



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SECOND SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT

SENATE

FRIDAY 30TH AUGUST, 2024

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Table of Contents

Attendance	3
Prayers.....	4
Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation.....	4
Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis.....	5
Minutes.....	16
Announcements	18
Ministerial Statements.....	23
Personal Explanations.....	34
Motions.....	37
Bills: Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2024.....	160
Adjournment.....	161

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Attendance

PRESENT

Madam President
Senator the Honourable Dr. Dessima Williams
in the Chair

- | | |
|---|--|
| Senator the Honourable Adrian Thomas | - Minister for Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture |
| Senator the Honourable David Evlyn Andrew | - Minister for Education |
| Senator the Honourable Quinc Britton | - Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry of Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture with Responsibility for Culture |
| Senator the Honourable Seville Francis | - Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry of Youth and Sports |
| Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph | - Attorney General and Minister for Legal Affairs, Labour and Consumer Affairs |
| Senator the Honourable Gloria Ann Thomas | - Minister for Social & Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs |
| Senator the Honourable Norland Cox | - Opposition Member of the Senate (Deputy President) |
| Senator the Honourable Katisha Douglas | - Opposition Member of the Senate |
| Senator the Honourable Neilon Franklyn | - Opposition Member of the Senate |
| Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis | - Member of the Senate (Labour Representative) |
| Senator the Honourable Salim Rahaman | - Member of the Senate (Business Representative) |
| Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair | - Member of the Senate (Farmers Representative) |

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Prayers

Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation

The Sitting of the Senate began at 8:46 a.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms: Madam President.

(Senate Prayer was said)

Madam President: Honourable Members, please join me in the Lord's Prayer.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

(Sound of gavel)

Madam President: Pray be seated. The Senate Sitting of 29th August 2024 commences.

Deputy Clerk: Item 3 – Oath of Allegiance or Affirmation of a new Senator.

Madam President: It is my distinct pleasure to invite Seville Francis to take the Oath of Allegiance as a new Senator. Madam.

(Senator the Honourable Seville Francis proceeded to the Clerk's Table)

Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis: I, Seville M.C. Francis, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III, His Heirs and Successors according to Law. So help me God.

(Senator the Honourable Seville Francis signs the Oath Book)

(The Clerk shakes Senator Francis's hand)

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation – Maiden Speech
Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis

(Applause)

Madam President: Welcome, Senator Francis. You have the floor, madam.

Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis: Thank you, Madam President. Honourable Members of this House, distinguished guests and fellow citizens of this tri-island state. I've been in this Honourable House on countless occasions, even as a stranger in the gallery. In fact, Madam President, I've sat in this very chair that you're currently sitting in as the Speaker of the House during the National Youth Parliament Sitting. I've even used this beautiful architectural structure as a backdrop for photoshoots. I think we can all agree that it is indeed a masterpiece.

I vividly recall sitting in these Chambers, staring at the now Senator the Honourable Neilon Franklyn, dead in the eyes as the Opposition Leader, while I exuded woman power and excellence as the Prime Minister, as we debated the issues affecting the youth of our country. Who would have imagined that we would be here again, sitting in these Chambers, on opposite sides, discussing the nation's business in a more official capacity?

My journey to this auspicious moment did not come overnight. It came as a shock, but it did not come overnight. The experiences, the trauma, the abuse, the embarrassments, the failures, the denials, the setbacks, the no's, the rejections and the narrow paved road with obstacles, were the equipment in the gym of my life, that built me and groomed me to carry this appointment and this country forward. This is not a full stop in my story. This is a semi-colon because my story continues.

Today, I stand here not only representing myself but every young girl who has ever been denied any opportunity for greatness. I represent every young man who feels like society is against him. Madam President, I represent the future of Grenada. St. Patrick is geographically positioned in the north of the island, which means we are the head and going forward, we shall continue to be the northern star of this Parliament and this country.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

***Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation – Maiden Speech
Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis***

Standing here today is beyond love for self; this is a significant moment in the history of our community and our parish. My friend's professional name for me is "Love of Country", because I've always been in service. I am proud to say that I hail from the most historic and beautifully scenic parish of our tri-island state, St. Patrick, from the home of the Amerindians, Mt. Rich. My mother, Susan Francis, whom I lovingly refer to as Mother Teresa II, made it her duty to ensure that I was brought up in a sound Christian home.

One of the questions from the Bible that I remember being referenced in John chapter 1, verse 46 asked, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" The response was, "Come and see". Today, you've come, and you are witnessing the modern-day Nazareth, my hometown, my pride, my joy, has produced something good. I am no Jesus, but I am a product of his grace and the village that raised me. My story has been used on many platforms for advocacy purposes, and while it may be new to some, others are aware of my journey. But permit me to briefly mention, as it is significant to the character of the person standing before you in this Honourable House.

I am a proud survivor of sexual abuse, suicide attempts, depression and many other societal issues that have shaped my character. I've termed my journey "The Chrysalis Impact" as I have transformed my pain, unleashed my potential and matured my purpose into the butterfly I am today. Because of this, I recently established a foundation called "The Chrysalis Impact", where I help young people with similar struggles to spread their wings. My hope is that they remember the wings of transformation are born of patience and struggle.

Amidst all my adversities, there were a number of people who were instrumental in ensuring that I remained grounded, that I kept my head on my shoulders and encouraged me to forge on. So allow me to thank a few, though the elimination of names is not intentional. To everyone who has contributed to my growth, know that you are appreciated, and the spot that you hold in my heart is permanent.

First, we must acknowledge that with God, all things are possible. He is the centre of it all. Again, I thank my mother, to whom I was a prayer project. Even when I strayed,

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

***Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation – Maiden Speech
Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis***

she kept praying and asked God to continue to cover me. I must pay homage to teacher Clanis Frame, Dean George, Serana James, Wellington Joseph, Shanel Joseph and my best friend Kidisha Charles, who are no longer with us but would have been proudest to see me standing here today. May their souls continue to rest in peace.

To my ever-supportive partner, thank you for being that source of strength during my most turbulent times. Thank you for keeping me grounded and for your constant encouragement. To my family, both immediate and extended, thank you for the support through the years. To my princess Janiya, you have given me an additional reason to be an exemplary young woman that you and other girls can emulate. To my nieces and nephew, you're all my favourite, including every child in the community who calls me "Aunty Cutie". To my friends who became my brothers and sisters, I salute you. They say it takes a village to raise a child, and to my village, I thank you.

To my alma maters, Hermitage Government School, the Grenada SDA Comprehensive School, St. George's University, and T. A. Marryshow Community College, I am grateful for the principles instilled in me. To my parish, the great St. Patrick, thank you for every opportunity you've afforded me to lead, to contribute, to celebrate, to defend and, most importantly, to claim.

My professional family, MYCEDO, St. Patrick Debaters, the Rural Development Unit, CariCope, CiWiL, NIDCU, NADMA, Friends of the Mentally Ill, the Saint Patrick 50th Independence Celebrations Committee and to every institution that has afforded me an opportunity to serve, I thank you. It would be remiss of me at this moment if I did not recognise Mr. Kevin Andall, who has been instrumental in preparing me for this moment, at my very first parish Youth Parliament Sitting in 2007 and then he passed the baton along to Dr Tessa St. Cyr who continued shaping me to be a public speaker.

I am a proud product of the Ministry of Youth's initiatives, and it ignites a flame within me to return there to serve in this capacity. As we forge ahead, permit me to place on record my sincerest gratitude to the Honourable Dickon Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, for being a radar for greatness and selecting me to serve the people of this great nation. It is commendable, sir, that you take the

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

***Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation – Maiden Speech
Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis***

country's future seriously by including a young woman like me as part of the country's succession plan.

Thank you to the people of Grenada for accepting me. I promise to serve as I've pledged during my Oath of Allegiance to honour, uphold and preserve the Constitution of Grenada. It is our 50th year of Independence, a significant milestone in our country's history. It gives me the greatest pleasure to be added to the historical moments that shaped Grenada's legacy. I am honoured to be one of the first young female senators to hail from the historic parish.

Additionally, my appointment contributes to Grenada's being a part of the 30% of female senators aligning with global standards for female representation. I am Senator the Honourable Seville Francis from Mt. Rich in St. Patrick. As our 50th Independence song said, it's only up from here. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Francis, for your reflections, your insight into who you are, your commitment to the highest institution of the land, and, of course, your gratitude to the village that raised you. Thank you, and once again, welcome. The Senator from a little bit north of St. Patrick. The Senator from Carriacou, Senator Norland Cox. Welcome, sir, and you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I take this opportunity to extend a heartfelt welcome to our Honourable Senator Francis to this Senate. I just want to indicate through you, Madam President, that the journey that we walk in our times shapes and moulds us to be who we are. So I don't know Ms. Francis. It's the first time I've interacted with her, but from her utterances, she seems sound, solid and as a Grenadian, we are happy to have our young women have an opportunity to be part of the Parliamentary process. I think that is outstanding, and I want to congratulate you for accepting the call.

As I said to you briefly this morning, this is the best part of the Houses of Parliament **(applause)** and you're going to find that out maybe sooner than later. And, you know, on

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

***Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation – Maiden Speech
Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis***

a lighter side, I thank you, Madam President, you know, just for reminding Senator Francis that Carriacou and Petite Martinique is due north of St. Patrick. **(Laughter)** So we are truly at the head. Thank you very much.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Cox. Leader of Government's Business, Senator Adrian Thomas, you have the floor, sir.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you very much, Madam President. I, too, would like to join my good friend, Senator the Honourable Norland Cox, in congratulating Senator the Honourable Seville Francis. And I also want to extend my gratitude to the people of St. Patrick for delivering to us another stalwart, another important individual, another young lady to take up the task of serving this country at the highest level.

What she has expounded on this morning, Madam President, tells a lot. It also indicates that she started the journey a very long time ago. And if my calculations serve me right, as one of my colleagues said yesterday, she would have, she will be maybe the most experienced Parliamentarian inside of here coming from the Youth Parliament and having had the opportunity to serve in that capacity regionally and internationally, I think she would be of tremendous value to this House.

And I'll once again want to say thank you very much for coming forward and taking up the mantle. And I wish you all the best as we sit here to discuss and debate government's business and the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Madam President: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Adrian Thomas. And I see the light of Senator André Lewis. No. It's Senator Neilon Franklyn.

(Laughter)

Madam President: My sight needs improvement.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: **(Laughter)** Politics would do that. Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I, too, rise this morning to join with my colleagues in the House to welcome officially, a close friend of mine actually, the Honourable Seville Francis. I have known Senator Francis for quite some time, and I would like to put on record that she was one of the people who was instrumental in actually convincing me to accept my initial appointment. **(Laughter)** So I am indeed proud of her being in this House.

And it goes to show the importance of the National Youth Parliament. I think it's an important institution to have two former National Youth Parliamentarians sitting in the Senate at the same time. It says a lot for Grenada and says a lot for the future of Grenada. **(Applause)** We both sat and served in the National Youth Parliament as Prime Ministers, so that in and of itself is a milestone. Again, welcome. I look forward to your contribution and I'm confident that you will serve as best as you can. Thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

Madam President: I thank you, Senator Neilon Franklyn, and I offer the floor to Senator David Andrew.

Sen. the Hon. David Andrew: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning to all colleagues within the House and persons listening elsewhere. I join my voice in welcoming our colleague on "This Side" of the House to the Upper House. It's an interesting place to be. It's probably a lot more interesting than the "Other Place" **(laughter)** you would soon find. But we welcome you.

I particularly like you volunteering to disclose a bit of your own past, your own history as a source of encouragement to young people everywhere, who probably feel when you get punched down, when you get knocked down by some cruel curve ball that life throws at you, you probably need to stay down and feel sorry for yourself. But your story, from what you've shared thus far, indicates that you used it as a catalyst to propel you forward. And so, we congratulate you, we welcome you, and we look forward to

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation

working along with you, as together in this place we served the nation's interest. Welcome. All the best to you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Andrew. Thank you kindly, and we offer the floor to Senator André Lewis now. **(Laughter)**

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Madam President. And it was indeed my intention to go immediately before Senator Franklyn, but recognising that there is this special bond, and he was really at the bit wanting to...

I join everyone, Senator Francis, in welcoming you to this Senate. I completely endorse the observation by Senator Andrew in terms of your background and what that means. I'm also heartened by the fact that many of our youths are serving at the same time in the Senate. It is my wish, as I said a few years ago when we had other youthful senators here, on both sides of this table, that it will help change our politics because, at the end of the day, we are here through political affiliations. Yes? At least part of this idea, we are here as independent Senators.

Your journey has prepared you, and what will continue to be important is to remain grounded. As we debate the nation's business, it is important for us all to be guided by this because there are people outside there who are depending on us, if you're confident that you will deliver. I wish you all the very best, and I look forward to meaningful engagement. As a matter of fact, I engaged you this morning rather than waiting officially. Yes? Thank you very much for making yourself available to serve the nation. All the very best. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you, Senator André Lewis, and I offer the floor to Grenada's Attorney General, Senator Claudette Joseph.

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning to you and everyone in this Honourable House. Indeed, it would be remiss of me if I were

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation

not to stand and offer my heartfelt congratulations and welcome to this Honourable House to a sister, Senator Francis.

It is indeed a wonderful thing that the Prime Minister saw it fit to consciously reduce the average age **(laughter)** of this Upper House by appointing a young female senator. So, two things were done in one stroke of the pen: the average age of the Upper House was reduced, and the gender balance was enhanced. I know with your addition, Senator Francis, it will make for more robust, in-depth and substantial debates in this House as we go about taking care of the nation's business.

Your experience as a Youth Parliamentarian, I am sure would be brought to bear as we discuss and debate the matters before this House and I am sure often times you will find yourself brining some of us, with less parliamentary experience up to speed with the Standing Orders, and the other rules on decorum of the House.

I know that you would find it rewarding and fulfilling as you join your fellow sisters here, Senator Douglas, Senator Gloria Thomas and my humble self, because as women, we always bring a more practical perspective to things. **(Laughter)** Yes. Different and more practical because we see the people behind the arguments when we have documents in front of us, and we discuss the matters contained in the documents, such as we will discuss today, the Supplementary Budget. We see the people and the faces behind what we are discussing. In other words, we don't see things in the abstract.

So, I look forward to working with you as we enhance the lives of all our people together and as we move this great country forward. And by the way, although I'm a Wharf girl, St. Patrick is my favourite parish. **(Laughter)** Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Joseph. It appears that the Senate is going north **(laughter)** not to mention female. All right, let me offer the floor to Senator Roderick St. Clair. You have the floor...

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

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation

Madam President: ... Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, and sorry for my tardiness this morning and for being unable to listen to the presentation by our new Senator, Honourable Seville Francis, but I will definitely go back and follow. I've been queuing for the discussion. But, outside of that, I want to say good morning to all the fellow senators inside here and all the staff and everyone listening on the outside.

But, what I would say from having been through that process myself for the past couple years, it's a very serious obligation, commitment. Sometimes I sit and I say its 13, 14 of us making serious rules and regulations for the 100 and something thousand plus in this country. And so our objectivity, our critical thinking, our deep research and consultation and feedback all come in one when we look at this whole role that we have. It's a very serious role because we must be able to sleep at night and feel that we have made the right decision with consciousness. When some matters come to a vote, a division of vote and we have to decide yay or nay, it does matter. I recall going through those things myself, and I say, "Wow". You think about all of those things.

I welcome further the woman part, we welcome to have more women present. This is very good, adding a different spice to the whole thing. But more so as a young woman, it gives many others in this country hope; it gives them aspirations that they can be, and they can be whatever they want to be. You know, we speak about Americans always speaking about how we can be what we want to be. In Grenada, we can be what we want to be once we apply ourselves, and I think, as young persons, this should be the message that we're sending out. You know, I was looking at the medium-term review, and I'm not getting into this **(laughter)** into the debate about that, and it speaks about the young women, unemployment rate and all of those things, and that to me was very telling.

And so, I trust that Ms. Francis, in her new role, can add to that voice of champion, leadership and direction. Of course, you will get unwavering support because the future of this country, you know, depends on the younger ones and particularly the women because they have to make a lot of decisions. Sometimes, they end up being single

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation

parents. How do you avoid that? How do you manage around those issues? So this is a very serious issue and I don't want to carry on too long.

I want to use this opportunity to welcome you. As Senator David Andrew, my good friend, said, "It's not like the "Other Place"." We discuss real issues, and we come here for business. **(Applause)** And so, preparation is what is important. We don't deal with constituents and constituencies, we deal with the issues and we hold good debate and we are all still friends. We sit down and eat lunch together, and we chat and debate issues.

And so, don't think sometime you may get a little punch here or punch there, don't take it personal. It's saying how do we think about it critically and so on? So with these words said, I want to say welcome, Madam President, to our new friend in this Honourable House. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: I thank you, Senator. I thank you, and I offer the floor to Senator Salim Rahaman. Senator Rahaman.

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: Thank you, Madam President, and good morning to all. My apologies for being a little late. Just about an hour ago, I landed at our International Airport. So, I would like to congratulate my colleague, Senator Francis, and perhaps remind myself and us all of two things:

1. To whom much is given, much is expected, and when we are asked to serve in this Honourable House, in our varying capacities, we do so on behalf of the people that we represent, and more importantly, we do so on behalf of democracy and our nation and its values and we have to remember that at all times. And so, as my colleague Senator St. Clair said, that sometimes when we debate and we disagree, we must disagree out of respect and upon the issue are not based on personalities.
2. And secondly, I remind myself and us of the words, "By their fruits you shall know them". Those words were spoken by Jesus in the Bible. "By their fruits you shall

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation

know them". So by what we do, we will be known by the people for the work that we do.

And so, I wish you the best as I wish my colleagues the best. I thank you. Thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Rahaman. Is it a light there? Yes. Thank you all. Distinguished colleagues, thank you all very much. Senator Katisha ... Douglas. Douglas. **(Laughter)** Douglas. **(Laughter)** You may rise, madam.

