned to win the hearts of Grenadian (pun intended), to abide by the ruling of the court. We could not see after all the analysis that we did, the legal opinions sought and obtained that any different result would come about even if the matter were appealed to the higher courts. So we committed

to honouring the findings of the court, and our first step therefore is to pay the people who will be immediately, immediately entitled to enforcement of that judgement. That is the people who have already qualified for pension.

Now remember we were given a whole lot of reasons why the pension could not be paid. We had a long national address, we were given $450,000,000.00, all kinds of figures were flouted about. There was no intention based on the utterances of the prior administration, there was clearly no intention to pay that pension or to pay it anytime soon. And we set about putting systems in place and discussing the matter even before the election, indicating that in the event of a victory at the polls, this is something we must do, because we on "This Side", we stand for the rule of law, for democracy and for the rights of our citizens as guaranteed by the supreme law.

So we were not going to continue to entertain the flagrant disobedience of the Constitution. And we are very proud that what it took successive Governments 38 years to try to do and they failed, we sat and worked it out and had a proposal for the Unions in eight days. I'm not exaggerating. My colleagues and I got sworn in on the 1st of July and on the 8th of July I sat with the Honourable Prime Minister and my colleague, the Minister for Economic Development and Planning and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, together with all of the Unions represented and presented a proposal which we worked assiduously on in eight days, to present to the Unions for the payment of the pensions. Now I think, I think the colleagues on Both Sides in this House; such a feat deserves a table knock. **(Applause)**

So we made the proposal to the Unions and we gave the Unions 30 days to review it, analyse it, work back the figures, tell us if we're right, tell us if there was a better model they would propose, tell us if we made any mistakes in computing the figure, 30 days come back with your input and then we move forward. And… well I imagine they did look and scrutinised and they found no flaws, because they didn't come back. So we are moving forward and the Pension Secretariat is just down the road from here, and we look very much forward to making initial payments on November 30 and going forward. That said, we also raised the issue of contract work and how unfair contract work is whether it is taking place in the Public Sector or the Private Sector, and the need to regularise as much as we can, contract workers. But let's be straight, we have to be straight with the nation, contract work and pension

reform must go together. Because we commit to pay the retroactive pension and we are doing so. We understand the import of the ruling of the court, but so as not to do severe damage, perhaps even irreparable damage to our economy in the long run, we must work out a pension plan going forward that's sustainable. Because as it stands now when people retire they are entitled to NIS, that's public servants I mean, they are entitled to NIS plus Government pension. And government pension is a non-contributory pension, which means the Government alone pays everything into the pension fund plus under the NIS Law, the Government pays 6% into the National Insurance Fund.

So going forward, that will be a really hefty sum that the IMF and everybody else have already warned is not sustainable going forward as it is. Plus if we regularise contract workers across the board, without at the same time treating with pension reform, what do we do, we bloat the Public Service, we expand the Public Service and in so doing the amount of people who would be eligible for pension. So we call on our friends in the Labour Movement to sit with us, and work out an acceptable mode going forward, where everyone will be happy, where we will not leave an unbearable financial burden for those who come after us and where those who retire going forward will not have to retire into poverty.

So, I look forward to, Mr. President, my learned friend and his colleagues in the Union. When I say, Mr. President, I mean, Mr. President of the GTUC, Madam President, and his colleagues in the Union, working with us to come up with a solution that the workers will be happy with, that the Government coffers will be happy with, and that the people of Grenada in general will be happy with, and that in the case of contract workers, a solution that we can relatively easily translate to the Private Sector. Because the Government, in a sense has set a bad example, the Private Sector is doing it as well and people who are on contract in the Private Sector can't move forward. They can't qualify for loans; they can't do a whole lot of things because they do not have security of tenure. So we look forward to the support and we look forward to paying this sum.

Just want to answer a couple of questions from... So, my friend, I hope in the explanation I just gave my learned friend, Mr. Franklyn, Senator Franklyn, I hope in the explanation I just gave in relation to regularising contract workers, I have

answered your question as to why some of the workers who are retained by the MIT, the new MIT Ministry are actually on contract.

There's another thing. On attaining office, we met some arrangements that Government had already made, our predecessor had already made with people for contracts. And the terms had been agreed, but the contracts had not yet been signed. And in most instances, we must act with decency and acknowledge Government as a continuum. And, if we have no good reason for not proceeding to sign a contract that our predecessor entered into, we signed the contract. New people coming into the Service, whether it's MIT or any other Ministry, by and large, they enter on contract, because we cannot go regularising some and not the other. We cannot, for example, in fairness, bring new people into the Service, as established, and then you have contract workers already in the service 10, 15, some 20 years on contract and we're telling them, wait till we regularise, while we hire new people straight in because we say we're going to regularise. So I hope I'm clear, and you'll see the propriety with which we are attempting to treat with this matter because it would be reasonable if you're regularising contract workers to regularise first, the ones who are in the system and have been on contract for a long time, not the new people coming. So, I hope that explains why it is being done like that, in some respects.

Finally, Madam President, the issue of the Diplomats, my learned friend, Senator Douglas. When Administration changes, by and large, the Diplomats are recalled. That's a fact of life. Because unfortunately, over the last 30 or so years, we've moved away from hiring Career Diplomats and in some instances, Career Diplomats were recalled for no good reason, except that a particular leader felt they weren't supportive. And what we have is when the Diplomats are recalled, they are replaced by Party hacks. So naturally, when there's a change, and it's not unique to Grenada. It's not unique, it happens all over. The Diplomats have to be recalled. What we want to do, or what we are doing in this Administration is treating our Grenadian servants, workers, Public Servants with dignity and respect. And when we are going to repatriate our Diplomats, we must make sure and do so properly. Properly recall them, give them some time to transition, give them some time to pack up all their belongings, and to come back home decently and in a dignified way and there is precedent for this, Madam President.

In 2008/2009, I did a case for a Diplomat who was yanked from her posting in a very demoralising manner. And it cost her more than twice as much as it should have cost her to get here and Government didn't take care of her well. And on her behalf, I sued the Government and we got a nice Judgment. So, there is precedent and I know the precedent well. So I am particularly careful in advising my Government to bring people back home properly and with dignity. Right! They are our people. **(Applause)** So, that's why it will cost some money. Some of them been out long, they have a whole house. Some of them have all their furnishings, this that. Some of them have to put it in a… come with a container, a small container. So, it's actually costly and the cost of travel as you know has gone up a lot. **(Inaudible comments)** Well, we have some foreigners… we ain't paying money for them though. **(Laughter)** The money is mainly to bring back our own people. So, what we've done is a total recall. And, it may or may not be that some people will be reappointed, because as you say Senator, we are trying to move away from this sort of insularity that has plagued us. We're trying to get the best people for the job, not necessarily the people who support us best.

So, Madam President, with all of that said, I support the Bill. And I ask for the support of all of my colleagues on the "Other Side". I think that only leaves you, "I'm picking on you today," that only leave you, Senator Lewis, and I expect you to support the Bill or at least the part dealing with pension. **(Laughter)** Thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you very much, Senator Joseph. Senator André Lewis, you have the floor, Sir.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you. Thank you very much, Madam President. And I am obligated to inform my good colleagues, we are very good friends, colleagues on the "Other Side", that for a moment, just a part of my fellow colleague Senator Joseph's presentation, for a moment I thought I was listening to the former Administration on the question of, I know that the Court has spoken on what our Pension entitlement is, I know the Court has spoken on the aspect of its constitutionality. And I am also fully aware that Section 29 (5) of our Employment Act does not make any relationship between the Types of Contract, in

terms of Permanency of Contract, and any of the suggestions, and I'm saying suggestions or pronouncements made my colleague on the "Other Side." So this is just a late sort of addition to my comments, but it is important because it would be recorded in the Hansard and because the world is listening and because our members are listening, and because we are clear as to what led to the fight over the many years, that led to docked salaries, which I will come to in a while, and you must be commended for all that has been done. So, I'm putting that on the table. We cannot go back there or we cannot set ourselves up in passing to sort of inform our members, that there is something to be worked out, as to amending their pension. That I will address later, because there is a Motion to that effect, to give support to all that has been told to us. And because my friend, through you, Madam President, Senator Joseph made mention of a meeting that we engaged the Prime Minister in, I may not have spoken about it, because it was an engagement between the Unions and the Association, but because my dear Senator made mention of it, and to indicate that I was present, I will also indicate that that commitment was given that apart from paying the retroactive pension, pension in relation to once someone retires now and going forward, will be paid. That meeting, my reflection was on the 7th of July. I stand corrected by my good friend, that it is the 8th of July. So, for the avoidance of doubt, lest it be said that I remained silent and they say, silence is consent, which I do not agree with, silence could never be consent, but there is this perception in our culture. I want it to be clear that we are not going back to the days of the past Administration that sought to change our Pension, that caused us to march the streets in the rain, sun, thunder and lightning; that caused our leaders to be questioned and arrested; that caused our members' salaries to be docked. We are of the opinion, based on the Judgment and the acceptance of the Government that these days are long behind us. So that's the pension.

The question of permanency; that commitment that was given that workers will be made permanent, we expect this to be fulfilled, and not to be traded one for the other. That was never part of the conversation. That sounds more like my good colleague here **(pointing to Senator Franklyn)** and I will single him out, because this is about the Nation's business. I mean he was a bit more refined than one of the other colleagues from the "Other Side," who really, you know, went after us and spoke about there is no legal obligation. Yes. And, you know, we are doing what is

right and go to Court. We were told, “Go to Court”, by the then Administration, “Go to Court”. We have done that and we are very happy that we have a judgment in our favour.

I also think it is quite feasible to make a number of workers permanent, especially… and we can start in bites, for instance, in the healthcare, as our nurses. And there’s nothing which says that all workers have to be made permanent the same time. We will love that. We will love to wake up a day and hear pronouncement that everyone who has served beyond, let us say three months as an example, because under the Labour Code, it says that three months for skilled and one month for unskilled. But we also know that within the Public Service that there are other regulations that may speak about the longer periods for certain types of work. And we are saying that once all these conditions are met the workers ought to be made permanent. We will love to hear that. But we also recognise that there’ll be some issues that may need to be addressed. But there is no justification that can be given in our view as to why our nurses in particular, cannot be made permanent. The same cry that we made in the past, as how the Security Forces have been treated in terms of Police Officers, for instance, there was no application of the Attrition Policy to our Security Forces. And if we were to treat our Healthcare Professionals in the same level as we treat our Security Forces, and I really do believe you, through you, Madam President, that our Senator here in charge of Health and the others are committed to our Healthcare Professionals. I’m saying that we can take a small bite and start, and it will give the commitment to our members, our Healthcare Professionals that you have security of tenure. This is something that has burned us and to be hearing right now that there is some kind of conditionality, telling me that I will have to give up something in order to get the workers permanent. I do not want to conclude, but I’m saying that for a moment, I was wondering if I was listening, or if there was no change in Administration to be quite frank with you.

Having said that, on the question of the Pension in the Supplementary Bill, the $60,000,000.00, that is heartily welcomed. As we speak, it is quite possible, subject to correction, and it would not be much far off, that it may be roughly 400 people there about, 400 give or take, you may have, in terms of the retroactive pension, and you may have a number of people who died during that period, I think might be ‘85 to

now. And, if we're speaking about $60,000,000.00, if we were to use it on an average basis, it speaks about roughly $150,000 per person. Now, obviously, it is average. So, some will be more, some will be less based on your salary. And that is really good for our economy. That is extremely good for our economy.

Think about what this current Administration has done by immediately accepting the Judgment of the Court. And the Judgment of the Court, I wish to repeat, has nothing to do with Retroactive Pension. It has to do with Pension. Retroactive mean that had the Laws not been violated, people would have received their payments, and those who are going will continue to receive. Psychologically, for our Grenadian workers, and for Grenadian people, whether you are a Public Officer or not, that was a relief. We felt that veil lifted. We felt that veil lifted because we know that a number of our members and their families, the level of poverty that visited them after retirement. And this is highly commendable. We look forward with high levels of anticipation that come the 30th of November, once these monies have been paid, what it will mean for our economy, what it will mean for, as I said, the psychological makeup of our people.

But I want to go further through you, Madam President, and use this opportunity to ask us as leaders, to ask us in the Labour Movement, to ask the Government, to ask the Opposition, to ask all of us, to counsel our people because when this money comes into our hand, especially because we are working class, many times, we are not accustomed to this kind of money in our hands and we tend to believe that money can't finish. And, I'll give you an example, through you, Madam President, just bear with me one moment. Only last week, we were engaged in those sorts of discussions and we have workplaces where our members sometimes go home with two hundred and something, three hundred and something thousand dollars and all of a sudden, the age is no longer upon them. And I hope you understand where I'm going. They are no longer elderly, they get young **(laughter)** and things that they wanted, they think that that money can get everything. And we have seen it, Madam President, where sometimes within six months to a year, two hundred and something thousand dollars, one hundred and something thousand dollars disappears. And they walk up our Union steps asking for assistance and we have to try to assist. So I'm making this call, making this call for us in the Labour Movement to engage our members in terms of money management. There are a

number of Unions that have already been doing that over the years, that where we get the age of our members and in the last five years leading up to retirement, you engage them into Pre-retirement and Money Management. But we know that this is a short period, because the decision to pay… the Court Ruling came at the end of March, March 29 or 30 and therefore, there isn't that long period of time for those sorts of engagement. But we know that we ought to be doing it and therefore, we are calling our members to be extremely… We don't want to tell you what to do with your money. So I want to make that separation because people are adults, but there's nothing wrong in advising ourselves as to the possible pitfalls that can come if we do not manage properly. Because we know a number of our members have mortgages, a number of our working class people, and permit me, Madam President.

