



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SECOND SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TUESDAY 28TH NOVEMBER, 2023

***Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held on Tuesday 28th November, 2023
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 National Security, Home Affairs, Information, Disaster Management Administration, Infrastructure, and Public Minister for Physical Development, Public Utilities & Civil Aviation and Transportation
Honourable Philip A. Telesford, MP (<i>St. George South-East</i>)	- Minister for Social & Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs
Honourable Lennox John Andrews, MP (<i>St. Andrew South West</i>)	- Minister for Economic Development, Planning, Tourism, ICT, Creative Economy, Agriculture, Fisheries & Cooperatives & Lands, Fisheries & Cooperatives
Honourable Tevin Andrews, MP (<i>Carriacou & Petite Martinique</i>)	- Minister for Carriacou, Petite Martinique Affairs and Local Government
Honourable Dennis Cornwall, MP (<i>St. Patrick East</i>)	- Minister for Finance
Honourable Ron Livingston Redhead, MP (<i>St. George North-East</i>)	- Minister of State wrf Youth, Sports and Culture within the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture
Honourable Delma Thomas, MP (<i>St. Andrew North-West</i>)	- Member
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
(St. Patrick West)

- Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade & Export
Development
(Excuse tendered)

Honourable Kerryne Z. James, MP
(St. John)

- Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment and
Renewable Energy
(Excuse tendered)

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***Prayers
Minutes***

The Sitting of the House of Representatives began at 9:36 a.m.

Mr. Speaker: Let's pray.

(House Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Please join me as we say the Lord's Prayer.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Pray be seated.

(Sound of gavel)

Mr. Speaker: Parliament now convenes.

(Clerk conversing privately with Mr. Speaker)

Clerk Assistant (Ag.): 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. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the House of Representatives, held at Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on the 24th of October 2023, at 9:00 a.m., be taken as read. Thank you.

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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 the confirmation of the Minutes of a proceeding of the Sitting of the House of Representatives held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on 24th of October 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Sorry.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I wish to, before we confirm the Minutes correct, propose a correction to the Minutes.

Mr. Speaker: Say that again.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: I wish to propose a correction to the Minutes before we move the confirmation.

Mr. Speaker: Please do.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, page 11. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew South East, I think, should be recorded as absent rather than present because your announcement indicated that you had a message from her that she was unwell and unable to attend.

Mr. Speaker: Yes. That's correct. Yes, I received a message about her absence.

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***Minutes
Announcements***

Yes, that's correct. So that correction has to be made. Any other corrections noticed?
All right. Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister. So now for the confirmation.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed as amended.

Clerk Assistant (Ag.): Item 5 – Messages from the Governor-General.
Item 6 – Announcements by Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, I have correspondence in my position that says that the Honourable Joseph Andall and Honourable Kerryne James are out of state on Government business and hence, wouldn't be attending this particular Parliament, and just also to say that the President of the Senate is also out of state attending the COP Conference in Dubai.

Permit me to share with you the Bills that have received the assent of the Governor-General since they were debated here in this House and in the Upper House. Bills that have received the Governor-General's assent are:

- Data Protection Bill, 2023;
- Disaster Management Bill, 2023;
- Tax Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2023;
- Public Finance Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023;
- National Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2023;
- Agreement for the establishment of a partnership between Member States of the Caribbean Community and the African Export-Import Bank Bill, 2023;
- Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2023;
- Bank Holidays (Amendment) Bill, 2023;
- Licences (Amendment) Bill, 2023
- Fiscal Resilience Bill, 2023; and
- Public Debt Management Bill, 2023;

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***Announcements
Presentation of Papers / Reports***

So, just to state that those Bills have passed through the Houses of Parliament and have received the assent of the Governor-General. Those are my announcements.

Clerk Assistant (Ag.): 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 have two reports that I wish to lay before this Honourable House.

- A Report of a Meeting of the House Committee; and
- A Report from the National Lottery Authority.

Mr. Speaker, in respect of the National Lottery Authority, I just want to share with this Honourable House some very quick highlights from the report. The National Lottery Authority, as a body, a corporation, Mr. Speaker, a statutory organisation, has been audited by WR Agostini, and this is in respect of 2021.

Section 9 of the Audit Act allows for an independent auditor to audit with permission from the Director of Audit. Total Assets recorded for the period 2020 were \$22.4 million, compared to \$36.4 million in 2021. Cash and Cash Equivalents, \$16.6 million compared to \$30.1 million in 2021. Income for 2020 was \$97.9 million, compared with \$139.8 million in 2021. The deficit for 2020 was \$882,000, compared with a surplus of \$12.9 million recorded in 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Leader of Government's Business. Those reports are now laid in the Houses.

Clerk Assistant (Ag.): Item 9 – Unopposed Private Business.

Item 10 – Questions.

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Mr. Speaker: I don't know where the person is. Honourable MP for St. Mark.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this juncture, there are some questions that I have placed through you, Mr. Speaker, and so, I am asking for the responses at this time.

Mr. Speaker: Could you just repeat? I am not hearing you clearly.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Okay. Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Yes. The questions. There are three questions in my name.

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: So, I would like those responses. That will be question one.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. I assume you didn't receive answers to those?

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: No, I have not received any.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Minister for Infrastructure.

(Clerk conversing privately with Mr. Speaker)

Mr. Speaker: I am advised by the Clerk that the answers were, in fact, provided.

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Questions

(Clerk conversing privately with Mr. Speaker)

Mr. Speaker: Okay. All right. Clearly, there has been a little, what I call a “mishap,” the answers were left on the Clerk’s desk and not circulated to the Members. Right? But the answers were in fact provided, I am told. So we will now have those answers circulated because they were, in fact, provided.

(Parliamentary Orderly distributed the responses to Members)

Mr. Speaker: All right, Honourable MP for St. Mark.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have a query here, Mr. Speaker. I see the response to one question, so I'm just wondering if the others are available. And also I would also like to say that, obviously, since it's been given, I would have had the time to peruse, so I would like to request that I can follow up with questions at another Sitting. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, that would be...

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify what is being provided to the Member to make sure that what was supplied is, in fact, what is provided. As I understand it, the Member has three questions, which essentially are for the Minister for Infrastructure, and there is a single question that speaks to the playing fields, which I think would have been answered by the Minister for Youth, Sports and Culture.

There's a memo on the computer that answers the question pertaining to the

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**Questions
Statements by Ministers**

playing fields, which I sense. I did not see them on the computer, which was not provided to the Members, were the answers in relation to questions one, two, and three, which pertain to Waltham, the Victoria Hotel and the Red Mud to Mt. Sinai.

I don't know whether what is being provided now is in response to those three. If that is not being provided, which I suspect it is not because I see here, this is in relation to the playing fields, I would indicate that those responses were provided to the Clerk, that's why I went back this morning and raised with the Clerk that I did not see the responses on the computer which suggested to me they have not been provided to the Members. So, if they've not been provided, I am asking that the answers be circulated because the answers were in fact provided.

Mr. Speaker: All right. Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister. And Honourable MP for St. Mark, the fact that the answers were provided to Parliament, we'll have them printed and disseminated to the Members.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: All right. You're welcome. She should proceed. Is it 11? Item 11.

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

Item 12 – Statements by Ministers.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a brief Ministerial Statement in respect of Phase One, Low Income Housing Project and to report to this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, that the Cabinet of Grenada is in receipt

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of a report from the Housing Authority of Grenada that speaks to some improvements and we want to place this on record our appreciation to management and staff of the Housing Authority for the work that they are doing in resolving the arrears issue. Arrears presently, Mr. Speaker, stand at 2.1 million dollars, so there is still a huge amount of arrears.