Sen. the Hon. Katisha Douglas: Yes. Good morning, and thank you, Madam President. Senator Francis, I would like to say congratulations and welcome you to this Honourable House. Looking forward to having healthy conversations with you. Sometimes, it can get a little ticklish, and I know you're aware of that, but what's important, as Brother Rahaman said, is that we don't take or attack personalities. We're here for a purpose, and the purpose is to look at the challenges that are happening in the country and take care of the people's business because they're out there listening to us.

So, welcome again and looking forward. It's a pleasure to have another young person, a woman, woman power that is, and we are going to ensure that we do what we took the oath to do. Welcome. Thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Douglas, and I pass the floor to Senator Quinc Britton.

Sen. the Hon. Quinc Britton: Ni hao. **(Laughter)** A pleasant good morning to my colleagues on the "Other Side" as well as on "This Side". And I, too, join with the sentiments being expressed this morning in welcoming our dear sister over to our side of the House. It is indeed as everyone said: it's where we discuss the nation's business. And it would be challenging but exciting for you, so I wish you well in your new position. And as I always say, just as short as I am, five feet six inches, I would remain short.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

***Oath of Allegiance / Affirmation
Minutes***

I expect you to do your best in this new journey, in the book of life. All the best.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Britton. I think this round has no more requests for the floor, so I want to thank all of you and move swiftly on.

Deputy Clerk: Item 4 – Confirmation of Minutes

Madam President: Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to move the Motion that the minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Building, Mt. Wheldale, St. George, on Wednesday the 26th of June 2024 be taken as read.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

Madam President: Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I rise to move the Motion that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Building, Mt. Wheldale, St. George, on Wednesday the 26th June 2024 be confirmed.

Question put.

Madam President: Senator, I'm sorry. Senator Andrew. David Andrew.

Sen. the Hon. David Andrew: Yes. Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, before we move to pose the question for confirmation of the minutes, I rise to

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Minutes

make two observations concerning the Minutes, which I hope we can consider before the question is moved.

1. I noticed the Minutes carried no page numbering. It makes referencing the document, should you have an area of concern, a little difficult. And so, I propose that is an area that needs attention, the numbering of the pages to ensure for ease of reference.
2. I notice, though, that there are some inconsistencies in referencing speakers within the Minutes. So I draw your attention to what's supposed to be page seven. If you scroll manually on what's supposed to be page seven of the document, since it's not numbered and under the section that say, "Undermentioned Senators made contributions". In some instances, names only were used, in other instances, designations only were used, and in other instances, both names and designations were used.

In my mind, there is a lack of consistency. So I'll point out and I'll read exactly what it says, "The undermentioned Senators made contributions: The Leader of Government's Business, Senator the Honourable Adrian Thomas". The second bullet head says, "Senator the Honourable Norland Cox. Senator the Honourable Salim Rahaman". The fourth one says, "Minister for Education"; we're not sure who that is. The fifth one says, "Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair". The next one says, "The Attorney General and Minister for Legal Affairs, Labour and Consumer Affairs" and the final one says, "Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis".

Now, we used designations on some occasions, names only on some, and both names and designations on others. This repeats itself on page nine and page 12. And I think for consistency, it might be important. If we use names and designations, we use those. If we're using designations, we use those. So, I just want to point that out for the consideration of the Honourable House. Thank you much.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Minutes
Announcements

Madam President: I thank Senator Andrew for his astuteness and careful reading of the Minutes. Thank you. Any other corrections or amendments? Hearing none, I do remind the Clerk to take on board the corrections proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed as amended.

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

Item 6 - Announcements by Madam President.

Madam President: Thank you, Madam Deputy Clerk. When we last met on Wednesday, the 26th of June, 2024, dear colleagues, we did not know what changes would come. First, let me say thank you to former Senator Jonathan La Crette, who served, and wish him well.

Next, let me turn my attention to what has already proceeded: the welcoming of our new colleague, Senator Seville Francis. I almost have nothing to say. What an outpouring of solidarity you have received from this House, "This Place". You come from the parish that is rich in history, St. Patrick, and you say you brought yourself here as a northern star. We welcome you, Northern Star, and you have already seen the expectations and the rhythm of this House. May your stay in the Senate, Senator Francis, be fruitful and enjoyable for you and be of great benefit to our nation. I hope that your presence here holds special meaning for young people and especially for rural girls and women.

I want you to know that this is a place that is not always in agreement; it's not intended to be. It's intended to be robust, to bring the diversity of Grenada to the table, so it will not always be in agreement, but I think you have already seen one of the critical features of the Senate, that it is agreeable. Senators are agreeable in the Chamber and out of the Chamber when not in agreement or not even on the same side. And that's a

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Announcements

feature of our independence, our protocol that we are proud of. Count on all of us to be good colleagues to you.

As you have already said, Senator, you're coming now have brought a greater measure of gender equality, the gender equality threshold set by the United Nations of 30% female in all decision-making bodies across nations. This is a watermark minimum, and we are glad that you helped to bring it on board more intently. And in that sense your presence is already making a difference, so now that we have a critical mass, although it's only 30, 33% let us make the cultural, social and political difference that gender balance promises, some of which have already been referred to by Senator Joseph and by a number of the men. So we're sailing well.

Thank you for bringing your youthfulness and your advocacy or championship of health rights and health issues to the table, and we hope that we will. I see the Minister for Health, acting Minister for Health has come to back you up. **(Laughter)** So we expect that people's health, women's health and the challenges of social health will be a feature that you will bring. Again, welcome and thank you for your service to come.

Thirdly, I'd like to turn my attention to ask us to offer a minute of silence for the people killed by and in the hurricane, Hurricane Beryl, which transpired in Grenada on the 1st of July, 2024. We may sit in our seats, bow our heads and reflect on their lives and ours.

(A moment of silence was observed)

Madam President: I thank you. Colleagues, ours is a national little archipelago. I count about eight islands that are fully or semi-inhabited; two were devastated, Carriacou and Petite Martinique and, of course, St. Patrick and other eastern regions, western in part, farming and fishing industry's infrastructure, telecommunications, and so much more. We thank God that the number of deaths were few, and we thank God for the excellent speed of NAWASA, GRENLEC and other utility and supply companies and agencies in getting us back up and running as a country. Thank you. Thank you, NADMA. Thank you all.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Announcements

We send our solidarity to the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique through their able representative here in the Senate, Senator Noland Cox and, of course, all the people of St. Patrick and across Grenada for so speedily rising up again. Everyone did. I think in the Senate we say, stay up, stand up and go forward because we are all together doing that.

We must send special thanks to Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell and his Cabinet, and to the Opposition Party as well, all of whom led from in front with dedication and with a sense of urgency. The national leadership rose to the national responsibility. Emotionally, we are on our path again, I think, most of us. Let us carry those who are not, and let us use this resumed emotional health and logistical successes, too, as we transition from relief to rebuilding. Clearly, today's actions in this Upper House, finalising the Supplemental Appropriation Bill, if indeed it is finalised, will be Parliament's contribution to our nation going forward—our gift to the reconstruction. So, I thank you and commend you all.

Two last notices from me. The Eastern Caribbean is having success with the appointment of Dame Janice Pereira, the retired Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. She was appointed as a member of the British Privy Council as of 48 hours ago. Whatever one thinks of the Privy Counsel and its relationship to the Caribbean, let us celebrate that one of our leading regional female jurists has been appointed to that historic and universal and premier legal institution. We sent congratulations to Dame Janice to her native Virgin Islands and to the Eastern Caribbean Judiciary.

And lastly, colleagues, I want to welcome back Senator Quinc Britton, who was on a long tour of duty, long, as in a whole week in China. And if I may be permitted, without being sanctioned, I think he got a new hair style over there. **(Laughter)** So welcome. I'm sure we will hear of the proceedings of the discussion of the parliamentary role in the achievement of the sustainable development goals—something we would love to hear about.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Announcements

On the 1st of September, I will depart the state for the 46th Conference of the Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association that will be held in Georgetown, Guyana. I believe I will be accompanied by Senator Adrian Thomas, and we will be representing Grenada at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) around issues of good governance and other thematic areas. This brings the end of my notices. Thank you. Senator André Lewis, you have the floor, sir.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Madam President. I crave your indulgence to raise a matter for another time, well, on this occasion again, as it relates to the notice on the Sitting of the Senate.

In the Standing Orders, under rule number seven, "Duties of the Clerk", it states that the Clerk shall circulate the Order Paper, which shall contain the business for that Sitting, and it has to be done six clear days, and that Order Paper for it to contain the business, must contain the relevant documents for discussion.

It was only on Tuesday the 27th, that is, this week on Tuesday, that we got the approved Supplementary Budget. I deliberately said approved Supplementary Budget because for it to come to us... The Senate plays an oversight role from the Lower House, and these documents are meant for us to be able to give justice as our new Senator has indicated to us. It is always good to have fresh minds, yes, to help remind us. For us to give justice to the nation, we have to be able to prepare.

So, these rules are set in place unless there is an emergency. Unless there is an emergency, and certainly a Supplementary Budget cannot be considered, in this case, a matter of emergency. The seven-day rule or the six-day rule must be and ought to be applicable.

It also gives the... Because I represent Labour, and even if I do not represent Labour, we expect everyone to be concerned about our fellow human beings. It gives the House of Parliament and the staff the opportunity to be able to take their time to do what needs to be done. But certainly, in terms of the nation's business, I am drawing to your

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Announcements

attention, Madam President, so that we can take the corrective measures going forward.

In other words, I would not like my dear Senator Francis to be in a meeting that I deem questionable. I'm not doing this. Yes? But certainly, we are out of time, and I'm drawing this so that corrective measures can be taken. I am placing this on record. Thank you very much, Madam President.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Lewis. I believe there's a request for the floor from Senator Cox. You have the floor, Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I just wanted to take this opportunity, while we are on the floor, in terms of some notices. Just two quick important announcements to recognise persons. We just recently concluded our carnival. I just want to congratulate our Carnival Queen, who hails from the north, Carriacou **(applause)** who is also a neighbour of mine, just a stone's throw away from where I live, on winning the 2024 National Queen Show. We also had a place in the calypso show as well, Dimanche Gras, that's Shanda, just want to also congratulate her too. **(Applause)** She has been working hard in that area, so I just wanted to recognise that.

But most importantly also, everybody, all the other artists who participated, who are Carriacounians, Superflint and also my good friend from L'Esterre. So, Madam President, I think it's sometimes important that we recognise the efforts of individuals who participate in our cultural activities, ensuring that we have cultural assets to present and sustain as we move forward...

Madam President: Especially when they come from Carriacou? **(Laughter)**

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: ... Well, of course, Madam President. But I don't want to get into a debate on culture here because I know sometimes it will raise a lot of eyebrows because we have St. Patrick, we have Gouyave, we have St. David, so we

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Announcements
Ministerial Statements

know how it is. But I also want to congratulate our Olympic athletes, Madam President, especially our medallists, both Lindon and Anderson. They have been working hard and knocking on the door. I think, you know, it's a great achievement for our country. **(Applause)** It's a significant achievement for us to have three persons who we can look to in terms of achieving medals for our country at the Olympic level.

But, Madam President, I think oftentimes we take the efforts of Kirani for granted. I think he has made everything easy for other young athletes going forward. **(Applause)** He has created the opportunity of belief that it can be done, and even me just sitting back looking at it, it just seems easier, and I'm certain that other athletes now see that it is achievable to be successful at the Olympics. It is just looking easier, and I think that is one of the things that we take for granted, the achievement of Kirani and the impact that his success would have had on other athletes. Even Lindon confessed to me that his biggest role model is Kirani James, and that is what drives him and motivates him to be successful.

So, I just want to put on record my thanks to them for really, really lifting our nation on the sporting side of things. So, those are two important announcements that I want to make, Madam President. Thank you for your indulgence.

Madam President: Thank you for both of them, Senator. Thank you, and congratulations to Carriacou on the winning of Miss Grenada 2024. Great showing of her island. Thank you.

Deputy Clerk: Item 7 – Ministerial Statements.

Madam President: Senator the Honourable David Andrew.

Sen. the Hon. David Andrew: Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to give a couple of brief notices in relation to education and the re-opening of schools. As the nation might be aware, only yesterday the Ministry of Education held

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Ministerial Statements

a press conference to speak about the nation's readiness for the re-opening of schools and quite a lot was said so I'll try to be very brief here because I don't want to rehash everything that was said because it's all on record and available.

But the press conference highlighted that all schools on the mainland will be re-opened as scheduled on Monday, September 2, 2024, pending no unforeseen occurrence and that there was going to be a deferred or delayed re-opening on Carriacou.; that was going to be assessed within the next two weeks to give a precise date based on the progress with repair work and relocation of the persons within the shelters and those stuff, but, that was talked about at length in the press conference.

We talked about support packages for students from Carriacou. We talked about a number of different things, the details of which I don't want to go into at this point, but there are two matters, Madam President, that I still want to raise in this Honourable House in relation to education.

The enactment of the Education (Amendment) Act. We will recall, Madam President, that in this very House, the Education (Amendment) Bill was passed on June 6th, which comes into effect on the 1st of September and now extends the compulsory age of schooling to 18. And we did lots of discourse on that, but suffice it to remind the population and to remind this Honourable House that after the 1st or as of the 1st of September 2024, it will be an offense to keep any child beneath the age of 18 out of school.

We did discuss at length that this did not mean retaining them in secondary school, but it meant that they had to be engaged in formal and official schooling, be it continuing at the level of TAMCC, be it at NEWLO or university, but they had to continue. So I want to bring this to the attention of the nation so parents can be aware and all of us in this Honourable House can be aware.

Now, we are aware that TAMCC, NEWLO, SGU and other higher institutions of learning are available options for our young people who are matriculating out of secondary school at age 16, some 16 plus, to continue their education. But because we are aware that probably not all of them might be interested in the programmes available

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Ministerial Statements

in those institutions or might not necessarily have the requirements, we have been taking other steps, and so at the Ministry of Education, we have started engaging a number of technical skills service providers.

These service providers are NTA-approved; they offer courses and programmes that are NTA-certified, after which they would get the appropriate CVQ qualification. Right. And so we've engaged about 15 of those providers. We had a conversation with them to discuss their willingness to cooperate with us and to collaborate with the Ministry of Education to provide avenues to absorb those additional students coming out of secondary school who may not go to TAMCC, NEWLO, or university or migrate.

And we are currently in the process of receiving the final data from them as to their capacity, their final courses and in the coming week, you will get public service announcements coming from the Ministry of Education, giving the public information about registration procedure, what courses are available, how to register, where the centres are and what support would be available.

So I'm sharing this with the Nation because given the amendment to the Education (Amendment) Bill, coming into effect the 1st of September, we want to make sure that the nation is aware that we are moving to provide additional absorptions spaces for the nation's children to continue their education officially, formally and in centre's that are approved. So, I wanted to bring this to the Honourable House.

Additionally, the second item I want to speak about, Madam President, is an intervention for literacy and numeracy that the Ministry of Education has undertaken. We are quite aware as a nation and, I daresay, as a region, how deeply plagued we have been with low performance in literacy and numeracy across the region. The Ministry of Education understands that our best chance to treat those issues is to deal with them in the formative years of our children. Because if you miss those years when students are most receptive, when children are like absorptive sponges, we miss the opportunities there. We spend a lot of resources, not getting the return to the same extent that we extend the resources to try to catch up down the road in various programmes.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Ministerial Statements

And so, we are targeting the early childhood development periods of our nation's children, and so we are starting to pilot in seven of our schools three interactive software for implementation and use in our nation's primary schools. We are starting with seven schools, one for each district, including Carriacou and Petite Martinique and St. Patrick, and when it is reviewed, we hope to implement it across all of our primary schools.

Now, I'm excited about this because it's student-driven. It follows the models using the technologies that our children are excited about. Students lead the way. Teachers become facilitators. Students get to listen to themselves. They get to hear themselves. They self-monitor as they go along, and teachers facilitate.

So we had two days of training within the Summer Institute on June 15th and 16th. We trained about 25 educators, principals and primary school teachers in the use of those software to facilitate the pilot and there was great excitement about the prospect of beginning to arrest the literacy and numeracy challenges experienced by many of our nation's children at that level and the Ministry is very cognisant that we need to address it there to begin to change the fortunes of our nation's children in relation to literacy and numeracy.

I'm excited too, and I thought I wanted to share this with the House because as we pilot in this term, we look forward to assessment and evaluation at the end of the period and wider rollout come the second term, January 2025, God willing. Thank you very much for your attention.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Andrew, Minister for Education. I listened keenly, and I'm excited about those two initiatives because I think the latter of the two, both of them, but clearly, the latter of the two is an early intervention strategy that I really think is critical. I don't recall the figures of our performance this year, but they were, if I recall, rather disappointing in Mathematics and English A. So doing something about them at an early stage is commendable.

And of course, all these young people who are proud to say that they've finished secondary school when they're 16, 17 and they're taking a year off, they're not sure what

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Ministerial Statements

to do, I'm glad that there are additional opportunities for them. There is a tendency. It appears to me, anyway, that many people would like to do the short-term skills acquiring so that they can sort have get on the job market in addition to further education, so those technical skills again would be useful. Thank you. I see the light of Senator André Lewis. You have the floor, Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Madam President, and it's good to hear that initiative from the Minister for Education, but there are two matters I would like to draw to his attention to sleekly get his lead assistance on. As it relates to the reopening of school, I recognise that the Minister has said that he will provide an abridged version, as he has done here, rather than going through a number of details.

But certainly, I'm making an appeal to the Minister again for the provision of dedicated transport especially for school children. Labour is concerned about transport throughout the island for workers getting home at night, et cetera. But my central concern here has to do with the reopening of school. It brings back the everyday experiences of seeing our school children stranded on the road for transportation and having to be fighting in the bus terminus and on the bus stops. The new bus stops that have been created, as people gather at different spots, moving, looking for transport... Because to pay attention to the nation future, as the Minister have indicated, is a multifaceted approach and transport is extremely important. Because it can also lend itself to reduce the possibility of conflicts, we know these things take place with the gathering of children.

