



GRENADA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

**SECOND SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

TUESDAY 17TH OCTOBER, 2023

***Sitting of the House of Representatives  
held at Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's  
on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2023***

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**Sitting of the House of Representatives**  
**held at Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**  
**on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2023**

**Attendance**

**PRESENT**

Mr. Speaker  
Honourable Leo Cato, MP  
*in the Chair*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Honourable Dickon Mitchell, MP<br><i>(St. David)</i>                             | - Prime Minister & Minister for National Security, Home Affairs, Information, Disaster Management & Public Administration, Infrastructure and Physical Development, Public Utilities & Civil Aviation and Transportation |
| Honourable Philip A. Telesford, MP<br><i>(St. George South East)</i>             | - Minister for Social & Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs  |
| Honourable Lennox John Andrews, MP<br><i>(St. Andrew South West)</i>             | - Minister for Economic Development, Planning, Tourism, ICT, Creative Economy, Agriculture, Fisheries & Cooperatives   |
| Honourable Tevin Andrews, MP<br><i>(Carriacou &amp; Petite Martinique)</i>       | - Ministry of Carriacou, Petite Martinique Affairs and Local Government  |
| Honourable Ron Livingston Redhead, MP<br><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<br><i>(St. Andrew North West)</i>                    | - Member   |
| Honourable Andy Williams, MP<br><i>(St. George South)</i>                        | - Minister for Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation   |
| Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith C. Mitchell, PC, MP, JP<br><i>(St. George North West)</i> | - Leader of His Majesty's Opposition   |
| Honourable. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, MP<br><i>(St. Mark)</i>                  | - Deputy Speaker   |
| Honourable Peter David, MP<br><i>(Town of St. George)</i>                        | - Member   |
| Honourable Kate Lewis-Peters, MP<br><i>(St. Andrew North East)</i>               | - Member   |
| Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP<br><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  
(*Excused*)

Honourable Dennis Cornwall, MP  
(*St. Patrick East*)

- Minister for Finance  
(*Excused*)

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

- Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment  
and Renewable Energy  
(*Excused*)

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***Prayers  
Minutes  
Announcements***

**The Sitting of the House of Representatives began at 9:11 a.m.**

**(House Prayer was said)**

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

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Pray be seated.

**(Sound of gavel)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Parliament now convenes.

**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:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the House of Representatives relative to the Throne Speech be deferred for another Sitting. Thank you.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion approved.**

**Clerk Assistant (Ag.):** Item 5 – Messages from the Governor-General.

Item 6 – Announcements by Mr. Speaker.

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**Announcements  
Motions**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Members, I have in my position information that says Honourable Kerryne James, Honourable Joseph Andall, and Honourable Dennis Cornwall are all overseas on state business and will not be present for today's Sitting. I am also informed that the Honourable Lennox Andrews will arrive here late.

I would use this opportunity to express to Honourable Telesford, Parliament's sympathy on the passing of your dad. I know he was recently laid to rest. Just wish to convey that on behalf of the Parliament, to you and your family, and to let you know that we have you in our prayers. Those are the announcements.

**Clerk Assistant (Ag.):** Item 7 – Presentation of Petitions.

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

Item 9 – Unopposed Private Business.

Item 10 – Questions.

Item 11 – Urgent Questions under the Provisions of  
Standing Order 20 (1) (Notice of Questions).

Item 12 – Statements by Ministers.

Item 13 – Personal Explanations.

Item 14 – Motions.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move Motion 14 (a) standing in my name, which reads:

**WHEREAS** debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Second Session of the Eleventh Parliament on 26th September, 2023, was deferred to a date to be fixed;

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

**Question proposed.**

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**Mr. Speaker:** Sorry. Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Address by the Governor-General is always a prelude to the next year's appropriation. In this case, it will be for the year 2024 and the accompanying Annual Budget Debate.

This debate, Mr. Speaker, will encompass and look into many of the pronouncements made by the Governor-General. It is in this context, Mr. Speaker, that we are proposing that we accept the Governor-General's Gracious Speech with the understanding that the content of that speech will be debated in a few months. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the Standing Order of the House, section 27A, I now propose the amendment to that Motion which would read:

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the said address be now accepted.

**Question proposed.**

**(The Speaker and the Clerk converses privately)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Sorry, Honourable Members, I was confused about the date. I saw the 26th, so I had to clear it with the Clerk. It is the 27th. All right.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Sorry, I didn't see the Honourable, sorry. Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I am a bit... when you said you were confused, I am confused on another matter, another point. I thought the Motion was being deferred. So, if it is deferred for debate in the future, you're asking me to accept it now, and I have to debate it later? It does not make a lot of sense to me.

The date on which we did the Throne Speech, we did accept the Gracious Address of the Governor-General, and I think to some extent that was done, except in the Gracious Address, but I don't know why we're moving a Motion now to accept it

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again and then debate it later.

I have not seen that before, so I just point it out for what it's worth. And we were not asked about this, so I don't know.

**Mr. Speaker:** All right. So the question has been put, and I now ask for the vote. Thank you, Honourable Opposition, for your comments.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion approved.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move a Motion 14 (b) standing in my name, which reads:

**WHEREAS** Standing Order No. 69 (1) of the Standing Orders 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 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.

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

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Just give me one second, Mr. Speaker, I just want to be absolutely certain that I am putting forward the correct names. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** ...it's lower down.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker, the Standing Order in section 69 (3) identifies the Leader of the Opposition as the Chairman of the Committee. Mr. Speaker, I would like to nominate the following Members of the Committee: Honourable Peter David, Honourable Kate Lewis-Peters, Senator the Honourable Quinc Britton and Senator the Honourable Salim Rahaman. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** May I put the question first and then...

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Sorry. Your light? Sorry. Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I am really at a loss because I think we have gone through this before. We have pointed out regarding these basic nominations, if there were basic consultation, then we wouldn't be having any difficulties at all. There has been no consultation. There has simply been no consultation as far as these names are concerned.

I asked the Member for St. Mark, who is our contact with the Leader of Government's Business for such consultation, and there was none. It is a bit strange that the Standing Order says the Leader of the Opposition should be chairman. I am chairman of a committee, and I don't have a say. In the historical context of this Parliament, whenever such committees were to be appointed, there was basic consultation. There's no real massive problem with that, especially if I am chairing. I am chairing, so you just hand me a committee from the "Other Side" and there is no consultation with "This Side".

And secondly, as I pointed out, it was the late '90s when the Government then

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won 15 seats and there was no opposition. There were some modifications to make sure that there is a Public Accounts Committee, and I did point out before at a regional and international conference, Mr. Speaker, about the Public Accounts.

We were being chided for having Senators on this Committee, and we had to point out that we had 15 seats. There was no such total representation in the Commonwealth, where all Members were on one side. So we should revert to what was the practice. I pointed that out, I thought that point had gotten through, but it appears that it hasn't. So I am chairing a committee, and I have no say as to the recommendation, which is a normal thing that is done when there is an opposition.

In fact, where there was no opposition, we did consult the political organisation, which is not really something that you had to do, Mr. Speaker. But we did because we thought it was important to have this consultation to make sure that we are all on the same wavelength, so to speak. So I don't think this should be contentious, but I just have to make the point for what it's worth.

I have great difficulty operating in a manner in which the Government continues to operate, ignoring the opposition. It is not in your interest. It just does not apply to basic and fundamental issues like the appointment of a committee. Mr. Speaker, I urge you to see to it that the Members on the "Other Side" do respect the fact that we are an important part of the process, and it is in their interest. Mr. Speaker, I don't want to continue repeating myself. I make my point for what it's worth.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Leader of the Opposition. I meant to ask Honourable Leader, you said you weren't consulted? The Leader of Government's Business had proposed the Members of the Committee. Do you wish to...

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, since you asked me, I would suggest that there be a simple consultation and that we do not do it today. A simple consultative process between the Opposition and the "Government Side" and maybe the Leader of Government's Business and the Member for St. Mark. And the Member for St. Mark would, in fact, inform us. I don't personally have to be involved, but I am just making a fundamental point. So I would suggest that... I don't think we can do it here...

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**Mr. Speaker:** I get your point, Honourable Leader. But my point is that the committees have to be formed in the first Sitting. Right? The first Sitting. So this is why I wanted to see if you had any adjustments to it before I put it to the vote.

**Hon. Dr. Rt. Keith Mitchell:** I wouldn't want to do that on the open floor, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker...

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay.

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** I don't think that is fair. If I have a recommendation, why should I look as if I don't want this and I want this and I don't want that? If we hold a simple consultation, and it does not have to be me, as I said, the Member for St. Mark can be the person.

**Mr. Speaker:** Understood.

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** ...And if we want to do that before we leave here, that's fine, privately we can do it, but I don't think that... What we're doing here is almost unnecessary, and I feel bad about it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable MP for St. Mark.

**Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to make an intervention here on this matter and to ask us to recall what happened previously.

The Leader of Government's Business and I had a conversation. He recommended some names. We recommended some names, and we held discussions privately before coming public here in this Honourable House. For some reason, it didn't happen this time, and I think it is lamentable. However, I think we need to see how we can salvage the matter, and I don't think it can be done here in public. It should not be done. I don't think it is tidy.

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I want to suggest that we either have a quick recess, deal with it, or continue with the other matters, and allow some time for discussion at a convenient time today, so that before this Sitting is finished, we would have dealt with the matter. I think that might be more palatable for Members rather than discuss it in the open like that. I thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Mark. Is it Honourable MP, is your reference to the Public Accounts Committee or all committees?

**Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen:** Mr. Speaker, I am bearing in mind that there are other committees, and so similar to this situation, there will be a recurring decimal. So I think what I suggested would resolve all of it in a private sitting, and then report to this Honourable House.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay. All right, Honourable Members, this House is now in recess.

**House adjourned at 9:32 a.m.**

**House resumes at 10:00 a.m.**

**Mr. Speaker:** We broke on a matter of Motions, we had a Motion tabled before us by the Leader of Government's Business. We now invite the Leader of Government's Business to proceed.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take it that we will do the Resolution all over again from the beginning.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** That being said, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move Motion No. 14 (b) standing in my name, which reads;

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**WHEREAS** Standing Order No. 69 (1) of the Standing Orders 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 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.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Speaker:** No, not there. Honourable Leader of Government's Business, could you just move down?

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Standing Order in section 69 (3) identifies the Leader of the Opposition as Chairman of the Committee. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to nominate the following additional Members to the committee. Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, Honourable Kate Lewis-Peters, Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair and Senator the Honourable Salim Rahaman.

