



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

THIRD SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TUESDAY 26TH NOVEMBER, 2024

***Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held on Tuesday 26th November, 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's***

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Attendance

PRESENT

Mr. Speaker
Honourable Leo Cato, MP
In the Chair

- | | |
|--|---|
| Honourable Dickon Mitchell, MP
<i>(St. David)</i> | - Prime Minister & Minister for Infrastructure and Physical Development, Public Utilities, Civil Aviation and Transportation, National Security, Home Affairs, Public Administration, Information & Disaster Management |
| Honourable Philip A. Telesford, MP
<i>(St. George South East)</i> | - Minister for Health |
| Honourable Dennis Cornwall, MP
<i>(St. Patrick East)</i> | - Minister for Finance |
| Honourable Ron Livingston Redhead, MP
<i>(St. George North East)</i> | - Member |
| Honourable Delma Thomas, MP
<i>(St. Andrew North West)</i> | - Minister for Youth and Sports, Mental Health, Wellness, and Religious Affairs, with a special focus on the Mt. Gay Psychiatric Hospital |
| Honourable Andy Williams, MP
<i>(St. George South)</i> | - Minister for Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation |
| Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith C. Mitchell, PC, MP, JP
<i>(St. George North West)</i> | - Leader of His Majesty's Opposition |
| Honourable. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, MP
<i>(St. Mark)</i> | - Deputy Speaker |
| Honourable Peter David, MP
<i>(Town of St. George)</i> | - Member |
| Honourable Kate Lewis-Peters, MP
<i>(St. Andrew North East)</i> | - Member |
| Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP
<i>(St. Andrew South East)</i> | - Member |

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Attendance

ABSENT

- | | |
|--|--|
| Honourable Joseph Andall, MP
<i>(St. Patrick West)</i> | - Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Export Development
<i>(Excuse tendered)</i> |
| Honourable Lennox J. Andrews, MP
<i>(St. Andrew South West)</i> | - Minister for Economic Development, Planning, Agriculture and Lands, Forestry, Marine Resources, and Cooperatives
<i>(Excused)</i> |
| Honourable Tevin Andrews, MP
<i>(Carriacou and Petite Martinique)</i> | - Minister for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs and Local Government
<i>(Excuse tendered)</i> |
| Honourable Kerryne Z. James, MP
<i>(St. John)</i> | - Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment and Renewable Energy
<i>(Excused)</i> |

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**Prayers
Minutes**

The Sitting of the House of Representatives began at 9:09 a.m.

Mr. Speaker: I invite you to join me as we do the Prayers.

(House Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Join me, please, as we say the Lord's Prayer.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Pray be seated.

(Sound of Gavel)

Mr. Speaker: This Parliament is now in session.

Deputy Clerk: Item 3 – Oath of Allegiance or Affirmation of a New Member.
Item 4 – Confirmation of Minutes.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Morning to everyone in this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the House of Representatives, held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Tuesday the 27th day of August, 2024, at 9:00 a.m., be taken as read.

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Minutes

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the House of Representatives, held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Tuesday the 27th of August, 2024, at 9:00 a.m., be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Third Session of the Eleventh Parliament of Grenada, held at Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Friday 4th of October, 2024, at 10 a.m., be taken as read.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Third Session of the Eleventh Parliament of Grenada, held at Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Friday 4th of October, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., be confirmed.

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Minutes

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Special Joint Sitting to celebrate the life of the late His Excellency Sir Daniel Williams, former Governor General, held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Tuesday 15th of October, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., be taken as read.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Special Joint Sitting to celebrate the life of the late His Excellency Sir Daniel Williams, former Governor General of Grenada, held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Tuesday 15th of October, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

Deputy Clerk: Item 5 – Messages from the Governor-General.

Item 6 – Announcements by Mr. Speaker.

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Announcements

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. I wish to inform this Honourable House that we have some absentees today. Honourable Kerryne James is out of State and won't be with us, so is Honourable Lennox Andrew out of State and Honourable Joseph Andall won't be here because he is unwell. I have information in my possession that says that Honourable Tevin Andrew won't be able to make it. Honourable Delma Thomas will be late, but she has indicated that she will attend today's Sitting. Yes, there she is. All right, I recognise the presence of the Honourable Delma Thomas.

And, now I wish to inform this Parliament that since we last met, I attended the 67th CPA Conference in Australia and there were some major conclusions that were taken at that Conference, and I'll just read a few of the conclusions:

1. "Parliaments should proactively explore all the necessary measures and support systems to allow Parliamentarians to undertake their term in office. I'll just read two more;
2. Parliaments should continue to adapt and innovate to strengthen their governance system while ensuring the efforts, respect and engagement with tradition and local context, and the last one I wish to read;
3. The Commonwealth Parliaments should commit and integrate technological solutions to allow for inclusive participation in the electoral process and practices for all persons, even those living with disabilities."

I wish to inform this Parliament for the year 2025, we are encouraging the use of artificial intelligence, yes, among Parliamentarians and we will be procuring the tools that allow our Parliamentarians to use artificial intelligence, and we will do some training with respect to AI.

And the final one that I wish to announce is that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Academy is a research portal that is online. Parliamentarians who have any interest in the courses there can sign on and do the courses. Some of them are free, and others have to be paid for, and the Parliament of Grenada is committed to assisting with the payment of a particular course that a Parliamentarian may choose. Those are my announcements.

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Papers / Reports

Deputy Clerk: Item 7 – Presentation of Petitions.

Item 8 – Presentation of Papers and Reports from Select Committees.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to lay on the Table the following Reports and Papers:

1. Report of the Director of Audit on the Public Accounts of Grenada for the year ended 31st December, 2016;
2. Report of the Director of Audit on the Public Accounts of Grenada for the year ended 31st December, 2017;
3. Report of the Director of Audit on the Public Accounts of Grenada for the year ended 31st December, 2018;
4. Report of the Director of Audit on the Public Accounts of Grenada for the year ended 31st December, 2019;
5. Statement on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2024 – Fiscal Resilience Oversight Committee (FROC) 10th September, 2024;
6. Fiscal Resilience (Suspension of the Public Debt Target and Primary Balance Rule) Order, 2024 (to be laid in the House of Representatives and accompanied by the memorandum required under Section 9 (2) of the Fiscal Resilience Act, 2023);
7. Annual Report – Grenada Investment Development Corporation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Leader of Government's Business. Honourable Members, those Reports are now laid in the House.

Deputy Clerk: Item 9 – Unopposed Private Business.

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Item 10 – Questions.

Item 11 – Urgent Questions under the provisions of Standing Order No. 20 (1) (Notice of Questions).

Item 12 – Statements by Ministers.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable MP for St. Andrew North West.

Hon. Delma Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to update this Honourable House on some of the initiatives that are taken by the Ministry of Mental Health, Wellness and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Mr. Speaker, I start with the Ministry of Youth and Sports to inform the Honourable House that the MPower Programme has completed its life skill component and last week Thursday, we held our quarterly session at the Trade Centre. This is a place where the participants come together to reflect on progress, share experiences and gain insights on the next phase.

Mr. Speaker, Cabinet has also approved an increase to the stipend of the MPower participants from EC\$800 to EC\$1000, so EC\$200 increase, my apologies and this increase will be in effect from the 1st of December. Also, the Cabinet has approved an increase in the grant from EC\$2,400 to EC\$3,000. Mr. Speaker, the MPower Programme now include a mentorship component that provides guidance and ensures sustainability during the start-up phase, and so we will not leave them after the one-year period, but there will be a hand-holding process and also continuous follow-up.

Mr. Speaker, in the month of November, we started a series of YOUth Talks engaging young people across the country. The series fosters youth empowerment, strengthens connection with the community and encourages active civic participation. Today, we are having one in St. Mark and tomorrow, please God, in Carriacou, and we are hoping to climax with a National Youth Rally, which will be held this Sunday at the Radisson Ballroom. And Mr. Speaker, this will bring together young people across the

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country, where we will launch our policy as a Government as it relates to youth development.

There will also be a Recognition Ceremony, and one of the highlights for this recognition will be our national hero, one of our national heroes, athletic cricketing hero Afy Fletcher will be recognised on Sunday with other national heroes. So, Mr. Speaker, we are inviting all the young people across Grenada to come out on Sunday. There will be talent; youth will also showcase their skills. There will be an expo aspect starting from 2 o'clock. So we encourage our young people to be there.

Mr. Speaker, also to inform this Honourable House that Cabinet has launched a new initiative as it relates to empowering our women and girls and this new initiative is called "Elevate Her". It's an initiative aimed at empowering unemployed and underemployed women in Grenada between the ages of 18 and 35. This programme seeks to equip participants with essential skills, national and regionally recognised certifications and resources to improve their employability and create sustainable pathways to full-time employment.

And Mr. Speaker, you may ask what makes this different from the Imani Programme. Mr. Speaker, there's a clear pathway to employment, and there's a clear exit strategy so that no one would stay in this programme for more than 12 to 18 months, Mr. Speaker, but, also we will be working along with these young women to create cooperatives in some instances, to help them with start-ups for their own businesses and also we are working with the private sector to ensure that once we put these trainees in their care to train that there is a pathway for clear employment. And so, Mr. Speaker, registration will start. The process will be online from this week. However, our staff members from the Ministry will be going out into the different parishes from Monday to register these women and so more will be given within the media in the coming days on how you can register.

Also to say that we have started negotiations with TAMCC and so we have started assisting in renovating some of the buildings. There are two buildings there that were destroyed since Hurricane Ivan and construction work has started there, I think either

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yesterday or Sunday to renovate the building and so we'll enter into a partnership with TAMCC to assist in providing those training initiatives for our young women and also we are hoping to include young men in those initiatives in 2025.

Mr. Speaker, within the Ministry of Youth and Sports, we continue to provide training for young people. We continue to look for ways and means to empower and inspire young people. And so we have a Community Youth Leadership training. The first one was held sometime last month in St. George's, where we had in excess of 50 young people in groups and individually being trained. Last Saturday and Sunday in St. Andrew, we had in excess of 30 young people trained, and so Cabinet has also approved a grant of EC\$5,000 that can be used not only by those trained in the leadership training but also by our Youth Ambassadors and our Youth Parliamentarians.

And just to inform this Honourable House that the Youth Election will be held on the 5th of December and to say that yesterday the registration process closed, so you can no longer register, but we encourage young people who register to go out there and vote for your candidate and this candidate will be your voice in the community for a period of two years. We continue to provide all the necessary training and all the necessary support for young people.

Also to inform you that, I think on the 4th of December, our Cybersecurity Training will be held where 100 people (so it's young people and there might be those a little more than the age of 35) will be trained in Cybersecurity. It's Government thrust in providing skill training that will result in real employment with real salaries, Mr. Speaker. And so, as a Government, we will continue to look for ways and means to empower our young people across the tri-island states of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

As it relates to Mental Health, last week, we had the Mount Sinai team in our thrust to improve the overall health care in Grenada. So, as it relates to Mental Health, they were here. Mental Health experts trained our staff in Mental Health. And so, the people who received the training will be able to train other people because we will start real training at the level of the community as it relates to mental health, Mr. Speaker.

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We believe that we have to start in the schools, and we have seen some of the challenges; just last week Thursday, I had to visit a family where a young man, brilliant, handsome young man took his life, Mr. Speaker. And so I sympathise with the Simon family, but to say to our young people, we are here to help and to say to every one of us, let us be our brother's keeper, let us look at the ways and means of not bullying or not stigmatising but providing support, not to only young people but, to everyone across our country. As a Ministry, we are committed to continuing to provide that necessary support and in our 2025 Budget, we will elaborate on what we will do as a Ministry.