There's also another concern I wish to raise. It is related to transport. As of Monday, the reopening of school, I shudder to think about what will happen to Green Street. Remember, H. A. Blaize Street is close to the public in terms of transport. There is a pre-primary. Yes. There's a pre-primary school located at the top of Green Street. Parents, under normal circumstances, will be dropping off their children, and then after one, after two, and there's normally under normal circumstances even in the circumstances where Green Street is hardly been used because H. A. Blaize Street is

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Ministerial Statements

being used, there is normally a build-up of traffic there on a morning. I shudder to think what will happen from this Monday morning coming.

So, I'm speaking, through you, Madam President, to my colleague Minister for Education, to make what urgent intervention, to the relevant ministry or personnel that has to address the use of H. A. Blaize Street that has been in these challenges for quite a while, for too long. Monday, and even for those of us who work in that area, if under normal circumstances, we can't find a park because that whole street is blocked off in terms of no parking, which was the normal parks.

So I'm making this urgent appeal. It is always good to address issues to see what can happen. I'm not waiting until Monday, I know it is just a short time away, but, please. Under normal circumstances, it creates issues. People have been tooting their horns, coming out, and parking their transports in the middle of the road because they can't find a park to run up to get their children. So I'm just drawing this to your attention, to the relevant authorities, to make this a matter of priority.

One, transportation for school children and secondly that matter that will happen and shall happen on Monday morning along the Green Street, that has the potential to back way back up to the intersection of Scott Street and Lucas Street which can have serious implication for transport way back down, going back down to Scott Street up Young Street back into the Town. So this needs urgent, urgent attention. Thank you for the opportunity.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator, and I trust that the relevant authorities are able to do an intervention in a timely manner. Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Madam President. I rise to make two observations pertaining to the ministerial statement that was presented by our Minister for Education, our good friend, Senator David Andrew.

The first one had to do with the issue of the age of 16 and 18 and all of those things. Of course, I know when this Bill was discussed, the Amendment, that those

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Ministerial Statements

commitments were given that things will be put in place. So we're happy to see that, and so we trust that they will be uptake in this process and that at least we would get some update later on as to if we had 30% or 40% uptake, you know, how much persons participated in this process.

What we have to be careful about at the same time is that we have, what I would term in my own phrase, 'skill relevancies' in terms of what the job market is looking at, where the opportunities are and what the country needs. So these training sessions should be really pointed in certain directions.

I want to add to that, that the private sector, the business community and of course Government too, employers in a broad space, Employers Federation and so on, are involved in this setup such that you have a sort of demand driven training packages that are designed, such that these individuals can then connect at some stage in some sort of internship or training or practical sessions in this whole NTA business. I don't know how the programmes are set up, but it would be good wisdom that integrated in the training or a course that some level of practical, hands-on is deeply rooted in the design of the course and that is connected with the businesses.

Such that if someone goes to do something... I don't even want to refer to a name to show any prejudice, but some skill or some interest area and you know that there are two or three or four businesses that will be willing to take on this person maybe twice a week, or maybe on afternoon sessions, so in the morning they do their theory and evening, so they have what you call the integrated learning side by side rather than you go to theory for six months or two months and then you're going to practical afterwards, it's done kind of concurrently. So, that is a strategy that I want to put on the table for our dear Minister, having been and operated in the education system myself many years ago.

And the other part connected with the issue of this numeracy and so on. I think we need to do some inventory, Madam President, as to who are the real specialists in our schools that are trained in these things. I mean, I know before you had proper training through the Teachers College and then you had specialised training in numeracy. You had people like Brother Dennis Bell, may his soul rest in peace, Baron St. Clair and so

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Ministerial Statements

on, may his soul rest in peace also, you see, rest is peace's, who would have been going around and championing this numeracy and mathematics and stem training, all on Saturdays throughout the country.

And so the question is, has that disappeared? What used to be happening before? What is the role of the curriculum development in all of this space? Because having 25 persons going to a workshop, I used to do those things too as a teacher, you know after CXC results come out, they meet and they say well this was the low areas, how do we fix it. But this is a broader perspective I think.

And also Madam President, my final comment on this is the involvement of the parents. We have to be careful because the parents have the children for a lot of time, on weekends, on holidays all like now. If you speak to them about technology and gadgets and software, those things are generally online accessible, so how do we empower the parents, who spend most of their time, in preparing the children for CPA and all of those things? How do we equip them, empower them and get them to also, I wouldn't say, pick up the slack, but add to what the Ministry is already doing?

Because the thing about pilots, Madam President, I am afraid of pilots. Pilots, they say okay you should really do a pilot because just in case you do it too big it could be an issue. But pilots sometimes end up just being pilots, and then the next phase, well, you know, we have to see where we get money to continue it. It was a project we got some special funding for, and so even if the pilot was good, we still cannot materialise the pilot.

So, I'm not too sure if pilot is a good word as a moral, but maybe you may say you are phasing it out, you're phasing it in, in that way, meaning that, we expect more to come as we go, because pilot you then assess it, you evaluate and then you say you can't do that. Then, basically, it is like research; the subjects, which are the students, and the teachers become like guinea pigs. But I wonder if it will work; I wonder if it wouldn't work. So it's just an approach of words, thank you. Well you yourself who is a research scientist yourself, would understand where I'm coming from with these phrases, thank you.

(Applause)

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Ministerial Statements

Madam President: Thank you, Senator. Senator Rahaman.

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: Thank you, Madam President. I'd like to make a suggestion to the Minister for Education. Junior Achievement, and that leads to what Senator St. Clair was speaking about. Junior Achievement—I don't know if Senators are aware, but at one point, it was stopped because private sector support for that programme ceased. We can't afford to stop an entity like Junior Achievement because what that does is help our youths coming out of school who may have business ideas to try their hand at business. So the private sector has been supporting it and has supported it over the years, but I'm not sure that under the Ministry of Education that, there's support for programmes like Junior Achievement, which is a very old programme. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** And if it is ongoing, then it is something that needs to be....

Just this week, I was speaking to somebody about it. We all know that the private sector is the engine of growth, and micro and small businesses are what add. We have to see how we can promote. They create jobs and so on. And the ideas that come out from our students and from fivev and, you know, new ideas, they're different from the ideas that exist in society because they have a different mindset. They understand technology better, and they want to try this and try that.

So I'm just saying that, leaning off of on Senator St. Clair's point, Junior Achievement is the vehicle that we need to continue to support and perhaps look at to make sure that enough funding is being directed there so that our creative minds, our creative youths, they get the opportunity to start their businesses and to succeed.

And also the funding. Once that Junior Achievement programme is over, they should have those businesses that are successful or have promise, we should have a private sector in conjunction with the Ministry trying to help them with funding, so that they can venture capitalism so that they can start and maybe buy shares and invest in that idea and help them to start that business. Rather than only them alone trying to go to a bank to seek funding. Just a suggestion. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Ministerial Statements

Madam President: Thank you to the Business Representative in the Senate for looking out for business opportunities linked to the preparation in the state. Thank you. I'm sure the Minister for Education heard you, and he wishes to reply.

Sen. the Hon. David Andrew: Thank you very much, Madam President. I want to express gratitude to my colleagues for their suggestions but to assure them that what are presented is simply one section of a number of elements within the National TVET Strategy Policy that we have as part of the plan to mainstream skills education in schools, to work along with industry, but admittedly all the things that we talked about can't all be done at the same time. So many of the elements that you have referenced are things that we are duly considering.

Currently, there is a partnership with Youth and NTA, trying to get selected numbers of persons trained with industry getting that practical element. The nature of skills themselves requires competency-based skills, so it's not theoretical to address, I think, one of the concerns raised by one of the other colleagues. And that's why we stress having NTA Certified Programmes because the standards are there and the number of contact hours for practice as opposed to theory, those are all elements that are clearly mapped out for the course to be accepted and validated.

And so, yes, we accept all of these things, but admittedly what's being shared now is only that particular element to absorb the students in the immediate but there are medium term and longer term elements of the National TVET Strategy and Policy, which will reflect a lot of what is being discussed and as soon as those become ready for public discourse we will have those shared. But thank you very much, Madam President.

Madam President: I thank Senator the Honourable David Andrew. Are there any other speakers on this Motion?

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

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Ministerial Statements

Madam President: Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to present the following Papers and Reports from Select Committees to this Honourable House:

1. Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for 2024 as approved by the Finance Committee at its meeting of 20th August 2024;
2. 2024 Mid-Year review Report as approved by Cabinet pursuant to Section 25 (3) of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) No. 17 of 2015 to be laid in Parliament together with the Supplementary Budget in accordance with Section 23;
3. The opinion of the Cabinet pursuant to Section 25 (2) & (3) of the PFMA.

Thank you.

Madam President: I thank the Honourable Adrian Thomas. Senator, your light is still on.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Sorry.

Madam President: Senator André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Madam President. We just had a brief caucus here because I guess each one of us was wondering if each one of us may have had some challenges in not being able to access the document. We are not seeing the Cabinet aspects included in what was downloaded for us.

Madam President: Thank you. Clerk.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Ministerial Statements
Personal Explanations

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes. I saw it in the mail, but I didn't see it here.

(The Clerk converses with Madam President privately)

Madam President: Thank you. I see signs that it has been found, and I'm happy to continue for a minute in silence while colleagues review the document. Thank you. Honourable Members, the question before us is the approval of the Papers and Reports that have been laid on the Senate floor here. Papers are laid.

Deputy Clerk: Item 9 – Petitions.

Madam President: Pause, please.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: We... Can I?

Madam President: Senator Lewis, please.

Sen. the Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much. We're just seeking some guidance as it relates to... Because I know the Supplementary Budget will be discussed. As it relates to the midterm review, can we also discuss that under the Supplementary Budget? Yes? Okay, good. So then that is okay. We just wanted to keep the train from rolling. Thank you.

Deputy Clerk: Item 10 – Government Notices.

Item 11 – Unofficial Notices.

Item 12 – Questions.

Item 13 – Personal Explanations.

Madam President: Senator Rahaman.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Personal Explanations

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: Thank you, Madam President. If I may. I just want to inform this Honourable House of a trip. I'm not sure if you made mentioned it, but it just concluded its first trade mission to Guyana, which was organised by the Ministry of Tourism in conjunction with the Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

We had about 30 Grenadians go down to Guyana. This trade mission happened when Guyana sent relief items post Beryl, and our Prime Minister, along with a gentleman by the name of Mr. Komal Singh, came up to Carriacou. He suggested to our Prime Minister that we should have a contingent trade mission to Guyana. The Ministry of Tourism took that idea and consulted with the Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce, got several businesses to travel to Guyana to represent what we produce, to show Guyana what we produce, and to speak to at least 200 Guyanese business people yesterday in an open forum to showcase what Grenada has to offer. And I must say that went very, very well. We were well-received by God's mercy.

I would also like to place on record my gratitude to the people and Government of Guyana for the hospitality afforded to not only the Government but the private sector as a whole. We were treated and I must also mention to our businesses at home and those who are not able to make the trip because it was a little costly for some of the smaller businesses, that from the Minister for Finance in Guyana, he welcomes Grenadian businesses to do business in Guyana; whatever your area of business is. He welcomes Grenadians to partner with Guyanese businesses.

And the reason why I make mention of this is because although within the OECS, our growth rate is good and better than most territories within the OECS at 3.9% from this midterm report, the rate of growth of the Guyanese economy is past 35% every year. It is the fastest-growing economy in the world, and when you look at the map, there's Grenada, there's Trinidad, and there's Guyana.

So, what are we trying to do? We already have importers of sand, and without the sand, our construction industry will be halted. And so we already have Guyanese sand coming in, and there are expressions of interest for our stone because currently, when these badges bring sand into Grenada, they go all the way up to St. Lucia to get stone to

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Personal Explanations

bring back to Guyana. A lot of Guyana is under sea level, so this presents an opportunity for Grenadian businesses and landowners who may have good-quality stone that they wish to export to get it tested so that when these barges come up to Grenada, they could go back to Guyana. Once we can start to send them back to Guyana, we will complete the trade route; it means the freight for the sand becomes cheaper. We can have a drop in the cost of sand, and we can find out if shipments from small businesses that produce goods can make their way down on that vessel to Guyana.

So, it is a wonderful opportunity. I didn't want this opportunity to pass without me mentioning it, and I hope that those who are listening can call the Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce. The organisers from the side of the ministry were the CEO of the Ministry of Tourism, Miss Petra Roach and also the Chairman, Randall Dolland, who was there and from the Chamber side, Miss Petipha Lewis. So I just want to thank them for all their hard work. They really represented our country well, and this is what I like to see: a marriage of both the public and private sectors at work in the interest of our country and our people. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you for that report, Senator. I take it that the three-zero persons who went, went at their own expense, as you seem to have indicated. Is it three-zero persons?

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: Yes, about that. Of course, I'm not sure about the Government side, but on the private sector side, we paid our own way. **(Laughter)** Thank you.

Madam President: Thank you. Thanks for reiterating the trade opportunities. You know, I might cause controversy here, but I would hope that the stones we could send to Guyana as business will not be the ones we need to hold up our own banks. There are some stones falling down from Grand Etang, which I traverse, but I think they're better off holding up that red mud so it doesn't slide too much. So before everybody

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

***Personal Explanations
Motions***

rushes out and packs up all our stones and sends it off to Guyana, just remember here in Grenada, our landslides is the business of the nation. Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: If I may, there's a statement, "Give as much as you can, but do not give so much that you become needy". So that's the answer to that.

Deputy Clerk: Item 14 – Motions

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you very much.

Madam President: Yes. I called on you. **(Laughter)**

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you very much, Madam President.

WHEREAS it was necessary to provide for the services of the State of Grenada for the year 2024 by means of a Supplementary Appropriation Act;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2024, for the period 1st January to 31st December 2024, be approved.

Question proposed.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, before I start my presentation, I too would like to join with my colleagues in recognising and being cognisant of the fact that what happened in Grenada on 1st July may have been one of the most devastating hurricanes that have ever passed through our tri-island state. And therefore, I will want to sympathise and empathise with my brothers and sisters in Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and St. Patrick to an extent.

Madam President, as I was having a brief conversation with my fellow Senator Norland Cox this morning, he indicated to me that maybe this was one of the most devastating hurricanes, surpassing what was done by Hurricane Janet in 1955. His facial

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

expression also indicated to me that the people of Carriacou are still going through what maybe they went through on the 2nd of July. So, Madam President, I stand here to express my condolences and to empathise with the people who have been affected the most.

Madam President, I also want to make the point and to indicate the House that I do have the Speaker's permission to proceed with this money Motion. What is the Supplementary Appropriations Act? What is it all about? Madam President, in layman's terms, all it means in the true sense of the word is supplemental to complete activities that started within the fiscal year and also to enhance projects and activities that the Government has taken within that particular year.

Many times, that happens with unforeseen circumstances, things you didn't expect to happen, like Hurricane Beryl. Even though Hurricane Beryl did not come or did not affect and create that impact in Grenada, we would have still been here, Madam President. But I must admit, and many of us must admit, that Hurricane Beryl said to us that we would have to come here faster than we thought, with a bigger budget than we anticipated, because we have to respond.

And as I empathise and sympathise with the people most affected. The impact that Kirani James, Lindon Victor, Anderson Peters, and the other Olympians created in the midst of these difficulties. They must be applauded for that. Madam President, it was a joy to look at television in Grenada and maybe to get the news in Carriacou because I doubt that many of the televisions or any televisions were up and running in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. But it was a joy in the midst of this difficult period to hear and to see the Grenadian flag flying in Paris.

But most of all, Madam President, it was also a joy to sit on a committee to plan that Welcoming Ceremony. And I have, present with us today, Madam President, the Minister for Mental Health and the Acting Minister for Youth and Sports, she love that Committee and it was a joy to work with her as we celebrate the coming home of the Olympian on the midst of the 50th Anniversary. So, I would like to thank that committee for putting such an important activity together in collaboration with the 50th Independence

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Anniversary Organising Committee. That was maybe one of the best responses to Hurricane Beryl. **(Applause)**

Madam President, we have a number of obligations in Grenada. Our farmers, our businesses, and our businessmen... What Hurricane Beryl has done is set them back, and we have an obligation to respond as a Government, as a state, to make sure that the farmers and the business community are up and running as quickly as possible. Therefore, if we procrastinate and if we sit by and do nothing about it, we as leaders will fail our people and will fail the State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Madam President, we have a responsibility.

As I saw the representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique walking here this morning, I thought he would have stayed for a while. I guess he will be back. It brought me back straight to Carriacou, three days after the hurricane, when I raised my hand and volunteered to go, knowing for a fact that there was no water and very limited shelter. I was encouraged to walk with my water and walk with my food, and I was offered a bucket in one of the badly damaged guest houses. I would not say what the bucket was for **(laughter)** but I made maximum use of it by visiting the shoreline. I spent a night up there, and I felt the pain, and when I landed on the ports and the Parliamentary Representative came to meet us, I looked at him in his eyes, and he looked at me, and he rested his head on my shoulder in tears and obviously, I am only human being, so my eyes were filled with water.

And from the time I hit Carriacou and I saw land, I saw land, and I say land because there were no trees. I knew for a fact what the close-up would have looked like. And I said to myself thank God, and the PS in Carriacou those were the first words he offered me also, thank God, nothing much didn't happened to Grenada. Because if Grenada was under the devastation that Carriacou went through, it means that things would have been even more difficult for Carriacou and Petite Martinique. And because things were up and running in a reasonable time, quick time in Grenada, we are able to help our brothers and sisters in Carriacou at a quicker pace.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Madam President, before I get deeper into the presentation, I want to commend our Prime Minister, Honourable Dickon Mitchell. From the moment this hurricane was heading in our direction, he was up and about. He was in motion. Up until today, this has been his top priority in regard to how we respond to Hurricane Beryl. And when you have a leader that nature that leads from the front and sits at the table with all the technicians and all the expertise who have the skills and talent to manage a disaster of that nature, and if you didn't know him you would have not been able to make a distinction who is politician, who is technical experts because he acquaint himself with the difficulties that this Hurricane Beryl brought to our country and he was able to bring it to the Grenadian people. To create an atmosphere where people had hope. Create an atmosphere where people have confidence that this dark day will be over soon, and we will build back bigger and better for the entire country.