When I listened to our new Senators give a background of themselves, it further reinforces that thought process that the vast majority of us have similar experiences, in terms of the way we grew up. And, it reinforces the point of the commitment that we need to make, to change our society. Why so many of us who have lived that experience, the aspect of poverty, through not any laziness on the part of our parents. Every single experience we have heard here, spoke about how much our mothers and our fathers and our grandparents worked. But we understand the structure of our society in the uneven distribution of wealth. And the fact that we live from hand to mouth, it is not that we do not like to work, we work and that is why we are engaged in this struggle, where we confront society, to try to change that distribution of wealth, so that we can live. My Brother David, we know each other real good, through you, Madam President, there are times the exchange will go on like this. We have that obligation, to ensure that we do the best that we can, to ensure that the opportunities are there. And this is what this pension payment; it comes like an advantage or a blessing in disguise. Yes, now the issue of sufferings, because our members suffered. But now the fact that you are getting a lump sum of money in your hand, it gives you an opportunity, it was a savings for you at a high cost to you, yes, but you can clear up a number of your outstanding debts, and you can reinvest it or invest it in the future of your children and grandchildren, in terms of education. We look forward to this positive change and therefore, this gesture, not just a gesture because this is not just a gesture; this is something we struggled for.

The current Administration has accepted the ruling of the Court. And it is so interesting for us as working class people, the importance of election cycles, importance of election cycles, where we can get our leaders to commit themselves, some has reneged. Let me put it this way because sometimes you get into office, and then you feel you can do what you want, forgetting to remember that five years will come, or four and a half years will come, or three years will come, because we do not have a fixed date for Election, we can call Election before. And then the people will speak, then the people will speak. So we know that those who have reneged in the past might be seated on "This Side," to be quite frank, this is an open discussion. This is the reality of what we are facing. And therefore a word to the wise should be sufficient because time will pass. But I am in the moment, and I'm not worried about tomorrow at this moment. What I'm speaking of is the aspect of the $60,000,000.00 and the continuation of our members as they retire, to receive their pensionable benefits. That is really, really, really commendable.

And for the record sake once again, this is not a favour, this is something we struggled for. This is the fight to respect our Constitution. And yes, we have to do constitutional amendments, one will agree with that, but what we're addressing here is that which we have. And the workers have fought hard and long, and our many leaders of the movement from the 80s to now have all contributed to the struggles. And our many workers, who have spoken out, have contributed. So we are not granted a favour. But we must recommend and we must recognise the action of this Government, not to make it harder for us because we'll have to continue struggling. And although we knew we would have won, but it is better not to have had to struggle longer because we have done that in the vineyard. And it is the same way, there are lessons to be learnt. And in that programme, through you, Madam President, that our Comrades did so honourably last night, as part of the TUC Solidarity Week of activities. And where some workers called, it was all related about sometimes you get frustrated that the Unions are not doing anything, time has passed. And we have battles that have gone on for 15 years, for 12 years. In this case, it is from '83 to now. But look at it, look at the most recent example, our Public Officers and our Teachers in particular, their docked salary was repaid. And had they given up that struggle, had they not continued that struggle of work to rule because the only thing we have, through you, Madam President, is our Labour power that we

can control. Had they not done that, this incumbent Administration may not have been in a position to address it. I'm not saying you would not have because it may have been resolved had they given up. In other words, had it not been a contentious issue. So, let us say, for instance, **(inaudible comments)** and I could attest to that.

But I'm saying, the lesson for our members is that this took place in 2018, the Christmas period in 2018. Had our Teachers and other Public Officers not carried on that struggle and let us say they had said, "Look boy, in 2019, the matter is resolved," meaning that we are not making an issue over it, it would not have been an outstanding issue to be addressed. And therefore, our Public Officers and our Teachers must be commended and the leadership of the Unions must be commended for consistently struggling. And that's one of the major lessons. So, the Government, current Administration must be commended. Yes, yes. **(Inaudible comments)** The Prime Minister, yes, because he the leader, but I also know that there is Collective Responsibility. I don't think that you'll just want to… I know there is collective… Cabinet must be congratulated because you see on one hand, **(inaudible comments)** no, but you see it's not just about you, remember other people are listening. This is being carried Live and therefore this is an education session for us all.

There is something called Collective Responsibility and therefore, I will need to praise you too, because if someone do something, and they say is the Prime Minister, and your Cabinet does not come out and take a position, you have to take Collective Responsibility. So, I think you deserve, collectively, to be praised for this **(applause)** and our workers and our other workers in the other workplaces. So be it in Spice Island Beach, where they have not paid their workers, be it in SGU, the struggles continue and we gave them that assurance that these struggles will continue. As in the case with La Source after Hurricane Ivan, that it took us 15 years, to get the monies to our members. And the strong lesson is that, out of over 150 workers, over 200 workers in La Source, give or take, when a number of them signed up to continue that struggle in the Court, and the employer threatened them that if they do not remove their name, they will not be rehired and some, out of pure necessity understanding that, because you need to work, removed their names and after the victory came, they were not entitled because under the legal system to take certain class matters to Court, you have to give individual names. So the lesson here

is that, if you are not prepared to lose, you will not… he who is not prepared to lose will not win, most times. So it must be commended for that and those are the lessons.

The question of TAMCC, it is really heartening to have this matter resolved. We are aware that the others have, through you, Madam President, have been indicated but our Unions are at a place that they are comfortable where we are today. And this could only augur well for our people as TAMCC is our highest tertiary institution. We found money to do all different things in the past and we are very happy where we are. And it's another reflection of struggle, because these workers were out for months. These workers were out for months and it's a struggle that lasted over about 10 years, 2012 to 2022.

I want to end by once again recognising the Resolution of the Pension, particularly the $60,000,000.00 and that which goes forward and to call upon our members to, and our leaders to assist in helping to manage those resources. To call upon the Administration and we know everything cannot happen overnight, everything cannot happen overnight but we do not believe that it would be difficult to identify the Nurses within our Healthcare System who have been giving and giving without being permanent. I am not lumping everyone together, yes there are a number or thousands of workers who are considered to be temporary which is a violation of the Law, section 29 (5) of the Employment Act. But we can start and put into motion that campaign promise, everything would not come in terms of permanency one time but we can do a demonstration in a practical way of at least starting with the nurses and our population and our workers will understand given the importance of all workers but there is no bout that our Healthcare System stands out and there is an urgent need to address these matters. So I want to end by recognising what the Government has done, this Administration, the pension, the docked salaries, the TAMCC and to make that appeal for the nurses and saying that we do not see the relationship my dear friend between the court's ruling and the aspect of permanency of our workers. Thank you very much, Madam President. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thanks Senator André Lewis. Honourable Leader of Government's Business, Senator Thomas.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I rise just to make some concluding statement on the matter and I am very happy and I want to commend my colleagues for supporting the Bill and also my colleagues on the "Other Side" for expressing their support in a tangible way and I think it's a good demonstration to the Grenadian public that we are prepared to work together. I have recorded some of the concerns raised and my good friends here have also responded to some of the concerns. I want to assure my good friend Senator Cox that in no way I try to bash the past Administration for Appropriation Bills. I know it's a customary thing, if ever I came across in that manner, it was no intention of me in doing so because I understand the need and the urgency of situations like that.

However, I also want to draw to your attention and to the House's attention that while the credit that you have given to us we accept it and quite rightly so and we also at times we may want to blow our own trumpet, noting wrong with that and I would not take any bashing for those issues that we have not dealt with as yet, it's a process and we will soon get there. But I did indicate to you that when we came into office we have analysed the situation, we have itemised some of our problems and we have prioritised and in going forward we will be dealing with them in a very responsible way. In ensuring that we give good governance to this country, we want to make sure that the issues that we are dealing with now are the issues that needs to be dealt with at this point in time. So I think the Grenadian people understand that we need the time to govern with prudence and we will try our best in going forward. I must admit and I want it to be recorded that we welcome the fire station in St. David, we are grateful for it. I have been begging for it since 2013, I begged more in 2018 and the Parliamentary Rep. for St. David's he begged a lot for it in 2022 and it is in St. David. I am happy that it is there and I know the people in St. David would be very happy for it also.

On the issue of praedial larceny, it is a burning issue and I appreciate the fact that Senator St. Clair has raised and I want to assure Senator St. Clair that it's one of the issues that we are talking a lot about in the Ministry. As a matter of fact I personally met with the Commissioner of Police to discuss the issue of the way forward. He has provided me with some documents of the past, I am studying it and we are working feverishly to make sure that it happens. It's a burning issue for the farmers and we know definitely it's a problem that we have to deal with. I also want

to bring to your attention, it's an old problem, it's a problem that has been there for a very long time. I personally, I'm not been satisfied with what has been done with it for the past 10 years and we will address it. I mean we are only three, four months in Government; it's a matter that has to be dealt with. We definitely know for a fact that the problem didn't start in June and we would not be able to answer it now but I appreciate your comments and I am hoping that at some point in time we would be able to sit down and put something together because we are all working in the interest of the farmers and they need that assistance quite likely. I also want to assure you that in analysing the situation in the various Ministries, the Ministry of Agriculture in particular, I don't think there is any other Ministry that has deteriorated so bad in Grenada than the Ministry of Agriculture. Out of 10 departments, we are missing seven Heads and you could understand when you don't have a Head, leading a process what can happen there. It is not easy to fill those positions as one may think especially when we are working under the principle of round pegs for round holes and square pegs for square holes. If we are doing that, it means that we just cannot handpick people and just place in positions. The human resources that we need in many of those Ministries are just not available or we cannot find them now.

There are a lot of people unemployed but we have to recognise our education system also will be looking at the whole question of making people employable. It is not only being unemployed but you have to be employable and we will be spending a lot of money in making sure that our Grenadian people can take up the jobs that are available in those instances. So we do have a… the job is great in managing a country, I think our Government is up to it and we are ready to govern and, Madam President, I hope that with the approval of this Bill for the next couple months we will demonstrate what we are really made of and our real plans for this country in terms of going forward. So once again I thank you very much and I hope that the next time we are back here, you will be able to give the Government more credit for the good work they are doing. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: I thank the Honourable Senator Adrian Thomas, Leader of Government's Business and your team for proposing, supporting, and clarifying matters in relation to the proposed Supplemental Appropriation Act and I will like to

thank the "Other Side" for seeking clarifications raising the… what one can call the doctrine of necessity on some proposals and projects including the diplomats and asking to help look around the budget for savings and unspent funds and so on. So I think it's been a healthy debate that can help both sides understand more as well as do deeper analysis and I think it just makes for a stronger administration of the legislation where it is to be enacted. Having said that, I think we can now go to the question?

Question put and agreed to.
Motion approved.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 15 - Bills.

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I beg to introduce for first reading, a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2022.

Clerk: An Act to appropriate an additional sum of one hundred and ninety four million, seven hundred and two thousand, nine hundred and ninety one dollars Eastern Caribbean Currency to the service of the State of Grenada for the fiscal year 1st January to 31st December, 2022, shortly entitled, Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2022.

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam 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.

Madam President: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. And the fact that we have debated it so extensively, I think I have nothing more to say on the Bill at this point in time.

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

Madam President: Honourable Adrian Thomas.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Madam President: Discussion? I see none.

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

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 16 - Public Business.

Madam President: Honourable Roderick St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. I stand to present one of my Motions that I have before the House. Something is wrong with my mike; maybe I need some more renewable energy. **(Laughter)** So it's a Motion on the need for Government to increase its emphasis on intellectual property related treaties and associated laws to benefit Agriculture and Fisheries, that is the Motion and it reads:

Public Business

WHEREAS intellectual property (IP) in agriculture and fisheries stand to bring increased economic benefits to Grenada;

AND WHEREAS despite this potential to increase the contribution agriculture and fisheries of Grenada's GDP, there is need for greater thrust for the accession of the relevant treaties and enactment of the relevant laws;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Senate support the request for the governing administration to:

(i). Prioritise and implement the relevant IP related agriculture and fisheries treaties and associated Laws that stands to increase Grenada's agriculture and fisheries contribution to the GDP;

(ii). Act urgently and attract as required the relevant resources (human and financial) to successfully implement the accession of the treaties and laws and prioritise in a timely manner.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator St. Clair. Honourable Member the Motion is as read by Senator… **(Clerk and President converse in private)** Thank you. The Motion needs to be seconded. Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Madam President. I stand to second the Motion as moved by Honourable St. Clair.