Just to inform you, as it relates to the Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation... The site has been cleared. We are in the process of fencing and erecting a billboard. Seriously, Mr. Speaker, saying to the public that come 2025, boots will be on the ground in Mirabeau, **(applause)** ensuring, Mr. Speaker, that we provide this avenue where our men and women and even young people who are involved in drugs and alcohol abuse can get real support. And, Mr. Speaker, we appreciate that this building would not be two or three months, and so as a Government, we will look at some level of outpatient clinic, which will be dealt with in the Budget, where we can provide some outpatient support while we prepare for this major initiative.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Infrastructure, Mental Health and MIT walked through Mt. Gay Mental Hospital, appreciating that there is a lot of infrastructural work to be done. And so, before the end of the year, the OT building will start repair work there, and in 2025, we'll continue to develop the infrastructural work on all buildings within the Mt. Gay facility. We are improving the aesthetics and the environment and providing all the assistance so that we can generally improve mental health across the tri-island state of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I thank you. **(Applause)**.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, Honourable MP for St. Andrew North West. Honourable Prime Minister.

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Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, good morning. In my capacity as Minister for Infrastructure and Physical Development, I just wish to reiterate some of the information we shared with the public last Tuesday.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday, we had to, in fact, postpone this Sitting of Parliament as a result of the significant precipitation that Grenada has experienced, particularly in the month of November. The statistics from the Meteorological Office at Point Saline (and you'd appreciate that Point Saline is perhaps part of the island that gets the least rain) indicated that we have received significantly more rainfall in November than we normally receive in the month of November, traditionally, and certainly compared to the rest of the months of the year, we've also received significantly more rainfall.

Combine that, Mr. Speaker, with the fact that Hurricane Beryl would have caused significant damage to the forest and the agricultural sector, particularly in St. Patrick and St. Andrew, that has significantly compromised our forest cover, and you'll recall prior to that, we had a six-month drought. So it means, Mr. Speaker, that it has left the island very vulnerable to any level of significant rainfall because we are having much faster runoff, we are having significant landslides.

In St. David alone, a preliminary count suggested we had as many as 29 landslides over a 48-hour period. And, obviously, the Chief Technical Officer had indicated at the press conference that perhaps in excess of 50, just two days prior to the press conference.

So it means, Mr. Speaker, that significant damage has been done to our roadways, to our culverts, to our drains, to both public and private retaining walls and combined with high tides, there's been significant flooding in many low-lying areas: the town of Grenville, Morne Rouge, River Road, La Sagesse and many other areas. And so extensive damage has been done to both private and public physical infrastructure, including some homes where a few homes were completely demolished by landslides.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, we also had the very tragic situation of a young mother, teacher and wife losing her life when the vehicle that she was in was swept

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away by water, and regrettably and sadly, she passed away. And so, Mr. Speaker, obviously, making sure that we are better prepared to respond to and to minimise loss of life, limb, and property from climatic events is something that has to be ingrained in our behaviour, in our culture. And so when we talk about resilience and sustainability, it's not an event, Mr. Speaker. It really has to become a way of life.

So there has been significant damage, in some instances, more damage caused by Hurricane Beryl. At the press conference, the General Manager of NAWASA would have indicated that at one time, as much as 60% of NAWASA's dam and water treatment facilities were severely impacted by the excess rainfall and the landslides. So I think he's put the estimated cost of damages as much as almost \$900,000, and probably counting.

We are yet to have financial implications of the cost of the damage to infrastructure, the damage to private property and the flooding, but we know it will run in the millions of dollars. Just the cost to clear blocked bridges, drains, and culverts to clear up the landslide would have required a massive operation requiring the use of significant heavy equipment from all over the country, and that alone will run the Ministry of Infrastructure and, by extension, the taxpayers in Grenada into the millions of dollars. So, Mr. Speaker, we are going to have to do a comprehensive review of the physical infrastructure in Grenada, particularly the roads, the culverts, and the bridges, some of which, honestly, Mr. Speaker, simply cannot take the volume of water or the level of debris that is coming down.

If you take the Eastern Main Road, for example, you would see that many of the bridges are built in a manner that simply does not allow debris to flow beneath them. You can take the bridge at the La Calome entrance. There's a concrete column running beneath the bridge that leaves, literally, maybe one and a half or two feet of space and the level of bamboo and the kind of debris that comes down the river simply can't pass. And so it hits the bridge, and then the bridge's underpass is blocked, and then the water gets into the road and then we have significant and massive flooding often time which does significant damage to private property as well. So this is something that we are

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going to have to take on as a national priority because if we don't address it, Mr. Speaker, it will not get better.

It also means, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to have to take on as a national project not just the replanting of our spices but the replanting of our forests and the reforestation of Grenada. If we do not do so, the landslides will continue and the damage will continue. NAWASA has already emphasised, the fact that our water catchment systems are going to have to change, and a lot more investment is going to have to be made in addressing how we manage the velocity of water which comes downstream into our rivers and eventually empties out into our low lying areas.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the damage to private property is related to the fact that the private properties have been built in areas that really should have no physical development. They are built in wetlands that have been dumped, low-lying areas along riverbanks, along the mangroves and sometimes in the mangroves, on hillsides, just looking at it says that it is unstable, and we continue to build in those places. Mother Nature will not bend or break or go under or over buildings. They will go through them and we've seen clear evidence of this as a result of the flooding.

So this is something, Mr. Speaker, that from an education perspective, we are going to have to ramp up, the Planning and Development Authority are also going to have to enforce for the sake of people because when you build in areas that are flood prone or prone to landslides and the landslides come, you are losing your own investment and also risking your life and your limb.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is something that I would provide a more comprehensive report about after we have the full assessment from the Ministry of Infrastructure as to the extent of the damage, the estimated cost of the immediate clean-up and the likely cost of shoring up a lot of the physical structures that have been compromised.

I also want to take this opportunity to report to the nation that the majority of the work on H.A. Blaize Street, which again resulted from a collapsed retaining wall, has been completed. And so, vehicular access has once again been restored at the H.A. Blaize Street as of Monday morning.

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The Molinere landslip, Mr. Speaker, all of the main structural work for the road or the bridge, because it's essentially a bridge that has been built, is complete. The first laying of the asphalt should be taking place as we speak, and therefore, we expect, subject to weather conditions, that this road should be complete and traversable within the first and second week of December. As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, during the period of unseasonal weather, we did, in fact, open the road to allow for vehicular traffic to ease some of the congestion that arose. So, Mr. Speaker, we are well on our way to completing this significant project, which has been a major challenge to commuters and pedestrians living in the western part of Grenada.

And so we wish to commend the contractor, the consultant and the Ministry of Infrastructure for the significant work done in undertaking **(applause)** what has been a challenging task. But, I think if you see it from the sea and if you see it from the road, it has, in fact, added to the landscape. We have to stabilise the downslope and the top slope, and most of all, the downslope is essentially loose earth that has been dumped. So the contractors will also be treating with this.

We intend to take on another major area on the west coast which has been neglected for decades, that is the area known as Mabouya, which is the piece of road between the entrance to Mount Granby, Mount Nesbit and Gouyave. And so, Mr. Speaker, we intend to also address this. Similarly, we also intend to address the Marquis Bridge, which is already compromised, because we appreciate it on the Eastern Main Road and, if not dealt with soon, could also provide major challenges to pedestrians and motorists on the Eastern Main Road.

But Mr. Speaker, the truth is there has been significant deterioration and neglect of many of these bridges, drains, culverts and retaining walls. We can take a place like Woolwich Road, for example, in the Town of St. George, which has been like this for almost 40 years, since I've been going to PBC where you can see with your naked eyes, that large portions of the road have broken off and the retaining walls have fallen and they've not been addressed. So those are a lot of the major infrastructural work that we are going to have to do just to keep the existing infrastructure in place so that people can

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**Statements by Ministers
Personal Explanations**

continue passing. So, I wanted to provide this update to the nation and I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister. I think we can move on.

Deputy Clerk: Item 13 – Personal Explanations.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of His Majesty's Opposition.

Dr. the Rt. Hon Keith Mitchell: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand on item Personal Explanations to inform the Honourable House of a specific situation as it relates to my own constituency and the concerns being raised by everyone concerned. As I stepped in, I heard the Honourable Prime Minister talking about the problems related to areas of infrastructural damage, particularly the western side. It is known that one will always remember the Cotton Bailey incident, where scores of people were killed, and therefore, one has to be very concerned about what is taking place on the western side. And I just want to inform you, with the recent passage of Beryl, there's a major area of concern opposite the Community Centre in Brizan, where if you pass there as I pass, you almost have to drive fast and forget the hump because if you look up you'll see the stones hanging down and that can be a major, major problem.

I have written to the Minister for Works, and, of course, we've called the Ministry of Works outside of the direct communication to the Minister for Works, and therefore, I want to bring it to the attention of the entire Parliament with all Members of Government and Opposition here that I'm very concerned about that area. So, I would expect the need to have some serious intervention very soon because that can lead to some serious, serious, serious damage to persons physically and otherwise.

So, I felt it necessary at this juncture this morning to raise this because we have not heard from the Ministry of Works or a reply yet from the Minister concerned, so, I thought it necessary. I want to take no chance with this so in case something happens,

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**Personal Explanations
Motions**

people will know I've done everything that ought to do relative to this particular area. So I just want to make this point this morning, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Deputy Clerk: Item 14 – Motions.

Mr. Speaker: Leader for Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General of Grenada on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Third Session of the Eleventh Parliament on Friday 4th, October 2024, was deferred to a date to be named;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the said Address be deferred to a date to be announced.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Mr. Speaker: Leader for Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 69 (1) of the House of Representatives provides for the election of a Committee to be known as the Public Accounts Committee;

AND WHEREAS it is further provided that the Committee be elected at the first Sitting of each session at which the business of the House other than the reading of the Throne Speech is transacted;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable House doth now elect its Members to the said Committee.

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Motions

Question put.

Mr. Speaker: Leader for Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I wish to nominate the following Members to the Public Accounts Committee: Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell, Chairman; Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen; Honourable Kate Lewis; Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair; and Senator the Honourable Salim Rahaman.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Mr. Speaker: Leader for Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 70 (1) of the House of Representatives Standing Orders provide for the appointment of a Committee to consist of a Chairman and two Members to be known as the Standing Orders Committee, which shall be elected as soon as it may be after the beginning of each session of Parliament;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable House doth it now appoint the Members of the said Committee.

Question put.

Mr. Speaker: Leader for Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to nominate the following Members to the Standing Orders Committee; Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, Member; Honourable Tevin Andrews, Member; Honourable Joseph

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Andall, Member; Honourable Emmalin Pierre, Member and under the Chairmanship, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Mr. Speaker: Leader for Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 70 (2) of the House of Representatives Standing Orders provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the Speaker, as Chairman, and four Members to be known as a House Committee;

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

Mr. Speaker, sorry. My apologies, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 70 (3) of the House of Representatives Standing Orders provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the Speaker as Chairman and four 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 the Honourable House doth now appoint the four Members to the said Committee.

Question put.

Mr. Speaker: Leader for Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to nominate the following Members to the Committee of Privileges: Honourable Andy Williams, Member; Honourable Ron. L. Redhead, Member; Honourable Peter David, Member;

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Honourable Kate Lewis-Peters, Member, under the Chairmanship of the Honourable Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Deputy Clerk: Item 15 – Bills.