Haven't said that, Madam President, I would like to also thank the Minister for Finance and his staff of the Ministry of Finance, the PS, the Deputy PS, all the technical staff, PS in other Ministries, for putting together, Madam President, this document of the Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2024. Madam President, this act is going to cost the country some dollars and cents, and I want to make the point here also that this is only two months after the hurricane. The real assessment of the damages is still ongoing. The preliminary assessment is maybe what we acting on at this point in time, but we have a lot of work to do. There are a lot of areas that we have not discovered as yet, but for the next three months, rest assured that we'll be able to deal with the issues and come 2025, we will still be dealing with matters and issues that have been created by Hurricane Beryl.

Haven't said that, Madam President, we have allocated \$269,598,086. And within that grand total, Madam President, we have a capital grant at \$5,368,472. Capital local \$233,218,318. Capital loans, zero. Recurrent, \$31,011,296. Madam President, I would like to itemise how the \$269,598,086 has been allocated to the various ministries. I will start from the top and go down in ascending order.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

- The Ministry of Infrastructure, Physical Development, Public Utilities, Civil Aviation, and Transportation – \$87,000,000.
I will go into more detail later on in terms of what that money will be used for.
- The Ministry of Finance – \$43,600,000
- The Ministry of Implementation, Mobilisation and Transformation – \$24,500,000;
- The Ministry of Economic Development, Planning, Tourism, ICT, and the Creative Economy... I'm calling it out based on the 2024 Budget. It's a little different now. Madam President, this ministry has been allocated \$23,387,000;
- The Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs and Local Government – \$18,520,185;
- The Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs – \$18,500,000;
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Cooperatives – \$17,860,000;
- The Ministry of Climate Resilience, the Environment and Renewal Energy – \$13,646,017;
- The Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture – \$9,973,963;
- The Ministry of Health, Wellness and Religious Affairs – \$5,000,000;
- The Ministry of National Security, Home Affairs, Public Administration, Information and Disaster Management – \$3,830,921;
- Office of the Prime Minister – \$2,500,000;
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Export Development – \$750,000; and
- And finally, Police – \$530,000, giving us the grand total of \$269,598,086.

Madam President, this by no means reflects the devastation of the hurricane, but as I said in my definition, the supplement is all about additional funds that you need to complete or enhance your work. And therefore, in the next three months up to December 31st, this is where most of the money will be.

We will appreciate the fact that Beryl is the main issue, the main driving force behind this budget, and also we must acknowledge the fact that we have received funding or compensation from some of our insurance companies that we must have in this

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Supplementary Budget. But, Madam President, we know for a fact that within your budget, you can look for idle funds; there is some level of flexibility, and we can reallocate funds from one vote to the next. But when you're exhausted that privilege and you still have work to do, then we need to come back here to this Honourable House to make sure that we take the right decision in terms of spending the people's money. It is important to note also that this Supplementary Appropriation Motion, Madam President, and the allocation of the funds, as was said in the "Other Place", the bulk of it comes from our taxpayers' money.

I am proud. I am proud that we didn't have to "scrunt", Madam President, to go begging these world organisations, begging those guys that maybe created the problem with Hurricane Beryl, well Ivan too. We didn't have to go and genuflect in front of them and ask them for funds to fix the problem that they have created, but we would not stop there, you know, because our voices must be heard here in Grenada, regionally and internationally. Our Prime Minister—I am very proud of him. I don't think he's afraid to speak in any forum and let them know that they have a responsibility and an obligation to fix the mess that they have created. Sorry for my language, Madam President. That's appropriate?

Madam President: That's the second one.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: That's appropriate?

Madam President: That's the second one that is inappropriate, and I'm glad you...

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President.

Madam President: "Scrunt", is not an official word in the Grenada Parliament...

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: But, I guess, Madam President, the ordinary folks would know what I am talking about.

Madam President: ... Neither is "fix-a-mess". Thank you, sir.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you very much, Madam President. But he is not afraid, Madam President, to let the world know that they have a responsibility to fix, you know, what I am talking about, because we are the victims of what they have been doing for years and being warned about.

Madam President, in the area of Infrastructure, as I said, over \$87,000,000 has been allocated to that project. One of the areas that we want to address is the Molinere Road, whereby \$9,000,000 was budgeted for that project. As we go through and redesign and do the necessary modifications, we'll believe that an additional \$12,000,000 will carry us to the completion of that project.

The asphalt work, Madam President, throughout Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique needs to be addressed, and one will realise that this Government is a serious Government when it comes to roads. We try to do as little as possible in regard to patching holes. Grenada roads today do not need patching holes. Madam President, what we need, in most places, is maybe to pick up what was there for 20 or 30 years and relay new surface. But we haven't gotten there as yet because we are still looking for the oil that was promised to us a long time ago. That was found... But that's okay.

What we are doing, Madam President, we are trying to relay patches of road, not potholes and resurface them. We are not afraid to tackle the True Blue road, Madam President. We're not afraid to tackle it. As I said, the "Other Place", we cannot have an institution like St. George's University contributing about 25% to the GDP of this country and the roads down there are not properly fix and addressed. So just like how we deal with the Eastern Main Road and the Western Main Road, I have no doubts that we have to lift the quality of roads throughout the country, and we'll be tackling those issues.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Therefore, this becomes a very important aspect of the work of the Ministry of Infrastructure, where the roads have to be addressed. Madam President, the bridges and drains also have to be addressed. And therefore, while we had an allocation of \$7,000,000 in the 2024 Budget, we still need an additional \$7,000,000 to address some of these roads and bridges, like the Marquis Bridge, culverts, and some of the retaining walls, including the road on H. A. Blaize Street. And I heard my good Senator, André Lewis, nearly rechristened to Adrian this morning... **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** Yes. I would have supported that and thought you deserved a good name. **(Inaudible comment by Senators) (Laughter)**

So, Madam President, construction, we all know, contributes significantly to the economy, not only in looking good, but it facilitates the movements of people and goods. When I drive to Providence in St. David, a journey that should take me three minutes to get to where I live, sometimes it takes me 10 minutes, and it is because I have to be swinging in and out, in and out. Grenadians deserve better roads than that. So, we're going to have an additional \$7,000,000 to facilitate those activities.

Madam President, government buildings. It is the policy of this Administration that we must maintain Government offices, and spaces, and buildings. It is not good to have a grand opening of the National Stadium or the Parliamentary Building or the Ministerial Complex or the extension office in Plains, grand opening, we eat, we drink, we cut the ribbon and we do not return for simple things like cobwebbing the eve of the ceiling or the repainting of the buildings.

I believe in maintenance. Our Administration understands the significance of it on a regular basis and when we don't do that, and we return 20 years to those buildings when you believe you have a \$100,000 renovation it turns out that you need a brand new building and a good example, Madam President, is the building we bought for the Police Headquarters on the Carenage. What we believed would have taken a short space of time turns out to be much more than that. Correct me if I'm wrong, it might be going for a year now or less. A little less? But it's a long, long time and is because on the surface, when you don't maintain buildings on the surface, what you see when you're go inside

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

you get much more than that to deal with.

So we want to make sure that we maintain buildings. While we allocated \$9m in the 2024 Budget, we are asking this House to approve another \$6m to address the buildings like the Grenville Police Station, the Central Police Station, Gouyave Police Station, Police Headquarters, the Supreme Court, the Registry, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture buildings and many more, Madam President.

Hurricane Beryl. That name will be called a lot of times here. You know, anytime you call or talk about Hurricane Beryl, it brings a sad feeling, you know, but we have to be more positive than that, and we'll get through.

But, Madam President, the clearing of roads for an activity, for an event we never catered for. While we had a bare \$250,000 in our budget for 2024, the impact of Hurricane Beryl, where we have to be clearing roads, culverts, drains, and landslides in Grenada and in Carriacou and Petite Martinique, in particular, is an additional \$2m we are requesting. As a matter of fact, Madam President, a lot of that money has already been spent, but we know we will be spending some more come January 2025. But, for now, \$2m we are kindly requesting from this House.

Another project that the Ministry of Infrastructure will be taking up under this Supplementary Budget is the Cliff Rehabilitation Project in Woburn. Many of us who drive on the Western Side would know that the road has been closed for a while, and we are working to make sure that things can get back to normal but in a better condition. I'm a driver, and you have to pray that you don't meet a container coming around that corner there or a trailer. There is no space, and if you drive there carefully, you'll see that.

Many years ago, more than 10, 15 years ago, there was some slippage there that has not been addressed as yet, and we want to address that also. But, we also aware of the fact that there isn't much room for expansion there and sometimes in a very shameful way when rules and regulations are not adhere to, when the rules are regulation are not respected, we find ourselves running into difficulties years after, if you build too close to the road you not leaving any room for expansion. And therefore, even in Molinere, with the new road, we have to compensate people and we have to do the same thing there in

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

order to widen the road, and in order to create even a sidewalk for people to walk on comfortably. So, Madam President, the Ministry of Infrastructure can justify \$87m.

The second biggest allocation is the Ministry of Finance with approximately \$43.6m. And, Madam President, there are two activities that the Ministry of Finance will be taking on their shoulder. The question of supporting business reactivation—\$25m have been allocated to that, and the Ministry of Finance will be working closely with Grenada Development Bank to make sure that this money is channelled in the right way to the right people. Madam President, part of this funding will be grants, part would be a loan at an interest rate of a mere 1%, and people who are taking loans would have a maximum of 10 years with a one-year grace period to repay that loan.

So this Administration, Madam President, when I say we want the businesses to get on their feet as quickly as possible... It's not only important for the businessman only, but there are people who he employs, the people whom he or she service. It is important that we get these people up and running again. And therefore, we have to come to the reality that at times, in difficulties, you have to stretch your hand. To the real architects of our society and those who hold up our society, the business sector has a very important role to play. And it will be remiss of this Administration to stand up and watch people struggle. They might be going through long negotiations with some of the insurance companies for compensation, and the Government could come to aid and after three months you can start your business again or six months rather than waiting to start it a year and a half after, it might be better for the society, it may be better for the economy. And therefore, the Ministry of Finance will be helping the business community to reactivate themselves and get the ball rolling again.

Madam President, the other \$18m, which is allocated to the Ministry of Finance, is to restore a contingency appropriation, pursuing section 22 subsection (2) of the Public Finance Management Act, No. 17 of 2015. These monies will be allocated to the various ministries, and I will just list them here quickly.

- The Ministry of Infrastructure – \$3,000,000;
- The Ministry of National Security – \$3,000,000;

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

- The Ministry Mobilisation Implementation and Transformation – \$3,000,000;
- The Ministry of Social Development and Housing – \$2,000,000;
- The Ministry of Health – \$1,000,000;
- The Ministry of Finance – \$1,000,000;
- The Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique – \$2,600,000;
- The Ministry of Economic Development – \$1,000,000; and
- The Ministry of Agriculture – \$2,000,000; two million dollars.

So, Madam President, those two ministries, Infrastructure and Finance, will have a lot of work to do to put this country on a strong footing.

Madam President, the Ministry of Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation. The Prime Minister saw it fit to establish this new ministry, and therefore, in crises like these or moments like that, that ministry steps up and comes forward. And so an allocation of \$24.5m will be used for that ministry to lead in some of the key areas of priority while the other ministries have their work to do. In other words, let's talk about the case of emergency, quick, we want it to be done now.

And therefore, this ministry will be asked to take on the responsibility to address 20 small roads of priority in the hurricane-affected areas, including Carriacou and also, Madam President, the completion of 26 houses and the construction of 50 new ones in St. Patrick. Madam President, this ministry will also be given the responsibility to be active, as they have been doing now, in the clean-up campaign in St. Patrick, and Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Some of that money, Madam President, will be utilised by you, and a lot of it, Madam President, in the whole question of transporting people and volunteers. I mean, we were doing this on a daily basis, and we had to do it because there is no way we wanted people to overnight and Carriacou to impose on the utilisation of water and food. So we asked even volunteers who were going up to assist to walk with their water and walk with their food, because we didn't want to strain the little resources that were available for the citizens of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. So, Madam President, this Ministry has a very important role to play.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

The Ministry of Economic Development, Planning and Tourism ICT and the Creative Economy, \$23.4m. Under this ministry, ¹SAEP is placed there. SAEP has taken the responsibility to assist quite a few of our farmers. So the farm access roads will be addressed under this ministry also, and there are some roads that have already been identified.

- Mt Reuil in St. Patrick;
- Bardia in St. David;
- Shambo in St. Patrick;
- Requin in St. David;
- Spring Garden in St. George;
- Dumfries in Carriacou; and
- Mondo in St. John.

Madam President, these roads are very crucial to the farming industry.

A sum of \$375,000 will be invested in providing a state-of-the-art hydroponics facility. We are dealing with some climate issues now, such as climate change demands, and we need to invest heavily in hydroponics and that, Madam President, we will address before the year is up.

Madam President, in the tourism sector, we have witnessed, in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, to an extent, the effect of hurricanes on the tourism sector. Even the office in Carriacou has created an impact which will cost the Government almost \$80,000 to repair. \$2.5m, Madam President, will be utilised to address some of the damaged sites and destinations in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. As we all know, in October, the cruise ships will be coming again. People will be running from the cold weather in the north and looking for the sunshine. But we are also quite aware that some of the facilities that were utilised by our own people need to be repaired and therefore, we will not hesitate to make sure that this is done.

¹ SAEP – Climate Smart Agriculture & Rural Enterprise Programme

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Madam President, the Underwater Sculpture Park. We were well on our way to establishing an additional one in Carriacou, and therefore, we will not hesitate to make sure that we repair the damage that was done and also to install the new one in Carriacou. And the MP disclosed to me that he's looking forward to the establishment of the Sculpture Park in Carriacou.

Madam President, the Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, \$18.5m. Over \$2,000,000, Madam President, for Carriacou in the 2024 Budget and therefore, we are asking for an addition of \$426,088 to cover the cost of the Public Assistance Programme in Carriacou. We will appreciate that the demand would have been greater than it was previously, had it not been for Beryl.

Rehabilitation of roads in Carriacou. \$3,000,000 was provided in the last budget, and we're asking for an additional \$3,000,000. Going up to Six Roads, there's a slippage that can pose a serious problem. I hope I got the area right. Therefore, the issue of roads in Carriacou is on our minds. We believe that people in Carriacou deserve good roads, and therefore, we are asking this Honourable House to approve an additional \$3.1m to address the Government Road Rehabilitation Project in Carriacou.

An additional \$15,000,000, Madam President, will be pumped in terms of rebuilding the economy of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. \$15,000,000. I see a little smile across there. No smiles? That's not enough? **(Laughter)** Madam President, I must make the point here also that despite what we have allocated to Carriacou and Petite Martinique, every ministry has a role to play in assisting Carriacou and Petite Martinique. As the MP indicated to us, there is no serious, functioning institution in Carriacou now operating at its maximum. And therefore, it is our responsibility to come forward and assist our brothers and sisters in Carriacou to make sure that life can go as smoothly as possible as time goes on. So, despite the \$18.5m allocated to Carriacou directly, all the other ministries have some aspect of the budget.

The Minister for Education will tell you. All the repairs that are taking place in the schools under the Ministry of Education, and the bulk of it will be going to Carriacou. Infrastructure. Roads. Some of the monies will be going to Carriacou. The Ministry of

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Health has a responsibility to provide the medical equipment that was destroyed, the roofs that were blown away... The Ministry of Health has that responsibility. So everybody would be stretching a hand. We need all hands on deck to assist Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Madam President, the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs, \$18.5m. We have a responsibility to pump another \$2,000,000 for the upkeep of our vulnerable citizens: the elderly and people who are sick. The demand has been greater because it's more stress, and we have to respond. If you cannot help yourself, the state has a responsibility to assist.

Madam President, the Grenada Home Improvement Programme, another \$4,000,000 is required to restore the original budgetary allocation for the continuation of the Home Improvement Programme. This is a programme we want to continue. We believe housing has always been a top item and on the agenda, and obviously, with the passage of Hurricane Beryl, more money will be needed to pump into this project.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Cooperatives, an allocation of \$17.9m. Thank God. Thank God that we have been able, as a state, as Government, to take the initiative, believe in insurance, and put our money where our mouth is. Some of the entities under Agriculture, the Grenada Cocoa Association, the Grenada Nutmeg Cooperatives, and Fisheries will all benefit from ¹CCRIF. And we are happy to have contributed to some of the premiums as a Government to pay to these insurance companies. So, with this hurricane, we are able to survive, but again, it is not enough, and the Government is prepared to take on the responsibility to assist where they can.

Madam President, in the Ministry of Agriculture, \$15,000,000 is allocated for the Agriculture Emergency Response Plan. And therefore, not too long from now, farmers with five acres and more would be paid \$9,000 as a one-off payment. Farmers with five acres and under will be paid... Do you wish for a pause? **(Laughter)** He pretended he hadn't heard you, man. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** Pretending. Farmers under five acres will be paid \$4,500 as a one-off payment.

¹ CCFIR – The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Madam President, we believe in agriculture. We believe that agriculture has an important role to play. While we may say it carries 5% of the GDP, we know for a fact that many of us in the rural areas do our own farming, our own backyard gardening, and provide food for ourselves and our neighbours. And this... Sometimes we don't measure it, you know, but it means a lot to the economy. It means a lot to the economy. And therefore, we'll make sure that the farmers are up and running again.

I empathise with the Nutmeg Farmers because many of them in Hurricane Ivan, maybe St. David, St. George, and St. Andrew, to an extent, felt the real power of Ivan. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Ivan. And today, in 2024, St. Patrick, St. Mark, St. John, what Ivan didn't take in Grenada, there it goes. So, I understand the plight, and 100% of my support will be channelled to the Nutmeg Farmers in this country to make sure that this important spice, which I remember the former Chairman terming "King Spice" of all spices, is back up and running.

This means a lot to Grenada. The nutmeg is a symbol. It's a symbol that no one can ignore, and we have to live up to the name. So it is important that we do exactly what was done in 1955 after Hurricane Janet passed in Grenada. I had the privilege two days after to drive in St. Andrew, and the nutmeg was not gone; cocoa was lying flat. I'm happy to see today that some of the cocoa plants are coming back up, but we have a serious responsibility to make sure that the nutmeg and the cocoa are replanted so that the next generation can enjoy what we're enjoying and what our parents left for us in the past.