Madam President: Thank you. The Motion is now seconded. Now we proceed with discussion. Honourable Adrian Thomas.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I must confess that I am not very clear in terms of where the Senator is going with the Motion. I am very…

(Clerk and President converse in private)

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: I will definitely need some supporting documents that can really and truly clarify and make us very clear in our mind, what are the economic benefits that can derive from such Motion. The Senator has not really and truly identified the relevant treaties that he is talking about. I don't know

what the relevant treaties are and I guess which I don't want to, the enactment of the relevant Laws, what is he really talking about. I know he is referencing agriculture and fisheries but I would have liked those issues to be clarified before I can… on behalf of the Government stand and really support this Motion. And because we need all these clarification, Madam President, I want to ask that the Senate defer this Motion for the next Sitting.

Madam President: Thank you Senator Thomas. Senator Roderick St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Madam President, thank you so much. I think, Madam President, we might be putting the cart before the horse in the sense that I presented the Motion, it was seconded and then I have to present the… what I may have in my mind but I haven't even open my mind yet to even say. So I don't know what is the ruling on because I haven't even spoke yet.

Madam President: Thank you Senator, I have made no ruling. I may have called too early for the response from Leader of Government's Business so you can proceed with your presentation on the Motion. Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. So it's not a marathon discussion but this Motion is for the discussion for the sensitisation, for the edification such that we can in our planning, in our guidance, we can able to do more for our country. And before even going here we ourselves say it, look at what our herbs can do, look at what our spices can do, it is so special, we should write a book and explain all the different uses and how we can use it for cold and for arthritis, we do that every day, we speak about it. This is what this Bill is talking about, it is talking about how do we in Grenada… how does whoever is in charge of this country, how we as legislators help to protect what our people are talking about. So when the folks with the petite bum and the caraille and whatever it is and even other things that we have not even discovered yet, how do we protect this? If there are no Laws and Regulations to protect those it's free for all. I remember as a little boy, there was this guy coming around collecting all the butterflies with a little net and he is collecting, heaven knows what he have done with this. Heaven knows how much money he has

made and we sit here happy. Not that we didn't know and maybe up to now not that we don't know but it is because we do not have regulations, we don't have Laws, we're not protecting our own heritage and this is what this is about. It is about… **(Inaudible comments/Senator searches for something)** I think I have it.

Only recently, Dr. Marcelle, well experienced scientist in Grenada wrote a book 'Selected Herbs for Export Potential.' Inside there it lists several of the different herbs, their chemical composition, what they used to use for and little remedies. So your friend in China or Japan or wherever can come to Grenada, collect these herbs, go away with these herbs, find special ingredients in these herbs, make all sort of medication with these herbs and send it back and brother La Crette is buying it and we are so happy for the hospitals. And they are making millions, but it is unprotected, so the State is not gaining anything. In fact a foreign investor I would want to say that way or a foreigner, naturalised or un-naturalised can come and buy up lands that they do what you call bio prospecting, bio privacy because they see certain things they are aware of and they buy up this place or maybe lease this place and they can extract our resource because it's their private property now and you don't know what is happening. Do we have an inventory of these things; do we know the value of these assets? This is what this is speaking about. It is saying let us put Laws, let us put Regulations in place such that we can protect. Such that for example the folks in Munich who does his farine for ancient years in all their own fancy ways and we say it's so nice, it's not protected. That tradition is not protected. So this call is a call whereby we can be able to protect those things. There are Laws and Regulations. We are saying for example our cocoa and our nutmeg is so special but what is preventing someone from taking it, extracting chemicals and make all sort of different products throughout the world and we here happy. We have this special cinnamon and special this.

Similarly if we go into the sea or you go into… in fact I learned recently even this thermal project that we are doing here they identified some special species maybe only in the world that is here. So this is what we are talking about, our Grenada Dove, of course it's protected. So there are a few Treaties or a few Acts and so on we can speak about, Madam President. I don't want to go into it because it is not a big academic lecture; I am just sharing for edification and for us to be able to bear those things in mind. For me, the most familiar one I am familiar with in

Grenada is called geographic indication and that is international. So for example you speak about the Champagne and Swiss Watch and all of those things like that, they are special because they are done in a certain way, and they are made by a certain set of people. The culture and the tradition, we speak about Jab Jab, ok I am just giving you those examples, it's specific. If you don't protect it, anyone can go and say well this is farine but to say this is Munich farine, it is done in a special way, there is a code of practice. The Regulations will protect these things so whoever tries to do it, they will have problems.

The issue about some of these is that for example the geographic indication sometime in 2013 somewhere I think there was a draft and then I think there was another strategy sometime in 2015 but nothing else has happened to it. We're not saying that it's taking long but all we're saying is that it is important so let's not leave it on the back burner and let's bring it to the fore. Because if we can't do that, this 10 or 15 years before us, Heaven knows what we would have lost already and we don't know what we lose.

So we are saying, let us act quickly so whilst yes we want to increase this and plant more of this, we may have resources that we have here already that by just protecting it we can be saved. So for example we may have a special plant variety that we may want to breed, we can now attract different companies, research agencies, institutions of schools to sign certain agreements and you know whatever is extracted from this, we can continue to get monies in the coffers of this country because we have those royalties connected to those things. This is what we're speaking about. How do you monetise those what we refer to as intangible assets that we have within our Agriculture and Fisheries Sector? So for example, let's suppose we have a special corn, I'll just use an example, special variety, how do we get maybe other companies, international companies to come, collect the material, but all this is done in certain regulated way. We have no regulations, and there is no Laws connecting to protecting those things. It's not about trademark and copyright, it's beyond those things, okay, it's beyond those things, and our learned friend Senator Joseph is in that legal field so she would school me in the details, but I would raise it, okay. For example, maybe our mangoes, how do you do more research and bring monies to this country because there are certain special breeding you can do. This is what we are talking about.

We speak about, we have… you know I was speaking to even those… it had a session, I call it a session with the Nyabinghi in Sauteurs over the weekend and they were speaking about how our weed and marijuana is so different and special, that even as we try to move in the commercialisation of marijuana, the decriminalisation whichever it goes that we don't get no kind of foreign weed coming into the country unnecessarily and interfere with what we have. So they themselves already see the need for this protection. So this is not something that St. Clair sit down and he get up and he dream, these are things that people are speaking about. Some of them they may not have the details as to what the name is, but this is what they are talking about, this is exactly what they are talking about.

So, there is something that is referred to as some access to shared benefits, that is basically it and there is… and I know, Madam President, you have been around in the UN and those areas, so you would have heard names such as the Nagoya Protocol and all of those things which are part of the Treaties. We speak about the CITES which has to deal with the endangerment of the protection of endangered species, for example the issue of our lobster and what we, sorry and conch, we call Lambie. We cannot ship it because all of these things are within a lot of these Treaties. The Nagoya Protocol I understand is US $55 a year, okay I thing we signed it but we haven't gone any further. So what I'm saying is that this Bill is calling, not Bill. I keep saying it because we come out in that thing. **(Inaudible comments by a member)** Yes, this Motion is calling essentially for the Administration, because they have the framework within the Ministry of Legal Affairs and CAIPO and so on, to not put this on the back burner and within your planning, within the staffing, that we make sure that we don't isolate agriculture and fisheries resources to just the mere physical product but there are the intangible products that we can…

In fact, Madam President, as I'm on the matter of intangible product, intangible assets, the Private Sector is so central to this, because if the Private Sector realise that in mango, there are 25 different special products and they can extract it and to do certain type of things, they will quickly try to see how they can invest in that. What happens? Things start spiralling. In fact, in some countries, in Asia, in the US too, what you find happening? These intangible assets, they have started valuing them, so you have to have special skills in valuation of these assets.

So once you start valuation you know where I'm going? It means that you can take this to a bank or some financing institution and you are able to get maybe SEED money, other type of money to invest, to expand and so on.

But again, normally you want to have collaboration with the Government. So the Government might say well I will back this by 25% such that, because you know in research and development you may have risks and so on. We have to manage risk all the time and so at the end of the day you may find young entrepreneurs, young innovators since even at the school level doing things that can be protected. But right now, if you're doing those things and inventing, the chances are they are not protected. And in the next five, seven, eight years some other company coming here and we hear they're renting land here, they're building here, they're dredging here and you realise secretly we'll lose a lot of our biodiversity. And we are happy moving around, that we're so proud that we could see the physical, an intangible we'll lose it. And this is what this call is all about. So it's not no fancy story tale. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President: Thank you very much Senator St. Clair. Honourable Senator Adrian Thomas.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I have listened to Senator St. Clair, and I must say that what Senator St. Clair has presented there, I think it's a Motion worth the while for consideration, but to be very frank, I would not like to make any move here in isolation from my fellow colleagues, my fellow cabinet colleagues. And also with the privilege of having to research and go into the various, or the relevant Treaties that you are talking about here, you have sighted some of them. I will want some time to look into that, to make sure that those Treaties relate to the Agricultural Sector and the Fishing Sector. So having said that, Madam President, I will kindly request that we defer this Motion to the next Sitting of the Senate.

Madam President: Thank you Senator Thomas. Senator St. Clair would you wish to respond? Oh there is a request for the floor. Senator… wait a minute. Senator Joseph.

Public Business

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Madam President, I rise to support the request made by my learned colleague, Leader of Government's Business, that the Motion, or further debate on the Motion be deferred to a later date. While I understand the thrust of what Senator St. Clair is saying, I must confess but before I make the confession, I must say that Government is committed to the Agriculture and Fishing Sectors. Government is committed to taking any steps that will enhance productivity in those sectors and maximise the benefits that can be derived from those sectors. Government is also committed to holistic expansion and application of our Intellectual Property Laws.

But at the same time the Motion as it is presented, will create some difficulty in supporting without further clarification, even some amendments to the Motion. And so, I think a deferment will afford both the presenter of the Motion and those of us who are asked to consider the Motion, time on the one hand to refine the Motion so that we know exactly what protocols and Treaties we are going to call on Government to accede to, and precisely what intellectual property benefits to agriculture and fisheries will accrue from ascension to those Treaties and passing of those Laws. Because I listened to the learned Senator and I must confess I hear a combination of things being said, some of which do not touch and connect with intellectual property, some of which cannot be protected under Intellectual Property Laws, but may be protected under some other kind of Law.

So, Leader of Government's Business makes a really good point in saying that we need the Treaties clearly identified so that we may study them to determine whether they are concerned with intellectual property and or agriculture. So I think it would be in good order for a deferment, so that we can do justice to the Motion, if it pleases you.

Madam President: Thank you Senator Joseph. I think I skipped a step, the Clerk was reminding me that… let me go back and propose the question.

Question proposed.

Madam President: Clerk…

(Madam President and Clerk converse briefly)

Madam President: The proposal is for a short adjournment, but Senator St. Clair, would you want to speak before the adjournment, or would you…?

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

Madam President: Okay. Please go ahead.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. I listened carefully… I said I listened carefully to the views and comments on this important matter and whilst it may not have a specific, it really cannot provide a specific. The call is for the relevant research to be done according to the different priorities and the different impacts etcetera and take action. That's what the call is, the call is not saying go and sign up for a geographic indication in the morning, go and sign up for Nagoya Protocol, that is not what it's saying. It says very clearly that we prioritise the relevant ones and you take the necessary action and you get the necessary resource. I provided some broad areas, like all of us here there are departments within the Government System, there are projects that you can write, there is technical support that you can receive for many things that have been done before in this country, for which we never even knew before we even started. This is what the call is you know.

And I don't expect the call to take action in the morning, because this is a long process. If it wasn't done for the last whenever Grenada existed, I don't expect this to just happen overnight. What is important is that this dialogue has been going on for a while, and this dialogue is a dialogue that we want to bring here, remove it from under the mango tree, on the river stone, in rum shop and bring it here so that we here, who the nation looks at and expect to seek their interest can start being aware. A lot of things in our life, we're not even aware of it, even in Grenada, because we're not in the space. So the issue of deferral, Madam President, I don't see the need. If Members don't see the need for the Government to well… not the Government, for the Senate to say well Government take a look at this thing and see what it can do for this country. This is opportunity for resources, otherwise the question is, are we

fooling ourselves when we say, well the cinnamon is good, the shado beni is good, are we going to live in this hope… but I wonder if anything will happen, I wonder. And whilst we're doing this, others are watching and saying look at the, let me see how I can quickly extract as much as I can before they really get smart and realise what they have.

Madam President: I thank the Senator. And we have a five to ten minute recess, no more. Thank you.

Senate adjourns at 4:02 p.m.
Senate resumes at 4:23 p.m.

Madam President: We resume.

(Gavel sounds)

Madam President: I thank you. The motion on the floor has been presented, seconded, debated and now we will call for the question, call for the vote on the Motion.

Question put.

Madam President: I heard nothing there. Senators speak loudly thank you, or lift hands.

Question put.

Madam President: I believe we will have to have a voice, an individual vote. **(Inaudible comment)** Yes take a division. Alright, so the Chair requests the Clerk to conduct this process please.

Clerk: Honourable Adrian Thomas, how do you vote?

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: I vote no.

Clerk: Honourable David Andrew, how do you vote?

Sen. the Hon. David Andrew: Nay.

Clerk: Honourable Quinc Britton.

Sen. the Hon. Quinc Britton: Nay.

Clerk: Honourable Claudette Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Nay.

Clerk: Honourable Jonathan La Crette.

Sen. the Hon. Jonathan La Crette: Nay.

Clerk: Honourable Gloria Thomas.

Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas: Nay.