Mr. Speaker: Leader for Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to introduce, for the first reading, a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Bank Holidays (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Clerk: A Bill which seeks to amend the Schedule to Bank Holidays Act CAP. 25 ("the principal Act") to observe the 19th day of October as "National Heroes Day" as a Bank Holiday in Grenada shortly entitled, Bank Holidays (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Mr. Speaker: Leader for Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the House of Representatives be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all its stages at this Sitting.

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. Speaker: Leader for Government's Business.

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Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader for Government's Business

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill, Mr. Speaker, contains two Clauses. Clause 1, Mr. Speaker, refers to the short title for which this is a Bill. Clause 2, Mr. Speaker, is to amend the Schedule of the principal Act so that, Mr. Speaker, the second Monday in August and the day following which shall be known and referred to as Carnival August Celebrations, Mr. Speaker, be no longer having to receive annual permission, Mr. Speaker, from the Governor-General, but now that this, Mr. Speaker, Bill is being passed there'll be no longer such requirement, but the second half of that Carnival Tuesday will automatically be a holiday. Also, Mr. Speaker, the 19th day of October for the last two years, that's 2024 and 2023, were referred to as Heroes Holidays, had to receive permission granted by the Governor-General on both occasions.

Mr. Speaker, by enacting this legislation, we no longer would have to get annual permission to have that particular day be identified as a public holiday, but it would be automatic from here on unless another Bill is passed to revoke so.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's a very simple Bill, 2 Clauses just to amend the Schedule to have October 19 as a public holiday, and the second Tuesday in August as a full holiday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Leader for Government's Business. Do I see the light of MP for St. Andrew South East?

Hon. Emmalin Pierre: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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Mr. Speaker: Go ahead, Honourable MP.

Hon. Emmalin Pierre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm still following your instructions from some months ago. **(Laughter)** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this Bill that has been presented before this House, and I wish to address, Mr. Speaker, the specific subject of October 19 being named Heroes Day. Mr. Speaker, when we think of October 19, anytime you think of October 19, there's only one October 19 that resonates: October 19, 1983. Mr. Speaker, I consider it one of Grenada's most politically sensitive and controversial days in our history.

Mr. Speaker, on the 19th of October 1983, the Prime Minister of Grenada was executed along with his colleagues. Other ordinary Grenadians, Mr. Speaker, lost their lives on October 19, 1983, all due, Mr. Speaker, to political conflict. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if we are thinking deeply about this proposed decision. Lest we forget. On October 19, 1983, Mr. Speaker, these individuals were lined up against a wall, and they were gunned down with machine guns. October 19, 1983. Mr. Speaker, the painful events of that day can still be referred to as the darkest day of our Grenadian in history. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is the closest that Grenada has ever come to a civil war.

Until now, Mr. Speaker, many Grenadians are still trying to come to grips and are still trying to cope with the trauma of October 19, 1983. Mr. Speaker, we cannot be serious about attempting to name October 19, 1983, "October 19". And that is why I said whenever you think of October 19, whichever year, 2025 or 2030, what resonates is October 19, 1983, almost synonymous. So, Mr. Speaker, it was a day when citizens fought against each other. Mr. Speaker, 41 years later, families are still asking for closure, families are still mourning and grieving over their loved ones. As a matter of fact, they're still praying, at least to have the remains of their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, while I do believe that our history must be commemorated, we must, but to name October 19 Heroes Day, in my opinion, might be very insensitive and goes against any attempt to unify our country. Mr. Speaker, I'm yet to hear any cogent, and

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maybe there'll be some attempts, but I'm yet to hear any cogent argument of why October 19 should be celebrated or observed as "National Heroes Day".

Mr. Speaker, when you think of October 19, it carries a deep pain, a hurt, a reflection that doesn't make you feel like you want to celebrate anything. Mr. Speaker, when we think of Heroes Day on the contrary, you think of celebration, you think of national pride, you think about recognising people of all walks of life, of all political affiliations, of all ideologies and philosophies, Mr. Speaker, you think of recognising them for the contributions that they have made. **(Applause)** The question is, why October 19?

Mr. Speaker, October 19 was a day people still recall: shot at first sight. The curfew, Mr. Speaker, the activities that aggravate pain and hurt for so many people, Mr. Speaker, we can choose to be insensitive or we can choose to find an appropriate day that does not erupt so many emotions among people. Mr. Speaker, except we are deaf, we must have heard the reaction to the last two celebrations. Mr. Speaker, I heard people for the very first time calling in on programmes crying, breaking down in tears, big grown men, recalling the events of October 19 and breaking down in tears, but that is just one aspect. Mr. Speaker, the anger that I've heard just over the decision to temporarily observe the day over the past two years. The anger, the emotions, the threats, Mr. Speaker, I am saying, have we been listening?

Mr. Speaker compound in that was the executive order pronounced by the leadership of this country that on that day, no one should play amplified music. Almost giving you a kind of curfew feeling. Mr. Speaker, you know, I really believe that much thought did not go into this. I honestly cannot believe that significant thought went into this. Mr. Speaker, even Christian holidays do not receive that kind of executive order. What are we saying? What message are we sending? But do we want to limit a celebration of heroes to that solemnity that we're promoting or do we want to expand this to a jubilant occasion where people, generally whether it's during the Revolution, whether the days of Uncle Gairy, whether it's today, whenever, that people, just people, can be celebrated.

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Mr. Speaker, I am curious as to what measure of mandate the Government received to propose that October 19 be observed as “Heroes Day”. Because when you go on the ground in the constituencies, Mr. Speaker, people, regardless of their political affiliation, are saying, why not another day, people everywhere, why not another day. So, this brings me to the point, Mr. Speaker, that controversial issues like these, and we must have been hearing the comments, controversial issues like these require consultation with the people **(applause)** consultation with the masses.

And so I’m saying, Mr. Speaker, this morning, absolutely nothing wrong with doing something about October 19 to remember, specially, those people who lost their lives. I have absolutely no problem with this. I also have no problem, Mr. Speaker, with naming a day as “Heroes Day”. But, I feel strongly, Mr. Speaker, this morning, Heroes Day must not be celebrated on October 19. **(Applause)** And I do hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Government would listen to people. Listen to people.

It’s not strange. It doesn’t take high science to understand why the turnout was so poor last October 19. There are people who do not mind celebrating Heroes Day, but they will not attend a Heroes Day celebration on October 19. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I am certain that there could be heroes to be recognised who are still carrying the scars of October 19, 1983. There are family members who will qualify, at some point or the other, to be named heroes who are still traumatised and probably won't ever leave their homes on October 19, 1983. Mr. Speaker, you notice what's even happening to me; every time I say October 19, I say 1983, and that’s not deliberate in some of the cases.

I close, Mr. Speaker, with a comment made to me by an individual who was specially invited to Progress Park on October 19. That individual said to me, “Mrs. Pierre, I could not go. I am still taking medication to deal with what happened on October 19, 1983”. That individual would have liked to be there but couldn’t pull herself out of her house to attend the activity. I am simply asking. This is not political. This is about emotional intelligence. This is about understanding what other people are experiencing. This is about understanding that we have 365 days, and it’s just logically possible that we

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could find another day that we can name "Heroes Day". Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
(Applause)

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Andrew South East. I now invite the Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Take the floor.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll seek your indulgence to ask to be excused from part of the debate. I did promise the Member of Parliament for Carriacou and Petite Martinique that I would attend an event in Carriacou in which 27 homes, which were gifted by an organisation of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the citizens of Carriacou, are being handed over this morning. The 27 pre-fab houses that have been built mostly in the Dumfries area and given the significant need for housing as a result of the damage to the housing stock of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I thought it would be important that I attend and show my gratitude for what is obviously a significant contribution to the housing stock of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. So, I would seek your leave to be excused from the debate. But before I do so, Mr. Speaker, I do want to take the opportunity to lend my support to the Bill.

First, Mr. Speaker, I think the practice... I should say the law should reflect the practice because the truth is what we call Carnival Tuesday has become a full-fledged bank or public holiday perhaps for the last decade or even more, and rather than have the Governor-General and the team at the Ministry of Legal Affairs every year scramble to issue a proclamation, Mr. Speaker, obviously we sought to have the law match the reality of having the second Monday in August declared a full bank holiday. There might be a need for an additional debate as to whether the first of August should not, in fact, be

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a holiday or the holiday, bearing in mind that I think the original intent was that the 1st of August be marked as perhaps the most pivotal holiday in our civilisation.

August 1, 1838, marked the end of British Slavery. **(Inaudible comment by a Member)** Yes, the formal end of British Slavery in Grenada and the British West Indies. And I say it's perhaps the most important day in our civilisation because it at least marked that the law for the first time was recognising that people of African descent were human beings and not property and you can't build civilisation and can't build a free state if one human being, in law, is viewed as the property of another and 200, 300 years later there are still parts of the world where young men and women are being sold into slavery or where women, in particular, are being sold into slavery.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think since we're talking about meaningful and non-meaningful holidays, we need to address whether, as a country, we are serious about meaningful or non-meaningful days and whether or not, if we truly appreciate the significance of the fact that our ancestors were bought and sold as property, whether as a country we should be marking the first of August as perhaps the most important day in our nation's history to reflect that our ancestors at least in law for the first time were being treated as human beings and not the property of others.

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the National Heroes, bank holiday and the naming of October 19 as National Heroes Day, my contributions to the debate, Mr. Speaker, are as follows. Picking a day or any other day out of the 365 days of the year goes back to the very point I made, which is, we are going to have to be serious about it as a nation as to whether we want to teach our people our history and the challenges we faced as a nation. This is about national heroes, not a hero. Everyone is a hero. A parent to his child is a hero. A child to his parent. A Good Samaritan who helps you along the way is a hero. We are talking about the national heroes in the context of statehood and nationhood. That's the first point.

Mr. Speaker, if you're going to name a day as National Heroes Day in the context of Grenadian history, there is no more heroic act than a Prime Minister, Members of the Cabinet and the citizens who support and defend them laying down their lives for this

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country. There could be no further heroic act. There could be no further act of martyrdom for one's country than having your life taken violently, tragically, in defence of Grenada, in defence of the ordinary men and women of Grenada, and in defence of a Prime Minister and the Members of his Cabinet. So heroism, Mr. Speaker, comes in all forms, and most times, those who become heroes don't choose to become heroes. It is by their selflessness and their act of giving and giving the ultimate, their lives for people and, in this case, for nation, that one could truly be seen as a hero.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, I probably would not have said anything because I think we would have assumed all right-thinking, sober-minded citizens who are prepared to think about others rather than themselves would support this Bill. But, I listened to the Member for St. Andrew South East say, "I feel strongly this morning... I feel..." Mr. Speaker, this is not about how I feel. This is about a nation. This is about sometimes confronting the difficult feelings that we have, and this is about in difficult times leading and making the right decision. What we have had, Mr. Speaker, is a deliberate attempt to downplay, ignore and pretend that October 19 didn't happen. **(Applause)**

Since 1984, Mr. Speaker, since the powers that be put together the New National Party and since it is the New National Party that has dominated electoral politics and has won in Grenada, Mr. Speaker, I actually went on because you see when we talk about I have no problem in acknowledging October 19 or saying something should be done, I actually looked, and I checked. The Member for St. Andrew South East, according to Wikipedia, has been a Member of Parliament since 2003 and served from 2003 to 2008 and again from 2013 to 2022, and is still serving. Where was your advocacy for acknowledging October 19? **(Applause)** Where was your advocacy for talking about the pain and the suffering and the need for closure? So don't come here in this sanctimonious, holier-than-thou, I feel commentary. As painful as October 19 is, Mr. Speaker, as difficult as it is, part of nationhood is about growth, and you're not going to grow if you don't confront difficult and challenging episodes in our history. Attempting to ignore it.