Might I add, Mr. Speaker, because I do not believe that we are yet settled it is proper protocol to add that these two Senators, Mr. Speaker, is added consistent with the Standing Order No. 69 (3) (ii) in which it states, "The Chairman of the

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Committee shall be the Leader of the Opposition in the House, if any, and if willing to serve. The Public Accounts Committee may comprise of a Chairman and other Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, as the House of Representatives may determine.”

Right? And we understand, Mr. Speaker, that earlier in subsection (1) of the said Public Accounts Committee, it states, “None of the members shall be a member of Cabinet, a Minister or a Parliamentary Secretary.” So, in this context, Mr. Speaker, it only leaves that the two Honourable Senators be properly nominated. Thank you.

**Question proposed.**

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** I have to comment.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr. Rt. Keith Mitchell:** For the record, Mr. Speaker, and for the last time commenting on this. When the Standing Order was changed, and the Government then decided to appoint Senators because we had no Members who were elected on the Opposition Side to sit on such a Committee, we did make the appointment, and later on the Standing Order was changed to give legal effect to what we had done. That’s the reason you have the Standing Order. So it is not difficult to do the same thing.

I want to make this point, since you have insisted that Senators should be on, I think justifiably so, I think it has to be two Senators that are not appointed by the Government, so that, in fact, is the correct approach. My point is we should have gone to the normal practice that was done scores of years ago. That’s my concern, and I just wanted it to go on the record accordingly.

**Mr. Speaker:** All right. Thank you, Leader of the Opposition. I now take the vote.

**Question put and agreed to.**

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**Motion approved.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to comment, in respect of the Standing Order, that the new Committee which would be appointed today should move expeditiously to revise the Standing Order so that we do not have a continuous repeat of this situation. That being said, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move Motion 14 (c) standing in my name, which reads;

**WHEREAS** Standing Order No. 70 (1) of the House of Representatives Standing Orders provides 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 may be after the beginning of each session;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** this Honourable House doth now appoint the Members to the said Committee.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

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

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** this Honourable House now appoint the following Members to the Committee in accordance with Standing Order No. 70 (1). Honourable Delma Thomas, Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, of course, Mr. Speaker, the Speaker being the Chairman of the said Committee.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion approved.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

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**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move Motion No. 14 (d) standing in my name, which reads;

**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 the House Committee;

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

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Mr. Speaker.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** this Honourable House now appoint the four Members to the Committee. They are: Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, Honourable Kerryne James, Honourable Joseph Andall, and Honourable Emmalin Pierre, under the Chairmanship of the Honourable Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion approved.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move Motion No.14 (e) standing in my name, which reads,

**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** this Honourable House doth now appoint the four Members to the said Committee.

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***Bills: Licences (Amendment) Bill, 2023***

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

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

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** this Honourable House now appoint Honourable Andy Williams, Honourable Ron Redhead, Honourable Peter David and Honourable Kate Lewis-Peters under the Chairmanship of the Honourable Speaker. Thank you.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion approved.**

**Clerk Assistant (Ag.):** Item 15 – Bills.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to move the first reading for a Bill shortly entitled Licences (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

**Clerk:** A Bill which seeks to amend the Licences Act CAP. 172 ("the principal Act") to exempt all attorneys-at-law from the requirement to take out a professional licence and pay a yearly licence fee in respect of the provision of legal services, shortly entitled Licences (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

**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 suspended to take this Bill through all of its stages. Thank you.

**Question put and agreed to.**

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***Bills: Licences (Amendment) Bill, 2023***

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill contains five clauses...

**(Inaudible comment by Mr. Speaker)**

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

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill contains five clauses. Clause 1 is broken up into two subsections. Subsection (1) of clause 1 speaks to the short title of the Bill. Clause 1, subsection (2), seeks to provide for the Act to come into force on such date as may be appointed by the Minister by Order published in the *Gazette*.

Clause 2, Mr. Speaker, seeks to amend section 2 of the principal Act to insert a definition for the term "Minister" and define the same as the Minister with responsibility for Finance.

Mr. Speaker, clause 3 of this Bill seeks to amend section 5 of the principal Act to exempt all barristers, solicitors or attorneys-at-law from the legal requirement of taking out a professional licence and paying a yearly licence fee in respect of the provision of legal services.

Mr. Speaker, this exemption is done so as to accommodate regulations S.R.&O 31 of 2023. On the 11th of August, 2023, Mr. Speaker, the legal profession practicing certificate fees regulations, 2023, S.R.&O 31 of 2023, the regulations came into force pursuant to regulations 3 and 4 of the regulations, Mr. Speaker, attorneys-at-law are

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required to pay the following annual fees to the Government of Grenada in order to be issued a practicing certificate.

This new regulation, Mr. Speaker, treats with a practicing certificate which will be obtained by attorneys-at-law and members of the legal profession. Prior to this, Mr. Speaker, Members within the legal profession were required to pay an annual licence fee and to obtain an annual licence. Under this new regulation, Mr. Speaker, there is a fee structure that is set in place, which takes into account the number of years that one is in practice, and a fee is applied consistent with the number of years that members are in practice.

Mr. Speaker, in actual fact, if one is practising for a period less than five years at the Bar, one would be required to pay EC\$250. If one is practising for five years or less 10, a fee of EC\$350 would be applied. If one is practising for 10 to 15 years at the Bar, a fee of EC\$500 would be applied, and in cases where members are practising in excess of 15 years, which is 16 years and more, the fee of EC\$750 will be applied.

This new fee structure, Mr. Speaker, is much fairer than what was obtained previously. Previously, Mr. Speaker, all Members were required to pay a flat fee of EC\$1,000. This is now applied to the number of years in practice at the Bar.

Mr. Speaker, Part II of the First Schedule spoke to a number of trades, callings and professions in which professionals are required to pay this annual licensing fee to the Government Treasury. For example, accountants EC\$1,000, architects EC\$1,000, auctioneers EC\$1,000, auditors EC\$1,500, blasting brewers, and so on, and so on. And so, there are a number of... And it is listed in alphabetical order.

So what this is doing, Mr. Speaker, this new Bill is now exempting members of the legal profession from falling under that particular fee structure, but in essence applying a new fee structure based on the number of years in practice at the Bar, which is much more equitable.

I move to clause 4. Clause 4, Mr. Speaker, seeks to amend Part II of the First Schedule to remove barristers, solicitors and attorneys from the list of traders, professions or callings in respect of which this EC\$1,000 fee was applied.

And clause 5, Mr. Speaker, seeks to repeal the Licences Act of 2014 in respect of S.R.&O No. 20 of 2014, which was implicitly repealed and replaced by S.R.&O. No.

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27 of 2014 due to an error in respect of the executing Minister. Although no express provision, of course, Mr. Speaker, to that effect was made, but in looking at the regulations, one would understand that particular repeal had to be made, strictly in legal terms.

The requirement to pay two sets of annual professional fees is quite onerous for the Members of the legal profession. The intention of receiving this practising certificate, Mr. Speaker, is to replace the outgoing fees and have the legal profession have a practising certificate giving them the rights to practice and the accompanying fees that go along with it. So, essentially, Mr. Speaker, this is what the Bill consists of: the amendment to these fees, moving away from the licensing and moving towards obtaining a practising certificate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Leader of Government's Business. Honourable MP for St. Andrew South East.

**Hon. Emmalin Pierre:** Mr. Speaker, I rise. I know it is straightforward, and I can see the expression that we shouldn't have further discussion. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a few comments as it relates to this particular Bill that is before us, Licences (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

Mr. Speaker, while I have absolutely no objection to what was done for the lawyers and barristers, solicitors this morning, we are knocking off EC\$1,000 and we're replacing that with a scheme that goes from EC\$250 to EC\$750. I mean, kudos to those who would benefit from this, Mr. Speaker. So we understand that what we are doing, we are now going according to the legal profession regulations and the rates that are captured there. So absolutely, no objection. I am quite comfortable with this.

But, Mr. Speaker, as the Member explained and got to the point of barristers and we removing that, and then he went on to refer to accountants, I sat and I was getting a bit comfortable because I thought that he was going to add that some accommodation similarly, because he used the word equitable. He used the word fair that we are making this amendment. So I thought if we're taking fair, then we're going to be looking across the board.

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So, a young accountant, for example, who is just setting up practice, or a young doctor just setting up practice, means that those two persons within the first five years will have to pay EC\$1,000. The lawyer who is benefiting here is now going to be paying \$250. Mr. Speaker, I am just saying, let's leave it at \$250 for the lawyers, but let us consider a similar arrangement, what you refer to as fair and equitable, in terms of a schedule based on years of practice for a young practising private doctor or a practising accountant. **(Applause)** So that was the first thing, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, while we are on this subject, because we do know that some of these people who are getting into practice struggle to start. So, we've made it fairer. We've made it more equitable for the lawyers. Let us do it for all these other people who are listed there who have to pay the EC\$1,000. And you might say to me in defence, Mr. Speaker, that lawyers have other fees that they have to pay that don't come to the Government, and yes, that is so, and so do other professions as well, Mr. Speaker.

But what is critical to note, Mr. Speaker. We cannot treat this as an even playing field or a level playing field as it relates to income. Hence the reason I am saying, fair, equitable, great for the lawyers, but let's take it across the board and reconsider what is happening to the other professions especially as I said for the person who is getting into business within that first five year period as they struggle to get out of the red.

But, Mr. Speaker, more importantly, I want to draw attention to a related matter, and that matter has to do with a category of persons who have to be licensed. And I am referring here, Mr. Speaker, to the Health Practitioners Act S.R.O. 45, Health Practitioners Order. Mr. Speaker, I want the same spirit of fairness, equity, caring for the lawyers which I support, I want that same spirit, Mr. Speaker, to follow as it relates to this category of persons.

So, for example, we speak about athletic trainers, personal trainers, barbers, hairdressers, make-up artists, nail technicians, pedicurists, beauty therapists, speech and language therapists, tattoo artists, not too interested in that one personally, Mr. Speaker, but I make the point. Mr. Speaker, these people, come the end of November, would be required to pay for the first time the licence fee. Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a category of people, and not wanting to make any comparison with the lawyers because I've already given my support to this, but we are talking about a category of

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people, Mr. Speaker, that we know many of them are struggling.

You go to Grenville right now, Mr. Speaker, and some of them, I don't have to ask, have not had one client for the day. Mr. Speaker, come the end of November, these people will be required to come up with EC\$750. Let's remember the number, \$750, that they must pay upfront to get their licence. But, Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, they will be required to spend over EC\$1000 more to meet the other requirements to get that licence. And, Mr. Speaker, these other requirements, for example, they have to get insurance coverage.

Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure, I'm certain...

**Mr. Speaker:** Sorry, I was not seeing your light. Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** You rise on?

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** I draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to Standing Order No. 39. All right.