(Applause)

Madam President, this excited ministry, the Ministry of Climate Resilience, the Environment and Renewable Energy, \$13.6m has been allocated there. Madam President, a lot of this money will be in the form of grants where the Grenada Development Bank, the Global Environmental Facility, and the European Union will be contributing in support of projects like the Grenada Geothermal Energy Development and the Sargassum Project. We know the impact of the Sargassum, especially on the Eastern Side of the country.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Madam President, the Grenada Solid Waste Management Authority has a lot of work to do, so we are asking for \$5.4m to provide support to this important company to help manage what Hurricane Beryl has caused in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. They are up there, and they are working to make sure that everything is being taken care of and that there is no sickness. We don't want to have another crisis. After Hurricane Beryl, we have to ensure that we do not let conditions deteriorate to the same extent when another crisis comes.

I was very concerned when I was told by one of the owners of 80 plus sheep after the hurricane that he could only account for 11. The first thing that came to my mind was that they may not have survived. So in the next five, 10 days, if we not careful we could have a health problem in Carriacou. Cattle's lost their lives, goats, and a lot of animals. And therefore, I am happy that we have taken charge and did not let that potential crisis fester and create another crisis in our hands.

Madam President, this ministry is also leading the marine clean-up of Carriacou and \$1.6m... As I said, many of the ministries would come to the aid of Carriacou. \$1.6m will be allocated just to clean up the marine in Carriacou.

Under the Ministry of Education, approximately \$10m will be allocated to that ministry. Remember, in the 2024 Budget, it was still the Ministry of Education, Youth Sports and Culture. So immediately, the homecoming ceremony for our superheroes, Madam President, took \$900,000 from that money, money already spent, and we are depending heavily on the National Lottery Authority to assist us there.

\$1.7m is needed to replenish funds for the T. A. Marryshow Community College. A college that we are very interested in, a college that is a stepping stone for many of our young people.

We have moved, Madam President, the subvention for NEWLO from \$75,000 to \$100,000, Madam President, because we are serious about improving the skills of our young people and the Minister for Education is here. He will elaborate more on some of the other areas in terms of which we intend to spend our money, the people's money, Madam President.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

In the Ministry of Health, \$5m. As I said before, many of the medical facilities in Carriacou have had their roofs gone. Those buildings were like a tank accumulating water and heavy wind, and therefore, most of the equipment was damaged, Madam President. And therefore, the roof needs to be replaced, and we need to source the equipment and get it back in Carriacou as quickly as possible. Therefore, \$5m has been allocated for the Ministry of Health to take on that responsibility. Basically, most of that money will be spent in Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

The Ministry of National Security. Madam President, \$3.9m. Again, this figure has been influenced by the devastation of Hurricane Beryl. I had the privilege to hear the voice of the MP for Carriacou, crying that we need to get the relief supplies to the people. We don't have transportation. Madam President, it was less than 15 minutes. We didn't take as much as 15 minutes to call back the MP and let him know the next day 12 vehicles, brand new vehicles, will be going to Carriacou to assist in that project. **(Applause)** That is how this Administration works: responsibility and response in a timely manner. I had the privilege to be in Carriacou when the vehicles came up the next day on a barge, which was mobilised for that purpose. A day before—but that was not all because we still had to bring up some more vehicles. We had to get the food to the people, relief to the people of Carriacou. And therefore, this ministry, the Ministry of National Security, had to make sure that this happened.

Madam President, the Office of the Prime Minister. \$2.5m, and we are requesting those funds basically to pay for the hosting of the CARICOM meeting here in Grenada. That meeting has already taken place.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, \$750,000 and this money, the bulk of it will be going to the establishment of the Grenada Bureau of Standards to help deliver improved laboratory services. Also, Madam President, the relocation of our diplomatic office in London has to be considered. And therefore, it will cost us over \$200,000 for the new facilities. We have taken the decision to establish a diplomatic office consulate in Ottawa, Canada, and therefore, we are requesting \$250,000 to facilitate this, Madam President.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

And last but not least, for 2023, \$500,000 to purchase law enforcement equipment for the Police Force to help them do their work in a very professional manner.

Madam President, those are some of the areas that we'd like to highlight in this Supplementary Act. This is a caring Government. We believe in putting the people first. We believe that in the moment crisis that is the way, unless somebody could show us some other way, that is the best possible response we can give now. We know for a fact, and we are cognisant of it. Solving this crisis will be a process. Solving this problem will be a process. We're going to tackle it like a man in terms of going forward under the leadership of the Honourable Dickon Mitchell. Under the leadership as demonstrated in Carriacou and Petite Martinique, the Honourable Tevin Andrew.

Madam President, we are in mid-air, and the plane has to fly. Turbulence is great, but we're going ride through, and we're going to land safely. We're going to land safely where every citizen, every boy, every girl, every man, every woman will be satisfied at the end of the day. But we need all hands on deck, and we need everybody to support in this moment of crisis.

We have a responsibility to support the Government in its initiatives. We are all here to respond to the needs of our people, our citizens. And therefore, I wish to commit this Bill for debate and approval and thank my colleagues on "Both Sides" of the Senate for their anticipated support. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: I thank the Minister for Tourism, Leader of Government's Business, Senator the Honourable Adrian Thomas, for his presentation and thank him for the details. I will make one or two agenda points to him privately over lunch. I would ask the Senate for a five-minute recess so we can get ready for the continuation of the debate. We recess for five minutes. Thank you.

(Sound of gavel)

Senate adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Senate resumed at 11:50 a.m.

Madam President: I offer the floor to the Senator for Carriacou and Petite Martinique, Honourable Norland Cox. You have the floor. Leader of the Opposition in the Senate.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I take this opportunity to make some comments, observations, and analysis regarding the Motion before this Honourable House and its intent, what it intends to do and the impact that it desires to make and also to maybe bring some clarity. Also, to request some clarity on some of the information that is presented through this Motion, Madam President.

Madam President, I think I want to start off where my Honourable colleague ended on the note of leadership and more so on the constituency of Carriacou and Petite Martinique in reference to the response to Beryl. I grossly differ with his response in terms of the quality of the leadership and the impact that it has had on Carriacouans and Petite Martiniquians regarding the response to Beryl. Because I think, Madam President, everything centres around the leadership and the management process. Those are the things that are going to reflect what the results, what the outcomes are going to be. And as in the words of my colleague, Senator, Minister for Legal Affairs, the numbers adjust at the forefront, but they basically reflect on the intention and impact it will have on people on the ground. Just to summarise, I think, the point she was trying to make. That is quite correct.

But, Madam President, I just want to indicate in my quick arithmetic calculation of the total sum of the Supplementary Appropriation. I've been only able to pull out just about 30% of what is being proposed through this Motion that is directly related towards Hurricane Beryl's response. I stand corrected, but that is what I was able to pull up.

So, in essence, a significant portion of this Supplementary Appropriation is not going directly towards Hurricane Beryl's response. I just want to signal that. I think it's

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

important to start off with that so that we can have that foremost in our minds. That is something. If we drill down on that 30% and pull out specifically what Carriacou may get, it might be less than that. I'm quite certain that it will be less than that or what Carriacou would have gotten so far; it might turn out to be less than that 30%. So I put it out early. So my colleagues on the "Other Side" can correct me before we close today if they come up with a different figure, but I am seeing here that it is less than a third of what is proposed.

Now, Madam President, I just want to go back to the point of leadership. Management. As a Carriacouan who was there at the start of the storm and throughout the whole recovery process, monitoring, looking at things, I did indicate at some point in time the relief response was a bit sluggish and sometimes in fairness when you have situations of that nature people respond differently people. People are built differently, and not everybody can respond appropriately to emergencies and disasters, and that is fair.

And in looking at the first allocation that was mentioned to the Office of the Prime Minister, I think that has to do with the vehicles. The presenter on the Motion spoke about the quick response to the vehicles, I think. We commend that. We commend the quick response vehicle. But I think we need to drill down more deeply on just the quick responses for the vehicles, and the question is whether or not the vehicles were appropriately used for the responses or for the need that was requested. Madam President, I beg to differ, and fellow Carriacouans can agree with me.

A lot of it was just joyriding as far as I am concerned because the cries continue to remain during that time, that period of persons not being able to access the relief supplies. Even after the vehicles came, and that is a fact. That problem continued for quite some time. And so, sometimes it is very important for us not just to implement measures but to ensure that they do what they supposed to, and in this case, Madam President, I don't think it actually did. So it all goes back to the issue of leadership on the ground and management of the issue on the ground.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Madam President, the Ministry of Finance, I think some \$43.6m is allocated. I think that \$18m has something to do with the PMF that's... But we are more focused on the \$25m, Madam President. The \$25m for business support or reactivation of small businesses. It is said to be a loan grant facility. Madam President, we are very concerned again about the impact and the accessibility of this facility and the whole issue of fairness and the persons who truly need the support being able to access it because that is an issue on the ground in Carriacou.

And I say this because they say "grant" and they say "loan". So far, we haven't heard what qualifies you for a grant or what qualifies you for a loan. I don't know if it has to do with the type of business that you'll get a grant for. We don't know if it has to do with the size of the request you're making or the amount that you're requesting. Whether or not you will get some grant or some loan, those details are yet to be made public. As a business owner myself who was impacted by the hurricane, I would like to know whether or not I'm qualified to partake in this facility, Madam President. So, I say this to bring some clarity because it's important for people to know.

Because we have a number of fishermen and farmers who are impacted. I know that there is some measure of allocation for farming and agriculture. I don't know if Carriacou is going to benefit directly or indirectly from that. But I know that our fishermen and farmers, as businessmen and women, will want an opportunity to access this facility. Some of the farmers, in particular, have holding pens that they totally lost. They may want to replace those. Fishermen who lost engines and have boats that are damaged may want to be able to access that facility to have their boats speedily repaired.

And so, just saying that you have a loan-grant facility without giving any details as to who qualifies for what, I think it lends itself to a little bit of mischief. So I don't know if it's what side of the bed you woke up this morning or what colour t-shirt I may have on that might qualify me for whether it's a loan or a grant. I think there needs to be some clarity there.

Madam President, I think also, it is important for persons who go to access this to know whether or not the regular measures, the regular lending measures under the GDB,

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

would be applied or would be waived. From my recollection and knowledge, the small development loan mechanism under the GDP before Beryl required persons to present a number of things to be able to access. I think the maximum was EC \$40,000 with a 10-year repayment and also the same one-year grace period. I think it is important for people to know what the requirements to access it are. What is going to be the standard requirement measures for the current small development facility at GDB? And if such is the case, persons ought to know that they need to come or they need to have security be it collateral, be it insurance, be it cash deposits, whatever measures, whatever security measures, mortgage, whatever security measures, those are the requirements currently under the GDP small development business loan. So the question is, are those measures going to be maintained, or are those measures going to be waived? I think it's important to know when you're going to borrow.

And we have our business representative here who normally guides us in the House in terms of business, and so he would know a lot about borrowing and the implications of not knowing what the requirements are until after you take the people's money and you realise you have more requirements to meet than initially planned. So I think that is something that is missing and that is something that needs to be of some clarity.

While we're on the measures, Madam President, I know that some relief measures were also announced and that has to do it persons being allowed two free barrels or two boxes or crates or something like that per individual. Madam President, I have said it, and I'm going to reiterate it again in this House, that it is inadequate. That is inadequate for the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I said it before, and I'm going to say it again. I think that there is a clear opportunity for this Government to have a clear period, either three to six months, during which Carriacouans can bring whatever they need, whatever they want, as much as they want. I think unheeded, I believe that that needs to happen.

And I'm saying this in the context that yes, there are going to be some revenue loss, but I believe if someone who has lost the entire home you are telling them that they

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

can only bring two barrels of relief stuff, you lost your entire home and you're only entitled to two barrels, I mean, just, that is what you're telling them. Madam President, that is inadequate. There are some people who have more than one appliance in their house they lost everything, you're telling them they can only bring one? That is what is being offered to Carriacouans and Petite Martiniquians right now. I think we need to correct that. I think we need to fix that. **(Applause)**

For businesses, Madam President, we know that most businesses have more than one refrigerator. Most businesses have more than one appliance, and if you only tell them they could only bring one fridge, one stove, one cooker, that just isn't making sense. So, I think that needs to be revisited. It needs to be revisited.

And there is also an issue with the tax waiver of measures, Madam President. I think that there needs to be some clarity as to the process of how a person is going to procure materials and how they're going to be able to access the removal of VAT and duties. I think that is still a bit muddy, and so I think that there needs to be some clarity there.

I was just recently, yesterday in Customs and a lot of quarrelling in Customs. People are saying, look, I have everything here; it's relief materials. It had one guy; I think he had 16 barrels of relief materials. It's right in front of you. You can attest. It's there; the evidence is there; it's relief materials where he can only get two free. And a lot of it is to basically give away. You know, so I just think this needs to be rethought, and there should be measures in place. For example, if Norland Cox lost his house, you could verify if my house is rebuilt. Carriacou is a very small place. It's very easy to do verification before giving those measures, and so I think it's something that we need to look at and fix going forward, Madam President. **(Applause)**

But with this measurement, Madam President, this measure of the loan for business, we think any opportunity to create a facility so that persons with businesses can access funding for a building is good, Madam President. The question is, are we going to access it? I don't want us to have, we have our Senator Britton here, a situation where we have grant money through our CESS Programme where a number of persons

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

in Carriacou did not get a chance to benefit. They were told that they would get support. People applied and submitted, but we had all kinds of reports that maybe my dear Senator colleague probably is not aware of. In some cases, one household was able to receive two grants of support from CESS when somebody else didn't get one. So, Senator, I am not really blaming you entirely, but I am just letting you know. I'm just letting you know some of the things **(laughter)**, some of the things that transpired. So I'm just saying this, Madam President. We have to put measures in place to ensure that what is intended actually happens. I think that is critical, Madam President.

Madam President, I want to move to MIT. The mysterious ministry. MIT. Madam President, we see \$1.5m for clean-up, and it's also stated that MIT is in charge or responsible for clean-up activities in Carriacou. Madam President, there is also... \$1.5m I presume that this \$1.5 million has already been spent. But I want to draw to the attention of this Honourable House, Madam President, and I'm going back to my initial comment when I started the issue of leadership, the issue of management, Madam President. Madam President, we have had reports in the early stages of the Hurricane Beryl response where contracts have been issued to contractors on the mainland, forgoing contractors in Carriacou and Petite Martinique to do clean-up efforts.

But you know what is even funnier about it, Madam President? When the contractor on the mainland receives the contract, he, in turn, calls somebody in Carriacou to subcontract the work, Madam President. I think this is not right, and it is not fair. If somebody in Carriacou can do the work, yes, why were contracts issued? It might be an issue of equipment or machinery. I don't know. But, we need some clarity on that, Madam President.

Madam President, I just wanted to signal that which I have mentioned and which I appreciate and all Carriacouans appreciate. The persons who came to do relief work to assist and to volunteer. We are very much appreciative of it, Madam President. **(Applause)** Make no mistake about that. The persons who continue to do so, the persons who take their hard-earned money, buy stuff, send for the relief effort, we are very much appreciative of that, Madam President. So we're not taking away from that,

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

but I just wanted to signal some of the issues surrounding the management and the leadership of the response to the hurricane relief efforts and what is taking place on the ground, Madam President.

Madam President, my colleague, the presenter of the Motion, made a statement, and you know I really agree with him. You know. He said, "The success of Olympic athletes is probably the best response to Beryl thus far", and I think I want to agree with him on that because the response (**applause**) on the ground in Carriacou is not, it's not the best. It's not the best. (**Inaudible comment by a Senator**) I said we agree on it. So you don't need to say it again. Madam President, he doesn't need to say it again. We agree on that.

Madam President, the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique are hurting in more ways than one. And one of the things that we recognise is lacking, Madam President, is a clear plan for going forward. There is no communication with the people about what is going to happen over the next six months or in the next month. There is no plan communicated. What is going to happen next? When is recovery, or when is rebuilding? There is nothing. There is a great vacuum in terms of information and communication, Madam President, and a lot of uncertainty and what that is doing, and I'm calling, and I'm warning the Government. What that is doing? It is driving people to leave the island.

There needs to be more certainty in terms of the recovery effort for Carriacou. There needs to be more clarity so that people can feel confident that they can stay and tough it out because they are going to get the support. As it stands now, Madam President, persons are leaving. Sadly to say so. We are asking them to stay. We are calling persons to stay. Persons who had intentions of investing in Carriacou, we ask you not to give up on those plans, but persons are frustrated. Some persons are very disappointed with the response, and some persons are losing hope.

My colleague mentioned, the presenter of the Bill mentioned about hope and confidence. Madam President, that is not what is present on the ground right now. The few strong persons who are there fighting to stay afloat day by day... You know, a

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

question was asked about a month ago. About three weeks ago, actually, a gentleman came to Carriacou for one day. He resides overseas, and he asked me a question. You know, we were just talking, and out of the blue, he asked this question. He said, "Cox, how are you all making it? How are you all making it"? And... you know... I was trying to find an answer for him and, Madam President, you know the only answer I could have come up with at the time was that I said, "Listen", I said, "We go to bed. We sleep. We wake. We do what we can. We go to bed. We sleep. We wake and we do what we can and we just continue to do that". And that is the only answer I could have come up with.

And I say I want to be fair to the Government. I want to be fair to the Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs. We are giving people the benefit of the doubt, but, Madam President, clearly, there are some activities that breed unfairness. There are some activities that breed mischievousness. There are some corrupt activities. There is significant nepotism, Madam President, and all that is going to erode any success, any achievement for the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique through this recovery process. I'm saying this, I'm warning, I'm putting the Government on notice that whatever plans you have is going to be eroded if those behaviours are not dealt with immediately. I'm saying this.

Madam President, the Ministry of Climate Resilience and we see \$5.4m allocated through this Supplementary Appropriation Bill, through this Motion for Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Madam President, yes, there is going to be a request for a response in terms of clean-up because of the debris from the hurricane. But, Madam President, one of the biggest issues facing Carriacouans right now with the clean-up is that, and I could be wrong, I'm not certain if any of the debris has actually left Carriacou as yet over a month. Right? Good. I'm not certain that any of the debris has left the island.