We've noticed, Mr. Speaker, that a number of individuals have approached the Housing Authority, have begun paying, and some of these loans, as it were, are being rescheduled, and so over time, we expect to see a much more improved report coming from the Housing Authority of Grenada. Mr. Speaker, the collections on a monthly basis average, under this particular category, average just in the region of \$68,000 monthly, that's what it should be. Presently, Mr. Speaker, we are now collecting \$48,000 monthly, which is a significant improvement.

Mr. Speaker, the Housing Authority of Grenada has begun the repairs to the roofs of these varying housing units. And so they have completed, thus far, Frequente. They've started in Mt. Gay and have completed a couple of the buildings, a couple of the roofs at Mt. Gay. We expect to see a continuation of these repairs throughout all of the housing sites. On the flip side of it, Mr. Speaker, we expect to see a greater level of cooperation from these homeowners, and we encourage them to continue to approach the Housing Authority.

There are some of them who have still not approached the Housing Authority despite receiving letters from the Housing Authority of Grenada. The Housing Authority of Grenada has full authority to operate professionally and independently without undue political interference. The Housing Authority, Mr. Speaker, has a right to collect what is due to them. We have seen the letters that were issued to these homeowners, and on all of these letters, it said that the homeowners must pay the monthly amounts for these units.

If you cannot pay and you are a homeowner, we encourage you to visit the Housing Authority of Grenada; that's the only way one would know of your peculiar circumstances, whether you are not employed, whether you've reached retirement age, whatever the

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situation is. The only way that the Housing Authority would know, Mr. Speaker, is if you approach the Housing Authority and speak to them so that they can come up with a solution that is absolutely necessary.

Outside of that, people may run themselves into problems, and I want to underscore that the Housing Authority will act professionally and independently without undue political interference. This problem can be easily resolved, easily resolved if people only approach and have a conversation. The Housing Authority they are not a bully; they're human beings just like us, so they will work a solution out to ensure, of course, and the Government can also assist, but they must speak up, we must know what is happening in order to render a proper solution.

So, we understand, Mr. Speaker, that some political games have been played surrounding this. This is a serious matter, and we are not to be playing games with this. Mr. Speaker, we should not be encouraging people not to pay. We should be encouraging them to honour their obligations because when they pay, it puts more in the kitty, so that we can ensure the buildings, we can repair those buildings and have people live in decent accommodations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Clerk Assistant (Ag.): Item 13 – Personal Explanations.

Item 14 – Motions.

Item 15 – Bills.

Mr. Speaker: MP for St. George North East.

Hon. Ron Redhead: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, good morning to all Members. I beg to introduce for the first reading a Bill for an Act, shortly entitled National Water and Sewerage Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

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Mr. Speaker: Thank you.

Clerk: A Bill, which seeks to amend the National Water and Sewerage Authority Act, Chapter 208, so that unpaid water and sewerage rates and charges are no longer a lien against the premises in respect of which the debt is incurred shortly entitled, National Water and Sewerage Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

Mr. Speaker: MP for St. George North East.

Hon. Ron Redhead: 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.

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable MP for St. George North East.

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

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable MP for St. George North East.

Hon. Ron Redhead: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I rise again to present this Bill the National Water and Sewerage Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023, with a degree of satisfaction because this is an amendment, Mr. Speaker, that is long overdue and will guarantee greater access to water from our Water Authority for our citizens and in

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particular those who are most in need.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, contains two clauses. Clause 1 speaks to the short title of the Bill. Clause 2, Mr. Speaker, seeks to amend section 35 of the principal Act by repealing subsection (4).

Mr. Speaker, the Bill will amend the principal Act as mentioned to remove the impediment altogether so that unpaid water and sewerage rates and charges are no longer a lien against the premises in respect of which the debt is incurred. In other words, Mr. Speaker, an ordinary man in Grenada can now apply to have pipe-borne water at his home regardless of whether he owns the land on which the home is built. So it is not addressing the ownership of the property, but it is addressing, Mr. Speaker, the fundamental right of access to safe drinking water and how, by saying simply that NAWASA will no longer require to put a lien, thank you, on the property for water connection.

So with this amendment, Mr. Speaker, that problem which existed in the past, where if you don't own a property, you can't get a water connection, will be something of the past. And, Mr. Speaker, the reason why we must amend this Act is that the Government of Grenada has embarked upon a joint initiative with an entity called "Nation Builders". That initiative is known as the WASH Programme, which aims to provide every household in Grenada with access to clean running water and adequate sanitation facilities by the year 2027.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, 98% of Grenada has a water connection, and if we are aiming by 2027 to achieve this in full, absolute connection, we believe this is something that is credible. We believe that this is something that we can do. So, for us to achieve the goal of having all homes with a running water connection, regardless of whether the occupants of the home are the legal owners of the premises, we need to amend section 35 subsection (4) of the principal Act, which prevents the objective altogether.

So, for example, Mr. Speaker. We are currently piloting the WASH Programme in the community of Belle Isle, St. David, and one of the things that we have discovered is that if you're living on your grandmother's property and she passes, God rest her soul,

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and she didn't have running water, she didn't make a will, so she didn't will you the property or it's not administered, you cannot, right now get a water connection even if you have a work and even if you have the ability to pay the water bill. And as such, we are putting forward this Amendment, or rather, removing this barrier will help you now to get the connection so that you can build your bathroom and toilet, that sort of thing, the basic human rights, water, or access thereof. And what we are saying, Mr. Speaker, is that for the Government to really meet this objective, we have to amend this under the WASH Programme, and I think, Mr. Speaker, places will benefit positively from this.

The Honourable Member for St George North West should feel proud that St. George North West constituency, which has one of the largest concentrations of pit latrines in the country, will now be able to embark on the WASH Programme, and the people will be able to access a running water connection. **(Applause)**

I can think also in the community of Horeb in Willis, where, Mr. Speaker, you have a situation in which many of the individuals there have been squatting on Government lands, which used to be an estate for over 20 years, and it's a challenge for them to get access to running water and electricity, that sort of thing. And so this amendment will help to open up the opportunity for them to get access, as I mentioned, to the basic human right, commodity, which is clean and safe drinking water for their use.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are convinced that this amendment will help to transform the lives of many of our people and help to guarantee their access to safe drinking water. And with these few words, I now lock off this pipe. **(Applause)**

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

Hon. Peter David: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was a little bit confused. I'm not sure how my friend approached this Bill because the Bill seems to be simply saying that if NAWASA puts water on a property and the water is put by John Doe, John Doe will be liable rather than the property owner. It doesn't mean that NAWASA, and this doesn't change NAWASA's policy. NAWASA wouldn't simply willingly just put

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water on properties all over the place without ensuring that the owner of the property will authorise it, else it would be, in my view, a trespass on the property if there's no authorisation.

I understand the mischief, and I agree with the Bill, that the Bill is trying to achieve, because there are many people who get water on the land, and the Government in many cases had that, but it would be reckless for anybody to authorize somebody putting water on the land that does not belong to the person requiring it. For two reasons, one, it would be trespassing and doing stuff on other people's property without the authorisation of the owner. But, secondly, it would also mean that you're less likely... I think the reason why NAWASA put it as a lien is that they agree with the Bill, but the reason they put it as a lien is to deter people from simply getting water and being unable to pay for it.

So NAWASA... The same point, I think my dear brother, South-East, St. George was speaking a while ago with the recklessness of telling people not to pay, and I don't think anybody, anywhere was telling people not to pay, I think that is a mischaracterisation of whatever criticism was there. And again, I say to my dear friends, that criticism should be listened to carefully, not with a sense of rejecting everything, but with a sense of understanding the basics.