**Mr. Speaker:** You rise on a Point of Order?

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** On a Point of Order, I draw your attention to...

**Mr. Speaker:** 39?

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Standing Order No. 39, which speaks to the scope of the debate. 39 (1) and it reads, Mr. Speaker, "Debate upon any Motion, Bill or Amendment shall be relevant to such Motion, Bill or Amendment, except in the case of a Motion for the Adjournment of the House". In this context, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Member is violating that particular Standard Order. Thanks.

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**Mr. Speaker:** All right. Honourable MP, please proceed.

**Hon. Emmalin Pierre:** Mr. Speaker, all I'll say to this is, even if the Member was thinking what I'm saying is irrelevant, he should not have said it publicly. Even if you're thinking that it's irrelevant to make a request on behalf of a category of people, who I just said, for the day so far, I am certain that they have not had a client and the same thing that we are doing here this morning, Mr. Speaker, which is to make things a little fairer, a little better, a little more accommodating, a little more equitable for the lawyers and the baristas and the solicitors, I'm simply saying, Mr. Speaker, while we do that let us consider also a few other groups of persons.

And I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, well, it's irrelevant, so maybe it would not be considered. But I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, at least what we can do is to consider. I'm not saying that we change it here today, but I'm saying let's go back and reconsider what is before us as it relates to S.R.&O 44, I believe it is.

But, Mr. Speaker, what is relevant also is that these persons have to do this by the end of November. And what is the penalty? What are they facing? The people who until this hour may not have had a client for the day, what are they facing? Mr. Speaker, a maximum of three years' imprisonment. What are they facing? Mr. Speaker, a maximum of EC\$100,000 in fines if they do not apply for their licence.

So, Mr. Speaker, I make the point and reiterate the point that is extremely relevant that persons in other categories be considered as we are on this move to make fairer and more equitable as was stated by the Member, the fees for licencing categories of workers, or categories of businesses, categories of business persons particularly, professions particularly as we said the lawyer.

I close, Mr. Speaker, reiterating that I said when I started that I support the reduction as it relates to the lawyers. You may argue, Mr. Speaker, and say, it is not a reduction, it's a replacement. Well, if I had to pay EC\$1000, and in reality, I would have had to pay EC\$1000 plus EC\$750 in the case of a lawyer practising over sixteen years, 1000 plus 750, now thankfully, that lawyer will just be paying EC\$750. Thank you. **(Applause)**

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**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable MP. Honourable MP for Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

**Hon. Tevin Andrews:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to support the Bill proposed, the Licences (Amendment) Bill 2023. I heard my colleague on the “Other Side”, Mr. Speaker, making, you know, a lot of assertions. But I just want to remind the Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill that is being presented here today is to address an anomaly, sorry, that has arisen as a result of a number of things.

One of them, Mr. Speaker, has to do with double fees that the legal professionals have to pay. Now it is unreasonable that legal professionals are currently obligated to pay two sets of annual fees under the Licences Act and the Legal Profession Act, and just to practice, just to practice, it is unfair. And I am sure that my good friend, through you, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Peter David, would agree with me on this one because it is unfair. As a result of that, we are taking this action to amend the Licences Act, Mr. Speaker, which, of course, will bring some relief.

Now, if we want to change the fees, I believe that the fees under the Licences Act are a decision for Parliament to make. But as it relates to the Legal Professional Act, which we are proposing, that decision, of course, Mr. Speaker, is left up to the General Legal Counsel, if I'm not mistaken, so that we could suddenly have conversations on those matters.

But I support the amendments, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that they will bring some relief to the legal professionals. I do think it's unjust for the double fees, taking into account that they would, based on the law, have to now pay two sets of annual fees in order to practice. This amendment is basically saying, we will focus more on the Legal Professional Act, which ensures that they will be subject to those regulations and pay those fees under that Act and not the double tax, yes, or pay double fees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, MP for Carriacou and Petite Martinique. MP for the Town of St. George.

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**Hon. Peter David:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Morning, Mr. Speaker, morning to everyone. Mr. Speaker, I just rise in support of the amendment to the Bill. I want to support my sister here in what she indicated, which was support for the amendment, but to call for the same latitude, compassion that... Remember, we also passed the Legal Professional Bill; it is we who did it. It's not something that was imposed on us, so we passed one, we passed the other, and we choose now to amend the one with the EC\$1000, which is commendable. So it is not as if we have to amend one and not the other; we could have done it another way. We could have amended the Legal Act, too, to come up to EC\$1000, but we didn't, and we are not calling for that.

I'm just addressing the issue raised by my brother from Carriacou and Petite Martinique that this is not something that was imposed on us. So we made a choice now to amend it in a way that we believe is equitable. That I think is laudable. I think what my sister is calling for is an extension of that compassion beyond simply attorneys.

You know, I said to some colleagues that the legal profession, as the medical profession used to be, back in the day, 50, 60 years ago, was a small group of people, a very elitist profession of doctors. I remember Maurice Bishop giving a speech when he went to the airport to see the first set of students going off to Cuba in 1979. He said he saw this lady crying, and he asked her why she was crying. She said she never thought somebody like her would live to see her child going to study to become a doctor. Prior to that, doctors were a very small elite group. Now we have doctors across the board, some making a lot of money, some not making so much money. We have a lot of lawyers, some making a lot of money and some making not so much money, struggling to survive, struggling to pay their bills.

So I think this is an excellent proposal, especially the Act to grade it. You know, 50, 60 years ago, there were five, 10 lawyers in town, and everybody had to go to them. So they were scooping up all the money, all the cases that were around. So I want to extend to say that I do support what was said by my colleague. And as an attorney, I mean, I am sure there are quite a lot of attorneys who can afford the \$1000 but there are some who will struggle to pay that one thousand because of the years in practice they haven't gotten themselves up and going, they're still working for somebody for a few thousand dollars a month and that would dig into it.

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So I agree with it, but I also ask for a similar review of persons other than attorneys who would find themselves in a similar position and that I believe is very, very relevant to this debate because as we seek to respond to what you hear out there that we are in some difficult times, as you respond to it, you respond to it in a way that is broadly equitable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable MP, for the Town of St. George, just turn your light off. Leader of His Majesty's Opposition.

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I just stand to, of course, give my full support to the comments raised by my two other colleagues who spoke before me. Mr. Speaker, I was a bit surprised when my brother, Member for St. George South East, attempted to get up on a point of order, and something to me is interesting to hear and to even agree to that is something we should look at. In fact, you know, sometimes we do things with good intentions, Mr. Speaker, but in our society, things can be twisted easily.

You know, what the perception could be, even if a man does not even read this? Well, you see, the Prime Minister is a lawyer; he is taking care of his friends. That is the perception that is going to... In other words, what the Member is saying would reduce that perception or the possibility of anyone attempting to do this. Because people don't listen to the rationale we talk about here. All the rationales given and the justifiable reasons for this modification are that lawyers are being paid less now, the Prime Minister's lawyer, and maybe you never know, you might say Peter is getting something too, you never know.

So, I'm saying it is a good suggestion to examine other areas of the license that may be something that you can look at to adjust in the future. I would have hoped that it would be nice if you came here with additional areas of licences, I think it would be more appropriate and so on.

But the other point I want to make is that sometimes we have a phase. We go to Parliament, we pass... The question is, are people paying, are they paying? In other words, we reduce or you may increase, but if you are paying, then I don't know that the emphasis should be just on the adjustment; it should also be on ensuring that

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people pay what they are supposed to pay, because that's an area of serious consideration.

I know that, having been Minister for Finance for several years, a lot of the time you hear people talking about the Government not doing this, the Government not doing this, but when it comes to basic things like meeting a little bit of their responsibilities, they don't do it. I'm not suggesting that lawyers in general do it because I have not seen the numbers, so I can't say that lawyers are not meeting that responsibility. But I suggest it is an area you should give to the Minister for Finance, who is not here to examine that aspect.

So, supporting the Members for their comments on this. It's all right to do what we're doing with respect to the legal situation, but examining other areas would be, to me, very important, and I think that's the suggestion. So I suggest to my friend I think should have been your partner today, not the other way around. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Leader of His Majesty's Opposition. Is it the Prime Minister's light?

**Hon. Dickon Mitchell:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Bill and I also take in good steps the comments made by our distinguished colleagues on the "Other Side" and in particular the comments of the Leader of His Majesty's Opposition. Because I think one of the key things that is perhaps not being made clear here is that the effect of the requirement for practicing certificate and the payment of the fee together with other conditions is that if an attorney at law does not pay the fees and does not have proof, for example, that he's paid his professional indemnity insurance he will not be issued a practicing certificate and he or she will not be able to practice. So it is actually giving teeth to make sure that the collections and the payment of the sum happen.

The current Licensing Act, unfortunately, actually does not have any teeth because you'll see there a whole host of professions that are listed there, and to a large extent, if people don't pay, they'll just continue practising. In fact, if you go and look at the Healthcare Profession Act, currently, when it speaks to registration as a

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doctor, etcetera., there is no fee associated with that. There's a requirement for doctors, for example, to have medical professional insurance; many doctors here don't have it, they don't buy it, and they practice. In the current construct, there's also a requirement for lawyers that professional indemnity insurance, and many of them don't have it, and they still practice.

So the intent of having the practising certificate take effect, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that, in fact, the legal profession is actually regulated more strictly by ensuring that Attorneys at Law comply with their obligations under the law to make sure that they meet the requirements for practising. It just so happens that by having the practising certificate fees and the licensing fees, a situation arose where there are two sets of fees, and obviously, the request was to have one set of fees.

Now, as to the recommendation for the fees and the tiered structure that would have come from the council and that in fact did not come from the Government and so I am in a sense agnostic as to whether or not the fee should have remained the same under the Licences Act or whether it should have affected. My friend might say I am agnostic now because I'm in this forum. **(Laughter)** You know, but the idea really, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that there is in fact compliance.

And as to the general comments, maybe it might be an opportunity for us to review all professions that provide critical services to the public. For example, accountants. I'm not aware of any legislation governing accountants. Real estate agents and brokers, everybody is a real estate agent these days, everybody is selling land, brokering land for commission, and it's unregulated. I know the Grenada Real Estate Group has been seeking to get legislation passed to regulate that sector as well.

So I certainly think the comments are made in good intent, and it is something that I think we can have wider discussions on and consultation on as to how we get more of the professions and the professionals who provide service to the public to be regulated and accountable. And we can talk about the construction industry, for example, I mean anybody can walk in and say that they are a plumber, an electrician, or a carpenter and take people's money, and the house collapses, rather than going to court. There are literally no regulations. So there is certainly a need for us to address that, and of course, to make sure that the fees are reasonable, because you

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don't want to discourage people from practising their trade.