What has been happening is that debris is being removed from one place to the next. That is what has been happening. I think that there is some debris moving from Petite Martinique to Carriacou right now. I'm not sure if it's going out of the country. I stand corrected, but from where I reside, garbage is being accumulated and not actually removed from the island. That is a growing concern. I'm certain that Solid Waste do have

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

plans to address it appropriately going forward, but that is a major concern. I just want to single that out.

What is most disappointing, Madam President, is that the ministry and we are going back to the leadership again, and management did not heed the advice and concerns of residents and even concerns of visiting donor agencies that our playing fields should not have been used to dump the debris. However, they went ahead, Madam President, against that advice and know you have playing fields that are officially designated dump sites, Madam President, where the Grenada Solid Waste Authority has put a billboard at the entrance of the playing field indicating that this is an official dump site. It opens at 7 a.m. in the morning and closes at 5 p.m., and there are persons working there receiving, directing the trucks where to throw what and how to throw what. That is what is happening right now. Our playing fields are officially dump sites. Madam President, we go back again to the issue of leadership and the issue of management.

Now, there is ample land in Carriacou. There is ample land in Dumfries. It takes less than a day to just get a tractor to just clear some trees and to just dump that stuff in Dumfries which is already... There are areas close to the sanitary landfill which could have been used to dump all those materials. Madam President, I'm telling you it's really bad, and you have that garbage storing there collecting water, and we know what season we're in. We know the season we're in. This, I think... I mean, that was a very poor decision, Madam President, very poor decision.

Madam President, I must commend the Government for their effort in terms of having counsellors to treat some of our persons who were impacted and, of course, the children in particular, the vulnerable ones, and some of our citizens to deal with the emotion and impact of Hurricane Beryl. But our recreational grounds would have served as one of the best therapies to deal with the stress of the hurricane where we could have used those recreational grounds, yes, use those recreational grounds for people to recreate, to come together, but no, we cannot do that now, Madam President, because it is all filled with debris. As I said, they are official dump sites. I think that was a poor, very poor decision. Poor leadership, poor management, Madam President.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Madam President, the Ministry of Infrastructure and we see a \$12m allocation for cross-overruns for the Molinere Landslip Project. Madam President, it was right in this Honourable House. I even made the news, too. I tell you. I made news. I made headlines, and I made social media, everything when I spoke in detail about the project and the implications of firing the consulting firm, Beston.

You fired the consulting firm, citing that there are political affiliations or something with the former administration, so you got to get rid of them, and then you went ahead and made your own changes. And then when the project site became unstable and the contractor could not implement it, because he realised, look, what you guys doing there will not work, work halted. And then what happened? You had to rehire. You had to go back now and re-engage Beston Engineering. Madam President, re-engage them, and I did say there are going to be implications, cost implications, a significant cost implication for variations for that project.

Madam President, we see here that the cost implication is more than 100% of the original cost of the project. The original budgeted cost for the project was \$9m, and we see here the variation is \$12m, and it may go up, Madam President. It may go up because one of the things that this Government, Madam President, is finding out the hard way is that projects are not straightforward. They are finding out the hard way that projects are dynamic. A number of things change. A number of things happen after a project is started, and some of it you have control and some of it you don't have control. Madam President, we come back to the common denominator, the leadership and the management, in terms of the decision-making process that has led us to the whole issue of this extra \$12m.

You know, Madam President, the presenter of the Bill said something early in his presentation that we didn't have to genuflect as we did during Hurricane Ivan to get money. Madam President, I agree with him. We didn't have to genuflect because the New National Party's Administration was the first to sign onto the CCRIF; that's why they could have had access to EC \$180m. **(Applause)** That's why you didn't have to genuflect. That's why, Madam President. So... **(Inaudible comment a Member)** We

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

will know way drop and where will be dropping just now... Don't worry. **(Laughter)**
(Applause) You will know about that.

Madam President, we believe that if you have measures, if you put measures in place and it's intended for a particular purpose, and in this case to solve the needs in the response for Carriacou and Petite Martinique in particular, then it should go so and it should happen so but it is not, Madam President.

Madam President, we also see under the Ministry of Infrastructure a further \$10m for cleaning up Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and that is something, you know, that we have advocated for. It's an opportunity to give people an opportunity to benefit financially. At the same time, there is also the measure of cleaning. So I think they said nine crews are engaged in clean-up. Madam President, we welcome that, but the issue remains as I indicated what is taking place is more of garbage being moved around than being moved out. So that is something that needs to be addressed very quickly because, as we know, once the garbage piles up and continues to decay, then other public health issues can emanate from that, Madam President.

Madam President, there is also an allocation of \$30m to do various infrastructure on Government buildings. I do not want to elaborate too much on that because until those details are fleshed out as to which buildings have been given priority or which school has been given priority, then I think it is fair for me to drill down more on that, Madam President.

Madam President, there is also a \$2m allocation. This \$2m, as presented by the mover of the Motion, is to support senior citizens and persons moving from Carriacou to relocate to Grenada right after the hurricane. We understand the request for that, but, Madam President, throughout this entire Supplemental, the greatest need, the greatest cry from Carriacou right now, is not being addressed in this Supplemental, which is housing needs, Madam President.

Madam President, I think this provides a great opportunity for maybe the Government to speedily repair as quickly as they got the vehicles in Carriacou, to speedily repair the minor damages to the Dumfries Housing Scheme and so that maybe some of

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

our residents who are residing in Grenada can be back in Carriacou close to their love ones where they can get more care and obviously less expense for the Government going forward, Madam President because we know that some aspects of the Dumfries Housing Scheme are liveable because we know that there are persons actually living there. So I think that is an opportunity for the Government to do so.

And not only that, Madam President. I know that the Minister for Education is pressed with getting persons out of the shelters, and so that's a clear opportunity. Once we have that sorted out, we can put persons there from the shelters in the Dumfries Housing Scheme, and we can get our school reopened. Not so, Mister Minister for Education?

Madam President, I'm just making these suggestions for the Government because I know those are issues before them at this current time, Madam President. It's a critical issue. Housing is the most important issue right now in Carriacou. Very, very much at the forefront of things, but we will hear more about that, Madam President.

Madam President, the Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs. We noticed an allocation for public assistance, an increased allocation, and is presuming, Madam President, that this increase, I didn't hear much detail from the presenter of the Motion, that the increase is associated with additional persons on the list for public assistance, I presume that is the case, and if so, that is welcome. But I think what was stated was an underestimation of the budget, but as they indicated, it was a response to Beryl, more persons having a need for public assistance, so that is understood, Madam President.

Madam President, \$15m to support the economy of Carriacou and Petite Martinique—that for me is a bit vague in terms of what the measures are. What measures are going to be employed? Were those monies spent already? Or what is taking place with this \$15m? I don't know. There is not much clarity given on that in terms of rebuilding the economy of Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

I am not clear about that. I don't want to assume anything, Madam President. I don't want to be accused of anything, so I think it's fair for the mover of the Motion to

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

provide some clarity to the House and, of course, for the nation and is this \$15m. What is rebuilding Carriacou's economy? What is that? How is that going to be done? What measures? It can be... Not detailed, but any summary indication... Is it going to be grants? Are businesses going to get... Whatever... What is it about? I think there is a need for some clarity and some more detailed discussion.

\$15m is not \$150, Madam President, and I think that's a little weakness on their part. I don't know if it's deliberate, but that is a little weakness on the part of the Ministry of Finance in terms of giving some more clarity on this EC \$15 million. I think that is something that stands out for me. I don't know, Madam President, if there is any mischief in terms of what may be trying to be achieved from this \$15m. But I think just saying \$15m to rebuild the economy doesn't lend itself to any surety. I don't know if it's one sector. We don't know. So I put it out there for my colleague to give us some more clarity on this.

Madam President, still on the issue of leadership. Madam President, the issue of management. As I indicated in my opening remarks, it is lacking from what we're seeing. There is great uncertainty, Madam President. There is no clear indication of any plan, and their actions are more reactive than proactive.

Madam President, I worked in the Ministry of Health managing the Princess Royal Hospital for about two years, Madam President. When you're doing some things, when we're in some sectors, you have to be proactive. You have to be monitoring processes and putting measures in place to deal with things. If you are reacting, you are going to be behind. It's till after things happen and you react, you will not be able to deal with some of the issues and problems. So, Madam President, I think the whole issue of being proactive is lacking and absent and that we must see more proactive actions instead of reactive ones, Madam President.

Madam President, the Ministry of Education, Madam President. I think it's important that we talk a little bit about education, Madam President, and I think a lot of it has to... We just had our dear colleague, Senator Andrew, speak this morning on some measures, also yesterday in his press conference, specifically relating to the opening of

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

schools. Madam President, there was an announcement or an attempt by the Government to have schools open as normal in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Open as normal, as scheduled, on the 2nd of September.

Madam President, I don't know if it is me, but I'm quite certain that it's only the Government alone that thought that schools could have opened in Carriacou. The people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique in no way thought that schools would open on the 2nd of September. Being on the ground and seeing what is there, there is no way that school could have been successfully opened because the response in terms of preparedness is quite lacking, and it just breeds more uncertainty.

My colleague, Minister, indicated that they'll look to see if schools can open in the next two weeks. I don't know what the issue with that is, but I'm a parent, and I am speaking as a parent, and this is my belief, Madam President. And I said to my colleague, that Carriacou and Petite Martinique should have been treated differently in terms of information and responses in terms of the reopening of school. You can't come a few days before the school opens and say to the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique that the school will be placed on hold and that we are not sure when it will be opening. I think that should have been handled differently. That should have been handled because the circumstances, Madam President, on the ground, are very, very different. It's very different, and it should be treated differently. The responses to parents and residents there, as regards the opening of the school, ought to be treated differently going forward. That will be my recommendation, Madam President, to my dear colleague.

We need some more certainty as to what is going to happen and when. I can tell you, some parents don't know, some parents are trying to get their kids in Grenada, who could afford to, and it's just an issue of lack of information of not knowing what is going to happen, and that is the honest truth, Madam President. So I wanted to underscore that. I think it's important to underscore that, Madam President.

I think, Madam President, again we come back to the whole issue of the recreational grounds, the playing fields, and most of them are in proximity to our schools. That, again, is an issue. That, again, is an issue. It's going to be a health issue. So it's

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

not just opening schools but having the surroundings of the school site appropriately prepared for school. That, again, is another challenge.

So, Madam President, I think the Ministry of Education have its work cut out for it, but as I indicated and I'll suggest here again, Madam President, there's a clear opportunity for school to recommence in Carriacou. For the primary schools, we can start with grade five and grade six; those are the most in need in terms of close to examination. For the secondary schools, we could do the form four and the form five; it can happen. I mean, I can even go into further details, Madam President, as to how it could happen, you know, but we don't have much time, Madam President, because you require me to drill down on a few things, and so I'll just say... Maybe I will do that at a different setting, Madam President, but it can happen. It can happen.

And I am saying, Madam President, it could have happened for school to start in September, but the response was very sluggish and as I said, maybe it's no fault of anybody, but if persons are new to certain things and lack the experience to deal with emergencies of this nature, then you can find those things happening, Madam President. So it goes back to my original inception statement that the issue of leadership and management is one that really requires work, Madam President.

Madam President, we have a number of issues, and I indicated that one of our most critical issues, Madam President has to do with housing. I see, Madam President, an allocation for 200 houses to be built. 200 houses to build at a cost of \$50,000 per house. If my mathematics serves me right, \$10 million... **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** How much? Yes. Yes. If my mathematics serve me right. We see a surplus. I don't know if that will fall under the miscellaneous; \$5m, Madam President. So I do not know if that is something that my colleague, the presenter of the Motion, may want to give some explanation where, what, why this extra \$5m. \$5m is a lot of money to not be accounted for. So that is something that we need to look at. So I just wanted to signal that out and to pull that out.

But what is most important, Madam President, in the document that was presented, none of those 200 houses are earmarked for Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

I stand corrected. I don't know if it's an error in the document, but that is what is here. None of those 200 houses are earmarked for Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and that is our greatest need at this moment, Madam President. That is our greatest need. Housing is our greatest need, and I will drill down into it. I'll show you why people are anxious about housing. I will explain to you why. I will explain this one. Why housing is important at this point in time. I'll explain.

Madam President, if you're not a Carriacouans, you haven't lived in Carriacou. You may not understand how we live as a people, and we harvest water from the rain, Madam President, and a dry season is coming. It's not just one that has been completed; a dry season is coming, and persons are anxious to get roofs on their houses so that they can collect water in preparation for the dry season coming. And if people do not understand why people are anxious to get their roofs on, that is why. I could tell you that. I didn't lose my roof, but I lost all my guttering, and I was anxious to get my guttering up so that my catchment could collect water so that I could have an ample supply of water to look after my needs and my family's needs when this dry season comes. And we just came from a brutal dry season where our water supplies and water stocks are low. They are low. And so water is going to be a major issue, a major issue for Carriacou, a major challenge for Carriacou next dry season.

The National Water and Sewerage Authority would have one of the strongest tests. Without Beryl, they have had challenges by rationing water just under normal circumstances and knowing you have more than 80% for roofs off while coming back on slowly, people through their own measures... We will talk about that in a little bit just now. We'll talk about that in a little bit just now. You know, I am very excited to talk about that, Madam President. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** About people who are actually working on their houses and doing their own repair work for themselves... Yes.

Madam President, so that is why, that is why the issue of housing is so important for Carriacouans right now because of the issue of water. Separate and apart, persons, yes, they want to be in their own space. You know we have this thing about Carriacou. We want to be in our own space. You want your roof back. You want to be comfortable.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Yes? So that is it. And I could tell you that my mom lost her roof and she gave me a time when she wanted to be back in her house. So everybody is on the ball, around the clock, because that is how we as human beings are. We want to be in our own space. So sometimes, if you don't understand the need and the cry, people can be misinformed and make statements contrary to what the true issues are, Madam President.

Madam President, I want to drill down on the whole issue of housing. Yes. And you know, Madam President, a few days after the hurricane, it could be less than a week, well less than a week, and if I am not telling the truth, Madam President, I mean we have somebody in the House who could pass in information. They probably can't speak directly, but they can pass the information on to a colleague or a Member to say differently.

Madam President, a few days after the passage of the hurricane, yes, just a few days, you know, I think a little later on, sometime in the night or so, I was walking from my home, which I couldn't actually live in at the time because of the condition. I was walking from my home, and I was listening to a pronouncement on a loudspeaker. I didn't see the person at the time, but I did recognise the voice, Madam President, and it made out to be the voice of the Parliamentary Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique, Madam President. In his remarks, I am certain that the people who were listening were very much happy to hear the Parliamentary Representative indicating that the Government, that his Government, will build back people's houses. Additionally, people are going to be engaged and employed as contractors, masons, whatever, whatever skills are required to help build back those houses, Madam President.

Madam President, I heard it not just once but on more than one occasion. I heard those promises, as how he like to say, "Promises made promises kept", Madam President. I heard persons from Carriacou and Petite Martinique were promised that the Government is going to build back, don't worry everybody is going to get support for the houses to be built back, Madam President. Those were the responses. But, Madam President, to the disappointment of Carriacouans in recent times, it doesn't seem that is the case. It doesn't seem like that is going to happen. It doesn't seem so. There are a

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

lot of Carriacouan houses that have been damaged; they're going to get the support of the Government to rebuild or repair. It doesn't seem like it's going to happen.

And the reason why I am saying that, Madam President, is because I had the opportunity to see a social media posting, a video posting where, Madam President, the Parliamentary Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique is saying differently, and I have some serious concerns, Madam President. I'll drill down into it, serious concerns about that remark.

But, Madam President, you know with the fear of me being accused of misstating what was said or what was not said, I took the liberty, Madam President, to dictate from the video, and I am quoting. Madam President, it's just a quote from the video, "**Let's be...**" I am quoting, Madam President,

"Let's be real. There are many of us, as Kayaks, who can afford to rebuild our homes. There are many people who can afford to rebuild their homes. Don't ask me, I'm telling you. And yes, you want the Government to rebuild your house for you. I find that really unfair. You could afford to rebuild your house. You have the money sitting in the bank to rebuild your home or roof, and you want the Government to do it for you. I mean, this is sad. Way you hear that from?"

End of quote, Madam President.

So, from saying that people are going to get support from the Government to rebuild their homes... He said everybody will get support to build their homes. I mean, I was shocked when I heard the remark; probably in a different place. I was very shocked when I heard "everybody" because I said to myself, "No, Madam President, this is not practical". This can't be practical. Where will the Government get resources to repair everybody's house in Carriacou, the whole of Carriacou mash-up? I said this isn't making sense, but then again... **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** I know... Let's be real. Let's be real.

(Laughter)

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Madam President: (Inaudible comment) Order.

(Laughter)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Madam President, you know, who does that? But you know what is most concerning about this, Madam President. That stood out to me, is the part that there was some certainty, Madam President, in that statement in terms of knowing that certain persons had certain monies on their account and the question is, is there an issue where persons personal banking information have been disclosed? Because I just found that that statement was very confident. He said, "Don't ask me, I am telling you they have the money"...

Madam President: Senator Cox, were you the person being referred to?

(Laughter)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: I wish, Madam President. I wish. I probably have it on the "Other Side" of the accounting equation. **(Laughter)** Madam President.

(Inaudible comment by Senator the Honourable Adrian Thomas)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: My colleague looks like a little... I don't know. We would clarify that just now.

Madam President: Strike from the record.

(Inaudible comment by Senator the Honourable Adrian Thomas)

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: But, Madam President, on a serious note, on a serious note. I know. I know our people and if you make certain commitments and they have certain expectations, they expect you to deliver it and if for some reason circumstances change, you misjudge, I think Carriacouans are forgive people. They would understand that circumstances change. The Government, for some reason, don't have the resources, and what was initially planned can't happen.