So I think in this case, while I have no difficulty with the Bill, I'm saying the issue raised by my friend is not what seems to be addressed here. Although it can lead to persons just giving permission... The Government can't give permission to anybody to NAWASA to put water on anybody's land. That would be reckless. Sure, would the Government not want to do with respect to its own land, but I understand the mischief because some people now are incumbent, and I have many cases of that. I have one family in River Road whose mother died years ago, and she took the water and now the children, who developed a high bill, can't get water simply because of this bill. But NAWASA is saying, somebody has to pay the bill, and this is the challenge that NAWASA sometimes has.

And what this is doing is, I guess in a sense, saying to NAWASA that the charge would not be on the land itself, it will be on the person. I assume that's what the framers

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are trying to achieve. I can only... The explanatory notes are quite brief, but that is my interpretation, and I haven't heard an expansive explanation as to the purpose and the mischief that is trying to be avoided here. I think a more expansive explanation needs to be provided, but certainly what I see here is that avoidance of persons ordering water without the knowledge of the owner, water is put on the land, the person who puts the water flees the jurisdiction, and then NAWASA is bound with it.

Maybe that is the mischief that's trying to be achieved, and I'm looking for some nodding heads, but I am not seeing it. But that is my view on this, I am not sure what... I don't see what you're saying that you can just go put water on land without regard to ownership of the land. That, in my view, would be a trespass by NAWASA and subject them to further litigation in the courts. That, Mr. Speaker, is my view. So while the Member was making a reference to the fact that this would free up just to put water on land, NAWASA would not do that because NAWASA itself would subject itself to some serious litigation. My view is that they may be trying to free up some of the issues they have liens on, or not, because of the recklessness of some people. Mr. Speaker, that's my contribution to this morning. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for the Town of St. George. Honourable Leader of His Majesty's Opposition. Just ask the Honourable to turn his light off. Okay.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, you know, sometimes I wonder what I am hearing from the "Other Side." You know the level of statements and discourse continues to baffle me. It must continue to baffle me. You know, Mr. Speaker, the Member gets up, he's presenting the Bill clearly he doesn't understand the Bill himself. Clearly, he does not. But he finds the opportunity to talk about who has more pit latrines in the entire country. This is the kind of level of debate that is not consistent with this Honourable House. You know, North West, St. George, has the most pit latrine.

When you did your survey, mister? The Honourable Member, through you, Mr. Speaker, where was this survey done? Just mouth open, words jump out. In other words,

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anything to get at the Member for North West, St. George. It is not about me. It's about the people of North West St. George. I certainly don't have a pit latrine. So don't... I am not the problem. Forget me.

You guys, through you, Mr. Speaker, the Members in this House seem not to be able to say anything without referring to something to deal with North West or to the Member for North West, St. George. But you're barking up the wrong tree, you're barking up the wrong tree, Mr. Speaker. This is the Honourable House, keep the technical issues at the level that it is supposed to be. This is not the time, you're not on the platform. So when you're on the platform, you'll say this and others can deal with you accordingly, but in the House, Mr. Speaker, I wish.

Mr. Speaker, one of the points made by the Member for the Town of St. George is relevant in that this thing is very scanty; we haven't heard much more than the two or three paragraphs I see here. The fact is, there is another aspect of this Bill that one has to consider. It doesn't necessarily mean or only mean somebody who is on a property that's not theirs and using water, and the owner doesn't... The owner himself can be held responsible for not paying the bills. There are some businesses that have not met their fundamental responsibility to the institution, not only NAWASA, but also other areas of service, and it seems to me that we have not separated them at all.

Because it means if an owner with a building rents, it could be a rental property, it could be anything, and he has refused or he has not met his responsibility to NAWASA for sewerage and water rates, and that occurs. The Bill says that NAWASA cannot put a lien on his property. That is what I interpret this to say, also. So are we saying here that we want to reduce the ability of NAWASA to use all available tools to collect the resources available to it for the services that it has delivered?

Mr. Speaker, you know, Mr. Speaker, I was the Minister responsible for NAWASA, well before NAWASA was the Water Commission, we call it the Central Water Commission, it was not a statutory body. Mr. Speaker, do you know how rates were charged in 1984? The rates were charged even after the Revolution, and during the Revolution, rates were charged based on the number of rooms you had in your house.

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So if you had a six-bedroom house, they would charge you based on the number of rooms. So you may have hardly been there, you've hardly used water when they calculate, NAWASA comes, they calculate how many rooms, and they charge the charges. That is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that's the history. On the other hand, I might have a little thing, a little ajoupa, but I turn on the tap and it runs all day, I pay nothing, a little or nothing. You may say this person is a poor person, but we have to get people to be responsible, so it only encourages people. I always say if you're poor, you still have to be responsible.

So, I remember piloting this Bill to create NAWASA as a statutory organisation in the 85 period, and I remember saying I come from a poor family, but we were taught that we have to be responsible. Your poverty means, in fact, you have to be even more responsible than the guy who feels he has life made for him. So I'm not going to allow my friends and my brothers and sisters to get away because and assume because you don't have the resources, a lot of the resources that you should be irresponsible, in fact, you should be more responsible. Mr. Speaker, at that time NAWASA was literally, the Ministry of Finance had to be literally bailing out NAWASA, people were not paying. And therefore, most parts of the country, through you to the Member who just presented this Bill, he probably wasn't even born yet, most people, Mr. Speaker, parts of the country never had water.

I was the Minister responsible for NAWASA and Water and I used to have to come to St. George with a couple of bucket pans to collect water to use and that time many countries, many villages in the country did not have water. You know what the media at that time said, Mr. Speaker, when the Bill came in? Well NNP dead now, the Minister put his foot in his mouth now. That was the statement and the headlines in newspapers at the time. Because people failed to understand, after living in a country where water was available and services were paid for based on its usage, not on the amount of rooms that I have. If I use "x" amount of water I pay for it based on the value of the payment or CC or whatever it is, a litre or whatever it is. You have to make people be responsible. So I said no, I'm standing in my ground. And faith, hope at the point the Cabinet of the country

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stood firmly behind the Ministry of Public Utilities.

Mr. Speaker, we were able then to invest. People started paying their share. NAWASA became a better commercial enterprise while providing services for those who cannot afford. There was room in the Act or NAWASA leadership and board that gives them room to be understanding of people who have difficulty being able to pay, and they have to make a case for it.

Mr. Speaker, within about a year and a half when water services, we were turning on the taps in lots of parts of the country that never had including my own village of Happy Hill and Brizan. Because the people of Brizan used to get water from the river, you know what that can mean. So people started using the fact that they now have to pay and there was less wastage. Used to pass in some streets and you see a pipe running all day with water, nobody calling NAWASA and said well the water is being wasted because they are not paying.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, the point here is these services become a lot more effective in terms of the ability of NAWASA to provide services. Many of you don't know this through you, Mr. Speaker, but over 45% of the country at the time, only 45% had electricity and about 40% had pipe-borne water. That's a fact. But because of these Bills and NAWASA being now able to collect much more resources, it wasn't overnight. There was a lot of teething process, and the Government then had to continue to support NAWASA in many ways.

But over a period of time, NAWASA became much more able with the resources that they now developed and then, the Government then, Mr. Speaker, realised we were forced to come to terms that the Government itself was one of the worst, in terms of payment and NAWASA with Government businesses we just didn't use to pay it, that's the one, Government before of course and then... No well, that's not a joke, I am talking about 1984 to 85 that's when I am talking about.