So I certainly support the Bill, and I think we can take the comments made in good steps. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister. All right. I think the debate has concluded in my view.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just rise to offer my appreciation to Members of this Honourable House for their contributions to this Bill this morning. The contributions have been properly received, and I just want to say thanks to Members on both sides of the House. Thanks.

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

**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 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.

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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. Thank you.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to introduce for its first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Fiscal Resilience Bill, 2023.

**Clerk:** A Bill which seeks to repeal and replace the Fiscal Responsibility Act No. 29 of 2015 to strengthen the rules-based fiscal policy framework and its accompanying risk management systems, shortly entitled, Fiscal Resilience Bill, 2023.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Mr. Speaker, that particular Bill we wish to take it at a subsequent Sitting of Parliament. So in this context, Mr. Speaker, I wish to introduce for its first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Public Finance Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

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**(Honourable Philip Telesford conversing with Prime Minister Honourable Dickon Mitchell)**

**(The Speaker and the Clerk converses privately)**

**Clerk:** A Bill which seeks to amend the Public Finance Management Act No. 17 of 2015, shortly entitled, Public Finance Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I am not having a good day today. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of this Honourable House be suspended to enable 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:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of this Bill.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

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**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Public Finance Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023 seeks to amend the Public Finance Management Act No. 17 of 2015 which is the principal Act and sets out three main objectives.

Objective one, Mr. Speaker, is to reform matters relating to the medium-term fiscal framework, and two, to consolidate various reports into the medium-term economic and fiscal strategy report. And finally, the repositioning and expansion of the obligation to prepare a post-election report.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, contains 11 clauses. Clause 1, Mr. Speaker, provides for a short title of which this is the Bill. Clause 2, Mr. Speaker, seeks to amend section 2 of the principal Act to revise the definition of “public-private partnership” for consistency with the Fiscal Resilience Act. Mr. Speaker, section 2 of the principal Act is amended by deleting the old definition of public-private partnership and substituting, therefore, this new definition.

So under this new definition, Mr. Speaker, public-private partnership means, a long-term contract between a private entity or private party and Government or a statutory body or state-owned enterprises, for providing a managing of a public asset and associated services which shall be on terms and conditions which will be approved by Cabinet”.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, it seeks to insert the following seven new definitions, thus adding clarity and strength to the Bill.

- (1) Contingent liabilities;
- (2) Explicit contingent liabilities;
- (3) Fiscal Resilience Act;
- (4) Fiscal Resilience Oversight Committee;
- (5) Medium-term economic and fiscal strategy report;
- (6) Medium-term fiscal framework; and
- (7) Public debt.

By inserting, Mr. Speaker, these seven new definitions in the appropriate alphabetical order, it will add much more clarity and broaden the scope of this particular legislation.

Contingent liability, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I will attempt to go through

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these definitions so that we understand, Mr. Speaker, what the Bill is actually seeking to do and the scope that is embodied in this Bill.

The meaning of contingent liability, Mr. Speaker, speaks to financial obligations which arise by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of Central Government, and includes the following, debt guarantees, demand or price guarantees, and termination clauses or other default provisions that could imply a transfer of liabilities to Central Government, including financial obligations arising as a result or a result of or in connection with public-private partnerships, but excludes letters of comfort.

So, Mr. Speaker, this new definition broadens the scope of liabilities under the Government's control because it speaks to uncertain future events. It speaks to events that occur as well as those that did not occur. It speaks to the guarantees, and it speaks to termination clauses as per contracts.

Next definition, Mr. Speaker, refers now to explicit contingent liabilities. Explicit contingent liabilities mean those legal obligations for the Central Government which require the Central Government to make a payment only if a particular event occurs. That's an explicit contingent liability.

The next definition, Mr. Speaker, is the Fiscal Resilience Act, which is basically the Fiscal Resilience Act of 2023. That particular Act, Mr. Speaker, we will take up at the next Sitting. We spoke about it just a moment ago. Most of these terms, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, these Bills are all interlocked and interrelated, and they speak to stronger, better governance and greater financial prudence.

Fourthly, Mr. Speaker, Fiscal Resilience Oversight Committee. It means the Fiscal Resilience Oversight Committee, which is preserved, or continued and renamed under section 12 (1) of the Fiscal Resilience Act.

The medium-term economic and physical strategy report means the medium-term economic and fiscal strategy report prepared in accordance with section 12A of the Act.

Six, Mr. Speaker, medium-term fiscal framework. It means the medium-term fiscal framework prepared in accordance with section 12.

And public debt. Mr. Speaker, public debt all direct liabilities of Central Government, statutory bodies and state-owned enterprises, including advances,

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arrears, compensation claims, finance leases, Government securities, loans, overdrafts, promissory notes, and supplier's credit agreements and contingent liabilities, including explicit contingent liabilities arising as a result of or in connection with public-private partnerships.

So, Mr. Speaker, this new definition for public debt is consistent with the definitions in the Fiscal Resilience Bill as well as the Public Debt Management Bill of 2023. I refer now to clause 3 of the Bill.

Clause 3, Mr. Speaker, seeks to amend section 4 (b) of the principal Act by deleting the words "medium-term budget framework". Essentially, Mr. Speaker, what we are trying to do is to remove the budget and replace it with that of fiscal giving it a broader scope, Mr. Speaker. So it deletes the word or the phrase medium-term budget framework and replaces it with medium-term fiscal framework, the same applies in clause 4, Mr. Speaker.

Clause 4 seeks to amend section 10 subsection (3) (a) of the principal Act by deleting "medium-term budget framework" and replacing it with "medium-term fiscal framework".

Clause 5, Mr. Speaker. Clause 5 seeks to amend Part III of the principal Act by deleting the heading "Medium-Term Budget Framework and Budget Preparation" and substituting it with "Medium-Term Fiscal Framework and Budget Preparation". All of these are seeking to do, Mr. Speaker, is expand the scope and the depth of work to be done.

We move to clause 6, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in clause 6, clause 6 seeks to repeal and substitute section 12 of the principal Act with a completely new section 12, but in essence, retaining all of the text that is there, but adding about four or so new subsections under section 12. Again, with the intention of broadening the scope and the responsibility upon Government with the intention of underscoring fiscal prudence. I will focus, therefore, only on the new additions that are included in this particular section, section 12.

So section 12, Mr. Speaker, just for us to understand, we are talking about clause 6, Mr. Speaker, which speaks to repeal and substitute section 12 of the principal Act for this new section 12, and here are the new additions under that. So we keep 1 and 2 subsection (3), so section 12 (3) without prejudice to the generality of subsection

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(1) the medium-term fiscal framework shall contain the Government fiscal policy objective over the medium-term a statement showing the progress made towards compliance with the fiscal roles and targets under the Fiscal Resilience Act and the strategies and priorities for achieving its fiscal objectives setting out the medium-term microeconomic forecast for the following.

So, Mr. Speaker, this subsection seeks to implement additional responsibilities on Central Government by showing the progress made towards compliance with the fiscal rules. So there is now, Mr. Speaker, a requirement to show compliance with the fiscal rules, whether we achieved our targets or missed our targets, or whether we are in compliance altogether. And it seeks to also set out the medium-term microeconomic forecast for the following areas: real GDP growth, inflation, Central Government revenue and expenditure, the overall fiscal balance, the primary balance, and the stock of public debt. So you see the scope increasing, Mr. Speaker.

Subsection (4), Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding what is captured under subsection (3) (f), which speaks to the stock of public debt. Subsection (4) (3) the medium-term fiscal framework shall present and report separately on the following;

- (1) The public debt attributable to Central government, separate reporting;
- (2) Public debt attributable to Statutory Bodies and the State-owned Enterprises, and the corresponding annual ceiling of the debt.

Subsection (5). Subsection (5), Mr. Speaker, prior to the finalisation of the medium-term fiscal framework and no later than six months before the commencement of the new fiscal year, the Minister shall cause a draft of the medium-term fiscal framework to be submitted to the Fiscal Resilience Oversight Committee for review. What is it doing? Put in timelines. It is now saying we must increase or improve our fiscal discipline and our reporting discipline.

Subsection (6). Within two weeks, Mr. Speaker, of receipt of the draft of the medium-term fiscal framework submitted in accordance with subsection (5), the Fiscal Resilience Oversight Committee (FROC) shall prepare and submit to the Permanent Secretary a written assessment of the draft. FROC must now, within two weeks, supply a written assessment of the draft fiscal framework to the Permanent Secretary.

Seven, Mr. Speaker, subsection (7), no later than five months before the commencement of the new fiscal year, the Minister shall submit the medium-term

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fiscal framework to Cabinet for approval. See what this is doing, Mr. Speaker? This particular clause 6 is seeking to improve the discipline in reporting, is seeking to broaden the scope of reporting, and I'll leave it at that. So it has broadened, there is a broadening of the responsibility under clause 7, clause 7, Mr. Speaker.

Clause 7, Mr. Speaker, is now seeking to create a new section under section 12 called section 12 (a) of the principal Act. This principal Act is amended by inserting after section 12 the following medium-term economic and fiscal strategy report. 12 (a) (1) reads that the Minister shall cause to be prepared a medium-term economic and fiscal strategy report to be laid before the House of Representatives for approval, along with the presentation of the annual budget. Two documents, Budget, and now that report. So it's causing the Government to be much more responsible than it was previously.

Secondly, you're now required to report or to publish on the official website of the Government no later than two weeks after being laid in accordance with paragraph A above, which is the laying at the House of Representatives alongside the Budget. What is this doing, Mr. Speaker? It is speaking to the whole question of transparency. So all and sundry can now go onto the Government website and see this report, read it and understand it, and ask questions. This is what transparent governance speaks to.

12 (a) (2), Mr. Speaker. The medium-term economic and fiscal strategy report under subsection shall contain the following;

- (a) An updated medium-term fiscal framework;
- (b) A review of the consolidated financial performance of state-owned enterprises and statutory bodies. Consolidated position of Government and;
- (c) A compliance statement. Are we in compliance? A compliance statement showing the manner in which the annual Budget and the medium-term fiscal framework are in compliance with the fiscal rules and targets under the Fiscal Resilience Act. And again I say at this point, that that particular Act we will consider at the next Sitting. Just giving it some time because we understand the importance of these new pieces of legislation and what it will do in respect of our own stewardship as Ministers of Government or as a Parliament, as a matter of fact.

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(d) A fiscal risk assessment. Everything these days, Mr. Speaker, anything to do with financial matters, you must now consider risk as an important factor in financial dealings. And so, a statement of your risk position or your risk assessment must now be laid, and it reflects the sensitivity of economic and fiscal forecast to changes in the economic outlook in respect of economic shocks and economic conditions.