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Imagine, Mr. Speaker, for all of my adult life, on October 19, people get up here and go to work as if nothing happened. No church service, no official state Government, Parliament, Judicial or Executive recognition of the fact that our Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues were executed in public. You go to the Fort except for the plaque erected by the few private citizens who've carried this torch; no recognition whatsoever by a country that its Prime Minister was executed? And those who held the power for decades to at least write a letter, to at least say to schools even if we aren't giving it a public holiday, observe it, mark it, talk about it, teach it. The Honourable MP held the post of Minister for Education, Human Resource Development, Religious Affairs and Information.

So, Mr. Speaker, if you give holidays on days that mean nothing that does not evoke emotion or at least debate or a discussion, what are you giving the holiday for? What are you giving the holiday for? If you believe Christ was born on the 25th of December, you'll give the holiday on the 24th or on the 23rd because there might be people in the country who are not Christians, so they'll object and say that should not be a holiday because I'm a Muslim, I'm not getting the holiday? If you believe Christ rose on Easter Sunday, you'll give the holiday on the Sunday before? If you truly believe October 19, and according to you, when you say 19th, you automatically think '83, is that ingrained in us, what other day should we acknowledge as National Heroes Day? A meaningless day in the middle of July, in the middle of January, in the middle of December?

So you see, Mr. Speaker, we have to go past this, always attempting to appear to try and score political points because something might be controversial or there might be persons who may not necessarily support it for emotional reasons. I completely understand that. We fully appreciate there may be some reservations and there may be some doubts. The people who have been pained most... The wife of Maurice Bishop, Mr. Speaker, she was at the event on the 19th of October, 2023. She acknowledged that she had almost given up on Grenada.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, if they had made any attempt to do something for October 19 to recognise the day, to acknowledge the day, even a church service, we

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probably wouldn't be here today. You had a blank canvas. You had the blankest of the canvases, the earliest of the canvases from since 1984 and you ignored the canvas. What you'd have us do is have October 19 go by as if nothing has happened. So don't come here and talk about "lest we forget". What have you done to recognise that we would not forget? Where is the textbook you commissioned as Minister for Education to investigate and teach and tell their story and recognise the pain and difficulty?

Mr. Speaker, up to October, we were being briefed by the US Army through the efforts of US Congressmen and Women, and in particular, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, to again go back at the United States Government and Army to interrogate them about the facts surrounding the bodies of Maurice, his Cabinet colleagues because we truly understand and appreciate the significance to those who've lost their loved ones of at least some rationale, plausible explanation as to why their bodies have never been delivered or found. So, Mr. Speaker, passion runs both ways. Feeling runs both ways.

(Applause)

And I want to conclude on this point. This notion that we are trying to push that everything must be about celebration and party and music is not going to drown out the pain. The pain isn't going to go away. Saying go and fete on October 19 or get drunk or have a good time is not going to take away the pain of October 19. Nothing is going to take away the pain. But it certainly would be more painful, and it certainly is more painful to pretend it didn't happen. **(Applause)** It would be a bigger tragedy not to acknowledge the pain, the sorrow, the tragedy, the hurt, the ongoing hurt, and the fact that the pain would never disappear for those who lost their loved ones. But if we have any respect for them, if we believe in human dignity, then at least we would be respectful and solemn and recognise the ultimate sacrifice made by those who lost their lives and by those who have to live with the fact that their loved ones have lost their lives. **(Sound of Time Bell)** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Honourable MP for the Town of St. George.

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Hon. Peter David: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make comments on this issue, and, of course, it's a controversial issue, we recognise that. And I think the Member of Parliament for St. David, through his discourse, made reference to October 19 as a painful day, and it was. I mean, for those of us who experienced October 19, it was an extremely painful day. But I think we're here to discuss the question of heroes and interrogate how we pay tribute to our heroes.

I don't think there's a dispute, Member of Parliament for St. David, I recognise and pay tribute to the fact that we are considering paying respect to our heroes, and I welcome it. In fact, I welcome the fact that there is consideration for our heroes, but there are several issues involved in that.

Firstly, a definition of what a hero is historically in Grenada. We have to discuss that. We have to discuss who the heroes are, and we have to discuss what day is best to pay tribute to the heroes. **(Applause)** I mean, there are people, for example, there are some heroes, and I want to pay tribute to the heroes.

Some people acknowledge... There are people who are acknowledged as heroes in the context of Grenada. One, T.A. Marryshow, not because he is a man from the Town of St. George but because he is known as the "Father of Federation". So, I think he is a hero. I think Julien Fédon, who fought against colonialism and slavery, I think to acknowledge that he is a hero. But, you know, the closer you get to the people, the more controversy arises. So, Eric Mathew Gairy is a hero, but to some, not. Maurice Bishop, in the view of many, is a hero, but to some, not. But, in order to arrive at a consensus, we must have this discussion. **(Applause)** We must have this discussion.

These issues are always accompanied by controversy. Why? Because of what we have in our society, which is a deeply divided society along several lines. So there are people who would say Gairy was a hero, and there are people who would say he was not. There might even be people who say.... I saw recently there's a Monarchist Group in Grenada. I was quite surprised to read about this Monarchist Group that wants to maintain the monarchy, to them, all of these people here are not heroes.

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The main issue I think, Mr. Speaker, is we have to pay tribute to our heroes, but we must have a discussion among our people. You see, this discussion can do two things. It can bring us together and we can agree to disagree. And I believe we've found that because there are people who believe Gairy is a hero and at the same time believe that Bishop is a hero. You'll find that we are finding ways and spaces to unite on the issue. So, I don't want us to conflate the two issues. There is no one sitting in this House who says we should not celebrate Heroes Day. The question is, how? How do we involve our people in that process? One of the ways we can do it is what was indicated earlier. Let us have some more discussion. How, when, where, and for what?

So, Mr. Speaker, let us not create further division on the issue in this House. Let us see if we can find... Why didn't we establish a bipartisan committee, and I keep coming back to that, to discuss this issue? Why can't people on "Both Sides" contribute to what is a hero?

I get to the second point: what is a hero versus what is a martyr? And this was raised loudly (**applause**) by the Martyrs Foundation, that not everybody who died on October 19 is a "National Hero". Fédon didn't die on October 19. Marrayshow was not October 19. So, the issue is that we can have a discussion without appearing to be angry with each other. Let us sit.

You know, my good friend... Mr. Speaker, can I circulate two documents? One is an article by a friend, Arley Salimbi Gill, on "Heroes Day—A National Conundrum", and a statement made by the Martyrs Foundation because I would be quoting from it, and the procedure is that I should circulate the document. I have for "That Side", and I have for yourself and...

Mr. Speaker: Go ahead.

Hon. Peter David: ... if I may. These articles indicate what was said earlier, that we need to have a national discussion on these issues. Mr. Speaker, after the first announcement in 2023, there was a whole discussion. Articles written, Martyrs

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Foundation... You know, let's pay tribute to people like Doctor Terry Marryshow who spent years, and the families of the Martyrs Foundation (**applause**) years asking for this to be done. Isn't it only natural that their views should be considered?

Now let us look at what my friend, Mr. Gill, indicated, and there are a couple of things that he said that are quite relevant. "There was no national discussion on the issue." "There should have been community engagements linking National Heroes' Day to the very political and partisan moment in our history", a point made earlier. "National heroes come from all levels of our society." Those are the kinds of issues that we must interrogate. For example, is Kirani James a national hero? There are people who are going to be advocating that in generations to come, but he had nothing to do with October 19. October 19 is a solemn day in our history when people were martyred, and that is how it should be treated.

I am not here condemning the attempt to celebrate heroes because every time we express a disagreement, it is met with resistance. And I say to my colleagues, my young brothers and sisters, it is good to listen. There are those of us who have been there for decades, and we have experienced the trauma that you are reading about. October 19 is a traumatic day. (**Applause**)

My brothers and sisters. Members of Parliament. Sorry, Mr. Speaker, for referring to them as brothers and sisters, but I am tempted sometimes to embrace. Mr. Speaker, look at what the Martyrs Foundation said in their statement, and we can go to them now because I know time is limited. They indicted to the Government that they do not believe two things really come out of it. The Day. You cannot have the solemnity required to celebrate the martyrdom of the men and women on October 19 that you would have if you were celebrating Kirani James, T.A. Marryshow, or Julien Fédon. It is an entirely different kind of celebration. So we need to consider that.

But we also need to consider what they said about the location. And these are issues you must... And these are the families. Is there anybody in the world who was impacted, the families of those who died on October 19, and they said to you in this article:

One, for 41 long years, the families were urging this. 41 years the families were

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urging this. Nobody listened. They had it at a particular location, Fort George, which was named at the time Fort Rupert, after Maurice's father, who died in 1973. Mr. Speaker, they urged that the event take place at Fort George, as it is currently named. They were ignored.

In the article, it states, "The event was presented to the families", not my words. I am not making the criticism. I am here speaking on behalf of people like Dr. Marryshow and others who are in the Martyrs Foundation. "The event was presented to the families as a fait accompli. No input or ideas were ever sought. Their views should be sought and taken into account in a collaborative manner". Their words, not mine. The point is, Mr. Speaker, that this is a dispute not between two political parties here, that is, civil society, the families, and the people who experienced the pain and hurt; they are speaking in this statement, this press release issued by the Martyrs Foundation. And to date, this controversy arose a year ago, a year hence, nothing has happened by way of consultation. So, let's talk about the pain of the families.

I agree with the Member for St. David. And listen, Mr. Speaker, I am not here condemning October 19 being celebrated. I am saying that I do not, along with others, believe it should be celebrated as "Heroes Day". Martyrs Day, some other thing not Heroes Day. So do not tell the public that we are against October 19 being a holiday. **(Applause)** I attended the first celebration in Queen's Park because it was a good thing, in my view, to celebrate the lives of those who were martyred on October 19. So just listen for one minute, Mr. Speaker, is all I urge. That is all I am urging. You can do what you wish because you have the House.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, we can let these things bring us together, or we can let it tear us apart. I recall 2009, 2010, I think it was, as Minister for Civil Aviation, I had the honour, and I called it that, to be the Minister responsible for Civil Aviation and therefore with the responsibility for the renaming of the airport. When the announcement was made, I nearly, in fact, I think that contributed to me losing my job, but I faced the controversy head on. Friends of mine called and said, "Boy Peter, you sure you want to do that". I said, "If not now, when"? We proceeded, and the airport was renamed.

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In the initial stages, there was controversy. There was one journalist who said he would never land at the airport. He would take a boat. My good friend. He is not around anymore, but we proceeded. And you know what happened, eventually? The day the airport was renamed was one of the most unifying actions since 1983. People from all parties, people from all walks of life because people were celebrating the life of Maurice, even people who did not support Maurice.

The point I am making brothers and sister... Mr. Speaker, sorry. Members on the "Other Side". The point I am making is, we can use these issues to bring us together or we can use it to continue to tear us apart. We on the "Other Side" represent a large percentage of the people. And I am saying this to Members on the "Other Side".