Clerk: Honourable Roderick St. Clair.

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

Clerk: Honourable Salim Rahaman.

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: Nay.

Clerk: Honourable André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. André Lewis: Aye.

Clerk: Honourable Neilon Franklyn.

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: Aye.

Clerk: Honourable Katisha Douglas.

Sen. the Hon. Katisha Douglas: Aye.

Clerk: Honourable Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Aye.

Clerk: Madam President the nays have it.

Madam President: Thank you Clerk. The Motion fails to pass.

(Gavel sounds)

Madam President: Senator Roderick St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. I present another of my Motions, standing in my name. And this one pertains to the Marketing and National Importing Board.

Recommendation for the urgent review of the Marketing and National Importing Board Act, to make the Act and the organisation more supportive to the Agriculture and Fisheries Sectors of Grenada. And it reads:

WHEREAS the Marketing and National Importing Board (MNIB) was established by Act No. 40 of 1973, to market produce of Grenada not already marketed under other statutory authority;

AND WHEREAS the original Act went through various amendments over the years;

AND WHEREAS over the years there have been scores of complaints from several circles (farmers, successive governments, the general public) of MNIB's

apparent failure to keep its mandate to increase exports and support the farmers of this nation;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Senate supports the recommendation for a comprehensive review of the MNIB Act followed by the appropriate amendments and organisational restructuring to result in improved services to our farmers, fisher folks and agro-processors, increased exports and improved food security for the State of Grenada.

Madam President: Thank you Honourable Senator St. Clair. Is there a seconder to the Motion? Senator Rahaman.

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: Honourable President, Madam President, I beg to second the Motion.

Madam President: Thank you.

Question proposed.

Madam President: The floor is open. Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. I stand here, Madam President, to… with this Motion because it's a Motion that I would have mentioned previously to various individuals, that were on the Order Paper from since in March or sometime before of this year. Actually this one and others, because as the farmers would communicate various issues, I would act and ensure that they're on the Order of Business, so that I don't really have to worry myself when Senate meets, or I have to rush to get some things done. I try to, as I get them, place them here, because that's where they're supposed to be. So in this regards, this matter actually is a matter then and it's not a matter that I wake up last night and come up with.

In fact, many farmers would have met me and say they found I'm quiet on the MNIB issue and I say well, I might be publicly quiet but I've been, you know as my former workplace, I worked there for several years and I would have been consulted

in different ways, give little advice, ideas, as I would do in any part of my life. So I wanted to share this little disclaimer in the process. And then in the now, it became even more relevant as farmers are calling me and say, look they're hearing that talk about they want to shut down MNIB. Mr. St. Clair, they can't shut down MNIB, what would happen to us? I said but, do they really want to shut down MNIB? So I went walking on Pearls on mornings and normally go and do my little exercise and I meet some of the farmers there and they say you know, even among themselves, despite how they does bad talk MNIB sometimes, they didn't realise when they start chatting, how much all of them really sells to MNIB and to make their life, you know their livelihood, you know, because I try to be listening neutrally.

In fact the information would show that over the last 2016, 2018, '19 thereabout that MNIB purchased close to about 20 million pounds of… sorry about $20,000,000.00 worth of produce from just about 2,000 or so farmers. So that's a lot of money that is circulating within our economy, and this is just to MNIB only not too… So it shows the scope of what is happening with our Agriculture Sector in Grenada, so I wanted to share this. But specifically on the MNIB, and I don't want to go way back to the history of how it was formed and all of those things, as a department within the Ministry of Agriculture way back in the early 60's and so on and all the corn house in Grenville. That was MNIB, yes, that was MNIB, but we have known it in the current space as involved in fruits and vegetables, mainly retail outlets, exports and so on. And this call here is for a review, a review in the sense that one, is it relevant in its current context? Is the Act… it's there but we're not using the parts of the Act to make it relevant. So, we will be slightened.

So, if you have about 20 different Clauses, you're only using two and three and you're specialized in that and you leave all the other parts out. We have to understand, who are you servicing? What is your purpose? And the purpose is to serve the farmers. And what are the needs of the farmers? But, of course, Madam President, MNIB is not a child that is… sorry, it's not, even robot these days we can control, meaning that MNIB has a parent. There is a father, there is a mother, you have sisters, there is a whole family. MNIB is a child of the Government from Sir Eric Matthew Gairy, GULP back then, that's when it started through successive Governments to today, transformed in different ways, different names, etc. And I say this to say that, whatever it is today, is the result of how you direct things. And I want

to say, early up front, for example, let us look at something simpler. The MNIB is sitting in the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Trade for the last maybe 15 years. And we will all ask ourselves and maybe that is news for other persons, why would such an important Agriculture Institution which is supposed to be serving our farmers, is not sitting where the Specialist for Agriculture supposed to be, which is the Ministry of Agriculture? Why? And so, a lot of the support that could be taking place between the Ministry of Agriculture and MNIB is at a disconnect. I have worked there, so, I have seen the opportunities and the benefits that we collect, all my life. **(Inaudible comments/laughter)** I worked there for a significant amount of years. And I have seen where, when it was under Ministry of Agriculture and when it went to the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Trade, and that lack of connect is a significant. So, one of the immediate review issue should involve the correct placement, back under the Ministry of Agriculture, such that it could support the programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture, support the farming community in a better way. Because who knows more about agriculture than the Ministry of Agriculture. So that is one fundamental issue.

But, in more detailed part, let us go, for example, the MNIB Act speaks about feed for livestock; that is there. I do not know if that section was ever repealed. And the organisation has not really involved in that. And we know in Grenada, the issue of feed for our Poultry Farmers, our Livestock Farmers, and so on. So when I speak about the review, the review is not about shutting down, changing so, but is to look at the Act, as they say. Look at the Act, see what is there in the Act that could help us and see what maybe is not there that you may want to adjust. That is the review. So for example, this is one area to me, that there are opportunities. And these opportunities would be able to increase the service, the service to our farmers. It will improve our relevance to our farmers. For example, it's also supposed to be helping with the issue of marketing of the produce. But I am not even dealing with fresh fruits and vegetables. Take something like eggs, for example, which we normally have problems with. Most of our poultry producers, they hardly have any proper facilities for storing eggs. Part of the Clause within the MNIB Act has to do with setting up storage facilities for farmers. Of course, these things would involve monies, but we are not dealing with the money part yet. We're dealing with what is the function. What it supposed to be doing. So sometimes we speak about MNIB is not

doing its role, but there are many things here that his fathers and uncles and aunties can help it to do. Okay. It speaks about the fisherfolks. There are opportunities there to provide support, inputs, market and so on. It is not only about fruits and vegetables. Yes, you will need other facilities, but the fact is, you become what I refer to, relevant. And why the word 'relevant'? The relevant is in terms of many perspectives, that the livelihood of our farmers, but the food security and that is maybe, this is what really is the real, most important part of that. How do we store our foods? Where do we do it? They had specialised Agency to work with the Ministry of Agriculture, link up with NaDMA accordingly. When we have hurricane season, we have different issues going on, they can have distribution, different parts of the country. This is the real drive of our food security. Right now, we are exposed to having a boat come in, a plane come in, to the point that we have to make sure that we cap rates back to 2019 to protect us for food. When, if we had a functioning and properly supported institution providing the relevance, we may have tons of eggs, tons of potatoes, tons of this meats storing all over the place and we could smile and make food more affordable, make it readily available, at all times. This, we think is critical as it relates to distribution, our supermarkets, hotels, etcetera can easily feed in, into this, if it is done in a proper way. So for example, one of the regulations that you may want to look at with the Act in reviewing is, how do you set a mechanism for maybe five or six or ten of our key items that we import into this country. And the Ministry of Agriculture set up a programme, work with the hotel and the supermarkets, whoever is going to import those items, go into some contractual agreement at that national level and you know, MNIB, you will now start buying, storing, packaging and distribute, even if it is 50% to start with because you may not be able to do the whole hundred per cent one time, and the farmers. And so, more persons can be involved in a ready market in an organised way and we should not have to be worrying about where we're getting our food from.

In fact, Madam President, we know that many of our organisations… so, for example, the different farmers groups, etcetera, a lot of them and that's a discussion we have to have and I am so happy when I heard that and I told him personally, Leader of Government's Business, that Cooperatives is under his Portfolio because you have a lot of these different organisations, fishers and farmers that need that sort of support. And so, MNIB, within a framework of servicing farmers can also have

a whole arm. And it speaks about that, support for those organisations, supporting them administratively because most of them do not even have a place to meet. They does not even have a computer, they don't even have, so, this support. So when I speak about, it's not just about the food, but they can also help with writing projects and all of those things that can connect because MNIB as a Government Institution, quasi, most time cannot get projects for itself, but if it have that membership space, it can able to better source a lot of those support that the farmers can get direct that most of the time Government do not have to even worry at the end of the day to find money to support the Agriculture Sector if we use it as a strategic tool.

The other point, Madam President, that we have to consider strongly is that, if this is a Farmers' Organisation, it is supposed to be servicing farmers. The question is, to what extent does the farmers be involved, in the representation on the Board of Directors? That is another concern when it comes to the issue of governance. If you have a case where, new Government, as the Act would specify, nominate nine persons and it's, yes, you will trust their judgment that, but the Act does not really specify, like many other Acts, in terms of, some may say, well, you have one from this Sector, two from that. It does not speak to that. And so, in the issue of governance, consideration, even in that, not even in that, in that actually, would be helpful. And that has been also an expressed view on the ground.

The issue of exports is a big issue, you know, because so, it shouldn't be Marketing and National Importing and because it is in the name, and so even that, you may also want to look and see how do you maybe change that narrative for, sometime how you name something, it gives that different movement. And so, even that can be looked at.

It is a competitive environment, when you look at how MNIB was exporting way back when, exporting pumpkin and all of those things like that, to now. But, you know, sometimes, we need to understand what Marketing Boards are, as a historical instrument. They are normally developmental institutions, by and large, by and large. Of course, you can do different modalities and make sure that you are not losing, you are not having losses and there are different modalities, but essentially, it's developmental. And that is why when it was first started, well not started, when it was changed over under the Revolution, the issue of cement, sugar, and people say why they have there, give the Private Sector the sugar and the milk and so on. But

those were the sort of funds now that should be helping to support these activities, and of course, accounted for and managed properly, etcetera. So, you move it out, you keep MNIB, the Government will be in further trouble, meaning that the amount you already was given recently, that is a different discussion, you may be having to give more than what you was given before. So that is something that should be done in a very cautious, cautious manner.

The issue of Value Added, Meals, Agro-processing, the Act speaks clearly about a role for the MNIB in this regards. And so, this Motion is also saying in the review, we need to look at that. To what extent is there Agro-processing support, so you take the juices, and you make, whether it's fresh juices, however, you choose to do it, all this is part of value added. Whether you will want to can it, you want to package it; however you want to do it. And that is why, and that is why, the question this morning, Madam Minister, as it pertains to La Sagesse, and what is going on there, is to understand, where are we? Is it being utilised? Is there collaboration with MNIB? Where does it fit into all of that connection? Of course, we will get the answers later on, but I am helping my dear Senator friend. This is the connection, because the La Sagesse Agro-processing Facility is essentially Government's facility that is leased out. And you have MNIB on the other side, which sometimes might need to have certain agro-processing capacity that may be residing there, but what is the relationship and connection?

And then, Madam President, the last maybe, few parts I want to add to this, is how do we look at the, what I call, developmental export exploration. So, for example, we may have a new product in Grenada, maybe cardamom, maybe, whatever this new product is, you can use MNIB to be able to be that front runner as a Government institution, public goods, and lead the export, develop it, market, develop it and then, the Private Sector now, then partner and then it moves. And that is what we find happening with a lot of the small exporters, who has now emerged and make MNIB export become almost, not necessary if you want to say that, because these other persons and if you look at them, they all used to be working in MNIB, most of them. And they would have learnt, developed and this is what developmental is all about. And so, you can take a new product, you go through the rigours with the Ministries and so on and then they capture and so. So, in terms of the export, you may want to look at it as developmental. And then the other part we

have to look at is that connection with the Grenada Food and Nutrition Council because that institution was not set up lightly for our nutrition, and our health and our food security, right food, etcetera, and how does that connect back to our School Feeding Programme, the Government Institutions and all of those things. So I raise this and I just share a few points.

The issue of inputs is another big issue and it speaks about this also, fertilisers, seeds, boots, etcetera. And we know the high cost of those items. And I have spoken about that before and I will come back to this at some point, there need to be price control on these items. That's a different discussion. And so, the MNIB can be used as an instrument, an instrument of the State to manage those things. In that way, we can able to control and manage the costs of our food. So, a lot of the things we are doing, cutting the freight, doing certain, might help certain group of people. But at the end of the day many people may still go hungry, because that public good that we have, which is MNIB, in whatever form you choose to have, it is not designed in the manner.