(1) Exposure. Exposure of the Government to contingent liabilities that we spoke to earlier, including the guarantees and those obligations.

(2) Our own fiscal risk as a Government arising from within the financial sector, statutory bodies, state-owned enterprises, and so on. So that risk assessment, Mr. Speaker, must now be done across Government, Central Government, statutory bodies, and state-owned enterprises.

(3) Mr. Speaker, any commitment unaccounted for in the economic and fiscal forecast. Any commitment that Government makes must now be recorded.

(4) Any other circumstances that may have a material effect. Any circumstances that have a material effect on the economic and fiscal forecast and are unaccounted for in the economic and fiscal forecast presented.

(5) And finally, decisions and measures of Cabinet or the Minister to manage fiscal risk. All of these must not be reported on.

Now move to clause 7. So, Mr. Speaker, you see what is happening. This Bill or these set of Bills, the intention, Mr. Speaker, is to broaden the scope and to cause Government to act. It creates a prudent and risk-based approach to governance.

Clause 8. Clause 8, Mr. Speaker, seeks to repeal and substitute section 16 of the principal Act with this new section, the budget preparation cycle. The budget preparation cycle shall consist of the following two phases, and again, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding that we are repealing and replacing this particular section. The constructor of this new insertion basically takes subsections (a) and (b) in the previous legislation, merges them into one, and improves or increases the requirements under the section. By this, I mean adding a new subsection or sub-subsection which requires the preparation of a medium-term fiscal framework in accordance with the rules and targets under the Fiscal Resilience Act. Again, adding to reporting and strengthening

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governance.

Clause 9, Mr. Speaker, almost there. Amendment to section 25 of the principal Act. Clause 9, Mr. Speaker, seeks to amend section 25 (1) of the principal Act, by deleting the words medium-term fiscal and budget framework and replacing it or substituting therefore, with medium-term fiscal framework, similar to the change made earlier.

Clause 10, treats with the insertion of a new section 25A of the principal Act or to the principal Act by inserting the following new section, post-election report, new section, post-election report, 25A. This, Mr. Speaker, this post-election report is one of the most critical components in this Bill, notwithstanding that all of the changes are very significant, but this one is extremely important, and you will see why. 25A reads, "At the Sitting immediately following the first Sitting of the new Parliament following a general election, the Minister shall prepare and submit to Parliament a post-election report setting out the following:" See what is happening here? There is a requirement now to set out a report immediately following a general election. The following;

(a) Updated macroeconomic forecast and assumptions from the medium-term economic and fiscal strategy or midyear report, whichever is most recent;

(b) Updated fiscal information to include the following;

1. Government revenue outturns and forecasts for the current year and for the next two years;
2. Government expenditure outturns and forecasts, current year and for the next two years;
3. Primary balance forecast for the current and for the next two years;
4. Outstanding debt stock in respect of public debt.

(c) An update of the fiscal risk position compared to the fiscal strategy report and the annual budget. So you see, Mr. Speaker, this is going back to the positioning of risk assessment at every level;

(d) The progress expected to be made towards compliance, underpinned again, Mr. Speaker, by the word compliance or the responsibility to be compliant with the fiscal rules and targets under the Fiscal Resilience Act.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, clause 11, amendment to the Schedule to the Principal Act. Paragraph (1) (a) of the Schedule to the Principal Acts is amended by deleting

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the word “medium term budget framework paper” and substituting therefore with the words Medium Term Fiscal Framework. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Leader of Government’s Business. Honourable MP for the Constituency of St. Mark.

**Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make comments on the Bill as presented by the Member, the Leader of Government’s Business. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed Government’s responsibility to competently and responsibly manage the finances of the nation, and also to report on it. And, Mr. Speaker, we now have the Fiscal Resilience Bill, which was read for the first time, which replaces the Fiscal Responsibility Act, which existed for some time before. And so, successive governments have exercised their duties to respond to that duty of government. And we are again before that kind of duty, to pass these Bills in Parliament.

The three Bills before... Well, there were how many bills? Four Bills? We did the Licences (Amendment) Bill before, and the Fiscal Resilience Bill was read for the first time, and then the Public Debt Management Bill is to follow the Public Finance Management (Amendment) Bill. And all of these are speaking... It's a package. Might deal with different aspects, but they speak to the prudent management of the nation's resources.

And, Mr. Speaker, the persons who are very well versed with financial matters, with economics, and so on, would easily breeze through these Bills and understand them. For some of us, it takes a little more time. And maybe I'm the only Member who it who took quite a bit of time, to go over and to look for some of the differences, some of the, the changes in words, I must confess, I didn't understand what was the content, the context for the change, but we take it all in good faith.

However, Mr. Speaker, we are on “This Side”. We would have liked to see some consultation. This is a commitment that Government is making to the nation to have certain tasks, certain duties performed in certain timelines. And the Bill is for just not us in Parliament. It's for the nation, the people out there, the people we serve, the people who are responsible for having us here. I really would have liked to see these

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Bills, these three Bills packaged together, presented here for first reading, and a bit of time allowed for consultation, for explanations, whatever is required, so that persons have a general understanding. Some may have more of an understanding after it than others, but at least a basic understanding of what the government proposes to do.

And also, when the report comes, has there been compliance with fiscal rules? Has there been non-compliance? Have we fallen short? Then they can measure the performance of the Government. And, therefore, an understanding of the duty of the Government is necessary so that people can measure what the Government has done.

So this is my first concern, because as I look at the definitions in this Bill, which is the Public Finance Management Amendment Act, I see some of the terminology and words that are defined here. They have a strong relationship with the Fiscal Resilience Act, and they will have... So you see things like, Fiscal Resilience Act mentioned here under definitions for it. Fiscal Resilience Oversight Committee, which would be mentioned in the Fiscal Resilience Act, and a number of other things, even the public debt. And so, they are defined here, but the Public Debt Bill will come after this one. So, it would have been good for us to have it in a package, but one has to accept sometimes that the Government has certain constraints that they work with, and therefore, certain things have to happen.

We on "This Side", and I very much would have liked to hear some consultations being done. I do not know if there have been significant consultations with other finance entities in the country or other legal entities. I don't know. I have not heard, but certainly in terms of the people, the rank and file, I would daresay there has not been any consultation on it. And I hear my dear colleague on the "Other Side", emphasising the importance. Well, if it is important to us in this Parliament, then the explanations are also important for the people.

So, this is... While I commend the Government for taking steps to seek to ensure fiscal prudence, strong fiscal management, and reporting, I would have like to see efforts made to ensure that our purse, our people understand the transition, which is the Government of transition, from the Fiscal Responsibility Act, to the Fiscal Resilience Bill, what additionally is there for us and how will Government guaranty that.

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I noticed the timelines, and I applaud timelines. If we do not have timelines, we do not work with the kind of alacrity, with the kind of enthusiasm and the speed that we should to arrive at some kind of results. So I commend the timelines, but I still want to maybe just throw a word of caution here. And in some of the commitments that have been made. There is one that was mentioned, the Post-election Report, which says that, at the Sitting, that's 25 (a). At the sitting immediately following the first Sitting, the new Parliament following the General Election, the Minister shall prepare and submit to Parliament a post-election report setting out the following. And it lists a number of things which I would not go into.

Mr. Speaker, this is the meeting after the first one, and a number of details that the Minister went into, to let us know what would be presented. And therefore, it means that Government has to undertake to ensure that they have the necessary human resources to do that, to deliver to the people, and we will remember the commitment that was made for the second sitting of the Parliament, after an election. And there was one, and I'm looking for it, where it says that certain information must go to the Fiscal Responsibility Committee, and within two weeks, they must give a report on that.

So again, this is another promise here in this Honourable House to our people, and... So I have nothing against it. It's good. It's noble, but we have to be careful what we promise and what we, well, what we promise to the people, and to ensure that we put the mechanisms in place to make sure that we deliver to the people.

So I again compliment the presentation. I am very sceptical about the level of consultation that has been made, but, Mr. Speaker, anything that will redound to the satisfaction of our nation, you know I have high regard and I have respect for it, but the commendations and the compliments will come when we see the results. So, Mr. Speaker, on this contribution, I thank you for the opportunity. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you very much, MP for the constituency of St. Mark. Is it MP for St. George North East?

**Hon. Ron Redhead:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was willing to give way to my senior in this Honourable House, but he said that I could proceed. So I think I have

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his blessings. Mr. Speaker, I rise in full support of this amendment.

In my view, it is forward-thinking and seeks to broaden the definition of public finance management. It will, in essence, incorporate the existing Public Finance Management Act, the essential elements of fiscal responsibility, without the need for a separate Act to do so.

Essentially, the executive's plan, Mr. Speaker, is to bolster the existing related legislations around maintaining our fiscal responsibility, while somewhat changing our approach to include, as well as look at, the fiscal sustainability or fiscal resilience in this sense. So, for example, clause 2 of the Amendment, part (b), public debt, will now include all direct liabilities of Central Government, statutory bodies and state-owned enterprises, including advances, arrears, compensation, claims, etcetera.

What this will do is to give the Government a more comprehensive understanding of our national debt situation, or the economy, so to speak, so that we can have more accurate policies and measures to target some of the situations or problems that we may observe.

And this comprehensive approach is critical, because as you know, Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest tasks small economies, such as Grenada, face is that of the externalities. Now we are subjected to the ravages of climate change, we are subjected to all sorts of things, including wars, other economic challenges that are beyond our borders, but also interact and impact us. And as such, the need to take a comprehensive look at our situation is critical, and this is what this amendment seeks to do.

Mr. Speaker, similarly, to include the definition of public-private partnership, subsection (a), statutory body or state-owned enterprise, is a good thing. Because it means the fiscal situation is not only going to be looked at from Central Government standpoint, but it's now going to be looked at with the statutory bodies or in collaboration, or a combination of the statutory bodies. This is critical because, Mr. Speaker, it means that we may see more comprehensive management of our public finances, including the state-owned bodies, so that situations such as the Marketing Board must never be allowed to continue or exist, or repeat themselves. It must never be allowed to repeat itself.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is critical because when we need to go in the whole

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question of managing of fiscal situation, it's not just applying strong measures of increase taxation just to get more revenues, in layman's terms, but it is to look at it in a combination of how you manage that situation with your revenue intake, but also be able to grow the economy in a sustainable and resilient manner. So I fully support this amendment, and I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I think it is long overdue.

A repeal and replace for the Fiscal Responsibility Act is something that, as a young man in the Senate, I personally championed. I was told that I'm not an economist, so I should not challenge such a thing that is needed etcetera. But what was interesting is that every year, back then, the FROC would report that we were in breach of the legislation. And as a young Parliamentarian then, I couldn't understand why we were not willing to take the necessary steps to get that right.