But, to personally scold people for working hard for how many years, earning their money... I don't know what the money was saved for. I don't know if the money is theirs. I don't know. But yes, there well might be people who can afford it, and I know of some Carriacouans who don't want the Government's help, even if you come and you give it, they will not take it. They have their two cents. They have their pride. They want to fix their place for themselves. Why? When they walk down the road, they don't want nobody to go and call their name and say that they gave them two pieces of galvanise. I know our people. So rather than fear, before a politician or somebody has to call their name to say they put up the window for them they prefer to rake and scrape and buy it for themselves, Madam President.

Madam President, so I just had to recall that because you see, Madam President, it is important to understand that even after going through the regal of Beryl, we as Carriacouans have to take that verbalisation. That is unfair. That is unfair and it is sad. And using his words, Madam President it is sad for that to be said about Carriacouans. It is said. And maybe if I have time, I will read the next one if I have time, Madam President.

Madam President. The response, Madam President. The response, Madam President, in relation to Hurricane Beryl, in terms of the Appropriation, Madam President, I also have a little concern in terms of the practicality, in terms of implementation. Now if we look at our budget cycle, we are basically in budget preparations right now for the 2025 Budget, Madam President, and Government is asking while some of those monies are already spent, the quantity of the money that the Government is asking for, can this be realistically implemented between now and October. I'm not even saying November.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

I am saying October because the Budget is going to be read sometime in November or December, let's say December. So, I think there is a challenge and there is an issue of being able to really and truly effect some of these measures.

While some of it is ongoing and some of it is grant stuff, some of the monies are already spent that is fine. I think, in particular, with the response to Beryl, why indicate that you're going to build 200 houses? 200 houses? You're building 200 houses between now and... Since the elections in 2022, we're supposed to get 500 houses per year; we can't even get one yet. Yes? But you want to build 200 houses between now and December? I don't know if that's practical. I don't know. I don't know if that's practical. And so, I think that is one of the things that I'm looking at. The whole issue. The practicality in terms of implementing this Appropriation; I think that needs to be questioned. If I'm not in line with what is there, persons can, you know, Madam President, Members can so correct me.

But, Madam President, 200 houses are earmarked for Carriacou, not for St. Patrick and St. Mark in this Supplementary. Madam President, you want you like to know what is earmarked for Carriacou for housing? Tents, Madam President. Small tents have been distributed. I don't want to sound as if St. Patrick and St. Mark are not deserving of the housing. Yes? That is not the issue because I know. I know because I am involved. I've been involved, and I understand the housing needs. But the question is, why is Carriacou not on the list? I don't see why houses cannot be built in Carriacou while houses are being built in St. Patrick. **(Applause)** I don't know.

I don't know if it's a typographical error, but the presenter of the Motion indicated that this response is largely for Carriacou and Petite Martinique, in his presentation. But what is in the document doesn't bear the facts. As I indicated, my small arithmetic shows just about 30% of what is being proposed is in direct response to Hurricane Beryl for Carriacou, and that is like a ball park. It might be less, Madam President. So, that is an issue. That is a concern. We have to be practical. If we want to make sense. We have to be practical.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

It sounds nice. I was listening to the presenter of the Motion, Madam President. It sounds very nice just calling out \$2m, \$5m, \$20m for... It sounds nice. But going back to my colleague Senator Joseph, who said the numbers are a reflection of what you want to do on the ground, the reflection of the impact on people, so we have to ensure that those numbers reflect the impact that person's in Carriacou and Petite Martinique, for example, our fisherman.

Little. Very little has been said about how those sectors are going to be treated with. Little has been said, and I did indicate we'd really like to hear some clarity on the \$25m. I do hope we can get some clarity and that before we leave here today, not just for me, Madam President, but I know that a number of persons out there want some clarity on the access of that loan facility in terms of whether or not those measures for qualifying apply, Madam President.

But, Madam President, before I wrap up, I must, I have to... And that is something that I really wanted to raise around the issue of water. You know? The whole issue of water and the whole issue of economic activity and person's capacity right now from a financial standpoint, from an emotional standpoint in terms of what is taking place in Carriacou. And, you know, the presenter of the Motion indicated that when he met the Parliamentary Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique. They hug, and they cry, and they shed tears. Something like that. For want of a better word. He did indicate that he cried on your shoulder. **(Laughter)** Madam President, I stand corrected. You said that you greeted him, and he cried. Yes? So I just want to make sure. The Hansard is there. We can verify that. Yes?

Madam President, I'm saying this in the context that many Carriacouans are not back mentally. And what is going to happen is that we... I don't... I stand corrected. I don't think that we are going to go back to normal, but I believe that we will have a new normal. That is what we will have to adjust to. We will have to be prepared for a new normal rather than going back to the old normal.

Some of the houses that have been destroyed are not going to be rebuilt, and some persons are already speculating selling. Some persons don't have the capacity to

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

rebuild, and if they don't get the support, it just wouldn't happen, and that is a fact. I mean, we have seen it in Hurricane Ivan. There are still buildings in ruins. Still. Yes. There are still buildings in ruins. So, we have to address our new normal. We have to address the new normal where some persons who do not have the capacity to rebuild their houses may not be able to do so.

And the challenge with that, Madam President, is that it's going to affect the economy of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and I might have to go and do a little bit more explanation again, and we can already see the activity will shrink. It started to shrink, and it will continue to shrink if the bleeding doesn't stop. And the bleeding meaning that, if people continue to leave, continue to migrate, it's going to be a challenge for us. And a lot of persons have, I mean, literally moved to Grenada, moved to the mainland.

I mean, some persons, job wise they've already moved. Their workplaces relocated them, and pending Carriacou getting back to some state that they can come back, hopefully. Sometimes they may not come back, but what might happen on the positive side is that somebody else may get a job, but the whole issue of reduction in the population Carriacou and Petite Martinique...

Just yesterday, Madam President, and I'll tell you. I was shocked too, and it comes to the same point. Just yesterday, I went to Customs to receive some stuff that was sent for donation, to give out and so I called a friend of mine in Petite Martinique and said look, you know, look I have this stuff here, you're going up, if you know anybody who want adult pampers and pull ups and incontinence pads, just take. You know. It's quite a lot. Just take them and give them out to those who need them. They said to me, "Well, all the senior citizens in Petite Martinique have already left. I said, "You sure"? Are you certain? They said it doesn't have anybody, it doesn't have anybody. They aren't there. They aren't there. There isn't anybody who needs that. They're not there.

So that is an indication there might be one or two, but that person was certain that the majority of the senior persons were moved to the mainland. So, it is a major concern. It's a major concern for the Government. **(Laughter)** I have to laugh. It's a major concern, Madam President, if economic activity has to be restored. We understand why

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

people move. The move is not the problem. The issue is whether or not they're going to come back, and that is where the issue of economic activity on Carriacou, that's where the concern is going to be. Once you have fewer people, Madam President, you're going to have less economic activity. Fewer people need goods, fewer people need services. And that is the challenge. That is one of the challenges that we are going to be faced with going forward.

And as I said, we, I have been making a call for persons who would have invested or plan to invest in Carriacou and Petite Martinique to still stick with those plans. Stick with those plans because we need all the support that we can get in terms of investment and persons wanting to stay. We recognise that a lot of the persons who had retirement home have also left. We do not know if persons are going to come back, and if they sell, if persons are going to buy and how... What is going to happen, Madam President? I think those are some of the things that we have to look at if people have to get a livelihood to survive.

Some of the businesses that are closed, there's no employment opportunity, so you have loss of employment in that regard. So those are some things that are front and centre that people have to have to deal with. And then you have the whole issue of inflation, and then you have the issue of persons arbitrarily raising prices. That, again, is difficult to police and manage. And the question is, they may feel that there is justification in them increasing their fees for their services. They may feel so. But I beg the question, do you, do you grow? Do you move if everybody believes that they need more for their services? What happens? You can just strangle the whole system, and we can create a problem for ourselves in the long run.

So, Madam President, I raise these few comments and concerns because... You see. There is always going to be a contrast and a difference in how one or the other sees things. But one of the things that I learned, Madam President, is that when you're leading and you have the responsibility of people, and the decisions that you make and how you carry yourself impact people's life. It requires you to behave and carry yourself in a certain manner, Madam President. It requires you to move with humility, it requires you to move

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

with a deep sense of gratitude and thanks for being given an opportunity to do that, Madam President.

And if those qualities and characteristics are not acted upon, Madam President, it is very easy, very easy for one to lose their way. Very easy. Madam President, I have not been around for a long time, but I've quite a bit of mileage. Yes. I've quite a bit of mileage. You know. In listening to Senator Francis this morning, the rigours of life, especially an early childhood, can shape and mould you into something great. And so, I make those utterances not just because I have an opportunity to stand here but because I live by them, and I can attest that they work.

And the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, Madam President, require that type of leadership and that type of attention right now. Not in a situation where persons ought to be scolded because they share an opinion. We don't have to agree with a person's opinion, but as leaders, we certainly do have an opportunity and a responsibility to respect it. Because the same way that you and I give our opinion, we expect persons to respect it. Probably not agree with it but to respect it. And the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique deserve better. They deserve to be treated better, Madam President. They deserve to be treated better.

And I say this because it is very unfortunate. It is very unfortunate for certain utterances to be made about fellow Carriacouans in that regard. You know, people work, people earn. We don't know what they do to get what they have. And to call them out like that publicly, I think it's unfair, and I think it's sad, Madam President, and very much unprofessional, if I might add. You know. To single out public servants because they have an arrangement through the hard work of the union so that persons can get their pay, because of certain circumstances their pay can still, they can still receive it, so they can survive. Those are things that the union would have fought and worked hard for. You know, Madam President, when we as Parliamentarians are also receiving our pay, you know, we are also receiving our pay, but we're scolding persons for receiving theirs? I don't get it, Madam President. I don't know who does that. I don't get it.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

And so, I offer just this observation, Madam President. As a Carriacouan, we don't like that. No. Yes. We don't like that at all. Trust me, we don't like that. And that is something that we detest, and it's somewhat unbecoming as a Carriacouan. And so, I just wanted to underscore that. I needed to register that. If I fail to do that, I fail to speak up as a Carriacouan. So I just need to underscore that. I can't tell anybody what to do. Who wants to apologise, who wants to double down, that is up to them. That is not my call. Yes. That is not my call, Madam President.

But, I say it is not necessary to do that. It is not necessary. It is not necessary, and I just hope that this will be the last of such and that we can see an improved relationship and operations because we have a lot of work to do. It's going to be a long road for us. It's going to take many supplements. It's going to take many budgets because there's only so much that could be allocated to Carriacou because the entire country has needs. And so, we have to be mindful of that. We have to be mindful of that.

So, Madam President, I want to offer my thanks for an opportunity to really dive in on this supplemental and what it was intended for and I want to close as I start, that the issue of leadership and management on the ground in Carriacou; if not properly address we are not going to see or achieve the outcomes that we so desire, that this supplementary so desire, that the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique so desire. We are not going to achieve it until there are some remedial changes in behaviour and attitudes and fairness, and to remove the significant degree of nepotism and unfairness that is taking place. We need to fix that. There is no reason for that.

Everybody has sustained some damage to some degree or another. Every single person. And so, there is not an issue of singling out anybody. There is no need to do so because for every two steps you make, you're seeing a blue tarpaulin from the Samaritan Purse. Every two steps you make is a blue tarpaulin. So, there isn't a need for us to be going down that route. We have an excellent opportunity to rebuild our islands with the support of government, with the support of taxpayers' money, with the support of donors and with the help of citizens. So, as the presenter of the Motion indicated, we need all hands to work together. We need all hands to work together.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

So, Madam President, with these few words, I want to... **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** Yes, I recognise I had a few more things that I want to talk about, but I recognise that the issue of the labour laws may come into play, and a certain number of hours is required before you have lunch. **(Applause) (Laughter)** So, Madam President, I will take my leave here now. I will stop at this moment.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Yes.

Madam President: Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: You're welcome, Madam President.

Madam President: Thank you very much, Senator Cox. Thank you. Thank you very much. Yes, our Carriacouan, thank you very kindly for presenting us in arguing for the new normal, the new positive normal for Carriacou. Thank you. Honourable Senators, we have eight more speakers. If you each intervene on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, there will be eight more speakers to come. Let me propose that we break for lunch and that you can consolidate yourselves a bit **(laughter)** so we could get through this before the fall of, what is it, the fall of sunset. I propose we try to finish by six o'clock today. So, we break for lunch. If it is acceptable to the Senate, I kindly request that we take about 45 minutes for lunch. Which means we get back close to two o'clock. Agreed to? Adjourned for lunch.

(Sound of gavel)

Madam President: Thank you.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Senate adjourned at 1:21 p.m.

Senate resumes at 2:22 p.m.

Madam President: The Senate resumes with our debate on the Motion. Senator Quinc Britton, you have the floor, sir.

Sen. the Hon. Quinc Britton: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I too rise to support the Bill as presented by the Leader of Government's Business in the Senate and let me congratulate the Ministry of Finance as well as the various Government ministries in doing a wonderful job in providing the necessary information so that we can have this Supplementary Bill to be debated here this afternoon. And I hope that I set the precedent by not staying very long as... **(Laughter)** I haven't seen my colleague Senator on the "Other Side". **(Laughter)** So that we can wrap up before the sun starts setting on us this evening.

Madam President, just for clarity or information for the many people who are logged on and watching, the reason for a supplementary budget is that when there is a potential shortfall within the budgetary allocation, the Government may ask the House and the Senate to consider, just as we are doing now, approving the Supplementary Budget. So that's the reason why we are here.

And, like I said, I rise to support the Bill as presented. And in the Bill under Vote 28, under the Ministry of Climate Resilience, the Environment and Renewable Energy, there is an allocation there for Sargassum Seaweed Clean-up, and this is something that we often have to face on a regular basis. I am sure the people in Marquis and so on, on the eastern side of the island, as well as, we see it happening ever so often now on the western side of the island, that is even including Grand Anse we've seen in recent times. So it affects all over and not just Grenada but the entire Caribbean and so on is being affected. So I'm happy to see that there are some provisions being made so that we can get more resources to do the clean-up process and so on, so you don't have that kind of decay and pungent smell.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Also, under Vote 30, the Ministry of Infrastructure, Physical Development, Public Utilities and Civil Aviation and Transport. A total of \$87m is allocated there, and I would like to single out in that vote or that clause where you have maintenance of government buildings, especially our police stations. And, very often, I feel very sad whenever I visit the Victoria Police Station, in particular there and Gouyave.

I've seen on social media some video postings of the situation in Grenville. And it's really sad, you know that our law men and women have to endure this kind of living conditions when you leave your comfortable home just for the sake of work. I don't think anyone of us in any work that you're doing... And I really have to applaud them for sticking to it irrespective of the circumstances. But I'm happy that we as a Government see the importance of maintaining and restoring those areas so that they can live and work in a more comfortable environment.

Under that ministry, you have them maintenance of bridges and construction, maintenance of roads and so on. We have an obligation to ensure that our infrastructure is properly maintained and that we build infrastructure that could last a very long time. In my most recent visit to China, I was amazed to see the manner in which they preserve a lot of their infrastructure, even infrastructure that was built many, many centuries ago, like the Great Wall of China and so on, and how they maintain it. There's a lot that I see we can learn from, and I will be making recommendations. For instance, we have what we formally known as the Green Bridge, that structure just sitting right there. I have a recommendation or a proposal that I would bring forward to my fellow minister, that we can do something to restore the aesthetics, or so, or improve the aesthetics of that bridge so that we can use it as a tourist attraction. Right.

In St. Mark, we have one of the oldest cast iron bridges in the Western Hemisphere. A bridge that is centuries old. A lot of people don't know about that. It's on the way to the Crayfish Bay Chocolate Factory. So that bridge is located inside there. So, I say all to say that, as a Government, we have a responsibility to ensure that our infrastructure is properly maintained.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

And last but not least. All of what we are doing here and you and you hear the name Hurricane Beryl being mentioned consistently, simply because we know, or before July 1, no one anticipated that we would have been in that situation. And I must commend our Government and the leadership of our dear Prime Minister, Honourable Dickon Mitchell, leading from the front.

Unfortunately, I was not here to experience the hurricane. A couple of other ministers and I were out of state. Fortunately for our dear Minister from the Sister Isle, he left on the Sunday morning. Well, that I did not know because I thought he was up in New York as well, just as the rest of us. We tried to leave this Sunday afternoon, but we could not. They advised us not to come; it's too dangerous. The airport would be closed, and so on, because we were going to come down; try and come back. I just wanted to be home

And it was... **(Laughter)** It was not an easy experience having to look at what's happening, and you know... At one time, you know, it became so sad because I'm not there, and I'm trying to comfort, you know, people back home. It's banded all over social media, what's happening and so on, and we were getting the updates and so on. So, even if I wasn't here physically, mentally I was home looking at what's happening.

So, I know it is not an easy experience. Some people are still traumatised and I just want to offer some words of encouragement to the people who has been affected on the Sister Isle as well as the northern part of the country, St. Patrick and St. Mark in particular, that rest assured we as a Government will do whatever it is in our power to ensure that we restore life to a state of normalcy. A lot of measures are being put in place, and we're still doing it to ensure that people get the necessary support that they need.

I heard my good Senator on the "Other Side" asking, you know, for some clarity and so on. And it's good to ask for clarity as to what are some of the measures being taken, and so. The two free barrels, that is one initiative. However, the Government also announced that there would be concessions on items for housing and so on. So even if you're bringing your fridge and your stove, you're getting concessions on those items,

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

once it is not for resale. Right? We announced that kind of relief measures and so on, as well as on building materials. Once you're rebuilding, then you're getting your concession, 100% concession on those items and so on.

So we are doing whatever is necessary, whatever we can to restore life to a state of normalcy on the Sister Isle as well as Grenada. So I just want to ask the people to, you know, be patient. I know it is not something that we planned for when we debated the budget last year. We never anticipated that. So it is something that we're still trying to cope with.

I'm pretty sure my brother from Carriacou can bear me out because I, too, visited the Sister Isle in the clean-up efforts. I volunteered my time together with a team from my constituency in St. Mark. We saw... well, it was first-hand experience. You know, seeing it in pictures and so on and then experiencing it is a whole different, a whole different story. It looked like an Armageddon; that's one of the best ways I could have described it at the time, like a real war zone.