So, as I close this presentation, Madam President and colleagues, the call is simple, it is a simple call of a review of the Act, review of the structure and look at the context or is it, how can we better service our farmers in its totality and how can it at the same time cater for our food security in this country. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President: Thank you, Honourable Roderick St. Clair. Other speakers? Honourable Claudette Joseph, Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Madam President, I rise at this time, quite frankly, not being sure whether I should have interrupted the good Senator while he was in full flight, but I rise, Madam President, to ask you to consider whether at all there should be at this time any debate on this particular Motion, in light of Standing Order 22 and Section 10 of the MNIB Board. Standing Order 22 (1) says, **"Except on the recommendation of the Governor-General, signified thereto by a Minister, the Senate shall not proceed upon any Motion or amendment to a Motion, the effect of which in the opinion of the President is that provisions should be made for imposing or increasing any tax, for imposing or increasing**

any charge on the revenues or other funds of the State or for altering any such charge, otherwise than by reducing it, or for compounding or remitting any debt to the State." And Section 10 of the MNIB Act identifies the funds of the Board as including in Section 10 (c), **"Funds to be appropriated by Parliament from time to time."** Madam President, it is common knowledge that the MNIB being a body corporate, a State-Owned Enterprise draws frequently on the Consolidated Fund for support for its financial undertakings, especially in these times, when it faces serious financial challenges. The Motion before the Honourable House, like the one before, is in very nonspecific terms and the resolution, leaving out the recitals, the resolution sought is for this House, this Honourable House to support the recommendation for a comprehensive review of the MNIB Act, followed by the appropriate amendments and organisational restructuring to result in improved services to farmers, fisher folk, agro-processors and increased exports and improved food security for the State of Grenada. Of necessity to undertake all of these matters, of necessity, there will be some cost to the State, some charge. And though it is nonspecific in the Motion, I don't think there could be much argument that a review as suggested might well result in some charge on the Consolidated Fund. Added to that, Madam President, the state of MNIB is a notorious fact, the sorry state rather, of MNIB is a notorious fact. MNIB was recently investigated by the Integrity Commission and the indications are that the Report was not good, particularly, the Report into how the entity itself was managed, how its funds were disbursed, organised or invested. Government has in recent times, had to bail out MNIB. As we speak, there is a shortage of brown sugar on the Island. MNIB has the monopoly to import and sell brown sugar in Grenada and cannot do so at this time because of lack of a resources with which to secure the product. And the way these State entities go it always falls back to Government to bail out. We are committed and indeed we have started the process of undertaking a review of MNIB, but I do not think… so in that regard, we are not at odds with the sentiment of the Motion, because we appreciate there is something that has to be done, if we are to save MNIB. But based on the Standing Order and the real possibility that any Motion we approve here today, may have the effect of encumbering the State in a manner that Standing Order 22 (1) enjoin, I would urge you, Madam President, to consider whether at all you should proceed to hear any

debate further on this Motion, as I think the Standing Order, respectfully, I think the Standing Order precludes you from so doing. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Joseph. Senator St. Clair, and then I will respond to you, Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Well, Madam President, I am not too sure if I can respond to the opinion of the Member on this matter, because this review is in no way speaking about the State spending money to review any organisation. MNIB is a Statutory Body standing on its own, it may get help from the Government, it may borrow money. As Item 10 says, **"funds of the Board may accrue from its operations, may be borrowed by the Board from time to time, be appropriated by Parliament from time to time, accrued from any source at any time be granted or allotted to the Board."** So it is not one source, meaning that, if such… in fact, Madam President, based on the characterisation of the state of affairs, to me, a review, I am not too sure if there is a word more than urgent, but it is urgent, urgent. And it is so urgent, if I may ask a question, if the review start already, Madam President, I would ask where the money come out to do it? And if her… sorry, the Honourable Member, find a way to do it for free, maybe I do not know. And if that was the case, that it was able to be done for free, what makes it feel that this suggestion here cannot be done for free to? But I don't expect it to be done for free. You have organisations, you can go to the World Bank, you could go to FAO, and they will do those studies, Government get those technical support to do those things. Right! So, if this is the set of money, then I am very worried about the kind of review that is taking place now. But I don't really want to debate that issue. I just wanted to share that source of funds is many places and I don't see this measure up to speed for that characterisation.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator St. Clair. In light of the presentation on "Both Sides," I have concluded that, what I have heard is that there is an investigation on-going, I think that is in the public domain and that itself might give responses to how much more is needed or is the results of the investigation adequate and my reading of Clause 22 subsection (1), does say that **"the Senate**

shall not proceed upon any Motion or amendment to a Motion, the effect of which should be made for imposing or increasing any tax or increase in charges." A proper undertaking or proper review of MNIB has to be financed and Senator St. Clair is correct that it can be financed from various sources. However, I think the more likely probability is that the Government will have to finance it and not look for funding to do it once it agrees to do it and therefore I have decided that we will not be able to entertain it. For the two reasons I repeat myself; the on-going investigation of the Integrity Committee which is a review at the moment and that review ought to run its course and we could take up the matter having access to the Report issued on that investigation. And secondly, there is a little bit of… maybe we can say there is some ambiguity or likelihood of new and additional financial burden on the State. So for those two reasons I would ask that we withhold further action on this Motion until a further date for the reasons that I have given and ask the Government's side to pay particular attention to getting the review before the Senate post haste at its completion at which time we can lay it before the House. Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: I didn't hear your last sentence or so, Madam President. I wasn't quite clear.

Madam President: That I have requested of the Government through the Honourable Leader of Government's Business to lay before the Senate the completion of the Integrity Commission or any other investigation or Reports that are being undertaken as Senator Joseph has intimated. As we have that we can then decide, does it constitute an adequate review as intended very honourably by this Motion or should we then… you would want to have an opinion at the time whether to proceed or you find that is sufficient. I must say in making this I am impressed with the scope of what MNIB is intended to do and could do and I look forward to returning to this matter. Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: At the same time, Madam President, so we look forward for this next action and continuing. At the same time the current review that our Member would have alluded to, I am not too sure if the House would

be privileged to get an output. I am not too sure when that review would be completed so that, that can also help inform the next steps. Because the truth is, Madam President, our farmers are worried about this situation, about closing down and other issues around this appearance. These farmers have loans; in fact banks are calling the workers and saying, what is happening? Would you be able to finish your loan, we need to know what is happening. Farmers have mortgages, they have their children to school and so this here is not no simple discussion. This discussion here involves and affects thousands of persons and I trust that we act on it in such manner that we don't have financial institutions and all sort of other things affecting these folks. That is the bottom line, it is not about review, review sounds nice but it's the impact it's having on the farmers because of this I don't know what is happening.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator St. Clair. I hear you. The scope of the impact of MNIB I think it is of worry even before it came to the Senate. It is out there in the public domain and to its credit the Government has started its investigation and I think we can be supportive of that process as well as encourage its speediness. Senator Roderick St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. I present here another Motion and it speaks on the urgent need for Grenada to have a comprehensive land use and management policy in place to safeguard our food security and the environment. It speaks of:

WHEREAS land is a key resource for food production, food security and enhancement of our biodiversity;

AND WHEREAS the number of acres of lands for guaranteed adequate food production and enhancement of our biodiversity is constantly being reduced in favour of several factors including constructions, left abandoned or just degradation due to the effects of climate change and human behaviour;

AND WHEREAS the absence of a comprehensive land use and management policy that is supported by the relevant contemporary legislation will increase the risk of losing more and more lands to agriculture;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Senate supports the Motion for Government to act swiftly to develop and implement a comprehensive land use and management

policy with the related supportive legislations to protect the lands that are suitable to guarantee Grenada's food and nutrition security.

That is the Motion on the Table.

Madam President: Thank you for the Motion Senator St. Clair. Is there a seconder? Senator Franklyn.

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: Madam President, I would like to second the Motion as moved by the Honourable Senator St. Clair.

Madam President: I thank you Sir. The Motion is seconded.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. Again a very simple call to this House and the call is for a land use and management policy. We can create all kind of other names about it, what we want to air here is that there is a need that can protect our lands, we can guide the use of our lands such that we can have our food security but at the same time we also manage our biodiversity. You remember that discussion from IP this morning so that we don't lose it, ok, and also you manage construction and development in a managed approach and that is what the call is on this Motion.

Madam President, this again comes because of what we are seeing with our food security risk, our issues. If you read, the same issue of the Medium Term Review, I think it was three months that was covered but Medium Term Review, Ukraine food security, energy food security, it was all over that review and we all know that. And so if we don't manage our lands properly, we don't manage zoning and all of those things properly, we would end up in problem. We are losing a lot of lands and we don't have to do no research, if we drive around, we are all Grenadians we will see places which had lands properly cultivated and then house… In fact someone was telling me only two days ago, Plains in St. Patrick's, the Land Use Policy thing came up a big issue when all those lands there started cutting up and you see big houses being established. And we can go round the country and there is nothing wrong in the housing, nothing is wrong, nobody is saying… but they have to

manage how you do this at the… The farmers themselves are calling for this, it's not just… the farmers are calling; they are concerned about how land is being used.

In fact, if you realise what has happened, our agriculture lands… I have some data from Ministry of Agriculture in 1857 we had 43,418 acres of farmland. In 2012 and we have not done agriculture census since 2012, every 10 years, so I think we're supposed to do one very soon, 23,579 acres, where are the rest of these farms. Of course we know some might be abandoned etcetera and that is part of the thing but a lot of the farm lands have disappeared. Either they're abandoned, they gone into constructions and so but that is one angle of the discussion about this policy. The fact is that if we have a policy and you have the supporting legislation then you could able to control how development takes place, you could control how the impact of those development takes place in the environment. So for example, the way houses are built, the way they manage their runoff, the way the drainage are done even in the public, the way that even the public roads are built and the drainage associated with it, all of those things related. How do you harness those water to prevent soil degradation and all of those things? How do you harness the water to contribute back to irrigation and water supply for different recycles? All of this is part of a good land use policy. The issue of managing our whole watersheds, because if we don't manage our watersheds properly and watersheds is generally that catchment area where water would fall from rain and they will go down and start forming rivers and streams, that is what generally what a watershed is and if it is not managed properly and we start cutting down wood and doing all kind of things, we would lose it, it would collapse and you would have well no rivers eventually, you may just end up with a big lake in an area. And so this call here is saying there is an urgent need for this.

Now there has been several about this policy, and all of us know that. We live in Grenada, we know there is talk all over, the land actors I think they call them they are dealing on the developmental side with hotels and these sorts of big projects but there are general discussions in the society about the need for this policy. And what we are saying is that… we want to say to the Government, amidst your busy schedule, amidst all that needs to be done, the longer we take is the more we would lose because whilst we are talking here right now, somebody doing something somewhere now that is going to affect the amount of lands we have for farming in

Grenada tomorrow. That is happening right now, the way the banks and other financial institutions would fund projects, to what extent, not just the environmental consideration but is it the right place? You could create incentives in the country as to where you zone certain things, you have to look at how do we develop this country as a whole, for example St. David's, you're speaking about you need to have a town in St. David's. All of these has impacts, where is the lands, which land are you going to interfere with, what is the impact with the biodiversity in the area, what is the impact on the farmers and food security in these areas? All of these things need to be taken into consideration. What is the whole issue on prospecting because that is a big concern that persons have. Feeder road built, land price gone up to $10 and $15.00 a square foot, that was agriculture before. How do you regulate and control that and disincentivise those sorts of things? Because in the next 50 years we wouldn't be around or I don't think we would be around… I shouldn't say we wouldn't be around, we may not be around and those after us would be wondering where are the lands to produce. Of course, Madam President, one can argue and say well you can use hydroponics and you can use aquaponics and all those different ponics. But at the end of the day, soil is very important. Many countries have lost most of… you go to Haiti and all of those countries in Africa where they dig for mine and they do all kind of… food become a big issue. We should not be worrying about food, and that is our concern and we want lands, we want place to be able to plant to grow but to live in harmony; that is the key part.

So the need for this policy, now what was interesting, Madam President, in all of these things because sometimes you have to be careful what you say. So in my research I discovered an article from The New Today, June 12, 2021, very interesting because I'm doing my research. Lo and behold I see my name show up regarding this land policy, so I said well how my name end up in that? And then I recalled I would have posed a question in the Senate sometime in 2021 pertaining to where is this land policy? June 2, 2021 I got the answer about four months after I asked it so you have a little time still. The question was do we have a policy? They said yes, the response from the Leader of Government's Business then says, so I am reading from the sitting of the 2nd June, 2021, 10th Parliament and the question related to land policy, it says **"yes land use policy has been developed for Grenada."** So you may say well… I guess a lot of persons may be watching me and

say well this guy head isn't right, why is he coming and discuss that here. But if one exists, I mean it's supposed to be easy to find it. So the question then says **"if yes, has the land use policy been implemented?"** The answer is **"no"** but there was an explanation. **"The land use policy has not been implemented…"**, that is the response. **"The policy was reviewed…"** (the word review coming up again) …**"was reviewed by the Ministry of Legal Affairs and will be submitted to Cabinet for final adoption shortly."** Ok, that is good response. **"If not is there an implementation plan?"** And they say well **"yes there is an implementation plan".** But the issue is then… so somewhere this policy is in a soft copy draft form somewhere and so this call is for… well I cannot go to find it myself because I don't have the legal authority but the call is how can the powers that be, the Government can locate where this policy is in, the status it is at and let us try and help to bring it to an end. I know you may have to go and look for it, so I don't hope we have to defer the Motion and then have to come back and say we find it so Motion you could go ahead. But I trust that we can do find this land policy and put a rest for that in Grenada because people has been calling for this over and over and I think all of us know the challenge about that. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President: I thank the Honourable Senator St. Clair. You presented before I could call for the debate, but the debate is on. So let it flow. Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I really and truly want to applaud the good Senator, Senator St. Clair for the important issues he is raising here today. We are almost heading for 6:00 p.m. and some of the issues, Madam President, if only a nice courtesy call was made to the new Minister for Agriculture, a lot of those issues could have been clarified in regards to the Marketing Board issue, the land policy issue and we could have had… because all of us are working in the interest of the farmers and trying to make the farmers happy. So at least the quickest thing to do is to have a sit down and have a nice dialogue but that didn't happen so we have to discuss it here today. And the good Senator is very knowledgeable about agriculture because I know he

worked a number of years in Marketing Board and he is still with the GCNA so he is versed.