And so, I am pleased to stand in full support of the amendment put forward by the Leader of Government's Business and to say that the leadership of this Administration is keen on ensuring that while we talk about the expansion of the economy, we are going to do it not just in a fiscal responsible manner, but in a fiscal resilient manner, which will then make for a more broader objective, comprehensive look and management of our economic affairs. So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, with these few words I rest my case. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable MP for St. George North East. Honourable Leader of His Majesty's Opposition.

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just to reinforce the points made by my colleague, the Member for St. Mark's, as it relates to this amendment. I think she captured... Well, when she indicated that there's a lot of rebranding of names of issues here, so one will not comment, and if one wishes to call something A or B, that's not the case, the substance of it, that's important. So I saw a lot of rebranding not necessarily with a lot of substance as far as many of these issues are concerned, but I'm wondering... its noble, Mr. Speaker, to promise all kinds of things on a document, as the Member quite likely pointed out, and I get the impression this document was not written by politicians. I really do not believe politicians... maybe I'm wrong **(laughter)**, maybe I'm going to tell me otherwise.

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Again, the impression is that this thing is written by bureaucrats sitting in a certain place in the so-called ideal world of words, but the practicality **(laughter)**, the ability to implement and satisfy those objectives, is left to the ones who have to take responsibility for the end product. And then when the licks start to come, no bureaucrat is going to say no, it's not him, it's me. **(Laughter)** He doesn't say that at all, so I'm just cautioning Members, and there are a lot of Members on This Side of the House, it's green, and I passed through that stage where I thought we could do everything and, and promising to make everything look like it come from heaven, but it's simply does not work.

So I'm concerned about this, because in the end, the result is what you promise here. Is what people will judge you from? So I urge caution here. I also, in the same context, a government comes into office after a general election, Post-election Report, and you're promising to bring a comprehensive review, financially and otherwise, in an early period of the Parliament, this is noble. If it can happen, all praise, the question is, will that happen? That government won, this government won the election on June 23rd, in cases where most people who had never seen the Houses of Parliament before, who had not really had experience, were versed in many of the intricacies of financial matters, historically so, I mean in terms of practice.

Can we blame them when they come to Parliament, if they didn't give me a report as indicated? Could I get up and say, "Where is the report"? I don't know that it would have been fair. I do not believe that it's practical, and I do not believe that the next government coming into office, whoever that may be, should be asked to satisfy.... I may be on the sidelines **(laughter)**, you know, so don't worry about me. I've had my days.

So I'm making the point. I may be there watching and wondering, well, how could that government be able to present the kind of report that's being suggested here? As I said, it sounds noble... colleagues, it's not practical and if I could, if I could bet **(applause)**, bet **(laughter)** right, seriously so, that any incoming government will not be able to achieve this. That is my thing, and if they could do it, I would be the first one to say, "You're the greatest". I really caution... The Minister for Finance is not here, but I really believe... the Government is bringing this, and he says he can do it.

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And this is okay. So I'm not here opposing it. I'm just suggesting, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it's achievable. That's all I'm saying.

But finally, Mr. Speaker, something I should have said at the beginning of the first... I noticed the Member for St. George's South East was rather tentative today, in many things. And I could understand this. No, to lose your father is not a simple thing. I lost one several years ago. And although he was sick for a while, it was still difficult to deal with when it happened. So every time I see someone losing a family member that close, it touches me. I'm sure many of you have seen the post I sent yesterday celebrating my mother's 101st birthday, so she compensated for the loss of my father. The fact that she's still here and able to walk around and be with us yesterday, having lunch, and she was giving all the jokes. So, so my friend, to you my greatest, my sympathy, on your passing. I think it's a miracle that you're here attempting to do what you're doing here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Leader of His Majesty's Opposition. Honourable Prime Minister.

**Hon. Dickon Mitchell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know I was debating with the Leader of Government's Business whether we ought not to have interjected in light of the fact that the Fiscal Responsibility Bill was not being taken through all of the stages today, and would be dealt with next week Tuesday, whether or not we shouldn't have done so with the other two pieces of legislation. And I was saying to him, I certainly have no qualms with that. Because, in fact, I think it was at the request of the Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen that we agreed to push the Fiscal Responsibility back to next Tuesday, so that sufficient time could be given to anyone who felt they needed additional time to debate the Bills.

And clearly it's a package, and to some extent, the Fiscal Responsibility Act is in a sense the main driver that, in fact, requires the amendments to the other two Bills that we're considering today. So, I'm saying this, because I don't **(laughter)** want it to be said that we never considered ourselves or our colleagues to spend more time studying a Bill and debating it. So, I'm saying for the record, it would not hurt, and I'm

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still prepared, subject to the concurrence of the Leader of Government's Business, proposing to the House that we do so, that we can do so.

Because I think it would also address the issue of consultation that was raised by the learned Member for St. Mark. Because there has been extensive consultation, we would see that this question, particularly the Fiscal Responsibility Bill, has been on the cards for review since 2015. And the fact that substantive reviews and technical consultations were done under the former administration, and we are really only building upon that. The FROC, the Trade Unions, etcetera., the Chamber of Commerce, all of these entities were consulted. So I'm saying, I obviously do support the Bill, but I'm happy if the Members of the House are so inclined, and if the Leader of Government's Business is so inclined, and if the House is so inclined to in fact have those two Bills taken next week as well, because they're short.

And to a large extent, the amendments are consequent as a result of the need to have a new Fiscal Responsibility Act in place, and it will certainly allow anyone more time if they so wish to review and study. So that's... I thought I should make that interjection for the record.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister. Honourable Members, the question. Honourable Prime Minister, let me make sure I get you clearly. The first of the Bill has been passed, you're looking at the other three?

**Hon. Dickon Mitchell:** Yes, I'm talking about the financial **(laughter)**, the Financial Bills, not the Licensing. I'm saying financial....

**Mr. Speaker:** I know.

**Hon. Dickon Mitchell:** ... right, because that one has been passed. I'm saying three...

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes...

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**Hon. Dickon Mitchell:** Right. So, I'm saying if the Member so, so, so minded, I'm happy to just simply have the first reading today and we obviously do the debates, second and third reading next Tuesday, because...

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay.

**Hon. Dickon Mitchell:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay. Let me hear the Leader of the Opposition. You wanted to make a comment.

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** Just a short ... I think the Prime Minister is very much on target there. Mr. Speaker, I have planned, in fact, I have prepared to deal with the Resilience Bill today. I really realise the seriousness of this Bill, relative to the financial situation in a general sense. In fact, it was difficult attempting to prepare for this without mentioning all the other Bills. It's like one Bill, really, just like a, b, c, d. And therefore, that makes a lot of sense.

I was going to ask your permission when the Resilience Bill was going forward. I was asking permission to treat this as my comments on this Bill, with the context of all the other Bills. I need a little more time than the time allotted to a Member to make a comment on one Bill. Because I had to encompass the entire four Bills in my presentation, to make it look effective. So the point is, very much on target.

**Mr. Speaker:** All right. Honourable Members... Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, having heard the Leader of the Opposition and the Honourable Prime Minister, I have therefore moved that the... Well, first and foremost, we suspend the earlier resolution that was made, that the House consider taking it through all of its stages, and let it be now suspended at this point in time, then we take the others. Right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you.

**(The Speaker and the Clerk converses privately)**

**Mr. Speaker:** All right. Okay. I am now going to call recess, so we get clarity for the Clerk on this particular matter, and we'll proceed thereafter.

**Hon. Dickon Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, if I may. I think we believe as Members that we may have a solution to that, that doesn't require us to have a recess. I think the Leader of His Majesty's Opposition has suggested, given that we've in fact had the debates on this particular Bill, that we can conclude the process on the Bill and then we would obviously perhaps just have the first reading for the third Bill and then, when we deal with Fiscal Responsibility Act, we'll just deal with, in a sense, because they're all related, next week. If that's fine.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, that's exactly the issue he was raising. So... Yes, yes. Yes, that we close this one of. Correct? Lovely. So... Yes, I sense the debate is concluded on that. Right?

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**House in Committee.**

**House resumes.**

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**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Members, I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment. 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. 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 move the introduction for the first reading, a Bill for an Act, shortly entitled, Public Debt Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

**Clerk:** A Bill which seeks to amend the Public Debt Management Act No. 28 of 2015, to revise the definition of "public debt", shortly entitled, Public Debt Management Amendment Bill, 2023.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg that this

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***Adjournment***

Honourable House be adjourned *sine die*.

**Question put.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable MP for St. Andrew South East.

**Hon. Emmalin Pierre:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise because I would have listened last night to a young lady, very passionate in her appeal and her concern, a matter that is now, I believe, of public importance. And I'm rising this morning... Is it still? ... This afternoon to make an appeal that this does not deteriorate further into something that the public has to become too involved in, and I want to appeal that this be addressed in a way that the circumstances do not go beyond what they are right now.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the young lady on one of our public programmes, and I'm speaking here as it relates to one of the community centres in my constituency. Do I have your permission to proceed?

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, go ahead.

**Hon. Emmalin Pierre:** Okay. I was just observing your facial reaction. Yes. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to give some historical context to this to understand why I believe it's a matter of public importance.

2,000, prior to 2008, the start of this community centre, the construction of this community centre, the election was called in 2008, and the work on the community centre stopped. Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, right after the election, there were public pronouncements by the government that they would do no work on continuing the community centre, and that was it. It was that. Absolutely nothing was done between 2008 and 2018 on that facility.

After the 2013 election, the community centre was restarted and completed. Mr. Speaker, since then, a group of people who were actively involved in the construction, in the voluntary work that took place during that period, formed a committee that managed the community centre from then until now. Mr. Speaker, I'm

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appealing this morning, there's a way to do things. There's a way to do things. Now, during that period and I can explain why some people might be very passionate about this, during the period 2008 to 2013, sorry, prior to 2008, these women operated in a nearby building that was provided to them, free of cost by Mr. Elias Jones, of this community, that said community.

They had about 15 sewing machines, and they were literally at the point where they started making an income from the items that they were making. Mr. Speaker, without any questions, without any discussion, and without any dialogue, someone showed up and took all the sewing machines, indicating that they were acting upon instructions from the government. So these sewing machines were taken away, Mr. Speaker, they were never told anything until today. Mr. Speaker, in 2013, this is when the New National Party government returned into office, I was brought to the Youth Development Centre in Grand Anse and I was given a tour of the area where the sewing machines were placed from 2008 to 2013.