Celebrating Heroes Day is an excellent initiative. Recognising the people we see as heroes as a people is something we need to do because it is through our heroes... You read the article by my friend Arley Salimbi Gill, and you will see him paying tribute to those. But at the same time, we must come together to determine who, what, where and how. Because if we are celebrating heroes, it is not heroes of the NDC or heroes of the NNP or heroes of the GULP or heroes of the PNM. They are heroes of our nation who we here represent as one people, indivisible, under God. So let us not display any tinge of divisiveness or arrogance or "I know it all" or you're wrong, and I'm right. There may be things that I believe that you do not agree with, that is fine, but there are things we all agree on. We all agree that we all have heroes. We all agree that they must be paid tribute to, and we must celebrate their lives. And we all agree that we must do it in a way that brings our people together.

So, every five years or every 10 years we name a new national hero. A national hero is not somebody you just name; you wake up one morning and say, Boy, you know what, I like my brethren, Andy; you know, Andy is a hero. No. We must find the criteria **(applause)** for determining what a national hero is. Maybe one day, my brother Andy will be a hero to future generations. **(Applause)** But for now, not now, not yet. But we must agree on the process.

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So I say to my brothers on the “Other Side”, if you don’t want to listen to me, listen to our intellectuals who are writing on the issue like Mr. Gill, etcetera. Listen to the Martyrs Foundation and the families who are impacted by what took place on October 19. Listen to them. I am merely here... You have the articles. You have all the information. I am merely here to say to you that persons who have been fighting the struggle for 41 years, persons who have lost their mother, father, brother or sister, on October 19, they must, they must have a say in how October 19 is celebrated and we as a people who have a long heroic history must have a part to play in who we tell our children are our heroes as a people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for the Town of St. George. I now give the floor to the Honourable MP for St. George North East.

Hon. Ron Redhead: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Bill as presented by the Leader of Government’s Business. I did not intend to say anything much on the Bill, but really, after listening, I honestly want to add some clarity of understanding.

I think the Members who spoke on the “Other Side” mean well in terms of their contribution towards the specific date of October 19. But I think they are confusing the issue of naming heroes and some perceived barrier that the Government of Grenada or the people are not going to get an opportunity to decide who the heroes are. We have not named any heroes. This is clear. It was clearly spelt out. The Honourable Prime Minister provided a context as to the specific day. The day simply signifies that the highest order someone can give, just explained it, is sacrificing their lives and that day is going to be celebrated as Heroes Day. But, I want to make this point, Mr. Speaker, because the door is not closed.

The information circulated by the Member of Parliament for the Town of St. George, Mr. Speaker, through you, is timely, and nobody is ignoring that information. People would have alternative views. What we are saying is that for 40-something years,

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this day has been kept in the dark. This is just year two. We in the Government believe that we can listen to people, but we are saying simply this.

When it comes to acknowledging this specific day, there is always this kind of cloud of secrecy. This is something we have to stop. Yes, we read about it; some of us were not there, but this is something that we have to stop. We are not and note well... I think we need to understand the context. What do we do with heroes? Do we acknowledge? Do we celebrate? Are heroes only in one context or one dimension? Heroes come in different shapes and sizes, and therefore, we need a day that signifies the ultimate sacrifice of Grenadian heroism.

We are not saying, Mr. Speaker, that the day is perfect. In fact, no day may be perfect, because when you consider everything else being equal, you will always find some alternative to say, well, maybe it should be on this day. What we are saying is, Mr. Speaker, acknowledging the day of October 19 is a start. The Government has not named any heroes as yet, because this is something that is going to be done by the people, and it will be done by the people.

But you see the "Other Members", Mr. Speaker, on the "Other Side", through you, is taking the tone as if they want to put the cart before the horse because you can't name a hero before you have the day. That's one. **(Inaudible comment by Members)** No, no, no, no because there is a structure... There is a structure to be able to roll out that in a progressive manner, and I am not going to be distracted because I think he who had the most opportunities and did absolutely nothing, yes, and did absolutely should not be the first to get up, should encourage that it is a start, but let us work towards something better.

So when we talk, Mr. Speaker, about National Heroes Day, the significance of the day is important as well. No one else sitting in this Chamber can name any other significant day because we heard two Members spoke on the "Other Side" thus far, they have not presented an alternative day. What they have said is, "Don't put it on that day because of pain, hurt, etcetera, trauma, which they did absolutely nothing to heal. So what we are saying is, Mr. Speaker, present the alternative day, and let us hear what it is

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and the Government certainly is a Government that listens, but there is no alternative day. And what would happen, you would find just like the usual previous style, you leave it, nothing gets done, nobody names any heroes and we go on about our merry lives. We can't continue to run the country like that and so this is not to take away from any pain or hurt.

Mr. Speaker, I could speak about it as well because the revolution, as much as it was good for my father, he was severely beaten by some of the same guys who assisted in the execution of Maurice. He single-handedly went and freed Maurice in his house and was beaten severely for it, almost died and was saved after by the Americans. So I am saying, Mr. Speaker, let's not go down the road of putting this kind of barrier against the day. It is a trauma-filled day for many people. However let us accept the fact that what we need to do is to bring people together, and if the day in 1983 was a day that was divided, in 2024 and beyond, we should try to use it as a day to unite. That can help heal and fix. **(Applause)** That could help heal and fix. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for St. George North East. Honourable MP for St. Andrew North East. The floor is now yours.

Hon. Kate Lewis-Peters: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this Bill and, of course, to state why I cannot support the day October 19 as being renamed "National Heroes Day".

Mr. Speaker, I am hearing contributions, and I am wondering if there is a deliberate attempt to communicate the intentions of the Bill here, a deliberate attempt to give a misleading intention because we are saying that giving recognition to October 19 is a non-issue. We have no issue with that. However to call that day "National Heroes Day" is where the problem lies. **(Applause)**

When we think about the day October 19, people remember it as a day of national tragedy. When we speak about heroism, we speak about an event or we speak about

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people that has to be celebrated. Can we celebrate people on a day when you had a total massacre? These are the questions we have to ask ourselves.

I have heard the day should be used to unite people, but this day creates more division among our people than any other day. **(Applause)** For some, Maurice Bishop was a hero based on his achievements, but to others, he was a dictator because he took away freedom from people and as a result of that, how can we link the two things together, heroism together with a day of national tragedy? Of course, we have no problem. The day should be recognised to announce it as a national holiday, it is still to be questioned, but to call it Heroes Day, we know for sure, is a total no, no. And if only this one time the Government can listen to its people, they will not make that mistake. **(Applause)**

We have to understand that this day means different things to different people. I've heard we have not suggested a day. Well, in our minds, no one would dispute the fact that the achievements of Dr. Kirani James could be recognised as one of our heroes; what about that day he won his first Olympic gold medal? That's a day of jubilee, a day of celebration it can be considered. But October 19 to celebrate our people? I cannot support this, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Andrew North East. I now invite the Leader of His Majesty's Opposition to make his contribution.

Hon. Dr. Keith Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, it's maybe the intention of this Bill presented here. It may be necessary. So, the fact is, this has, in fact, brought up a lot of issues, and, therefore, I want to stand on the presentation of the Member for St. Andrew South East and clearly the Member of the Town... Some people can't even speak for themselves but want to speak for others. When they speak, Mr. Speaker, I wish they would speak **(laughter)** well for themselves instead of trying to speak for people who have the experience of speaking for themselves historically, so. So, I stand, Mr. Speaker, on the very worthwhile contribution of the Member for St. Andrew South East and the Member for the Town of St. George.

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Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me just comment on the fact that the initiative of looking at the Carnival Holiday, may also be a good one to look at, but as I was trying to get the attention of the Leader of Government's Business because in his presentation he talked about Tuesday, that's what I think I heard. If I heard wrong, then so be it. But the Member for St. David when he was speaking spoke about Monday because I know Monday is always considered literally a holiday; Tuesday is usually, we almost call a half day, a half-holiday, so to speak. So I think there needs to be some clarity there. Yes. I think it is important to do so. But, I see no problem trying to address this because it is right that they pointed out that, historically, we have always looked for a proclamation from the Governor General. So clarifying this may not necessarily be a bad thing. So I have no major issue with this.

But, Mr. Speaker, the harsh reality is, as Members already pointed out, Heroes Day is a necessary initiative, but the problem is as many as the others have pointed out the necessity for bringing people together and having serious consultation with the population in a non-partisan way is crucial for an issue of that nature. It is not for one side of the House of Parliament to decide on a particular issue of this nature. It's the country. It's a national holiday. So, there needs to be some serious consultation with the population as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, you know, some people would have read about October 19; a few of us have lived it and I think that's a fundamental difference. Reading something... In fact, some of them their fathers would know about it, but some of them have read about it. So to imply that no serious thought was given about this over the years is fundamentally false.

I remember the first period of sitting in the Cabinet of the country in 1984, there were lengthy discussions and differences of opinion expressed of how we treat October 19 and the country as a whole. I can speak to this. I am not reading about it. I can speak to it because I was right there. October 19, while there weren't announcements of the solemnity of the day, it was a solemn day throughout the country. **(Applause)** If you drove around Grenada on October 19 for the first several years you would have noticed

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this, in many churches, not just one religion, but different religious organisations, there were services in all parts of the country because this was still fresh and people were still mourning the loss of good friends, good friends.

I will always remember Unison Whiteman. He was a very good friend of mine. We taught at Presentation Brother's College together, and I know he was a good man with good intentions, and so on. So every time that day comes, it's a solemn one for me, besides the loss of friends and family members, but he represented something because I know he had a good, good heart as a person.

So to say that nothing was done, you know, it's sad. I wish the Member for St. David was in the House because I really think, especially in his position as our Prime Minister, I think the Member for St. Andrew South East was expressing a concern and he seemed to have taken this in a negative way. She wasn't talking, Mr. Speaker, and criticising the Government. She was talking about how she felt, and he's almost saying, she had no reason to express how she felt. How could you tell someone that? How could you express to someone that they are playing games? The Member is expressing herself about that event and that was the response. I think it's sad. It is sad. And even words like, "She's playing to be sanctimonious and playing like she's an advocate... How the tragedy of that time... What had she done?" You would not have even known if she had done anything if you didn't ask, Mr. Speaker.

You know the problem I have fundamentally about the Government, this Government has never consulted anybody, period. There are Members of the Opposition who have been in Government for several years and have done a number of major initiatives, not just one, but many members. You would have thought an issue of that nature, at least a consultation or a meeting of the minds. There are other issues, but I can't tell people whom to consult or who to talk to because when I called to express my congratulations, it was told at a national event, "I want you to know he called me, and I didn't call him". So that alone started off to me as—I will not be making a call to that number at all, and I never got one since two and a half years after almost 40 years in the Parliament of the country, but everyone has a choice.

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That's one's choice and you can't force anyone to have a relationship or to consult. Maybe they are not used to this. Maybe it's in their DNA. All of us have our own DNA. It's very unique. So I can't force anybody to be like me and I cannot force myself to be like somebody else because it won't come out well because I can't be anybody but me. But at least there are some fundamental principles of human relations where we consult and talk to each other. Mr. Speaker, I don't see how I could support October 19 as Heroes Day. To me, you are putting the cart before the horse. That is my view. I know for some people, we're not supposed to have views, but that's my view. That might not be your view, but I can only have mine, and it is good to have other views, and that's okay.