But, Madam President, there is a draft policy for land use in our country. As a matter of fact that is maybe one of the first matters I requested from the Ministry of Agriculture and while it has been an old issue that the farmers and Grenadians in general are clamouring for, our Government 2013, 2018 and even the last election we have been calling for it. I had the privilege when I was sitting in the GCNA to attend one of the consultation meetings and then another… that draft was done and reviewed and another draft was also done, so there is a draft. So the issue of developing has been solved I guess and then we're looking at the issue of implementation. Madam President, the second recital **"AND WHEREAS the number of acres of land for guaranteed adequate food production and enhancement of our biodiversity is constantly being reduced in favour of several factors including construction, left abandoned and degradation due to effects of climate change and human behaviour."** Madam President, it reads nice, it sounds good but I would have liked to know the authoritative source of that information because we supported a Motion here and it becomes our belongings, the whole House not only from the Senator per se. And then the second one reads: **"AND WHEREAS the absence of a comprehensive land use and management policy that is supported by the relevant contemporary legislation will increase the risk of losing more and more lands to agriculture."** Again, Madam President, is this an assumption? Do we have the authoritative resources to really back that statement? Madam President, it is our calling as the Government of the day to really and truly put a system in place and put a policy in place. But, Madam President, the way that this is presented, I believe that there is serious need for some amendments to it. I would not recommend that we sit down here for the rest of the night and address those amendments now because I can see it on people's face that how we were cheered up and feeling happy earlier in the day, we are now drooping. **(Inaudible comments)** Well André I want to spend some more time with my family **(inaudible comments)** and I know everybody may want to do that this afternoon.

So, Madam President, I want to ask that we defer this Motion to the next Sitting of the Senate. I humbly make that request. **(Inaudible comments/Phone ringing/Laughter)**

Public Business

Madam President: I thought it was dinner time but it sounds like it's dance time. **(Laughter)** Thank you Senator Thomas. Senator St. Clair the proponent of the Motion, would you like to respond Sir or would you like to hear any other discussions both on the Motion itself and on the call for deferral by anyone before Senator St. Claire responds and closes it out? I see no request for the floor, so Senator St. Claire, please proceed. Thank you, Sir.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. The point about deferral, Madam President, is… I am trying to figure out where in the Standing Order there is deferral, I am still trying to find it. I haven't seen it so I don't know how to treat with deferral. I note the comments of the Leader of Government's Business. At the same time I note the concerns about the recital, about the statistics, whether it's 10% and 15% and 30%. I trust that I don't hear no calling and no statement anywhere speaking about how we're losing so many lands because that doesn't seem to be an issue at all. That's what I am interpreting. Because if something is happening in such manners that it causes the eyes to open and get your attention, it mean that something has happened. As I mentioned in Plains, you saw what has happened and as fast as you're seeing. So I note those comments but it's not grounds for me to defer and defer is not a part of the Standing Order. So with no further comments, Madam President, I rest my contribution on this important Motion that has far reaching effects. And I am happy that the policy is alive and action will be taken and so we await that next step on that matter. And of course we would want to know in the next few months or so with follow up questions, where it's at. I trust that there will be a launch or something. I trust the farmers would be happy to hear that official word. For the first time I have heard from a Minister pertaining to where this policy is. I am very enlightened about that.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator St. Clair. Senator Thomas, do you have your light on?

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: I was rising on a Point of Order.

Madam President: Oh, I didn't hear you say, Point of Order raised sir.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: But I can live with it. I can live with it.

Madam President: You can proceed now. I think Senator St. Clair is finished.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Well I just wanted to clarify the matter that… I do not want St. Clair to interpret me wrong. All I was saying is that we need data to substantiate the recitals, and we are not… not that we are not in support of the land use policy; we are going in that direction. As a matter of fact, most of the questions and Motions here, most of those things are recorded in our Manifesto. Most of those things are… we already put the mechanism in place and we have and we are going along. Marketing Board, we have a new Board of Directors in Marketing Board. We are already addressing all of these issues, but what we are saying here, that the way it is written, there needs to be some amendment to it, and because of that we are asking that we defer it to the next sitting, basically.

So it's not a question of coming back and when the farmers, there is a landslide or somebody cutting down cocoa trees and nutmeg trees to build houses, it's not that we would not react, because we can see those things. But if we are making recitals of that nature, all I'm asking is for some hard data to substantiate what we are saying. Thank you.

Madam President: Thank you Senator Thomas. I did hear from Senator St. Clair that he will await what comes next from the Government. I don't think he will want to use the word deferral and so on. But he will await hearing from you, so I am guided by that and I would encourage you in the spirit of the Motion, Mr. Leader of Government's Business, to act swiftly, to act swiftly. I am impressed that there are initiatives that you're taking, and I say impressed as encouraged that there are initiatives and as you told Senator St. Clair, that there is a draft Land Use Policy in place. I know this brings joy to a lot of hearts, because we've never heard it, I can speak for myself. So this is encouraging and I would urge you to act swiftly to get this matter back on the agenda here in the Senate. Thank you very much. Senator André Lewis.

Public Business

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Madam President, for the opportunity to present the last Motion of the day, and I think we will all crown it off with a comprehensive agreement on both sides of the table, in terms of support for this Motion based on the commitment already given by the current Administration. Because we spent some time when we discussed the $60,000,000, in terms of the retroactive pension, it may not be necessary to go into too much but I'll just obviously read the Motion in terms of going through the procedure.

Labour Senator's resolution to Parliament in support for pension for Public Officers

WHEREAS pension and gratuities are extremely important for workers at the time of retirement entering the twilight of their life;

AND WHEREAS on March 30, the High Court ruled that the Pension Disqualification Act was unconstitutional and that all State workers who are in pensionable positions are covered under the 1958 Pension Act;

AND WHEREAS the present Government/Administration/State has announced that it will honour the Court's ruling;

AND WHEREAS the present Government/Administration/State met with the representatives of Trade Unions and Staff Associations;

AND WHEREAS the present Government/Administration/State committed to honour and pay retroactive pension and gratuity (the 25% gratuity as historically established) to all retired pensionable Public Officers by November, 2022 using the pre-independence 1958 Pension Act;

AND WHEREAS the present Government/Administration/State committed to honour and pay pension and gratuity (the 25% gratuity as historically established) to Public Officers who retired, retires and will continue to retire using the pre-independence 1958 Pension Act;

NOW THEREFORE, this Parliamentary Sitting of the Senate hereby resolves as follows:

1) To identify with and give full support to the decision to restore the pre-independence 1958 Pension Act for Public Officers.
2) To identify with and give full support to the decision to pay retroactive pension and gratuity, the 25% gratuity as historically established to all retired pensionable Public Officers by November, 2022.

3) To identify with and give full support to the decision to pay pension and gratuity, the 25% gratuity as historically established to Public Officers who retired, retires and will continue to retire.
4) To identify and support the decision for all pensionable Public Officers to now begin to receive their pension and gratuity, (the 25% gratuity as historically established) at their time of retirement from the service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT if affirmed this resolution be forwarded by way of message to the House of Representative.

Madam President: Thank you Senator André Lewis, Trade Union Representative in the Senate. Is there a second to the Motion? Senator St. Clair. Roderick St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, I stand in support of the… to add my second voice to this Motion, Madam President.

Madam President: Thank you, seconded by Senator St. Clair. I would crave the indulgence of the Senate and not have to read the question, but I call for debate on the Motion. Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Madam President. You know, while Senator St. Clair was reading the Motion on the Land Use Policy, I stepped outside for a while and as I entered the inside of the Parliament section, where close to the offices of the President etcetera, where our hard-working and committed police officers who provide security to us inside here in our Sitting, I felt a sense of joy and a sense of pride, knowing that we have a Motion that confirms to them, that they will be rewarded at the time of retirement, for the years of service that they have contributed to this country.

Recognising that over the many years of us fighting and struggling together, when we had what we called the U and SA (Unions and Staff Associations), because the Unions and then the Staff Associations made up of prisons and police. And recognising that over all these years, as organised labour and sympathisers, let the struggle for the restoration of our pension; our police officers and prison officers

could not publically come out and march with us, and support us. And recognising that through it all, many of them have retired into poverty, recognising that through it all, many of their kids and their families were not able to benefit from the gratuity that ought to have been paid to them, in keeping with the 1958 Pension Act and recognising that through it all they continue to give of themselves as all other public officers. But I'm addressing the police officers because I ran into them there. And just that sense of accomplishment that our uniformed workers, service providers who lays their lives on the line for the security of our country, for the security of our Parliamentarians, for the security of our people, there is this sense of accomplishment.

We speak many times of the nurses and the doctors because, yes they are part of organised labour. But I specifically wanted to start by recognising our uniformed services, prison, police who were in the trenches with us while we debated this matter, and it gives that sense of satisfaction that, here we are today giving support to the position as adopted by the current Administration. That one accepts the court ruling, the reestablishment of the 1958 Pension Act; that pays as of this year, as of November, the retroactive pension and the commitment that anyone who retires this year and thereafter will get their pension, so there will not be any build-up of retro attractive pension, which is easier for the State. This is indeed a proud moment for working people of Grenada, because as we said earlier on, that the economic spill off, which has been spoken about many times, cannot be overstated. And recognising that with the collapse of our rural economy and with the level of unemployment that we have witnessed and continue to witness, and there'll be many steps yes to increase employment, which is good, but for these workers who have given 20, 25, 26, 35, sometime as much as 40 years, now to be assured by this Senate, identifying and supporting the position as advanced by the current Administration must be a milestone to be recognised.

As I've said, we have spent years, both in this House and on the street, speaking about the advantages. As a matter of fact, in one of the… during our election cycle, there were the constant reminding of how important, by the current Administration the payment of pension is. And it is just this moment as we speak Members, and not too far from here probably 300 meters, if it is so much, probably 250 meters, 300 meters, is the CAIPO Office where it was said earlier this morning

the amount of people that has traversed from different parts of the country, to come to this small office, but significant office to give their information, to ensure that they are able to receive some form of appreciation and consideration, in keeping with the Law, in keeping with our Constitution for the years of service that they have contributed to our State is really heart-warming.

And it is through this, Madam President, as I said, it is a subject area that we have spent a long time on, and in the Senate here, we are used to, I'm not saying it is necessary, but we are used to going up to 10:00 and 11:00, because the people's business comes and it's important. And we must not, I repeat, we must not fashion our debate, or cut corners on the basis that we want to go. This is an important part of our lives; this is where the nation's business is to be discussed. I want to repeat, this is where the nation's business is discussed and therefore we must put in the time that is necessary to ensure that we do justice to our nation as we debate these matters.

And this in a nutshell, Madam President, through you is my supporting arguments (well there ought not to be arguments) for this resolution to be adopted and therefore we can end on a very positive note. Something that was highly commendable, if I may speak through you, Madam President. When the Leader of Government's Business spoke this morning, earlier this morning, and I saw Senator Norland Cox, a Senator that I have developed tremendous respect for, let me just make that point. I've said so openly before and I recognise that although we are on opposite side, but what we saw this morning, was that transition and transfer of information when Senator Cox stood up to give some explanation to some of the projects and activities that the current Administration has met. And it was just so beautiful to experience, and I think this is a very good note for us to end on as we recognise the work of our public officers. Our public officers who many of them could go to the Private Sector to work, but service to country, service to country does not come with the frills that the Private Sector may have, but it comes with that level of commitment to country, of that public good and that public service and that is why many times in the Public Service the salaries are much lower than the Private Sector because it is understood, it is understood that it is all part of giving to country. And this here, this Motion as being agreed to and committed to by the State, the Prime Minister and by extension the Cabinet, because my colleague, through you, Madam

President, this morning specifically asked me, pull that out in terms of the Prime Minister and I'm mentioning it. It is really commendable, that we are where we are today, and therefore I commit this Motion asking for the support, Labour is asking for the support that is already there.

So it is not us, we have fought for it, we have marched the streets for it. Our leaders were arrested, we were called all sorts of names and that's a historical fact. And this is not about sides, but this is what we went through when we stood in this House and we stood on the streets, and we were called all sorts of names. But we believed in our Constitution, we believed in the just cause of our struggle and the court has sided with us and it has been accepted. So we have done the heavy lifting, we have marched the street. Unfortunately a number of our colleagues have died without receiving any of that pensionable benefit. They have estates that will benefit from it. There are many of our people who today are not in the best of health, so in more than the twilight of their lives, they may not be able to as we said, enjoy retirement, but psychologically and emotionally they will be in a position to say I did not tarry in vain, I did not struggle in vain, I did not march the streets in vain, I did not believe in vain, that one day this matter will be righted. And we are here to, so I commend this for, and I'm asking, I'm asking, asking **(laughter)**, asking for the support for our workers. Not a moral responsibility as was thrown across to us a few months ago, a few years ago, that's the fact, but it is that legal responsibility that's been accepted by us all as a law abiding citizen. Thank you very much, Madam President.