It was sad you know, Mr. Speaker, not just what happened but what was worse, what was really sad, was the fact that these sewing machines were now beyond repair. So I stood and I looked at them being taken away to be dumped. Mr. Speaker, these are the same people in question. They rallied and they worked hard, they raised funds, they contributed to build that community centre in many cases after 2013. And note what I said, the government took a policy position that it was not going to complete the community centre. Then it probably was about 20% done, as far as my memory goes, let me state that. So 20% is not a figure that we should act upon.

Mr. Speaker, fast forwarding now to this last election, and which is why I want to say, how things are done matters. The person who manages the key for the facility is Mr. Atiba Mowuto, a Rastafarian from that community. And I'm being specific, Mr. Speaker, because I remember in 2003, the very first time I heard reference to a community centre for that village was at a meeting that was held in the yard of Mr. Hansel Japal. And, Mr. Speaker, the name Atiba Mowuto, the person who manages the key, and I'm giving context to all of this.

It stayed with me because this was the person in that meeting in 2003 who stood up and spoke on behalf of the community, making the strongest case that I ever heard for the facility. As a matter of fact, he ended his presentation that night by

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saying, "I do not believe that we would ever have that community centre, because since the days of Sir Eric Matthew Gairy, we've been begging and begging for it". Those were his exact words. This is not a political person. This is not, in my opinion, a partisan. I've never seen him in a partisan political activity. These are people who worked hard to ensure that what they have now is available for the community.

So, Mr. Speaker, donations that were acquired, for example, of 20 computers that were still being used at the centre. When I spoke to him last, Mr. Speaker, about 20, 10, EC\$15,000 was spent on acquiring drums in the past, they were all damaged, and he said they were in the middle of a process of repairing... they've just repaired as a matter of fact, but restarting the cultural programme using those drums. I don't need to explain Mamma Cannes, drums, and culture.

Mr. Speaker, when the last election was held, God rest her soul, Ms. Agatha John, who died thereafter. She was leading an after-school programme in that community centre. Mr. Speaker, she was told that the programme would not continue. You asked, Mr. Speaker, the parents and teachers of the students who attend the classes there every afternoon, about the progress they were making.

Mr. Speaker, someone representing, I believe, the Ministry of Works, probably, or the Ministry of I'm not even sure. Community development approached Mr. Mowuto as it relates to handing over the keys for the community centre, which was after the general elections. Mr. Speaker, according to Mr. Mowuto, the young lady agreed not to further demand the keys after she did a tour of the facility and saw the condition of the facility and learnt of what was happening at the facility. In other words, her reaction was that she felt the place was well managed. It was okay to continue as they were going. Mr. Speaker, persons who want to use the facility go to the person who manages the key, access the key, use the facility, and move on.

Mr. Speaker, I was very disturbed last night. And just coincidentally, I was riding up to Grenville when I just happened to turn on the radio. I was really disturbed to hear the story of persons from the housing brigade, under instructions, going to the community centre, breaking the door, Mr. Speaker, changing the locks with no conversation held with the persons who manage the centre, or the person who manages the key. Mr. Speaker, all that was said, I don't want to repeat it here, as to what was happening and why it was happening.

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But I'm making the point, because I'm not even sure, I don't believe that the Minister, the Line Minister, is probably aware of this. I don't believe, and I'm going to convince myself he's not aware. But I'm making the point because I see this deteriorating into something that we do not want to encourage. Whoever, Mr. Speaker, is acting on behalf of the government, whoever the persons are making decisions and taking actions, Mr. Speaker, I want to say this: there's a way that things are done. The level of hostility, the level of verbal attacks, the confrontation, we don't want this to deteriorate further. Unfortunately, it has gone into the public domain, and I'm saying today, let us end it there by doing the right thing. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Andrew's South East. MP for St. Andrew North East.

**Hon. Kate Lewis-Peters:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to share my concern as well as displeasure with some very topical issues at this time, as they relate to low-income housing. This is the first opportunity I've had to really speak publicly on the matter, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these houses were designed and targeted to improve the living conditions of our low-income earners, and the fact that the new arrangement is such that they have to raise their finances through lending institutions before they can get access to these homes is my concern, Mr. Speaker.

Because if you understand the circumstances that low-income earners face, they are basically, or will basically be unable to acquire these loans from the institutions. But not only that, if, let's imagine some acquire the finances, it puts them in a situation where for a long period of time they will be owing until they can gain the name or title to these properties.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of misconceptions presented by the authorities regarding those homes. To draw reference, Mr. Speaker, I've heard that it's your equity, it belongs to you as soon as you can come up with this money. That's not true, Mr. Speaker. We all know that whenever we go to a lending institution to secure funds, the property belongs to them until we complete the payments. That's a fact. So why make people believe that? How do you feel? You won't feel good to

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**(laughter)** have the title to something immediately after purchase. I condemn this misconception, Mr. Speaker.

Additionally, Government must understand its responsibility to the people. So we have had situations where the previous homeowners of the low-income housing were not paying as expected. Some people are of the opinion that they were getting these homes free, so as a result of these groups not paying, the measure that we are going to put in place to ensure that all monies are collected is to not have them owe us as Government, but owe the financial institution. Government is moving away from its responsibility of taking care of the needs of its people and passing it on to our financial institutions, whose sole purpose is to make a profit.

This is not the responsibility or the objective of a government. We have, we should come up with more creative ways to allow these low-income earners to make payments for the homes. It was designed for them, “to transform” their living conditions. Some arguments state that it’s too good for them. I’ve listened carefully to the new chairman of the Housing Authority, and I’m baffled by some of the statements, because they clearly reflect that they are not aware of the living conditions of some people in this country.

So they have an opportunity to own and pay in an affordable manner until they can own these homes, but we have transferred the responsibility of government to a financial institution. As much as Government has to find finances to do its work, it should not be on the backs of poor people. It should not be on the backs of these low-income earners who now will not have access to owning these homes. Mr. Speaker, I must record my displeasure in the new way that access to these homes is put forward by this administration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Andrew’s North East. MP for South St. George.

**Hon. Andy Williams:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to the House, also. Good afternoon, I was just testing you all to make sure that everyone is up. Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk about the point that the Honourable MP just spoke about regarding housing. And, Mr. Speaker, sometimes I think we have to stop playing

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politics with things, and let's be straight up and honest and let's see what we can do to really help, help the Grenadian people.

Because, Mr. Speaker, I am very passionate about this. Last year, I had a chance to visit Mt. Rush and Soubise, and when I look at the living conditions, when I look at the arrangement that was made through the previous administration and you look at the buildings, and you don't have to take my word for it, you can go up and look at it, you can, people are living in conditions where they is mould in the building, the tiles are broken, the railings are broken also and you are living on a height. So you have cases where the children can fall over if these things are not replaced.

The arrangement that was there before, Mr. Speaker, was not an arrangement that would have been in the benefit of the people, to begin with. Let's go back a bit, there... people were given low-income houses and they had to put in their own cupboards, their own closets, make changes, and so on to the building that they had to occupy to make it liveable. If we are talking about low-income houses, how can it be low-income when the people, after they get the homes, have to go and hire carpenters and so on to do all these things? And they still have to pay for it; it's not free. They have to pay for it.

Now, let's go further. If these properties have any issues now, they have to take out of their pocket to provide maintenance for them, but this is not the case now. We took our time and said if we are giving someone something, let's give them something that is worthwhile and good. So when you enter phase two of the project now, you are entering an apartment with cupboards, with closets, with everything. This is what you call a government that is looking out for its people and not just playing politics, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Now we're talking about equity. I don't think the Member understands equity, so let me explain to her what equity is. When you purchase the apartment building, you are getting it for approximately one-third of its value. So immediately, you can use that value or the equity right there in the apartment to do something else. **(Applause)** Now, if you want to talk about the poor and vulnerable, as you always speak about, and let's go into it, I'm not playing politics. We're getting into the meat of the stuff now. You have to try, Mr. Speaker, to find a way to elevate people from their circumstances. And when someone purchases one of the apartments now, what will happen is that

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they can now get equity in the property that they can use to better their lives in other places.

For example, if you have a child and your child has to study, you may want to take a student loan, and you can use the apartment now as equity to take a student loan. You may have a business idea, but you want it to be funded; you can now use the equity in the building, Mr. Speaker, to finance, to help finance that opportunity. That is the way you take people out of poverty, and not boasting about them being a poor, vulnerable state. And this is the responsibility of Government. So sometimes we have to stop playing politics with things.

We have a housing assistance programme, Mr. Speaker. When you sit down and watch materials, you can come to the MPs and they can make their case, we do the application, and we assist them. We have this programme now, Mr. Speaker, where we looked at it, we analysed it, and we saw the flaws in it, and we don't want to put people back in the same position. Note that the Minister for Social Development has to find funds to do maintenance on the same properties in phase one. So, do we continue with the same thing, because we want to play politics? Or do we try to address the matter?

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm saying to the Members on the "Other Side", you are doing the country a disservice when you continue to play politics with people, to pretend that you are there for the poor and vulnerable and not trying to help them better their lives. And we see it as our responsibility, and we are in government now, Mr. Speaker, to help our people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. So I'm saying, let's stop playing politics. Let's try to help our people. Every time you see me play these things, it'll be a lot of doing the country a service. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, MP for St. George South. Honourable MP for St. Mark.

**Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll try to be very brief. Mr. Speaker, this segment of the Parliament Sitting is not supposed to be a presentation and response. But, I, I must say something. I cannot leave it like that, Mr. Speaker. I beg your indulgence. My dear friend from St. George South has said

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quite a lot, and some of it may be relevant, some of it may not be quite relevant to the whole situation.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, he said when he was wrapping up, that if someone wants house repair, they go to the MP. I just want to ask the question, which MP, and where and how? And which MP is listened to? And this is a question I have raised in this Honourable House many times. How do we direct people, you know, to have access, we as sitting MPs who are not in government? How? This question has never been answered, and I remember the Member for St. David, and as you said, the Prime Minister, said yes, this is something that needs to be addressed, and it will be addressed.

And Members would recall that. So we're not playing politics here, we're playing reality. Up to now, one and a half years into the new regime, the question hasn't been answered. So the Member is comfortable, he's sitting comfortably because people can go to him and ask, we Members on "This Side" are extremely uncomfortable because we cannot respond to the basic needs of the people who are Grenadians, Carriacouans, whatever they are, Grenadians, so this is one thing.

The other thing is to say that we have not, we don't want to rise up people, the amount of people who have gotten house repair, nice little wooden houses, toilet and bathroom and they followed us in doing that because they washed it with a wash programme which is essentially the same thing. Giving toilets and bathrooms to needy people, so if it wasn't worth it, then why was it implemented?