So the Government then has to realise you cannot owe NAWASA millions of dollars, expect to get services as we are doing around, and at the same time we are not paying, so they started. The Government then had to start meeting its responsibility, and

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that was early in '85. So most people then started doing a lot more in terms of their responsibility to the taxpayers and to NAWASA, in fact.

So, this thing was a teething process. So I don't want to do anything and I don't want to support anything that says, NAWASA must be limited in terms of what it can do to force people some people who can afford to pay to be able not to pay, so you cannot put a lien on a business or an area. And I'm not talking about the section that the Minister, Member for St George Town said a while ago and what the Member for St George North-East. I'm talking about the additional facts. So if you're separating and say, you are separating and businesses are not part of that then say so, but that is not in the Act what I have read, what I have read, Mr. Speaker, does not say.

So to come up with, to make jokes or throw aspersion that's the level of responsibility. That is the level of responsibility. I know where you are coming from but we are not here for that. If you want to keep at your level, keep at your level, keep that level but do not bring it in this House and expect to go unchallenged. The people of North West, St. George, do not have the largest amount of pit latrines. I don't know where you were, Mr. Speaker, through you. It's a false statement, it's totally false and it's an attack on the people of North-West, St. George. It's an attack on the people of North-West, St. George. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Member to be more responsible when he's speaking because it's not...

You know, I happen to... My qualification tells me if you want to talk about a survey you have to tell me how it's done, you have to say what's your criteria, you have to say the survey methodology, you must come to terms with this, Mr. Speaker. And that's not a boast! So I must be turned off given my profession when I hear someone come talking about surveys and you can't tell me how it's done and what's it data collection process. Who collected the data? Because bias data collectors could interfere with the biasness and results and you get higher levels of errors, higher level of errors in that. That's a fact. I am not here to get into you guys level, but I am just making a serious point.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is, look at the other side of this, what happens, that's all I am doing. So if you intend to make it clear that the business now can be

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exempted and NAWASA will be able to put a lien on businesses that are not responsible for the water that they pay then say so, but don't talk only of the indigent who has used the land, not be responsible with the water and of course want the owner to take responsibility. If you can do that to alleviate that problem I have no difficulty whatsoever, Mr. Speaker. So I make the point and I just want to reiterate this to the Member there needs to be more clarification. We're not saying that is not necessarily the intention, but I have not seen it in writing and have not heard it **(sound of time bell)** and if I hear it, there must be proof of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Leader of His Majesty's Opposition. Honourable MP for Carriacou and Petite Martinique. They say ladies first, so I'll invite Honourable MP for St. Andrew North West

Hon. Delma Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I rise to give support to this amendment tabled here this morning. Mr. Speaker, in my mind, this amendment simply seek to provide access to water to individuals and at the same time protect homeowners or people who own the building.

So we know and we appreciate that water is essential for everybody. Water is an essential human right. In fact, the United Nations speak to that, water is a human fundamental right to everyone's health, dignity and prosperity. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, this amendment for me, coming from the rural village of Mt. Horne where you have many people who cannot get access because merely the property belongs to Government or they are renting from someone or in some instances the people died years ago there's no deed to the property and so they cannot get access to water which we know is very, very important for our daily activities. And so this Bill will give the homeowners access to water where they will be responsible for paying their own bills. **(Applause)**

So the bills would not be given to the homeowners because it's in my name. So the bill will say "Delma Thomas" whereas the homeowner will be "John Doe," so "Delma

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Thomas" will be responsible. So if I'm renting and I refuse to pay bills for three months and I'm removed from the property the owner of the property who is "Ron Redhead," is not expected to pay that bill. **(Applause)** NAWASA would have to hunt me down to ensure that "Delma Thomas" pays her bill.

And so we support this Bill where every individual whether you rich are you poor would have access to pipe-borne water in their homes. Mr. Speaker, I recall when we started giving people bathrooms and toilets, there were people who couldn't get it, elderly citizens, because they did not have the property in their names. Their mother died years ago, and so while they were sick in bed, they couldn't get it. This new Amendment will enable NAWASA now to give them water and they pay for the water.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I rest my case and I am happy to support this Bill whereby the people of St. Andrew North West and the people of Grenada who pipe-borne water can now apply and every household now can now access pipe-borne water across, whether you have ownership to the land or not and you are responsible for paying for it. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Andrew North West. And I invite the MP for Carriacou and Petite Martinique to the floor.

Hon. Tevin Andrews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, stand to lend my voice and to support this Bill. Mr. Speaker, the Bill seeks to take into consideration an initiative that was launched by this Administration, piloted by the Member of Parliament and Prime Minister and the folks in St. David are called "Nation Builders."

It's an initiative, Mr. Speaker, that seeks to eliminate the bureaucratic handlings that often hinder the implementation of community projects, and I said, Mr. Speaker, encourage citizen active involvement in the development of our beloved country. And, Mr. Speaker, the first project under this initiative is the Water Access Sanitation in Home Programme, it's also known as the WASH Programme, Mr. Speaker.

This pilot project, Mr. Speaker, was intended, it was started in the parish of St.

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David and it aims to ensure that every household, not just in St. David, Mr. Speaker, but throughout Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique has access to clean running water and adequate sanitation facilities by the year 2027, Mr. Speaker. And while it may surprise many, Mr. Speaker, the WASH Programme concept note reveals that despite 90% of Grenada's population having access to water there is still a large number of Grenadians that struggle with having access to quality water and numerous households in the country still rely on outside pit toilets including constituencies that we represent, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the WASH Programme, is in response to those concerns and the intention is that this Administration because we care about people, because we put people first, and recognises that there are a large number of Grenadians not having access to clean quality water this Bill aims to address just that so that our people those of us who do not have the access can now have access without having the headache of the bureaucracies that are in place.

So, I'm proud to be part of this Administration that is piloting this Bill that is bringing this Bill to this Honourable House so that our people can have access to clean, quality running water, Mr. Speaker, and to address some of the challenges that they are facing. So I stand in full support of this Bill, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable MP for Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Honourable MP for St. Andrew South West.

Hon. Lennox Andrews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of the Bill. What this Bill does, Mr. Speaker, is that it makes it easy for our people to have access to water. And therefore, with water we can improve our hygiene, we can improve our sanitation and we can improve our living standard.

Mr. Speaker, there is some interesting statistics, Mr. Speaker, that reflect the kind of life that we've been living in this country, because of insufficient access to water. And as we all know, toilet facility is a reflection of the living standard of our people. And, I

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want to present some data, Mr. Speaker, on the situation with toilet facility in this country. Data that our own Statistics Department would have produced. And here it goes.

Mr. Speaker, and I'm going back, and I'm coming forward, so you can see what is happening. And I mean, what is happening is good, but it's still of major concern. Which brings into focus the need for this project, and indeed for the Bill to make water access easy to our population. So, Mr. Speaker, in 2008 the data shows that 13,966 households in Grenada had pit latrine. 13,966 households in Grenada had pit latrine. Our household averaged about three persons, good, in 2008.

In 2011, the data shows that 10,928 households had pit latrine, 2011. 10,928 households had a pit latrine, and you all know what a pit latrine is. Yes. In 2018, Mr. Speaker, in 2018, the data shows that 9,964 households was still using pit latrine in this country, hmm. But there's an interesting statistic, Mr. Speaker, that I want to point out, that I want to point. So what we see, therefore, is that between 2018 and 2011, the number of persons and the number of households using pit latrines declined by 8.8%. That's good.

But interestingly, Mr. Speaker, let's go back to that year. Mr. Speaker, the data shows that in 2011, of the 10,928 households that had pit latrine, 109 were from the town of St. George. So there were 109 households from the town of St. George that had pit latrine in 2011. In 2011, for the rest of St. George's, for the rest of St. George's the data says that 2,680 households were using pit latrine, in 2011. Good. St. John's, 808, St. Mark's 358, St. Patrick's 1377, St. David's 1,383 and Carriacou, 750.