So, Mr. Speaker, criticising and making this thing almost like a political thing... I didn't think this was a political initiative at all, that's why I said I have no difficulty with initiatives. But when I heard the criticism of the NNP for not recognising that day, it is totally not true. It doesn't mean that the only time you recognise a day means you have a holiday. Is that the only way you can recognise and show some empathy for a particular event? I pointed out already how many church services and activities occurred on that solemn day.

The issue of a holiday came up, but there was great division, it was not unanimous around the country. We tested it with several groups and persons in the society, and there were mixed results. I don't know, maybe the Government has, in fact, done that and if it did it and found out it was necessary and supportive, the people supported, then, okay, I don't have a problem. I am not going to criticise because I don't know whether the Government did, but to imply that it was not considered, it's so clearly false and not necessarily the kind of approach...

Mr. Speaker, I heard it said October 19 represents a heroic day because some people made... As if some people made a decision to be executed on that particular day... As if they made a decision knowing that they were going to be executed, and it's like many of the saints of the past, they tell us, faced execution and knew what they were going to face and went up voluntarily and so on. I don't think anyone on October 19 wanted to be killed or went there to be killed. I heard comments from people who were

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in the room when the armoured cars started knocking on buildings and doors. They were there with their leaders, and everybody was traumatised, including the leader; nobody wanted to die. So to say people were heroic on that day, and this is coming from someone just being born at the time, is clearly not someone who lived through an experience, someone who read in a book or got a story told to them. But, please, talk to others who were around who may have a different view and would understand what took place.

Mr. Speaker, it is sad. It is sad that we have to be literally countering expressions that took place here today on that Bill. We should not have to do this because that means the things should not have been said, so we should not have to counter it. Take for example, about the USAID and why we didn't ask about the bodies and so on. Mr. Speaker, let me say this, and this will be the first time I am saying it here because it was raised. As Prime Minister of the country, it was well known that I had a very good relationship with the President of the United States, George Bush. That's history. I am probably one of the few prime ministers in the region that went to the White House at least five times during his tenure, discussing major issues and that issue came up in one of those sessions, a session in which the Former Prime Minister of Australia was also there, three of us in the White House, John Howard.

I raised that issue to the President and I know instructions were given. I met with several Officials of the Government, the State Department and the Army, men who were in Grenada at the time and all were saying the same thing. I reported to the Cabinet the discussions that took place and they disavowed knowledge of where the bodies were. They did. Whether you are saying they told the truth or not, that is what happened, but we, in other words, took it to the highest. So from someone reading a book, I am hearing someone telling a tale on the side and coming into Parliament and talking about it loosely, is unfortunate.

So I had to say it here today, I have never said that in the Parliament, but because we were being accused... So we went at length, Mr. Speaker, to deal with this because it is a painful period. This is not something anyone wants to enjoy talking about here this morning. We can't enjoy this. This fact is, October 19, brings in a lot of painful memories

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to people who were around at that time (**sound of Time Bell**) and others... Mr. Speaker, yes... And others who may have been told the right stories.

So I just want to, in closing, Mr. Speaker, I hope the next time we speak about this important event on October 19, it does not have to be a holiday to be accepted, you don't have to name a holiday to treat a particular day. In fact, you could call it a day of reflection and ask for people to have specific events on that particular day, not necessarily having a holiday. If it has to be, then so be it. And I don't believe, as was rightly said by almost every Member of "This Side" who spoke, we have no difficulty with it, but it doesn't have to be for us to be able to reflect this, the event, to our children and grandchildren of this country, Mr. Speaker. So I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, on that note, because of the issues raised by Members on "This Side", I cannot, on my own feelings on this, I cannot in conscience support October 19 as a holiday and call it, "National Heroes Day".

Finally, Mr. Speaker, just one second. I heard the Member for St. David said...

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Member.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: ... Yes, just one second...

Mr. Speaker: I gave you time after the bell went.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Yes, just one second...

Mr. Speaker: Go ahead.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: ... Not long. Mr. Speaker, I heard it said that there are several heroes and families who are heroes and so on. I believe, therefore, it's important if the Government can engage the nation about what is meant by this hero and what criteria are set out, I think the Member for the Town of St. George mentioned this,

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set out for Heroes Day, it is not a controversial thing, so we are all on the same wavelength as far as that important issue is concerned. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Thank you Leader of His Majesty's Opposition. Is your light still on, Honourable? All right. I now invite the MP for St. Mark to take the floor.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise just to add my concerns to those expressed by the Members on "This Side". I want to make it abundantly clear that I respect and, I believe that some honour is due or recognition or commemoration or, however, it is said for that day. It is due to Grenada to Grenadians, however, we put it. It is due on that day to recognise the events that took place and come up with something that would appropriately reflect our feelings, our decisions, whatever, on the matter.

I concur with my colleagues that the designation of Heroes Day is problematic for me, as well as for other people. We are not just here to represent our personal feelings, but we, since receiving the notice, did take some time to do some research, to ask, and to consult in a small way. And I believe that the Government is well-placed to do a more comprehensive and detailed consultation. And I think this is one of the things that we find, and I find often lacking the desire or the interest to consult the people whose lives have been affected or will be affected by any decision that the Government takes, and I want to beg that they review the decision.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, am concerned about how we are going to deal with the definition of a "hero", the criteria for heroes and how we're going to deal with the varying backgrounds of people who are heroes. Some, they did things, although very commendable, were sad, and some would have done things commendably and joyfully. So, how do you mix these two? I think this is one of the things that our Government of the day and our Prime Minister as the leader need to look at so that it becomes more meaningful and applicable to this situation. And I do not think that will take away if there was a different decision on the name of the day, I do not think it will take away the

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sentiment of that day. But if it is ignored, if the consultation of people is ignored, I think that would be a sadder day for us.

And I've been wondering since I saw it how, and it was said by the Member for St. Andrew South East, people like Kirani James, people like Junior Murray, persons from St. Mark, for example, or St. George, great footballers, great cricketers, a young gentleman called Nyron Belfon from St. Mark who did extremely well in cricket and so on, and in every parish around the country, I just mentioned them... And I wonder how are we honouring them on Heroes Day, people like them, it doesn't have to be them, but how are you going to juggle that to honour these people who have excelled and whose pursuits and achievements are joyful in nature with other recognition of persons whose demise came in an untimely and very painful way.

So this is not to criticise what the Government is saying, as a matter of fact, I want to compliment the "Government Side" for looking at a holiday, looking at some way to do that. But I also want to say that to imply that nothing has been done is very sad. Now, if one were to look up my name in Wikipedia (**laughter**) they would not see what I did, but I did too. (**Applause**)

When we were planning for the work on Fort George, the restoration which one of the Members got unstuck from the pipeline, when we were planning and discussing one of the important things to us was to archive, to save and to salvage any documents there and under my tenure that was done where we have an archive to archive all of the documents that were there and to get persons to restore what could have been saved. I even wrote to the US Embassy to ask for support in getting documents, and documentation of what has happened in our country is very important.

So yes, this Government has made a move, and it is commendable. But, there's nothing wrong with "Our Side" saying that, you know, maybe we should revisit the name or do a consultation. The manner in which it was done... The process... And I want to beg the "Other Side" to please take a little time off to review the documents shared by the Member for the Town and whatever other comments that may be of value to give it that kind of consideration so when we do come up with it, we wouldn't have a paucity of

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attendance for the 19th, but people will be able to identify with it and to attend in a more meaningful way than I have seen happening in the past two years. I look forward to it. I look forward to an event that all of us as a Nation can go to and be united and I will certainly, God's willing, be there when that does happen. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, Honourable MP for St. Mark. I see the light of the MP for St. Patrick East. I now invite the Honourable Dennis Cornwall to take the floor.

Hon. Dennis Cornwall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to every Member of Parliament. I stand to lend my support to the Bank Holidays (Amendment) Bill, 2024. And, although the discussions here this morning have been around October 19, 1983, I can't basically say that I have the same experience that most of you have expressed here in the House because, in 1983, I was a student of Economics in the Republic of Cuba and though my experience as a student then is vastly different to most of you who were living on Grenada. I must say that I believe that most of us, or even almost every Grenadian, had some sort of experience or impact from the 1983 events here in Grenada.

Notwithstanding that, I believe one must also remember a Prime Minister and Members of his Cabinet were shot down or executed on that particular day, and today we still have that wound wide open and so on. We're talking about we don't know where the bodies are, we're talking about whether or not we should basically have the day recognised as a holiday in Grenada and how it should be. I don't believe, and I don't stand behind the idea that every holiday that we basically announce in Grenada, should be a jam-and-whine kind of thing. And, I think the moment is such that, it requires that that day be a very solemn day and I fully support all the activities that we have actually announced that this day should carry with it; No amplified music and people should look forward to basically going to the church to basically express their solemn situation. And

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so, I fully support and stand behind the idea that October 19 be a holiday as announced and be recognised as is. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, Honourable MP for St. Patrick East, and I now invite the MP for St. George South to take the floor.

Hon. Andy Williams: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to everyone. Mr. Speaker, I just sat there taking in everything about the holiday or the proposed holiday, October 19 and, Mr. Speaker, it's an interesting one in terms of listening to "Both Sides", Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, National Heroes Day, I think we tend to go with the flow. We tend to debate back and forth. Mr. Speaker, but, you know, what about doing research on National Heroes Day throughout the world? And, Mr. Speaker, while sitting there, I did some research, and I want to share it with the House on National Heroes Day.

Mr. Speaker, in the UK, let me just read this. The United Kingdom first celebrated National Heroes Day in 2011 on the 21st of October, the same day as the victory at Battle of Trafalgar. That's the UK. Mr. Speaker, let's go to Zambia. Heroes' Day in Zambia is a public holiday celebrated on the first Monday of July annually. Heroes Day is a memorial day for those who perished during the independence struggles. Mr. Speaker, let's go to Zimbabwe. Heroes' Day in Zimbabwe is a public holiday observed on the second Monday of August each year. This is a day to remember those who died during the liberation war or those who were declared National Heroes.

Mr. Speaker, so when we go through the back and forth, Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to see the context in which this is done and, Mr. Speaker, know the meaning and not just oppose for opposing sake. **(Applause)** Right? Mr. Speaker, it is important to go deep and do research especially when you're coming in an Honourable House like this to debate such things, number one.

Mr. Speaker, number two. Mr. Speaker, these people on the "Other Side", had a chance, how many years, Mr. Speaker, to do something like this and to make one single

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step. What did they do? Nothing. Mr. Speaker, what we are doing here today they had the chance, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, was in office for maybe 20-something years. Mr. Speaker, he had the chance to do what we are attempting to do today after just over two years in office. **(Applause)**

And, Mr. Speaker, it is a shame, Mr. Speaker, to see when you are taking the bold step to take action and to do something, Mr. Speaker, all you are seeing on the “Other Side” is the attempt to oppose. And, Mr. Speaker, they talk about working together, Mr. Speaker, these people refused to work with us. Mr. Speaker, they talked about listening. Mr. Speaker, we could go back, Mr. Speaker in their reign in Government, Mr. Speaker, it didn't have anything as listening and consultation.

So, Mr. Speaker, when they come with this notion that all of a sudden they're in opposition and now they are holy, and they know the best and they did their best, Mr. Speaker, what they are saying today is not what they were doing when they were in office. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, I'm just saying that let us be wise, Mr. Speaker, and also, Mr. Speaker, not because we are on the “Government Side” and you are on the Opposition Side, Mr. Speaker, it means everything that we do has to be a back and forth. We would welcome consultation with the Opposition if they are willing to consult with us. And, Mr. Speaker, when they get up in the House and make it seem like we are the arrogant one, Mr. Speaker, let the record show because sometimes, when time passes, we tend to forget how things were.