Mr. Speaker, the last thing I want to speak about is equity. Whatever the meaning of the equity is, those of us on "This Side" who don't know what equity means. Whatever the meaning is... If you cannot face the bank because of your standard of living, your income, whatever your situation is, you carry to the point of equity, so the people that the Member is talking about and our people here (**applause**), we are talking about are two different levels.

Some people will be able to take care of themselves, people who can afford it. I always say let them build their house and buy their houses. A lot of Grenadians have built beautiful houses, but there are some who live according to what the Bible says, the poor will always be with us. So we can't talk equity here. We have to talk about how we elevate these people who do not have the wherewithal and the means. So

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there has to be a next programme that accompanies that programme for the equity side of it, where you go to the bank and you have one third and so on, all power to those who can do that, but we on “This Side”, we are concerned about the people who cannot afford. This is not our only vocation in life, but it has to be a part of our vocation because our conscience will not let us do anything differently. These people need help, and the Government of the day has to recognise it and has to deal with it **(applause)** otherwise you cannot lift them out of poverty. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Mark. Let me just make this comment before the Honourable MP for St. George North East stands. Let me remind this Honourable House that when you speak on the adjournment, as the Honourable MP rightly said, it's not a debate section, it just gives MPs a chance to make some interjections, get some things in that they had no time to do before, so let's keep it that way, please. Honourable MP for St. George North East.

**Hon. Ron Redhead:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise on the Adjournment to highlight National Heroes Day. This Administration is keen on uniting all of our people, and one of the most divisive periods in our history had to do with the loss of lives on October 19. We have designated this day National Heroes Day.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to invite all Grenadians to an ecumenical service at the National Stadium for 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 19. We would have the tolling of bells that would be followed by a one-minute silence, and that will be nationwide at 1:00 p.m. We will also have a light tribute, which will take place at the Carenage at 7:00 p.m., followed by a candlelight gathering.

Again, all Grenadians are encouraged to be a part, and we will have a strobe light display. Transportation will be provided, and in the coming days leading up to the 19th, you are going to hear more details from the National Celebrations Committee and the National Organising Committee, jointly, speaking about it.

So, Mr. Speaker, essentially as it relates to national unity, this is the single biggest step, and I want to commend the Administration of the day. We didn't cause it; half of us, or a good bit of us, were not around during the Revolution. However, our responsibility is not to take these things lightly, but to acknowledge that while we didn't

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lose loved ones there, many of us understand the importance of healing and coming together.

Lives were lost, Mr. Speaker, and as such, the responsibility of the Government is not to continue the tribal warfare that currently exists in that moment or period in time, but is to say to us that we need to be responsible as a people to never repeat it again. We are listing this day as National Heroes Day, not because we want to just highlight the Revolution, but because we see the day as significant to mark it as National Heroes Day to name heroes to come.

Mr. Speaker, the heroes are going to be, in my humble opinion, based on interaction with people from all walks of life and not just political, but in certain sports and maybe even some living, so we are calling on the nation to rally around this. Too often we are always looking for the tit-for-tart, sides and position on this and that, when half of the time it's just wrong and full of our opinions, we have no facts to back up what we say.

So essentially, these bodies of Grenadians whose lives were lost were never buried. This is something. I'm not a spiritual man. I'm not a preacher, but I'm saying this is something as a nation that we should see as important to give some semblance of respect on one hand and to mark the day so that it never repeats itself in our history. We are loving people in Grenada, and as a culture, to continue the love, you must continue to promote the unity, we must continue to promote the togetherness, and this is the single biggest step, Mr. Speaker, in healing our nation.

Now, with that said, I can't leave without addressing the substance, so it's not a debate. But honestly, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, as it relates to this Housing Programme. Now we have received grant funding to build the houses, not to give them out for free. We also, Mr. Speaker, built these houses with the intent to improve the housing stock of the country for the vast majority of Grenadians. Now, I'm not here to argue if the people who inherited phase one are still in the low-income bracket; that's not my business.

What we are saying is, Mr. Speaker, we are faced with two problems. One, the issue of compliance and two, the problem of maintenance. The question is, and if concerns are raised genuinely, what do you propose? What is your alternative? To say that collaborating with the private sector, in this instance the financial institution or

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two, to support the finances, to purchase so that you can then own the property and over a period pay for it or rather have it as part of your assets base and over a period complete the payments for it, is the wrong approach, then my question is what is the alternative?

Because Mr. Speaker, let me say this. The responses thus far to our housing situation in the country are feeble or have been feeble for a long time, and the Minister is here; he can attest to it. When we came in and we saw the maintenance programme, for example, the house repairs, the budget for that was a meagre amount. I think it was closer to about \$15,000 thereabout, on average. The fact is, if you take all of these things into context, what will be the cost to build whatever the dimension is, I don't remember it from the top of my head, of these houses? The question you had to ask is, building a bathroom and toilet on a wooden structure, is it not putting you in a more vulnerable position three or four years from now? We are susceptible to all kinds of externalities, including natural disasters.

So if you are talking about sustainable development, if you're talking about lifting people out, I agree with the temporary repairs, and we have continued that. We are not satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that housing needs to just reside around somebody having to run down a Member of Parliament to get assistance.

I am baffled, because if the Member for St. Mark, for example, is saying that this is just one year half, right, you created these programmes, you've been in office a long time, how come you don't know how to do and where to go and so on all of a sudden? So you're telling me that you create something, and now all that has changed is the executive, it's just a different political party in power.

We have not stopped a number of these programmes because we understand, Mr. Speaker, to a large extent, that as difficult as changes are, in some instances, some people have been built up for more than 20 plus years with this kind of setting and therefore, cannot live outside of it. So we are catering for them. But I am saying all of a sudden we do not know how to access these things as Members of Parliament, and some of us have been Members of Parliament for a number of years.

And I am saying, Mr. Speaker, it is time that we lift the conversation around these elements: poverty, housing, access to health care, and stop the tribalism. I

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believe that the Administration is open to listening to the Opposition on recommendations, but I am not hearing recommendations; all I am hearing is that we shouldn't do this because the poor man can't afford it. And, Mr. Speaker, let's be honest, the people who applied before the election, we didn't change the people who applied.

A number of people applied. We didn't change the people. So I'll give you an example without calling names. Party activists from the former administration were on the application forms; are they low-income? I don't know. The point I am making is that when you talk and give the impression that the house was meant for poor people and so on, you must have the evidence to support what you're saying. There is absolutely no indication these housing units would have been able to be afforded, whether or not we say we set up the payment plan or not, by low-income and in some instances, no-income people.

However, there is a need, Mr. Speaker, for different categories. If you say phase one was for low-income, fine. Phase two is not for low-income, but it's for income where you can manage, and in this instance, it's going to help bolster your equity base, your asset base as an individual, and leave, in some instances, some question of generational wealth for your younger children.

And as such, Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage people to take the opportunity that those who were chosen have and to utilise it in the best way possible and not get involved in all this unnecessary bantering. We know that there are people who are going to struggle with their housing situation, and time and time again, different programmes, various programmes from the Ministry of Social Development will help.

Again, these are things we inherited. We didn't change that component of the governance. We want to encourage the Opposition as well. If you have any credible suggestions, you don't have to give them to the Government; go on a public radio and say what the alternative to the housing units is. Say how you are going to maintain it. Say how you are going to pay to keep security. Say how you are going to pay to clean the garbage, etcetera. Look at Mt. Rush, for example. It's a mess with the garbage, and I can get in on other aspects. But I am saying, Mr. Speaker, we have to be mature about this, and let's have a national conversation, if you please, but come with solutions rather than criticisms. Thank you. **(Applause)**

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**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable MP for St. George North East. I want to caution again that you have to keep your contribution and interjection of a debating nature. Please do. Leader of Government's Business. Honourable MP, could you turn your light off?

**Hon. Philip Telesford:** Mr. Speaker, thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to add some information here with respect to the Parliamentary Offices. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Parliamentary Offices, we have 15 such offices around the country and I can speak for the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs, that these social programmes are not necessarily administered in any of the Parliamentary Offices, but you can access all of these services and I can say specifically in respect of Housing or Community Development of which I am directly responsible for. If you have any problems, Mr. Speaker, you can call me at the Ministry. I will receive your call, and if for one reason or another I'm not able to receive the call, I will definitely return the call, and many people who've contacted me can say the same.

So, how can you access these services? There is a Housing Coordinator. There is a Community Liaison Officer for every single constituency. They do not work with any MP or any Senator or anybody in the constituency. They work with the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs. They are accountable to the administrative staff within that Ministry, and they must comply. If they fail to comply, there are consequences under the Public Service Rules.

I say this to say, Mr. Speaker, that I would encourage that we can obtain the contact information for these individuals who work with the Ministry and the Ministry will be very willing to give it to all of the Senators, Ministers, as the case maybe, MPs, so that they can be able to contact the respective persons in their constituency.

Every application or every individual who approaches these officers must complete the application and forward it to the Ministry. They do not have the right or privilege to not receive the application. The Ministry is the one that makes the decision as it relates to processing applications.

I say this to say that, Mr. Speaker, it is a very simple and straightforward process. There is no one who is alone unto themselves. There is a Ministry, and we

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function in that regard. Also, I would encourage... There are 15 MP offices. I would say that those officers can actually facilitate the process by visiting your office on the constituency day. Yes. They are authorised to so do. They can visit your office on your constituency day, and if you have an office for them, they can fill out the forms and take them to the Ministry. It's about service to people. You reach the people where they are. It is allowed. If you fail to contact them well, then it's your problem, but they are authorised to do so. So I say this for the record, Mr. Speaker. Right. So, Mr. Speaker, this is all I think I want to say today. Thank you. **(Applause)**.

**Mr. Speaker:** All right. Thank you. Thank you, Leader of Government's Business. All right. I sensed that you're the last, so as we close, let me just make these comments.

I want to commend all the MPs who actively participated in the Cyber Awareness Programme that Parliament, in fact, launched. I think it was the 29th of September. I also want to commend the Women's Caucus. Honourable Peter David is not here? I must commend, chaired by, of course, our Honourable Dr. Modeste-Curwen. I saw tripeptide at work in this caucus. I was very impressed with the way the two sides were able to come together and look at the issue of Gender Based Violence and other pertinent matters. So, combinations are in order for the Women's Caucus for the work done, and we hope that will just push us further as we attempt to address some of the burning issues in our society. And with this, I think we can now take the vote.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**The Sitting of the House adjourned sine die at 1:03 p.m.**

**PREPARED BY**

**HANSARD REPORTERS**

Ms. Shanta Joseph

Ms. Akeda David

Ms. Leasha Francis

Ms. Jasmine Redhead

**EDITORS**

Mr. Andrew Augustine (Clerk)

Ms. Leasha Francis (Senior Hansard Reporter, Ag.)