So the largest area that has pit latrines in the country is St. George. The rest of St. George, excluding the town. The rest of St. George. Good? And if, Mr. Speaker, if you want to apply the 8.8% decline in households that use pit latrine by the year 2018, it means that the rest of St. George, 2,466 households, would be using pit latrine in this country, in the year 2018. So, Mr. Speaker, we still have a fundamental problem, a fundamental problem of water access. The reason why people use pit latrine, is because they don't have water, so they could put toilet in their house, yes. They could put toilet in their homes.

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I mean, there are some other data points that are of interest, Mr. Speaker. The data is showing here, from 2011, you may say it is a little bit old, but never mind, it gives an idea of what is happening in the country. Overall, for the country, 61.77% of our households had an indoor toilet. 61.8% of the households had an indoor toilet, and 73.5% of the households had treated water inside their homes. Yes. 73.5% of the households had treated water inside it. So we still have a problem in this country of access to water by our people, so that they can have proper sanitation, they can have proper hygiene, they can have more facilities to help to improve their living standard.

And what this Bill amendment is trying to do is simply to provide water access, make water more accessible to our people so that these numbers can come down and we can enjoy a much higher living standard, and make our people live better and feel happy about themselves. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, Honourable MP for St. Andrew South West. Honourable MP for St. Mark.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to make a few comments on the Bill that has been presented. I heard some very, very useful statistics. I didn't hear a comparison between 2018 and 2022. I mentioned that because a lot of work has been done in terms of providing water to households. And I know St. Mark's benefited tremendously from that. And so, I just want to raise that as a point.

I would like the statistician to get those statistics for me at some point in time. We have done exceedingly well in terms of the original WASH Programme. We have done well, because a number of persons who have pit latrines got, how you say it now, the flush, how you call the flush toilet, anyway, the indoor toilet, to flush. So, I would support any Bill that allows persons access to water. I just have and I heard the Leader of Government's Business mention that they're collecting money and so on, and he's happy for that.

And I just wondered how we protect NAWASA to be able to collect the fees from...

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so you no longer put the lien on the house, or the lien perhaps on the business as well, but what enforces the business, or the house owner, to pay, if they are at fault? Do they just, even if they're renting a house, rent it to somebody else under a different name and whatever monies were owing before become lost to NAWASA? So I just have this question.

And I just wanted to endorse the fact that we have done a lot, and you will find that when you look at your statistics, from 2022, June 2022 to whenever, you will find that, you would deal with whatever amount you have to plans to deal with and it would be interesting to see what is in the budget for dealing with this problem. Because just taking away the lien from the house owner alone would not solve it, because you have to put the money there to give support, and also, you would have to take into consideration that new houses are going up all the time, new houses without a toilet.

So, the numbers alone do not speak for themselves, because it may be, or is it the same number of houses that still remain from 2011 all up till now, without water? Do you have an additional? I'm not a statistician, but these are some of the questions we have to ask ourselves. So, every government that comes into office has perhaps done something since 2011, and from the stats I've heard and kudos to the government of the day, and kudos to the project in St. David, but I have not heard anything new in terms of what is being done.

Toilets and bathroom indoor and that, and those who know it on your side could tell you to, is the, we had moved significantly into providing toilet facilities and water in the home, in the households. So, let the statistics show that at some point in time, we have done some work, and you will continue. And I look forward to seeing the budget, and how that would be supported. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Mark. Prime Minister, Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will protect

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NAWASA the same way GRENLEC is protected (**applause**), the same way FLOW, LIME and any other utility providing service to other countries is protected. I appreciate that the question of how we protect NAWASA is a valid one. Essentially, we're asking, we want to ensure that we don't give people the opportunity to not pay for water that is consumed.

And so I think, the Honourable MP for St. Mark, put the question, I think, succinctly in the right, in the right manner. (**Laughter**) Yes indeed. And oftentimes, that helps with clarifying the issue, because I took it from all that was said by the Honourable MP for the Town of St. George and the Leader of His Majesty's Opposition that that is really what we were trying to get at. Perhaps in a much more inelegant and long-winded way than compared to the MP for St. Mark.

And essentially, how do we ensure that by removing this lien that NAWASA currently has on real property for unpaid rates or charges associated with the property? And that we don't create a situation where there's a risk, or a serious risk to the revenues of NAWASA. Remember, Mr. Speaker, in life we always have to balance risk and benefit, and so the question I think, what we have to ask is, do we believe the risk of ensuring that NAWASA can have this particular enforcement met, outweighs the benefit of ensuring, using the statistics provided by the Honourable MP for St. Andrew's South West, that he probably have as much as maybe 30,000 persons who, more likely than not do not have access to indoor treated running water, and who therefore are forced to rely on pit latrines.

Whether ensuring that we remove one more impediment to them having access to running water, so that we can have bathrooms, indoor bathrooms, and indoor toilets. It's a greater good than the risk of some money not being paid to NAWASA. To this government, the answer is clear. It is a greater good, to ensure that the approximately still nine or eight thousand households, and if you multiply that by three, as the statistician says, on average three persons live in a household, then the almost 25, 26, 27 thousand persons who are yet without access to indoor running water, it is clear that the benefits outweigh the risks.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this is just the removal of one of the many impediments to ensuring that water, sanitation and hygiene are brought to all our citizens. And, Mr.

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Speaker, I am sure the Leader of His Majesty's Opposition is one of them, that in fact, the people who are most likely not to have access to water, indoor plumbing, indoor bathrooms and indoor toilets, are the category of people he essentially associates himself with all the time, those who are poor and those who are vulnerable.

And therefore, any caring government would obviously want to ensure that the projects and the programmes they embark upon, particularly when it comes to improving the social and community wellbeing and the development of our citizens, target those who are most in need. And, Mr. Speaker, the same way we can't live without oxygen, is the same way we can't live without water. And I want to point out that NAWASA currently, in circumstances where people do not have a title to land.

And let us now underestimate the state of land title ownership in Grenada. It is fragmented, and there are lots of people who live on property that they have no documentation for whatsoever. Either your family land, which can simply pass forward from generation to generation, or the yard arrangement where you walk into a yard and there are 10 or 15 homes, cousins, aunties, nannies, grandparents, etcetera. They have no title. Oftentimes, the paths to get to the homes are a track.

And so, in those circumstances, very much like GRENLEC, which, when you apply for electricity, asks that you pay a deposit, so that if you run up the bill and you don't pay, they can, in fact, offset the bill against the deposit. NAWASA, similarly, is asking for indemnification and will be asking for deposits, so that persons who otherwise may not have title to lands et cetera, but clearly are living on the land, and who clearly need to have access to water, can similarly pay deposits or pay over a period of time.

And so, just so we are clear, Mr. Speaker, many of the persons who are going to be targeted, and will be targeted by this programme, are persons who can't even pay the connection fee. And so, we've signed the Memorandum of Understanding with NAWASA to ensure that, in fact, the connection fees are paid over a prolonged period of time, once the connection is made and once they're getting water, along with the water bills, so that it's prorated over a long period of time.

So this programme really is meant to target persons who legitimately do not have

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water. We think it is a national goal that everyone should line up behind, everyone should help and contribute towards attaining, so that as a country, by 2027, we can eliminate the use of pit latrines in Grenada.