Madam President: I thank the Honourable Senator. And I give the floor to Senator Claudette Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Madam President, thank you and just for the record I wish to say that we who are here on the Government's Side, conducting the nation's business, when we are conducting the nation's business time also is not of the essence for us. Just for the record. Madam President, I agree with most of what Senator Lewis, the Senator representing workers says. And it's not so much that I have any disagreement as such, it's that the meeting referenced, where the commitment was made by the Government to honour the ruling of the court, a lot of

things were said. What was said, one, we recognise and will abide the Order of the Court, to ensure that people who have already retired and immediately became entitled to payment on pension on issuance of the decision of the Court, we will take steps to pay them. And that is what is going to happen beginning November 30.

The other thing we committed to do, Madam President, was to pay pension to people who started retiring from the service this year, in the ordinary course of things. So these people will not have to go through the pension secretariat for the retroactive pay. We also said, and my recollection is, Madam President, the Unions agreed that the model that the judgment leaves us with, as I explained earlier, having to pay NIS and the pension which is non-contributory scheme into which only the Government pays. The workers don't pay. We also said there, and I left the meeting feeling that we had general agreement, that, that model is not sustainable in the long term, and that we must sit together and work out a model that does right by the workers and right by the Government, particularly the Treasury of the Government and by extension, the people of the country and that was the clear understanding. So what we expect as Government is further dialogue going forward. Because let me explain this, what the Constitution says and what the Court upheld is that the Pension Law that was enforced when the Constitution came into being is preserved so that everybody in the service at that time, had their pension preserved. The Constitution goes on further to say that the Pension Law should not be changed, not that it cannot be changed but that it should not be changed or amended with a result that leaves the public worker or the person entitled to pension in a less favourable position than just before the amendment, or just before the Constitution came into force. So an amendment can happen. That is why the judgment recognises that everybody who qualify, prior to the issuance of the judgment are entitled. We can't put them in a less favourable position.

There is also an interpretation that says that people who are in the service and perhaps make their years and so already are protected. That's arguable, because you become pensionable on retirement, not before. The question is, how do you treat with people who will come into the service after? If we, while we agree with what is said in the Motion, if we agree or we support the Motion without an amendment or as is, it ties the Government's hand for the future, and it essentially concludes the matter without proper discussion and analysis on how we are going to

proceed going forward and that's the difficulty we have. Because quite frankly, Madam President, it is our feeling **(phone ringing)** that while the Member is entitled to table the Motion, in the spirit of the discussions that we had, and in the spirit of our actions so far, all of which have been in good faith from paying the docked salaries, to paying the pension, everything has been in good faith, to continuing to remind people of our commitment to regularise contract workers, the Motion, in our view, is here prematurely, before we have had the discussions that we need to, in order to come up with a solution that's responsible and sustainable and protects not just the persons who become pensionable now or in the near future, but those coming behind, so that we have something going forward that as many Grenadians as possible, including those people who we regularise into the service, will benefit from. So that my brother, my Senator from the Workers' Movement is our… and I think you know, is our, that's our little concern there, little but big in impact.

If we are to tie our hands in this Honourable House, it will not be responsible; it will not be what's best in the overall interest of all Grenadians. We are not going to stay here, we are not going to stand here and say to you it's just a moral responsibility, that's not it. It was never just a moral responsibility, it was a legal responsibility, has always been since Mc. Queen when the Court made it clear. We are not going to say to you that, there's no right to pension. I had a big argument with my learned colleague in the Law, well two of them who were arguing on behalf of the Government here and elsewhere that there's no right to pension. That's not correct. So we recognise the right and we, with the respect we have for the rule of Law intend to abide by the court, but we also recognise and in fact it's hinted in the judgment of the court, that the model that we are left with is not a sustainable one. And we owe that duty, that responsibility to the Nation to treat with this matter in a responsible way, in a fair way, with due and serious consideration in collaboration and with agreement, preferably with the representative bodies of the workers, so that at the end of the day, everybody is happy and we don't have to sacrifice other programmes of the Government in preference for paying, essentially, two pensions.

Under the current situation, for example, some people when they go home with pension and NIS, they end up in retirement with more than their last salary. That's not the intention of the legislature. That could never be, that could never have been the intention of the legislature. And in fact, those who are still around who were

active in the Government of the People's Revolutionary Government, will say to you openly, that when the NIS Law came into force in April 1983, they were not finished. It was an incomplete job, and the intention was to have the NIS transition in full and replace the pension. Unfortunately, the Government did not get an opportunity to complete the work it started because the NIS Law came into force in April, and by October, the Government had collapsed, and subsequent Governments never fixed the problem, never completed the process. And this is what we, this Government intends to do with the support and cooperation of the Unions. So, while we agree with the sentiment, and we would stand by our word, we can't support the Motion as currently crafted. If you understand me, I know you do. So, an amendment, quite frankly, the best thing would be a withdrawal, so that, we can sit and come to a mutual agreement, that will be best or at minimum, an amendment which will include the commitment of both parties to engage in comprehensive pension reform discussions. If it pleases you.

Madam President: I thank Senator Joseph for her input. Thank you, Senator. And I give the floor to Senator Norland Cox. Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I think I should start by saying well, well, well. I believe my dear colleague, Senator Lewis is a little bit disappointed because it doesn't appears that the "Other Side" is going to support his Motion. And I think the second disappointment is that he's probably missing me on the "Other Side" right now. **(Chuckles)**

You know, Madam President, I was listening to my colleague Senator Joseph, and some of the very sad words that she used, in some of… almost quoting the former Prime Minister, Dr. Mitchell, in his deliberations on this very said matter, Dr. Dr. Mitchell, on this very said matter. **(Inaudible comments)** And it's not surprising, but I didn't expect the comments to come so soon, and not at the first Sitting. But maybe, if my dear colleague would have given us a little break, and probably bring that sometime next year, then he would have come. Nonetheless, Madam President, this issue of pension is the single largest issue for workers in this country and it has been so for decades. And we, the New National Party as a Government, we have

always supported addressing this matter and that's a fact. And we have done so, not by words only, but by action and that's a fact.

This party have done more for working class than any other Government that ever run this country and that is a fact. But I say that I heard on several occasions here today, and sometime in the past, by the current Minister for Finance, and I think just to paraphrase him, "that when people work, they must get their pension," point blank. I think that was his statement. So there was no talk about reviewing and looking at some kind of construct as to going forward, but people should receive their pension, that was the response of the current Minister for Finance to our explanations as in Government at the time, that the challenge and the unsustainability of the current construct, and how this ruling, how does it impact the issue of NIS? What does that mean? And that was the concern that we raised, that those discussions are to be had to ensure that you have a smooth process going through. But no, it was construed as us being against pensions. And here we are today, hearing those very said comments, the very said articulation that we put forward, it is being said in this Honourable House. I'm not surprised, but surprised that it was made so soon.

Madam President, we support pension. We support pension, and while there are comments that we haven't paid, we have paid, records have shown that we have paid before a certain section. We came right in this Honourable House and passed legislation and made payments to bring persons on I believe, from February of 1985 and those persons are receiving their pensions. It was a small block of persons and I'm sure the Member for Labour can remember that and support me in that regard, as I am supporting him here today, albeit on "This Side". And I don't want to go far to just make a talk and stuff and we could go further and make small, but this is a very serious matter. As I said, this matter transcends beyond political parties because this impacts people in a real way. Yeah. This matter needs to be addressed. And as the Government of the Day, they have to take the responsibility to see this through and that is the fact before us. **(Applause)**

Fortunately for this Government, because of our stewardship, our financial stewardship, there are resources there to start to address this in a meaningful way because I am hoping that you will admit that in four months, I don't think you're able to collect $60,000,000 in four months. **(Laughter)** I want you to understand

something. The same thing that our dear colleague through you, Madam President, is saying and calling for because if, as you said, through you, Madam President, to the Leader of Government's Business, and other colleagues have said, if the issue is about dignity, then why refuse to support this Motion? I say it again. My colleagues on the "Other Side" said that they want to do things for people with dignity. This is a matter of dignity. Why refuse to support this Motion? And so, it's not a matter of the previous Government refusing to pay, it's a matter of doing it properly and ensuring that this country remains sustainable, because what you will find out as Government is that it is not just pensions alone we have to pay, you have a Health Sector to support, you have a Social Services to support, you have education to support. So when we were speaking on this matter, we were speaking in the context of the country as a whole. While this is a serious issue and it is an issue of dignity, you cannot, if you are a responsible Government, you cannot make a decision in isolation of all the other sectors in the remainder of the country. And so, now that we are hearing that paying or agreeing to this Motion, now that we're hearing that the 1958 Act is on unsustainable, we didn't hear that before. We didn't hear that before. What we heard is that NNP refused to pay, they're lying, they're wicked; now I am puzzled. I am somewhat puzzled that **(chuckles)** I don't know, well we'll know who I'm puzzling and who's going forward.

Madam President, I stand here, I stand here, proud to be part of an organisation that has taken action on paying pensions and continues and continues to support the issue of pensions. This is the only, the only Government that has ever taken action on pensions, it's the New National Party Government. That's the only Government that has ever done it and that is a fact.

So, I say this, and I want to recall, Madam President, that this is an issue of dignity and my colleagues on the "Other Side" said that that is the mantra of the party, dignity. So, I stand here in support of my colleague on this Motion. I give my support to this Motion because this is important and the Government of the Day has given a commitment to all of Grenada to resolve this matter by November 30. This morning, I heard my colleague Senator, lauding how speedily the matter was resolved in eight days, I think. So, I think we have just November 30, is about a little over a month or so away. So this matter should be put to rest on or before the end of this year. Thank you very much, Madam President. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you very much, Senator Cox. Thank you. Senator La Crette, you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Jonathan La Crette: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, as mechanical as Senator Cox's presentation was, I'm trying to ascertain what angle the Senator is coming from, simply because his Administration paid approximately 70 people. We have over 1800 people currently in the service, who requires pension payments and moving forward, the number is going to swell and we will pay them. I don't think it's a matter of our Administration saying that we're not willing to pay. I believe that we have been very succinct and extremely clear as to how we are going to treat the pension issue, simply because we believe that it is owed to the worker that has worked and is working and will continue to work. So as a result of this, we just feel that from a place of principle, there is a need for us to sit as an Administration, and to also have some further discussions on the matter, so that we can properly do justice to the pension payments. Additionally, I believe it was in Cabinet on Monday, we recently formed the Pension Review Committee and they are going to be **(inaudible comments)** and they were represented as well, and as a result of that, with those structures in place, Madam President, I don't foresee that there's going to be a problem moving forward in ensuring that the working class of this Nation receives what it due onto them.

Madam President: I thank Senator La Crette for his contribution. Honourable Senator Adrian Thomas.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I thought after Senator Joseph made her presentation, I thought she was very clear. I thought her presentation makes sense and I thought the facial expression on Senator Lewis indicated to me that he understands where Senator Joseph was coming from. **(Laughter)** It is my impression. So, it's not facts. I didn't say that, but I got that impression.

Madam President, we have put all the structures in place to ensure that come November 30, this pension would be paid to the people, to the workers who are entitled to it. There is no reason why… As a matter of fact, we heard all excuses; it

will cost the State over $2 billion. Then we heard it will cost the State over $400 million dollars. Until we get the facts with assistance from the IMF and the good workers we have in the same Ministry of Finance, saying to the people of Grenada, this could only cost you $60,000,000, including your retroactive payments. Madam President, when this Administration says things, we say what we mean and we mean what we say. **(Applause)** And therefore, in going forward, we must put structures in place, we have to be responsible. I don't know of any country... I am from the working class, Madam President. I grew up… as a Public Servant in my early days I spent a number of years in the Public Workers' Union. I sat on the Union Negotiating Team against the Government fighting for workers. This Party was born out of workers struggle when we refused on a principled basis, our leader said, no retrenchment, no unjustified retrenchment. Madam President, this is the foundation we are standing on. So when we say, we're paying pension, we're paying pension. As a matter of fact, this was a surprise Motion to me, because I thought we put all the structures in place already. **(Applause)** Every single pensionable worker in this country who are entitled to the pension know that the pension will be coming in November. The whole of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique and people in the diaspora they know that we'll be paying the pension.

Madam President, I accept the support on the "Other Side", but when we pass Motions in this House, Madam President, we have to make sure that it is proper; we can stand behind it where there are no doubts in our minds and it's on that basis, Madam President, Senator Joseph put forward her request. Madam President, I ask my colleagues, my friends, to be reasonable. Let us understand, we are involved in governing this country, as the Executive, we have some serious responsibility. What we do today could affect tomorrow. And therefore, Madam President, I stand in support in the request that Senator Joseph has put on the table.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Thomas, and I give the floor to Senator Douglas. You have the floor, Madam.