Mr. Speaker, at this moment in history, it is a time when everyone can get up and speak without any repercussions. Mr. Speaker, in their time... Mr. Speaker, let me just say something. I was scared to even enter into politics because I say, Andy, if you enter into politics, the victimisation that will come would be so much; you have to run if you lose. It's a good thing I win. **(Applause)** Right?

So, Mr. Speaker... **(Laughter)** Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, when you say something over and over, it seems as if it is the truth. And, Mr. Speaker, they themselves might believe what they are saying. But, Mr. Speaker, if they are honest with themselves, if

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they are honest with themselves, Mr. Speaker, they will know all you have to do is just look back to see when they were in office the kind of tension they had in the country. Today, Mr. Speaker, everyone can say something without repercussions and without any, you know, backlash whatsoever.

So, I'm saying, when you look at the research on National Heroes Day it's not just a holiday to gallivant and to celebrate and to party. All over the world, National Heroes Day means something and it is always a day when we celebrate the lives of people who stood for this country, Mr. Speaker. And with this, I want to rest my case. Thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, MP for St. George South. All right. We've had a long debate on it, and no other MP seems willing to... Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, firstly, I wish to express my appreciation to Members on the "Both Sides" of this Honourable House for their debate on this Bill. And honestly, Mr. Speaker, I did not envisage that this particular Bill would attract so much debate because of its simple nature. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, is seeking to get the House's permission to enact two dates as public holidays, and so, that is all it's asking. So, in the case of October 19, Mr. Speaker, both years, 2023 and 2024, have been celebrated on October 19 as National Heroes Day, which has been happening for the past two years. We are asking this Honourable Parliament to make this law. That's what we are trying to do.

So the question, Mr. Speaker, as to who our national heroes are is not to be discussed here and now. As correctly stated, per the document circulated this morning, it says, "National Heroes..." ... It asks the question, in about the fourth paragraph, "Aren't National Heroes selected by the people"? and of course... But in order to get to this stage, Mr. Speaker, one must first recognise a day on which these recognitions can happen. And so the Government that was elected on the 23rd day of June 2022 is asking for this particular date to be recognised. So, the question about who our national heroes

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are is not the question for this morning's debate. The question as to why is not a matter for today's debate and the question as to how these people, potential heroes, are to be recognised is not a matter for today's debate.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this is where we start. We start by acknowledging, first and foremost, the fact that a particular time in history has to be set aside for such an activity. The very first line written by Arley Gill says, "A nation should designate time to celebrate its history and to commemorate its heroes", and that is what we're seeking to do. He said, "I believe that honouring our heroes represents the very soul of our nation", and that is why, Mr. Speaker, it is even more pivotal and important that we designate a particular day.

The Government has debated this in the halls of its Cabinet. And, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that had June 23, 2022, gone the other way, there would have been no difference and no debate on the date because Grenada was crying out for a long time, for decades, Mr. Speaker, just for the freedom of expression, just for the freedom to speak and to speak one's conscience. And that is even evident today as we speak, Mr. Speaker. The doors within a certain organisation as we speak, members of that organisation are barred from having representation in a convention coming up in a couple of weeks. No freedom. No democracy. Democracy is out the window, Mr. Speaker, and it's a fact, it's a fact. So, Mr. Speaker, we use this opportunity to pretend, pretend that's what we're doing here, playing the game-less pretend, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, our intention is not to create division and to stir up any ill feelings. Our intentions are pure. Our intention is to recognise our heroes (**applause**) and identify a date and time at which that can be done. And this will evolve over time, Mr. Speaker. The next generation of Grenadians would be happy that we've made this decision because, over time, the pain that was so well articulated by the Member for St. Andrew South East, that pain will ease over time. The complexity of Grenadian society will evolve over time, and over time, those who read our history will ask the question, what really all this fuss was about? At some point in time, those questions would be asked.

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So, Mr. Speaker, they talk consult; no consultation, no national discussion. You see, Mr. Speaker, they're on the other side of the aisle; the shoe is on the other foot, so they're asking about consultation. But I want to say to this Honourable House, when it comes to the selection of our national heroes, there will be consultation. The Grenadian population will get the opportunity to decide who their heroes are. **(Applause)** That is what is important. It is not about how well we can pretend.

You see, Mr. Speaker, some behave... They asked the question about our knowledge of past events. We heard them saying, "What we've experienced, Mr. Speaker, is what they read about". You see? What they've experienced, Mr. Speaker, is what we're read about. As if to say we have no authority to discuss the subject, so, Mr. Speaker, there is a rude awakening coming, you know, because you see this Government has introduced in our schools our national history. **(Applause)** So the youngest child who reads our history will now be afforded the opportunity to discuss and debate robustly our history **(applause)** and they will be able to speak with authority on these subject matters. So it will not be something just for a select few who have the authority on these subjects.

But, Mr. Speaker, may I remind this Honourable House that we sit here because of a majority vote. We received the popular votes, Mr. Speaker, in the last elections. So we were sent here by the people. We are here representing the interests of the Grenadian people, so we do have the authority, Mr. Speaker, to speak on these important national issues.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to touch on the issue of amplified music, and I want to remind this Honourable House that in Grenadian, in order to play amplified music, you must get permission from the police. In other words, on a normal day, the playing of amplified music is forbidden. So the Member for St. Andrew South East said, "It's a feeling as if we are in curfew". "It's a period of curfew, Mr. Speaker" Well, Mr. Speaker, if that is the case, then it seems to me that the Honourable Member might well be living in a perpetual curfew. And one must be... You see, it's all about emotions. It's all about

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creating hype around the subject matters so as to rarely divert attention from the truth, but we must reckon with our history. This is our history.

And so, Mr. Speaker, once again, I want to thank the Honourable Members on “Both Sides” of this House, Mr. Speaker, for their contributions to this Bill. I now commit it to the Parliament. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Leader of Government's Business.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Clerk: A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Bank Holidays (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House resolves itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider this Bill, Clause by Clause.

Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

House resumes.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendments. Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

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Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill be read a third time.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Clerk: A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Bank Holidays (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker to introduce for its first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Tax Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Clerk: A Bill which seeks to amend the Tax Administration Act No. 14 of 2016 ("the principal Act") to enhance the integrated legislative framework to combat money laundering and terrorism financing, shortly entitled, Tax Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order be set aside to enable the Bill to go through all its stages at this Sitting.

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Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill seeks to amend the Tax Administration Act No. 14 of 2016 ("the principal Act") to enhance the integrated legislative framework to combat money laundering and terrorism financing. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, contains two Clauses. Clause one treats with the short title and Clause two, Mr. Speaker, amends Section 27 to enhance the powers of investigation of the Office of the Comptroller of Customs.

Mr. Speaker, Section 27 of the principal Act is amended by inserting subsection (8) to include the following new subsections, (8A) and (8B). Subsection (8A), Mr. Speaker, treats with the authorised officer who, Mr. Speaker, having reasonable grounds for suspecting that information provided to the Comptroller of Customs may either be incomplete or inaccurate and that where, Mr. Speaker, a person or entity, Mr. Speaker, who are in possession of such information may now have the authority to review, to enter the premise and to get all of the information pertaining to those records. And so, they will now be able to review all books records and documents which are relevant to any investigations that the Comptroller would so undertake.

The authorised officer, Mr. Speaker, may then serve written notice on such persons requiring them to provide their information. So, Mr. Speaker, the Comptroller,

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serves a written notice requesting the information and the information, when received, Mr. Speaker, may then be copied and kept for his purpose, Mr. Speaker. and, Mr. Speaker, this is very important, Mr. Speaker, because we are aware that many complaints have been levelled against different people regarding the correctness, the accuracy and the completeness of the information being given to the Comptroller of Customs. And so, Mr. Speaker, this now empowers the Comptroller to carry out such investigations and receive all pertinent information surrounding any investigation.

Subsection (8B), Mr. Speaker, requires the person upon whom is served in relation to the investigation to produce the information and to make any such information available and to answer questions relating to the particular or potential infringement. And so, Mr. Speaker, this is important because it is a very important element within the set of legislations that treats with terrorism financing and money laundering. And, Mr. Speaker, in order for Grenada to get proper ratings from the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force and other international bodies. It is important that these amendments to the legislation be made so that Grenada stands in compliance with the legislation.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this particular amendment to this Act really covers part of the areas in which Grenada was seen to be non-compliant. And so, Mr. Speaker, I submit this to the House for its consideration. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Leader of Government's Business. Leader of His Majesty's Opposition.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Yes. Okay. Because nobody else... I was just walking in, so I want to make sure it is okay.

Mr. Speaker: He just presented the Bill.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Yes. Okay.

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Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Just one point, Mr. Speaker. In the preamble to the Act, the discussion before the essence of the Act, you have “Comptroller of Customs”. It should be “Comptroller of Inland Revenue”. No, the Tax. If it’s a tax, it’s Inland Revenue that collects the tax activities for the Government services. So I... Well... I noted that.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: That’s the Tax matter, right? Tax Administration (Amendment) Bill? Yes, that will be Inland Revenue. I think, yes. I believe it is Inland Revenue.

(Inaudible comment by Honourable Philip Telesford)

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: You want to check it by there? Just check it. Okay. I just noted it. So in case it...

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Thank you. Any other contributions?

(The Leader of Government’s Business, the Clerk and the Legal Drafters discussed privately)

Mr. Speaker: Do we have the adjustments? Okay. Leader of Government’s Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, thank you. Mr. Speaker, actually, the Leader of the Opposition is correct in that the Bill itself makes reference to the Inland Revenue, but the briefing notes had it incorrectly as “Customs”.

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Mr. Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Philip Telesford: I think that's where the... Yes... Because having checked the Act, we recognised that that is the case. So there is no need for any amendment or change because the Bill in itself is accurate, it's just the notes themselves that have a little error on it. Yes.

Mr. Speaker: I see no other Member wishes to contribute. I call on the Leader of Government's Business. I call on the Leader of Government's Business to close.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I receive and accept the recommendation by the Leader of His Majesty's Opposition, and we thank you for your observation, and I now commit this Bill to the House. Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Clerk: A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Tax Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House resolves itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider this Bill Clause by Clause. Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

House resumes.

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Mr. Speaker: I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendments. Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Clerk: A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Tax Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to introduce for its first reading a Bill for an Act, shortly entitled Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Clerk: A Bill which seeks to amend the Terrorism Act No. 16 of 2012 ("the principal Act") to enhance the integrated legislative framework to combat money laundering and terrorism financing shortly entitled, Tourism (Amendment Bill), 2024.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

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Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order be suspended to allow this Bill to be taken through all its stages at this Sitting. Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, like the previous Bill, this one is also geared to enhance the integrated legislative framework to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. This particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, seeks to amend the Terrorism Act No. 16 of 2012 and contains 12 Clauses.

Clause 1, Mr. Speaker, treats with the short title of the Bill. Clause 2 provides for the amendment of section, section 2 to insert three new definitions, including "designated entity", "funds or other assets", and "regulated entity". It also seeks to revise two definitions. Definitions for a "listed entity" and the definition for "terrorism".

Mr. Speaker, this particular Clause seeks to amend section 2 to insert these definitions to contemplate acts against international organisations and involves the use of firearms, explosives, chemicals, biological or nuclear weapons or any other weapon or means of mass destruction. This, Mr. Speaker, is seeking to broaden the net to capture all potential involvement in these acts of violence.