And I do not think the Member for St. George North East meant any offence when he highlighted that St. George North West has a high concentration of pit latrines. Many of our parishes, well, I can say for a fact, because I've checked the data, that St. George North West, like St. George North East, like St. David, have a high concentration of use of pit latrines. And that is precisely why we'll be targeting those areas to make sure that we can reduce the use of outdoor pit latrines and that people can have access to treated indoor water.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, just finally through to, speak to a concern raised by the Member for St. Mark, that in fact, going forward, this administration does not intend to embark upon home repairs, or home rebuilding programmes that do not have bathrooms and toilets affixed to them. Let me repeat that, Mr. Speaker, we will not be building homes that do not have bathrooms and toilets, because you'll be contributing to the very problem you are trying to eliminate.

And the Minister responsible for housing and his team have already, from a policy point of view, made that clear. So we certainly expect that we will not, on one hand, be trying to achieve that aim, and on the other hand, you're creating the problem, because you are building homes that do not have the basic amenities for modern building, which are an indoor bathroom and toilet.

And, Mr. Speaker, we must bear in mind particularly that we have young men, girls and we have elderly persons, thousands of them, especially at night, and especially in the rainy season, who would have to leave their dwelling to go out to a separate pit latrine to be able to do basic human functions. And so, the need to accelerate and ramp this up is something that we believe all of us as MPs, in all of our constituencies, can support and line up behind as a national objective that we can all support.

And remember, it is not just the government, it is the private sector, it is volunteers, it is Grenadians in the diaspora, everyone can line up behind this, because at the end of

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the day, I think we appreciate that it is a significant improvement in the quality of our life, if we do have access to indoor running water, a bathroom and a toilet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister. Sorry. MP for St....

Hon. Emmalin Pierre: Thank you...

Mr. Speaker: ... Andrew South East.

Hon. Emmalin Pierre: ... Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm only rising because I noticed the presenter of the Bill would have put on his light. Had the concern that I have, been raised, I was not going to stand. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think, primarily, what I'm hearing is that people do not have a major objection to this. And I cannot say that I have a major objection to what was presented this morning. But what I do want to state is that consideration needs to be given to some of the issues that were raised, because I believe that there would be value in considering all that was said. Don't just see it as opposition.

But added to that, I want to raise about two other things that I didn't hear in the discourse so far. While we seek to achieve an objective, I think we need to consider possibilities. What are some of the possibilities that we may face that could potentially be a legal challenge, and other kinds of challenges as well? So, one of the things that was mentioned is that this is going to address the issue of people who are renting properties.

So, Mr. Speaker, let us consider that I would have rented my piece of land to you, and you intend to do farming on the land, and I'm quite comfortable with that. But then tomorrow you start putting up pillars, because you now want to build a house, and now you have the right, even if I am uncomfortable with you using my land to have our family on the land, you are now able to access water connection, because you are living on the land. So I am just saying, and hear me, I am saying I am supportive of this, but let us look at all the other possibilities.

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So we may want to, in all of this put some particular possible, potential issues, for example, where there are active live, legal issues before the court, legal matters, as it relates to the lands, for example, where for example, the land owner is renting, but probably has an issue with the fact that the person is living on the land, we have to consider that as well. So I'm saying consideration in special circumstances. Right? And I did not hear that in the presentation. So if the Member says that there is consideration, definitely I would 150% support, once you're on government lands, and you've been living there.

As a matter of fact, the law makes accommodations for people living on land for a period of time, having the right to ownership. So already the law supports people living on lands that are not there, but we are speaking now about those other cases. And while we speak about those other cases, let us be mindful that there might be some genuine circumstances as it relates to the owners of those properties. And so, we must not blank it wise, but we may say, there could be exceptions where we would have to investigate further, where we may say, okay, at least a letter is required of support and things like that. So I'm just saying, there might be some exceptions that we may want to be careful with. **(Applause)**

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

Hon. Dennis Cornwall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give full support to the Bill that is presented to us here today in the House. And I'm doing so against the backdrop that over the years we have had many challenges, ranging from the fact that the land was not owned by the persons living on it, who may not have had the right to do so. And includes, for example, church lands, I wouldn't name... exactly where those lands are, but you could not have built even a pit toilet on those lands.

People had to resort to basically using communal bathrooms and toilets, and so on. Over the years, they have deteriorated and are now out of use. I also believe that

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we have seen a decline in the amount of stand pipes that we have seen around the country, and that was in the right direction I believe, because it prevented a lot of people from having their shower on the road, it also prevented people from allowing water to go to waste, because again, water is something that is valuable to all of us. And therefore, we need to make sure that we protect the resources that NAWASA is providing us. There was this idea that water comes from the sky and it belongs to god and everybody should have access to it, and so on, whether or not you pay for it. I want to posit that I support fully that NAWASA is able to recover the cost that it, debt it earns on to be able to provide us with water.

So I want to move to the next point, which says that we, as politicians or Members of Parliament, should try our best to encourage our constituents to make sure that they pay their bills when the time comes. If you do not pay for the water that you consume, all it does is create shortages and problems for us and so on. I have seen around the country where people still use the rivers for washing their clothes and bathing. We have to basically rise above that. And therefore, I fully support the idea that you create an environment where greater access to water is given to people, but they must be responsible for the water they consume. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Patrick East. And I now invite the MP for St. George North East to close.

Hon. Ron Redhead: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the Members for all of their contributions. I would have liked the Honourable Member for St. George North West to at least stay to the end. It's a short Sitting to hear what the conclusions would be. But nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to thank each Member for their objective points raised.

And I also want to take the opportunity just to add some clarity, that the amendment is repealing subsection 4 of section 35, to remove the lien. It is not dealing, and I'm taking my time to say this, that property matters will be dealt with in a strict sense of the law, in

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its normal course. It is not taking away the right of any property owner. **(Applause)** And I think we need to all try our best to understand that. This has nothing to do with the property; it has everything to do with access to water. People who are most vulnerable and in need. So that's not the issue that is being presented, in terms of the criticism of the Bill, the amendment Bill itself.

While it is a valid point, we have the Honourable Member and Prime Minister of St. David, the Honourable Member of St. David and Prime Minister, make the point that the Government also entered into an MOU with NAWASA. So NAWASA's normal procedure, to recoup its unpaid rates or charges on water connection, is not going to be disrupted. They still will operate as their normal procedure. So nothing is changing where that is concerned. What we are saying is that we are removing the lien barrier, which prevents ordinary people from getting access to pay for a water connection.

Mr. Speaker, allow me just to give some updated figures as they relate to pit latrines and access to water. So as it stands now, we have about 3,500 people who have no running water in Grenada. As it stands now, approximately 8,715 people are using pit latrines. As it stands now, 1,398 do not have access to toilet facilities in the country. That is the data that we have, the latest data. And we have heard the Minister for Economic Development clearly articulate what the data suggest.

But, Mr. Speaker, sometimes we are operating like we are not in the reality of the situation. This amendment strictly explains what it was. And to suggest otherwise about who's not paying and so on, is going on a different route. The concern, I believe is a genuine concern, because we should all factor that in, but to suggest that if we remove this in any kind of way, whether in trying to express the concern as the position why you want to critique the amendment, to if we remove this, it will open up the gateway for people who are not paying, to not pay and NAWASA is not getting their money is false. So we need to understand, Mr. Speaker, that legislation which deals with actual human rights....

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Mr. Speaker...

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Hon. Ron Redhead: ... not once...

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Mr. Speaker...

Hon. Ron Redhead: ...that...

Mr. Speaker: Honourable MP for St. Mark. Are you on a Point of Order?

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Mr. Speaker: Please stand.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Member is verging on imputing improper motives, on the contributions that were made in good faith and good spirit. Nobody on "This Side" said that it shouldn't happen, and that it will open a floodgate. So it needs to be corrected here, Mr. Speaker, because then it would go out as though "This Side" didn't support the Bill for poor people, and we were saying that there would be too much. But when you look at a Bill, you must look at the ramifications....