Sen. the Hon. Katisha Douglas: Thank you, Madam President, appreciated. Just for clarity and clarity for the public, I heard and I stand to be corrected here, the Leader of Government's Business, mentioned that the $60 million, the $60 million

includes the retroactive. So, when you say, includes the retroactive that's the total amount for the entire pension, because you said includes the retroactive. So only $60 million that has to be paid out for pension, full stop?

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: If ever I said this, what I mean is for retroactive payments.

Sen. the Hon. Katisha Douglas: Thank you.

Madam President: Sorry, Senator Rahaman.

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: Madam President, I wish to just be very brief, but as an Independent Senator, listening to "Both Sides," I wrote down the following: **"If you kill the cow for meat, you won't get any more milk."** If an international organisation like the IMF has said that it is not tenable to continue in that fashion, then in the long term, how is it in the best interest of even the workers? How is it in the best interest of our Nation? And so, and so, whilst we understand and we support this payment to them, because it is long overdue, there needs to be a sit down and to revisit, to find out what we can afford, what is the maximum that we can afford to pay our people if what is currently on the books is not affordable. And there is a reason why it was avoided before. And, if you only were to look at the current amount of contract workers, that speaks for itself, it is because it was a moving away from the permanence. Why? Because it wasn't tenable. So, if we hear the same thing over and over and over, if we don't heed, it will cost us. And so, if we intend to put country first and the politics must come, therefore, second, we must go back to see what is the maximum, the new maximum that we could afford to pay our people going forward. Thank you.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Rahaman. Other contributions? Seeing or hearing none, I believe we have two proposals on the table. Perhaps Senator André Lewis would like to respond to the proposal of Senator Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Madam President, thank you. Through you, I stand with the Motion. I mean, as someone who has been through the thick and thin, who stood and is still standing on the shoulders of our leaders who have done everything possible to bring us to this stage, this Motion is totally in keeping with all of our discussions. And I stand on this Motion. Okay.

Madam President: I thank Senator Lewis for his response. So we have, we go back to the Motion and ask for a vote on it. I would rather have a Division Vote rather than a voice Vote. Clerk, the vote.

Clerk: Honourable Adrian Thomas, how do you vote?

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Nay.

Clerk: Honourable Norland Cox, how do you vote?

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Yea.

Clerk: Is that "Nay" or an "Aye."

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Yes.

(Laughter)

Clerk: Honourable Gloria Thomas, how do you vote?

Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas: Nay.

Clerk: Honourable Salim Rahaman.

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: Nay.

Clerk: Honourable Jonathan La Crette.

Sen. the Hon. Jonathan La Crette: Nay.

Clerk: Honourable Neilon Franklyn.

Sen. the Hon Neilon Franklyn: Aye.

Clerk: Honourable Katisha Douglas.

Sen. the Hon. Katisha Douglas: Aye.

Clerk: Honourable David Andrew.

Sen. the Hon. David Andrew: Nay.

Clerk: Honourable Roderick St. Clair.

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

Clerk: Honourable Claudette Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: No.

Clerk: Honourable André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes.

Clerk: Honourable Quinc Britton.

Sen. the Hon. Quinc Britton: Nay.

Madam President: Honourable Members, the Motion as voted on was seven "Nays" and 5 "Yeas." The Motion is not carried. **(Sound of Gavel)** Honourable Roderick St. Clair.

Public Business

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I stand here to present a Private Member's Bill. I will call it a Crop Compensation (Amendment) Bill, 2022. I sit…

Clerk: A Bill to amend the Agricultural Crops (Compensation) Act, No. 9 of 1967, shortly entitled Agricultural Crops (Compensation) (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

Madam President: Thank you. Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Madam President, I beg that the Relevant Standing Order of the Senate be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all its stages at this Sitting.

Madam President: Senator St. Clair, are you finished? **(Senator St. Clair searches through his papers)** Take your time. While he searches for… the Bill has to be seconded, St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Madam President, sorry, the Senator asked that the relevant Standing Order be suspended so as to allow the Bill to be taken through its three stages. I think, Madam President, that needs to be put to the vote.

Madam President: Before it's seconded?

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Yes. He has tabled it so there is no need…

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: There's no need for secondment. It's a Bill.

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: …for a seconder on this occasion.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: It's a Bill, it's not a Motion.

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Yes. There is no need for a seconder.

Madam President: Thank you.

Question put.

Madam President: Ok. What went wrong here? The proposal is whether we will agree to the suspension of the Standing Orders for the Bill to be taken through all three stages now. We need to vote on that and then get back according to the outcome there get back to the discussion on the Bill itself. St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. While it's late and I do understand…

Madam President: St. Claire can you just…

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Sorry, Madam President, on a Point of Order, I… **(Inaudible comments)**

Madam President: We are unclear of the voting on the proposal to suspend the Standing Order.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: So I should able to speak…

(Inaudible comments by Madam President)

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: We're supposed to speak on before we vote on it… **(Inaudible comments by Madam President)** on the suspension so yeah, no, no, we don't reach there yet.

(Inaudible comments by Madam President)

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: No matter I have the paper, its suspension. We wouldn't try to short cut things. So on the issue of the suspension of the Standing Order, Madam President, as I was saying, while I know it might be dark on the outside and raining very heavily on the outside. I know there are farmers out there who might be trying to keep away the thieves from the lands or maybe going and feed their animals or trying to take care of them in these times. I say this to say that there are two issues why I want to suggest to Members that we can address this Bill in its three stages, simple. One, the Bill addresses two Clauses, not even eight lines totally. It's not a whole Bill, it's two Clauses to deal with the issue of time and an issue of a Committee. It pertains to the crop compensation issue of farmers. For over 25 years farmers has been crying that if their crops are damaged, people thief their crop in their field, the price and the value…

Madam President: Senator Thomas, sorry Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: On a Point of Order, I think Senator St. Clair is starting to talk about the Bill and not necessarily the suspension.

Madam President: It appears so.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: So then what is my premise to say it must go through all stages. I must have a rationale and the rationale has to be what is the urgent matter? And the urgent matter is farmers over 25 years wondering what is going on, the price and valuation. So all I am saying is that this matter, I believe, Madam President, is an urgent matter like many other urgent matters that has been addressed by this said Government that is saying we have so much things. This here would not even take us 25 minutes to resolve as from where I sit, it is two key issues. So depriving our farmers from this matter here today is that if tomorrow their corn or their cabbage or so is damaged, it means that they would be 25 years, 30 years back whilst we have taken many other initiatives in the last recent times to benefit many other sectors and the farmers are still crying. **(Inaudible comments)** This is true, Madam President. So doing first reading is basically… this paper was circulated weeks now, that is first reading technically; awareness. Second reading is to look at

it and see what we have to edit and third reading is like what we did this morning with the Budget Supplemental, we say well, we debate everything already let's vote on it.

In fact the time spent here on this would contribute so much to our country, it would put money in the hands of the farmers in the sense that if damage takes place they can get better money rather than all of us leaving here happy that we passed a supplemental budget for one hundred and something million dollars and farmers are still left out. So if we want to do that fine.

Madam President: Thank you Senator St. Clair, point of urgency. Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Madam President, I just stand to help add some clarity in terms of order of the House and in terms of procedure and while I do understand the importance of the Bill that is being put forward by the Senator St. Clair at a stage where he has asked for the suspension of the Standing Order to take the Bill through all the stages, that matter must be treated with before any deliberation takes place on the Bill. So I think it is important that we get the procedures of the House correct to avoid any issues going forward and in other matters. So while that is the case, we do understand that but the rules of the House I think it is important that we ensure that they are kept in order for good purpose and operation of the House. Madam President, I think the leave is for you to deal with the request for the setting aside of the rules to take the Bill through all its stages and that is something 'Government Side' and 'This Side' will decide whether or not so take it from there. Thank you very much.

Madam President: Thank you Senator Cox. This is exactly what we are doing, thank you, thank you. So that's the matter before us. I have already called the question for this House to decide if it wants to agree to the proposal to suspend the Standing Order of the Senate so as to take the proposed Bill. I'll do it again.

Question put.

Madam President: Can you hear me? Should we have a division vote?

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Madam President, I move for a division please.

Madam President: You move for a division; thank you. Clerk.

Clerk:	Senator Adrian Thomas	-	No.
	Senator David Andrew	-	No.
	Senator Quinc Britton	-	Nay.
	Senator Claudette Joseph	-	No.
	Senator Jonathan La Crette	-	No.
	Senator Gloria Thomas	-	No.
	Senator Norland Cox	-	Yes.
	Senator Kathisha Douglas	-	Aye.
	Senator Neilon Franklyn	-	Yes.
	Senator Salim Rahaman	-	Yes.
	Senator André Lewis	-	Yes.
	Senator Roderick St. Clair	-	Aye.

Clerk: Madam President you have the untying vote because it's six, six. So the decision is yours.

Madam President: Thank you. The result of the vote is that six nay and six ayes and I will cast the deciding vote which is nay. We will not suspend the Standing Order of the Senate. Let us then proceed. Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. So we go down to… Just let me see where we go.

(Inaudible comments)

Adjournment

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 17 - Adjournment.

Madam President: Request for the floor from the Leader of Government's Business. Senator Thomas.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I beg to move the adjournment of the House, sine die.

Madam President: Is there a second?

(Clerk converse with the President in private)

Question proposed.

Madam President: Senator Cox, did you want?

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Yes, Madam President, I just wanted to say something short. I know that we're a bit exhausted but I think it's very fitting to close by recognising you, Madam President, in this Honourable House and to say that it's a privilege to have you here serving in this capacity. You have contributed significantly to this nation, also doing so very quietly in most cases but your contribution is one that is distinguished and I am happy to serve as your deputy in this case and I look forward to working with you going forward. I just wanted to underscore that before we leave tonight. Thank you very much.

Madam President: I thank you Senator Cox. Any other statements? I have one. I also want to thank you Senator Cox for accepting to serve as Deputy President of the Senate. You come from a distinguished family, those that I know, you come from one of the largest parties in the country **(laughter)** you bring a personality and a personal record that will obviously be what it has been today; a contribution to the Senate and I look forward to your leadership alongside me in moving this institution and its agenda forward. Thank you for your kind remarks.

Adjournment

I want to thank all Senators for your day. I think we've all been transported today. You know at moments I would just feel like I'm somewhere that I've never been before. I'm somewhere good, somewhere interesting and it's a feeling I've had and I don't mean it in any bad way but in really far away high diplomatic places, new and powerful places and this is a place of great power. And it's very humbling to sharing it. I want each of you to remember and recognise your power as a human being, as an advocate and as a national leader. It's a real privilege for me to observe you and to be here with you getting that energy and I hope that each of you have a chance to absorb it if not from the chair, from my chair, from your chair and know that you are an absolute and complete resource to the country. Go out feeling that you are delivering. And I think we had three journeys today; stories, common vision and procedures, those are the journeys I went through. The stories, we started with very personal stories, who we are, who is the person behind the face and the suit and the dress and the stories of the country, of sections, the stories of workers and farmers and people in the Government and stories of Grenada that we heard through your passion and defence of them. I was moved by all of it and I think our stories are our journeys and they will continue. And even though not all the stories was success stories they were told and I just saw a little while ago Senator Claudette Joseph and Senator André Lewis sort of grinning across the aisles to say the struggle continues to each other; I like that. Those are the stories that were made today.

On common vision, there was so much shared in the Supplemental Appropriation Act outcome in particular. It's a lot of money that the Government has come and asked for as additional sum. And we have crossed the billion dollar mark already in this country in our national budget for 2022 and yet the vision for transformation captured in the request for the Supplemental Appropriation Act was drilled down on for clarification and urging on one side and for sheer commitment and determination on another and that common vision would remain and should remain with us and good luck to the Government implementing it because we are all participating and watching and supporting that it's a success.

The third journey was on procedure and I note it because it was my particular challenge today and may remain so for a while until I come to learn better the rules of the Senate and I absolutely thank you all for your patience, your guidance, for your learnedness. There was no haughtiness or arrogance or irritation from any

Member towards me in particular as a newbie or to others. And I think all we have had here today were David's, La Crette's David, as we slayed the goliath of custom and arrogance and fear and division. We lunched together and I watched who sat with who and there was by and large such a crossing of the aisle around lunch even if there was not a big conversation, there was a crossing of the aisle and I really want to commend you to continue the dialogue because some of the outcomes here are disappointing and I think what they speak to is insufficient dialogue. There was no rejection of good ideas; there was rejection of timing, of depth and so on. So please let us go forth, knowing that we stand in a common space from different places but in a common space. And I want to commend and thank the Senate for this Maiden sitting that yielded so much. We will come back as speedily and as quickly as we can to pick up and continue and push forward beyond the hundred days, the achievement of the people's agenda.

We stand adjourned. I want to thank particularly the Clerk and his team for their guidance before today and of course today. **(Applause)** I want to thank all the Police Officers, security and our martial who seems to be ready for pension **(laughter)** by the colour of his hair but not the stride of his walk. **(Laughter/applause)** Thanks to the media and thanks to all those who are looking online especially the girls on your day today; international day of the girl child.

Question put and agreed to.

The Sitting of the Senate adjourned sine die at 7:00 p.m.

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