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Terrorism, Mr. Speaker, is something that we have become aware of, most vividly, in the last couple of decades. And this, Mr. Speaker, is usually designed to influence governments or to intimidate the public or sections of the public, or any other territory or country, or any international organisation.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this world as we know it has changed. We live in a global village where the transfer of assets, including financial assets and resources, to aid in these undesirable activities is more easily facilitated because of the advent of social media, money transfer services, electronic banking and other means that facilitate the payment for these kinds of services.

And so, Mr. Speaker, as a global village, Grenada is not exempted. Small as we are, peaceful as we are, we are called upon to prepare and to arm ourselves, figuratively so, against these potential acts of violence. And so, terrorism, Mr. Speaker, because we are part of a global village, we must take it seriously. And Grenada, as I mentioned earlier, has been monitored by the international community and more closely by the FATF, which rates our performance as it relates to our compliance with these struggles against money laundering and terrorist financing.

Terrorists, Mr. Speaker, sometimes utilise innocent people, not even being aware of the acts that they are being lured into committing; sometimes as transporters of assets, sometimes as conveyors of information. And so, Mr. Speaker, as a small island state, we understand our vulnerability, and so we must comply with the provisions that enable us to strengthen our borders and to protect against these intruders who will try to penetrate us, penetrate our borders by way of social media and luring our young people and people in general into assisting in committing acts of terrorism.

And so, Mr. Speaker, Clause 3 provides for the repeal and replacement of section 3(A) to improve the provisions for identifying terrorist organisations. Broadening the net, Mr. Speaker. Because it is very important, Mr. Speaker, that the legislation be strengthened, that we become more knowledgeable of what is outside there and prepare ourselves for the eventualities.

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Clause 4, Mr. Speaker, provides for the amendment of section 5 to expand the prohibition against biological toxins and weapons to include a prohibition against the use of biological toxins and weapons. Currently, Mr. Speaker, the conduct prohibited is against developing, producing, stockpiling, acquiring or retaining biological toxins and weapons. It never included the actual use of these toxins and weapons. And so, the definition, Mr. Speaker, is strengthened, or the Clause, Mr. Speaker, is strengthened to include the actual use of these biological toxins and weapons.

Clause 5, Mr. Speaker, provides an amendment to section 6 to expand the prohibition against causing a nuclear weapon explosion. Clause 6 (1)(A) currently creates an offence for knowingly causing a nuclear weapon explosion. Clause 5 seeks to substitute the following new offences: causing a weapon explosion either knowingly or having reasonable cause to suspect that the nuclear weapon explosion could occur.

So, Mr. Speaker, this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is providing a wider catchment for anyone having involvement in these types of activities, thereby strengthening our ability to respond, to catch, to detect any of these activities happening. And, Mr. Speaker, later on you'd see in Clause 6 how we interact with the international community in this fight against terrorism and money laundering.

The world, Mr. Speaker, has changed immensely. It could be a very nice place to live and to coexist, but it can also be a very dangerous place because there are always criminal elements who are looking for loopholes in legislation, who are looking to penetrate the unsuspecting, who are monitoring the vulnerable and seeing how they can use them to get, for their own advantage of committing these types of crimes.

So Clause 6, Mr. Speaker, Clause 6 provides for the repeal of sections 14 (A), 14 (A)(B), and 14 (B) and the replacement with new sections, sections 14 (A) to 14 (G). These provisions, Mr. Speaker, relate to the procedure for listing an entity, identifying and listing those entities, as an entity believed to be involved in terrorist activity and the special monitoring powers of the State of Grenada, in collaboration with monitoring requirements imposed on regulated entities, businesses likely to be utilised also by these listed entities.

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So, Mr. Speaker, there are some new features that were added that help us to identify these listed entities. Mr. Speaker, with the previous definition, it is not because of the change in the way these terrorist organisations finance these activities. Because of how they have changed, it is even more critical now that the definition be expanded and that the listed entities be now widened. So here are some of the new features for these listed entities.

One is expanding the monitoring requirement that applies to these listed and listed entities. Creating an offence for regulated entities who fail to apply the requirements and establishing a process for the Attorney General to remove an entity from listing where there is no longer reason to believe that the entity is involved in terrorism. So this feature, Mr. Speaker, now gives the Attorney General the authority to remove an entity that is no longer involved. So, you can add or remove from the list.

New feature number two, Mr. Speaker, by virtue of this section 14 (E), now empowers the Attorney General to notify the United Nations Security Council of the names of entities that Grenada has listed to facilitate global supervision of the entity. So, Mr. Speaker, this feature provides for that networking and sharing of information across this space so that our sister countries, Mr. Speaker, would always be abreast with who these new entities are. Because, Mr. Speaker, they change their names, the names evolve, they change their principals. And so, we always, Mr. Speaker, have to be one step ahead. And that's why feature one, as identified a little earlier, is also important, because as those names change and become no more relevant, we can now remove, but now include those new names that these terrorist people would change to. The new entities.

Feature three, Mr. Speaker, by virtue of new section 14 (F), empowers the Attorney General to receive notification from another state that that other state has listed a particular entity on its own list to facilitate Grenada's contribution to the global supervision of these entities. So, Mr. Speaker, across the board, there is the sharing of information on both sides and that, too, is important so as to create their connectivity in this fight against money laundering and terrorist financing.

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New feature four, Mr. Speaker, by virtue of the new section 14 (G), creates an offence for foreign terrorist fighters. So, a foreign terrorist fighter who knowingly and without lawful excuse, travels for the purpose of planning, committing, supporting, or facilitating the commission of and the act of terrorism will now be liable, Mr. Speaker, to a fine of sum EC\$500,000 or 20 years in prison. So, Mr. Speaker, this feature now imposes a fine and imprisonment when one of these terrorist fighters is captured. A fine in the sum of EC\$500,000 or 20 years in prison.

Clause 7, Mr. Speaker, provides for the amendment of section 22 (A) by inserting a new subsection 3 (A) to expressly capture as prohibited conduct the financing of travels for training or preparation and financing whether from legitimate or illegitimate sources. So, any type of financing, illegitimate or legitimate, as long as it is used for that particular purpose, creates an offence.

Clause 8, Mr. Speaker. Clause 8 provides for the amendment of section 27 to increase the penalties for contravention of sections 19 to 22 on summary conviction, under paragraph A from EC\$40,000 to a fine of EC\$1m; a conviction on indictment under paragraph B from EC\$1,000,000 to now EC\$10m. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, a minimum penalty of EC\$1m is being introduced under paragraph B for a conviction of indictment.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, section 27 provides for a person who commits an offence under sections 19 to 22, is liable to pay a fine not exceeding EC\$400,000, but under this new section, Mr. Speaker, it is now moved to \$1m on conviction of indictment to a fine not less than EC\$1m and not more than EC\$10m or imprisonment of 30 years or both.

So, Mr. Speaker, this particular section dealing with the fines, recognises that the fines have significantly increased, both imprisonment and monetary fines. And so, Mr. Speaker, this underscores the serious nature of these activities and the fact that our compliance, changing of our legislation to reflect what is obtained regionally and internationally, brings us in alignment with what is obtained.

So, Mr. Speaker, Clause 9 provides for the amendment of section 27 (A) to mandate the Director of Public Prosecution to examine the appropriateness of freezing orders periodically and to apply for revocation of freezing orders where appropriate.

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Clause 10, Mr. Speaker, provides an amendment of the Fifth Schedule, to remove the contents of Part 1 (A) to be repositioned into the new Seventh and Eighth Schedule.

And, Clause 11, Mr. Speaker, provides for the insertion of the new Seventh Schedule and the new Eighth Schedule.

So, Mr. Speaker, in summary, this is what we are seeking to do. To broaden the net in respect of all activities that relate to terrorist financing and money laundering, and to come into alignment which what is obtained regionally and internationally. I now commend this Bill to the House for discussion. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Leader of Government's Business. The floor is now open for other contributions. There seems to be no other contribution. Leader of Government's Business. **(Laughter)**

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill is straightforward in one sense and the fact that we are just responding, mainly to what is obtained regionally and internationally, I could understand why there is really no, no reason for debate. And I think what we're trying to do here is to, on one hand, protect our country, well, as a matter of fact, in many respects, protecting our country. So I just want to thank Honourable Members for their support of this Bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Leader of Government's Business.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Clerk: A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

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Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House resolves itself into a committee of the whole House to consider this Bill, Clause by Clause.

Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

House resumes.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendments. Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Clerk: A bill for an Act shortly entitled, Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, 2024

Mr. Speaker: All right, before I take the Leader of Government's Business, we have one more Bill to be brought to the Parliament. It is, by my watch, 12:50 p.m. I

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Bills: Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, 2024

Bills: Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2024

suggest that we go to the last Bill instead of breaking for lunch. Yes? All right. Leader of Government's Business. Leader of Government's Business. Yes.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to introduce for its first reading a Bill for an Act, shortly entitled Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Clerk: A Bill which seeks to amend the Proceeds of Crime Act No. 6 of 2012 to enhance the integrated legislative framework to combat money laundering and terrorism financing, shortly entitled, Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the House be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all its stages at this Sitting. Thanks.

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

*Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held on Tuesday 26th November, 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's*

Bills: Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2024

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like the two previous Bills, this one also is part of that integrated legislative framework to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. This Bill seeks to amend the Proceeds of Crime Act No. 6 of 2012 and contains four Clauses.

Clause 1 provides for the short title. Clause 2 provides for the amendment for the amendment of section 32 to establish a more dissuasive criminal penalty for failure to comply with the guidelines issued by the Anti Money Laundering Commission, from EC\$50,000 to EC\$100,000. Mr. Speaker, like the previous Bills, this is underscoring the seriousness of terrorism and the consequences that it has on national economies. And so, all of these Bills are really seeking to dissuade people from being engaged in these types of activities.

Clause 3, Mr. Speaker, provides for the insertion of a new section 32 (A), to establish dissuasive administrative penalties for contravention or specified provisions of the Guidelines with corresponding dissuasive penalties if the offence is treated as a summary conviction. This new section, section 32 (A), would then replace the current section 32 (7).

Mr. Speaker, Clause 4 provides for amendment of section 63 to empower the Commission to compel for information to discharge its functions. Again, Mr. Speaker, in the previous two Bills, the importance of being able to get information by using the force of law. That's what this is trying to do. So, it actually empowers the AML Commission to compel the perpetrator to provide the information so that they can facilitate their work.

So, Mr. Speaker, in a nutshell, this is what it is. It's a very short Bill, but it's very important in the whole fight against money laundering and terrorist financing. Thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Leader of Government's Business. And like the others, there seems to be no input, so I invite the Leader of the Government's Business to close.

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Bills: Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2024

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to thank the Members of the House for their support of this Bill. I now commend it to the House. Thanks.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Clerk: A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the House resolves itself into a committee of the whole House to consider this Bill, Clause by Clause. Thanks.

Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

House resumes.

Mr. Speaker: This Honourable House now resumes. I have to report that the Bill was considered by a committee of the whole House and passed without amendments. Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held on Tuesday 26th November, 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

**Bills: Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2024
Adjournment**

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Clerk: A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Deputy Clerk: Item 16 – Request for leave to move the adjournment of the House on matters of urgent public importance.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House be adjourned *sine die*.

Question put and agreed to.

The Sitting of the House of Representatives adjourned sine die at 1:01 p.m.

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