Mr. Speaker: Okay, Honourable just, just raise the objection.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: ...and this is what we have done. We have said, look at the possibilities and try to address them. Either in this Bill or otherwise, but none of us has said that this Bill...

Mr. Speaker: All right.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: ... should not happen.

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Mr. Speaker: All right, Honourable MP. It's my view that he didn't cross the line. Honourable MP for St. George North East, you continue.

Hon. Ron Redhead: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so in wrapping up, what I'm saying is that we should not suggest that this has anything to do with property ownership, which will be handled through the court. We cannot interfere with that. This amendment is not seeking to interfere with anybody's ownership of property, and those who cannot pay the bill, as expressed earlier. I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, this amendment is simple, and tries to create an easier environment to have access to clean and safe drinking water, by ordinary Grenadians and certainly all of our people by the year 2027. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for St. George North East.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

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

Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

House resumes.

Mr. Speaker: I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.

Hon. Ron Redhead: 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.

Hon. Ron Redhead: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

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, International Companies (Repeal Act) (Valuation) Bill, 2023.

Clerk: A Bill which seeks to validate International Companies that failed to meet the statutory requirements for continuing to carry on business in accordance with the Companies Act, Chapter 58A, shortly entitled, International Companies (Repeal Act) (Validation) Bill, 2023.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order 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 of Government's Business.

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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: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill, though short, is a very important Bill, and it contains seven clauses and one Schedule. The main objectives of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, are to validate International Companies that failed to meet the statutory requirement for continuing to carry on business in accordance with the Companies Act, Chapter 58A, after the repeal of the International Companies Act, Chapter 152.

Mr. Speaker, the second objective is to deem these International Companies that are listed in the Schedule to continue to carry on business and to provide services in accordance with the Companies Act, Chapter 58A.

The second clause of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, deals with the interpretation. Very importantly, Mr. Speaker, under the interpretation section, the Bill seeks to list those companies. There are 22 such companies, Mr. Speaker. They are:

1. Troquet Inc.;
2. Resource Financial Services Limited;
3. Danes Management Ltd;
4. Clear Harbour Inc.;
5. BF International Inc.;
6. 2 Excel Inc.;
7. Summerhill Limited;
8. Kalypsoland Limited;
9. Lotus Inc.;
10. Hart Industries Ltd;
11. Sol Mutuel Ltd;

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12. SDR Trading Limited;
13. Premier Consulting and Marketing Ltd;
14. HH & B Trademark Services;
15. L. P. Brown Ltd;
16. Waterfront Investments Limited;
17. Jamoon Advisors Ltd;
18. Best Rich Exchange;
19. Richmonde Globe Investments Ltd;
20. Richmonde Capital Ltd;
21. Yacco Group Ltd; and
22. Camadak Limited.

Mr. Speaker, clause 3 of the Bill seeks to allow these companies to continue to operate. Specifically, section 3(1) states, “Notwithstanding section 3(3) of the repeal Act, an International Company shall be deemed to continue to carry on business and to provide services in accordance with the Companies Act, Chapter 58A”.

Clause 4, Mr. Speaker, speaks to the validation of these companies that otherwise would not have been deemed to be valid entities operating in Grenada.

Clause 5 speaks to their failure to comply. Where an International Company fail to comply with the requirements of section 3, the provisions of section 368 of the Companies Act, Chapter 58A shall apply.

And Clause 6, Mr. Speaker, speaks to the right of persons to legal remedy. Notwithstanding in this Act, notwithstanding sorry, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding in this Act, this Act shall affect the right of any person to any legal remedy that he or she would have had in respect of these companies operating when they were deemed not operating under the law, under the International Companies Act, law.

And Clause 7, Mr. Speaker, talks to the Schedule.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018, the International Companies Act, Chapter 152, was repealed. The existing International Companies incorporated under this Act were granted a transitional period of three years, from 2018 to 2021. And those companies during this

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transitional period, Mr. Speaker, would have continued to enjoy all of the pre-existing conditions to operate during the transition.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, some of these companies, as listed here, did not fulfil the requirement to continue to operate, and as such, the time expired, and they were, as it were, in legal limbo. So there was no law governing the functionalities of these companies. This Act, Mr. Speaker, seeks to bring all of these international companies under the Companies Act of Grenada, Chapter 58A.

Mr. Speaker, these companies, because they fell outside of the law, outside of the Companies Act, could not have done some simple things, like filing their annual returns and getting certificates of good standing and so on and so on, because there was no law under which they were operating. So this particular Act of Bill is seeking to bring all of these companies under the revised legislation.

Notwithstanding the initial transition period, Mr. Speaker, of three years, a subsequent enactment of the International Companies Act (Repeal) (Amendment) Act, of 2021, some international companies failed to take the necessary action to continue to lawfully carry on operations under the Act. And so, Mr. Speaker, we are seeking to correct this, so that we give all of, bring all of these people under the Act. And as a result, they would be able to properly function as a company in the State of Grenada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Dickon Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Bill. Mr. Speaker, international business companies or IBCs as they are commonly called, were a common feature of not just Grenada, but many of the Caribbean Islands, not too long ago. It was a tool designed to encourage persons to set up businesses in Grenada and in many of the Caribbean Islands, whose primary clients were outside of Grenada.

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And so, an IBC would set up an office here, it would employ persons here, it will be able to retain professional services, i.e. lawyers, accountants, tax advisors, it will be permitted to rent or own property here for the purpose of its office or its operations, but it's actual business, or its primary business was targeting persons outside of Grenada. And so, you will see, for instance, that many of the call centres or data centres, as they're called, which operate here, were formed as international business companies.

Because while the services or the persons providing the services were located in Grenada, the actual business or the client was really someone outside of Grenada. And the International Business Companies Act was designed in such a way that it also gave incentives and concessions to these businesses to operate in Grenada, for obvious reasons, because you're seeking to in a sense attract an international business or an international company that was actually engaged in international business, but you were given the opportunity to set up in Grenada and to provide employment for persons in Grenada, to provide in a sense economic activity by relocating here.

And one of the main features of international business companies was a low domestic tax regime. So you would find that the income that the international business company earned was not taxed for the purposes of our own domestic legislation. And the question is, why? Well, the answer is obvious. If you tax them, they'll simply not come to your location to do business. So, the opportunities for employment, the opportunities for economic activity that they brought by locating here, they would simply go to some other jurisdiction that afforded them a concessional tax package.

So, like many other things, Mr. Speaker, for small island developing states, the International Business Act was a tool created for us to attract economic activity on our islands. But like so many of these tools, Mr. Speaker, we come up against organisations like the ¹OECD or the ²FATF which then says you're operating as a low tax jurisdiction, and which many times, sadly, wrongly and inaccurately characterise you as a tax haven, or as a tax exempt status et cetera, etcetera, etcetera.

¹ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

² Financial Action Task Force

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And so, Mr. Speaker, for a number of years, there's been relentless pressure on Caribbean countries to effectively eliminate the regime of international business companies. Different countries treat it differently, so for example, Barbados. They took the approach of saying, we obviously need these international business companies to remain here, so that you cannot accuse us of having two different tax regimes, one for domestic companies and one for international business companies, we will simply reduce the tax rates for domestic companies as well, so that they match that of international business companies. That was one of the ways they sought to deal with it.

In the case of Grenada, Mr. Speaker, as you would see, we took a different approach and essentially said, we were going to repeal the International Business Companies Act. The intent of which is that if you repeal the Act, these companies cannot exist, because there is no legislative framework for them to exist in. And you would see that there was a subsequent amendment to that, because many of the companies would obviously say, well, we're here, we're employing people, we are operating, and if you repeal the legislation under which we operate, it basically means we're operating illegally. And if you're operating illegally, it means you'll have to send people home, we're going to have to terminate the businesses to the detriment of Grenada and the several hundred Grenadians that these companies employed.

And so, there was a First Amendment, the International Business Company Repeal Amendment Act, which sought to give these companies the opportunity to transition under the Companies Act, so they could now operate under our domestic Companies Act. As the Leader of Government's Business said, some of these companies, however, did not properly transition or transitioned at all, because they were required to be certified by GARFIN as being in good standing. And in many instances, GARFIN either did not or was unable to certify them as being in good standing.

And therefore, that condition of GARFIN certification before you go under the Companies Act was missing for many of these companies, but they continued operating. And as time would have it, Mr. Speaker, many of them now face the challenge where the bank will say, "Where are your annual returns? Where are your corporate filings? Where

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is your certificate of good standing?" Well, there is no International Business Company Act anymore, GARFIN, and they seem not to have been able to work themselves out so that they could be transitioned under the Companies Act. And many of them, as you see, are now in a state of complete uncertainty.

So the mischief this seeks to remedy, is to hopefully once and for all, gave these companies the opportunities to be regulated, by the Registrar of Companies, to operate and function under the Companies Act of Grenada, so that going forward, all of the issues like corporate filings, certificate of good standings, annual filings et cetera could be done under the Companies Act. There's still another part which we may have to treat with later on, which is how do you treat with the incentives and concessions that would have formed the basis for many of them to operate here, in the first, in the first place. But that's for another time and place.

For now, Mr. Speaker, we're just trying to actually, in a sense give them legal or I think the law is called de jure existence and not just de facto existence, because they do exist in fact, they're employing people, they're providing services, but we need to make sure that there's a properly legal regime under which they are governed and regulated. And that is the reason, Mr. Speaker, for having to bring this second, so to speak, amendment to the International Business Companies Repeal Act. And so I stand to support the Bill. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Thank you very much, Honourable Prime Minister. Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Right. Mr. Speaker, I just want to express my appreciation for the contribution to this Bill. As said earlier, it's a very simple and straightforward amendment, and so I just want to express my appreciation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House resolves itself into a Committee to consider the 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.

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.

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Clerk Assistant (Ag.): 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. Sorry. I was not seeing her light. Just hold. Let him put the question first and I'll take you after. 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 proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable MP for St. Mark.

Hon. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am well aware that this is the busy season, and so I do not want to prolong this meeting. But it would be remiss of me if I did not take the opportunity to express my appreciation for the invitation that I got from the UN Women and other such-minded organisations, ParIAmericas and so on in St. Lucia a few weeks ago. Mr. Speaker, you were there also, and I did not hear you mention it, I thought, and Madam President of the Senate was also there.

Since then, I've received numerous communications from persons concerned, and I think it has, while I was aware of the issue of gender-based violence, domestic violence, it really served to expand my knowledge of what happens, given the data we were given and so on. And I know there was a lot of work done in Grenada over the past few years with the Spotlight Initiative. I'm aware that it's being, the funding for that is being closed off now in Grenada, the external funding, but my understanding is that there will be some in the budget for that.

And so, as a Member of Parliament, and as the sitting chair of the Women's

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Caucus, I just wanted to mention that, and to publicly state my commitment to fighting the Gender Based Violence and to get involved in working with women, Ministries, and other organisations on this very important issue. I've never realised the magnitude, and I was just looking at some statistics I got on various countries, Grenada, Jamaica and so on. And nobody is looking good. That means all of us have work to do.

So I just want to encourage all of my colleagues on "This Side" and "That Side" to let us work together, because this is a great opportunity for bipartisan work. I'm always sceptical about it, you know, but I feel that this is a scourge that all of us need to put our hands together to get rid of. And so, I really was grateful for the opportunity, and I will continue the communication on whatever works have to be done. And we do have some plans in mind, and we will need the support of all if we are going to change the statistics for the better for Grenada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Mark. And while I didn't mention it in my announcements, I must commend you for the work. You are doing a good job as the leader of the Women's Caucus. Right? Let me make that very clear. Lights? **(Laughter)** Honourable MP for Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Hon. Tevin Andrews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it would have been remiss of me if I did not stand here today to bring some clarification to the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and to people in general who might have been misled by statements that were made on a particular platform, Mr. Speaker. So I thought it important to come to the People's House to address this matter.

Mr. Speaker, I heard my good friend, through you, the Honourable Member for St. Mark making reference to a situation in Petite Martinique, that there is no dentist visiting the island of Petite Martinique, and that nothing is being done in Petite Martinique, and that we've made so many promises that we have not delivered it, and we used to be talking about Petite Martinique, Carriacou and Grenada, and all of a sudden Petite Martinique is now forgotten.

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But, Mr. Speaker, the issue of dental service in Petite Martinique has been one that's been affecting the people for years, including, Mr. Speaker, when the Honourable Member, through you, was the Minister for Health. The Member of Parliament is well aware that the services are being affected as a result of a lack of adequate equipment. So the dental services in Petite Martinique are being interrupted because what we have now present in Petite Martinique is a dental chair, not even a unit, a dental chair that is over 30 years old.

What this Administration has done, under the leadership of this Member of Parliament, is that we have procured two dental units. Not a dental chair, you know, two dental units; one for Carriacou and one for Petite Martinique. **(Applause)** I am also happy to report, Mr. Speaker, that the dental units are now on the port in Carriacou, ready to be assembled by the biotech experts, and soon, hopefully before Christmas, will be delivered to the people of Petite Martinique. **(Applause)**

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Chief Dental Surgeon and I, and the Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique are working to ensure that there are adequate dental services starting next year, which will be offered to the people of Petite Martinique. And not just Petite Martinique, but to the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique by extension. We don't just talk, we are about action, and what took them 30 years to correct, we have done it in under 15 months. **(Applause)** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I now invite the MP for St. Andrew North West.

Hon. Delma Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it will be remiss of me if I don't stand here on behalf of the people of St. Andrew North West to pay tribute to a man who has served them well, a businessman. And I'm speaking of no other person than the late Francis Mahon, who passed away and was laid to rest last Thursday. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that I use this House, because he has given assistance to the people of the constituency of St. Andrew North West, and for this we are very thankful

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and grateful.

So many families, Mr. Speaker, apart from the regular housing programme, who had small needs, we were able to get assistance from him. There were people who had, there were children who were unable to pay the tuition fee to TAMCC, it's free now, and we are happy, but during that time, he assisted more than seven persons, paying tuition. We had in excess of five persons wanting assistance for CXC, and I was able to call him, and he was able to deliver and assist those students.

Christmas is coming, and normally, he will give back generously to the elderly, in terms of hampers, over three to four thousand dollars' worth of groceries, in hamper assistance that was given to my constituency. When schools in the constituency ask for assistance, material or otherwise, we were able to ask for donations, and we received assistance from him. At the Princess Alice Hospital, he was able to assist in retrofitting and tiling the female private block. And also, he was committed to doing the male block tiling. The hospital wasn't ready yet.

And so, Mr. Speaker, today I want to express our deepest condolences to his family, on behalf of the people of the constituency, and on my own behalf, of St. Andrew North West. We will miss a selfless and extraordinary human being. I thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Thank you very much, Honourable MP for St. Andrew North West. All right. I sense that's it. Yes. I sense no one is going to speak.

Question put and agreed to.

The Sitting of the House of Representatives adjourned sine die at 11:49 a.m.

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