And, I know some of the measures that are being taken now, which my dear friend had concerns about, the playing field. Two of the playing fields are being used as dumping sites. That is only, from my understanding, it's only a temporary measure. Right? And within the next couple of weeks to a month or two months or so, we'll be... We... Hence the reason why you see that appropriation there for Solid Waste, so that they can remove those debris off island. Solid Waste... From what I have learned, Solid Waste will be bringing in some heavy equipment to kind of compact the galvanise, a baler to compact the galvanise and so on, so you can get it off the island.

So it's a situation that, like I said, none of us planned for when the year started, but we are doing all within our power to make sure that people have a sense of normalcy. So I thank you as I close, Madam President. I thank you for the opportunity for me being able to present and hence the reason why I give support as Bill being presented by the Leader of Government's Business. I give support to this Bill and I expect my fellow colleagues on the "Other Side" to do the same.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

And like I said, I'm setting the precedence right after lunch, I come on back and I'm not even 15 minutes. I hope my, my... **(Laughter)** It's not test match today, it's T20. **(Laughter)** So I am... I thank you again, Madam President, and thank you very much. **(Laughter)**

Madam President: I thank you, Senator Quinc Britton. Thank you very much for your content and for your brevity. Who follows? Senator Katisha Douglas. Madam, you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Katisha Douglas: Thank you, Madam President. I promise you I will be shorter than 15 minutes. **(Laughter)**

Madam President: Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Katisha Douglas: Madam President, I stand here, and I would like to support certain aspects of the Supplementary Budget. Specifically, those that support the rebuilding of Carriacou and Petite Martinique and the North of Grenada.

Madam President, I would like to take the opportunity to encourage the Government to ensure that they have a strategic plan to ensure the funds are utilised correctly to achieve restoration, because taxpayers are listening and observing how our monies are being spent.

Madam President, I would love to hear more in the presentation about the allocation of temporary shelters because the fact is that we still have people in schools under tarpaulins, but we do have low-income houses. So are these houses available to put people there temporarily, so we can free up, you know, the schools in particular? And I'm going to talk about the reopening of schools. So, it's important to have temporary shelters for the displaced residents.

Madam President, I'm sure when rain falls, our hearts hurt because we know, "Oh my God", we have our brothers and sisters in Carriacou who are getting wet. You know.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

They are feeling cold. So, temporary housing—I would have loved to hear more about that from the “Government Side”.

Madam President, I think it's a very, very important, and Senator Cox mentioned it, communication; maintaining clear and frequent communication to the public about the recovering efforts. I know this Government is very good at utilising social media; you can give them that. But I think more now than ever that they need to utilise social media and communicate more so that people would understand what's happening, what the plans are, where we're at with the plan, and what the progress is because people want to hear what's going on.

Also, Madam President, in the presentation... It's important, and I don't know if that's to come, to highlight the future plan for disasters. I mean, the hurricane season is very young, and it's predicted to be very active. So what is the future plan? Citizens are still traumatised by Ivan and now Beryl. So it's important for us to use this lessons that we have learnt to improve our disaster preparedness.

We hear a lot of stories about NADMA, you know, the way they're going about distributing the relief items. You know, and I can only say stories. But what is our plan to ensure that, as a country, we are prepared for the remaining part of the hurricane season? So, in the case something happens, what are we going to do? So it's important that we have a solid disaster plan in place. Maybe there is, maybe we're using the lessons that we have learnt in order to strengthen what we have what, but we need to know. And I would have loved to hear that in the presentation.

Madam President, I would like to touch a little about the reopening of schools. I mean, we understand the magnitude of the problem in Carriacou, and nobody would like to be in this situation, but Ivan passed in Grenada, and our administration, through planning, through structure, through communication, was able to reopen school one month later. And I know Senator Cox provided some recommendations; you know how the Government can go about doing that. And at the time, even though conditions were not optimal, we put things in place so that children could go back to school.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

You know when we have children out of school, they're home, they're idle, and we know what can happen. And, you know, some parents they have to go to work. So what are we going to do in order to have school open sooner rather than later? I think it's very important and we have to look at that. Grenada have more schools than Carriacou. You know, maybe we can reach out to persons that were involved in Ivan to see what they did and how they got it done in order to speed up this process.

Madam President, in closing, I would like to say leadership, teamwork, transparent communication, effective planning, structure, protection of the vulnerable, ensuring that relief efforts are prioritised, the elderly, the disabled... I heard Senator Cox say that Petite Martinique, the elderly—there are no elderly people there or few—the low-income families—pulling all these little pieces together will make a significant difference in recovering Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

So I believe we need to work together. This is not about politics. This is about coming together as a team. **(Applause)** A strong team. A super team to ensure that Carriacou and Petite Martinique... I don't have to come over the "Other Side" for us to do... **(Laughter)** ... To ensure Carriacou and Petite Martinique are built back sooner rather than later. I thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

Madam President: I thank Senator Douglas. And I will be mindful the next time I give you an invitation, you have a quick reply. **(Laughter)**

Sen. the Hon. Katisha Douglas: **(Laughter)** Yes.

Madam President: **(Laughter)** I offer the floor to Senator Seville Francis. Senator Francis.

Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis: Thank you, Madam President. And, Madam President, please forgive me in advance if at any point I say "Madam Speaker". It is still the Youth Parliamentarian in me, so I have to get accustomed to saying "Madam

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

President”.

Thank you for the honour to stand here shortly after my baptism into the Senate to contribute to the discussion on the 2024 Supplementary Budget, marking my first address in this Honourable House of Parliament, with responsibility for Youth and Sports.

My support for the Supplemental Budget is steadfast and rooted in, or from a humanitarian perspective, as I am by nature, Madam President. Life often presents us with lemons, a lot of times, we prefer strawberries, but just like all grandparents who always have that pre-packed hospital bag for backup plans, so too the Government is doing the same through this budget, Madam President. The budget estimate reflects such preparedness, ensuring that we can respond effectively to the evolving needs of our society, particularly with regard to our youth and our athletes.

Permit me, Madam President, before I proceed to place on record my empathy and solidarity with the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique who have been affected by the devastation of Hurricane Beryl and Minister Tevin Andrew and Senator Cox. I also want to place on record that I stand in solidarity with you both as you work to rebuild Carriacou and Petite Martinique. But I also want the record to show that my heart, my thoughts and my prayers stay with the people of St. Patrick as I've been on the ground and witnessed first-hand the devastation caused in the north of mainland Grenada. I stand confident that we will build back better and stronger, for we are resilient people.

Madam President, with respect and admiration, I commend this Government for its commitment to our people, particularly in the wake of the devastation and the passage of Hurricane Beryl. The Government's actions thus far are not only a testament to the care and concern for the welfare of its people, but they are also an exemplary demonstration of sound economic principles rooted in the Keynesian theory and allow me to explain why I said that, Madam President.

This theory proposes that during an economic hardship or crisis, i.e. Hurricane Beryl, it is the responsibility of a government to step in and stimulate the economy through increased public spending. Madam President, if we look at the Schedule and the Estimate, we're going to see that the capital is more than the recurrent in the Schedule.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Right? Now, that simply means that the Government's decision to allocate more capital than the recurrent expenditure in this supplemental estimate is a clear reflection of this economic philosophy and a strategic move that speaks to this Government's forward-thinking approach, Madam President.

The capital investment in rebuilding efforts after Hurricane Beryl and the development projects not only addresses the immediate needs of our communities but also lays the foundation for long-term economic growth. And that is important. Madam President, after the devastation of Beryl, the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, our youth, in particular, needed more and still need more than relief. They need hope, and we cannot underestimate and downplay what hope can do for a person

By prioritising capital investment, the Government is not only restoring what was lost but also building a stronger, more resilient nation. And, Madam President, I must agree with the Honourable Senator Cox, who indicated that... Well, first of all, I thought being independent was very commendable, but Senator Cox mentioned that there are people on the Sister Isle who are rebuilding by themselves. But the context in which it was said came off with a negative connotation. So, Madam President, I'm trying to understand since when independence is seen in a negative light.

But through you, Madam President, I would like to send a message to the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique and commend them for taking the initiative to help themselves. **(Applause)** It means that, Madam President, the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique who were referenced by Senator Cox, are taking initiative, and that shows mind-set and growth of our people and that is commendable, Madam President.

(Applause)

Madam President, I hope that by the time he gets back to Carriacou, there are people on Carriacou because it seems like he's taking word on the street that people are evacuating without doing fact-check, Madam President. So I hope by the time you get back to, you know, relay our kudos, there are people and nobody met you on the street and say everyone left Carriacou, Madam President.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

A word of advice, through you, Madam President. I think it's important that we do some fact-checking and credibility when we are in this Honourable House. Don't just take word on the street that the people have left and that is something that is being reported. I would like for us to have some concrete evidence when these things are being mentioned, Madam President.

Madam President, I proceed. I just want to say that as we are speaking about the future of our country, we cannot ignore the youth because we are indeed the future of this country. And so, too, often our society acts like a shipping agency, Madam President, placing our young people in boxes and slapping labels on them that limit their potential. Madam President, today I stand as a youth for the youth and with the youth to dismantle this restrictive mindset that we have. Our youth are not confined by labels but are filled with limitless potential that exists and extends far beyond the borders of this globe. The light of our country's youth is often dimmed, but I stand resolute that we will shine brighter than the sun.

We have all witnessed the astounding performance of our Olympians, our athletes, our pride and our joy. And we are celebrating in the best Grenadian way that we can. Grenada continues to make an indelible mark on the world stage. However, our athletes cannot contribute in the most remarkable way, Madam President, if they are not supported. And that is one of the reasons why I stand here to support the injection, the capital injection into youth and sports.

Madam President, the support that our youth and our athletes need is not limited to finance. It's not limited to celebratory money because they need us in every aspect, Madam President. Madam President, but in order for them to maintain the standards to shine brightly in their red, green and yellow as they represent us, they require limitless support.

And, Madam President, the supplementary request from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, though it is not the most expensive, is significantly fitting, timely and necessary in accommodating and accommodates the awarding of our athletic Olympians, acknowledging their contributions to the nation's greatness. But, Madam President, this

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

is a step in the right direction, one that any decent individual would support without hesitation. In the words of a very popular politician, "I'm only sorry we didn't give them more". **(Laughter)**

Madam President, **(laughter)** I extend heartfelt gratitude to the business community, for joining forces with this Government to honour and reward the impeccable athletes for their contributions and service to our country. **(Applause)** To every athlete who has represented Grenada and those currently building on that legacy in Paris, in addition to those who went before, I say thank you. We are beaming with pride and we must continue to rally around our Para-Olympians who are there representing us right now. **(Applause)**

Madam President, I want to speak of the ripple effect of investment. No amount of money is truly sufficient to provide our nation's youth with what they deserve, or we, because I'm still youth. However, we must not underestimate the ripple effect and the value that the amendment to our national sports policy will have in motivating our future athletes. Madam President, benefits are endless, and I would like to consider, I would like us to consider, Madam President, the smile effect. I coined the term the smile effect.

Madam President, have you ever had an experience where someone looked at you and smiled? The most responsive thing to do would be to smile back. Right? And sometimes, we do it effortlessly. Now, that has a rippling effect that you may not even realise. Madam President, a simple smile can spread positivity just as the success of our awarded athletes can inspire our youth to engage in positive, healthier lifestyles.

Madam President, as mentioned earlier by Senator Cox, one Olympian indicated to him that his motivational source came from another Olympian. Madam President, it is evident that if we invest in our athletes and if we invest in our young people, who are the future of this country, they too can have that effect on other young people who may need it, without even realising it, Madam President.

And the evidence has shown, not just here locally, but regionally and internationally, that positive engagement through sports can aid in crime reduction and contribute to a more positive society. Madam President, we are all intellectually porous

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

in here, so I don't need to explain how that works and how contagious that is. Now imagine a young athlete on the verge of giving up, deciding to persevere because they see tangible benefits of holding onto their dreams. These benefits are being made possible by this Government's investment in sports. **(Applause)**

I want to just touch briefly on the role of sports in youth development. Now, in my previous work with youth, including those who have been incarcerated, I have witnessed firsthand the power of sports to help build resilience and provide purpose, Madam President. One young man shared a story with me after he was released from serving his time. And I asked him, what it is that makes you tick? What it is that gives you purpose? And, Madam President, his answer was simple: sports.

This underscores the importance of rehabilitative sports. We cannot afford to lose a single youth to crime or any of the plagues of our society. Madam President, my colleague on the "Other Side" again, Senator Cox, rightfully puts it that recreational sporting activities can indeed aid in relief for our youth, Madam President. We cannot deny the unifying power of sports. But to amplify the power, it requires great investment. Life is about elevation. We live, we learn, and we must correct our past mistakes. It cannot be undone, but there are things that we can do to remedy what was done in the past, Madam President.

Madam President, the practical definition of insanity is doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting a different result. The grant offered to us by the National Lotteries Authority provided us with opportunities to break the cycle of repeated mistakes, and we are grateful for that. Madam President, this is another prime example of our 50th Independence theme and celebratory song. It is only up from here.

Madam President, the amendment to the National Sports Policy will not only target participating athletes on the world Olympic stage. So, before the question is asked, I will respond to that. It involves every sporting discipline. Investing in our athletes signals to our world that we, Grenada's Government, are serious and committed to developing Sports in Grenada. This investment will enhance our sports-tourism products, attract international investors and events and boost our tourism sector here in Grenada.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Madam President, as I conclude, I wish to say that this strategic allocation of resources will restore hope, boost our economy and ensure that Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique emerge from the crisis together than ever before. Let us stand together in support of this effort, confident that we are on a path to a brighter tomorrow. Madam President, this capital injection will be a beacon of hope for our youth and our athletes. I'd like to call the Supplementary Budget the Supplementary Phoenix.

Like the mythological phoenix, our Ministry of Youth and Sports will rise, beginning with the recognition and compensation of our athletes. This Budget is not merely a financial document. It is a declaration of our commitment to the future, to the elevation of our youth to the pride of our nation. Let us seize this moment to invest in our athletes and our youth, for in doing so, we invest in the future of Grenada. The world is watching us, and we cannot afford to let them down. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: I thank you, Senator Francis, for your passion and enthusiasm. Thank you for sending out solidarity greetings across the nation, in particular, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. And I offer the floor to Senator Neilon Franklyn. You have the floor, Senator. You're following your sister. **(Laughter)**

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: Thank you, Madam President, of course, of course. Madam President, I rise this afternoon to contribute to this debate on the Supplementary Estimates 2024, as presented by the Leader of Government's Business. Madam President, before I get into the important matters that I've identified as significant to raise in today's debate, I would like to first respond to some of the things I heard while sitting.

The very first thing, of course, is one of the things mentioned by the Honourable Senator Francis in response to what the Honourable Senator Cox was referencing in his presentation, where he indicated that conversation with a gentleman from the Sister Isle and in essence the gentleman indicated that the elder folks specifically, were moved or no longer on Petite Martinique specifically. She, in essence, indicated that he should

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

have evidence and not take word of mouth information from the streets and to bring in this Honourable House.

I agree. I agree with the Honourable Senator, Madam President. However, I would like to point the Honourable Senator to Vote 35 in the Supplementary Estimates under the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs. This item is labelled "Hurricane Beryl Response". The amount allocated is \$2,000,000. The intended use of the funds, as indicated by the Government's document, is payment for Hurricane Beryl expenses. Was the provision unforeseen at the time of Budget preparation? It says, Madam President, "To support the relocation and upkeep of venerable citizens (the elderly, high-risk persons) from Carriacou to Grenada in the aftermath of hurricane Beryl".

What Senator Cox was referring to wasn't nefarious. The comments made by the gentleman in Senator Cox's conversation at St. George's Port were well founded because the Government budgeted \$2,000,000 for said initiative. So that's one, Madam President.

Secondly, Senator Cox quoted the Honourable MP for Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and I found the quote quite interesting but more so disturbing, Madam President, for an MP to make such comments. In a time such as this, where all citizens are faced with a situation that, while it may be new to us in Grenada, the devastation that the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique experienced is unmatched to anything they've experienced before. So one would have thought that the Honourable MP who sits in the "Other Place" would have at least met the citizens of the Sister Isle with good judgment, empathy and emotional intelligence. However, what they were met with, Madam President, was shared impetuosity, and this is very concerning to me.

But, Madam President, allow me to get into serious matters of the Supplementary Budget. This is not me indicating a "no-support" for the Supplementary Budget, but I'm raising items that I have a concern with. Like the Honourable Senator Francis indicated as she referenced the Keynesian Economic Theory. In situations of great economic stress, Governments are expected to implement fiscal policies to deal with job creation, expanding economic activity, and generally, stimulating the economy and the indication

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

of the over \$238m, if I remember correctly, for Capital Expenditure is a good indication. However, Madam President, my concern is where and how the monies would be spent.

So the Honourable Leader of Government's Business, in his presentation of the Supplementary Budget, so eloquently, Madam President, defined a supplementary budget or what he thinks a supplementary budget is, and I quite agree with the definition given. Two terms that stood out to me were "to complete" and "to enhance". Very important. Madam President, in assessing the medium-term review report, which was laid by the Honourable Member, I would like to point the entire House to page 27, table five. Some interesting information there.

To complete or to enhance. My understanding of a Supplementary Budget, Madam President, is that whenever the Government experiences a situation where they have either run out of money for a specific initiative or budgetary item or have encountered something new, in this case, the new would be the devastation caused by Hurricane Beryl. The overall amount that the Government is seeking permission to spend as a Supplementary Budget is \$269,898,086. I didn't forget to ask the House to look at table number five. I just wanted everyone to have time to assess the table.

My assessment of this table, Madam President, indicates that... I think I've said this before in previous Supplementary Budgets. Line item labelled "Employee Compensation, Wages, Salaries and Allowances, Goods and Services and Interest Payments... Those line items. The calculations there, Madam President, indicate to me that the Government intends or will underspend in those areas. So, therefore, there exists, at least, if my mathematics is right, \$88.7m unspent. So I beg to ask this question, Madam President. If there is this amount sitting there, intended not to be used or not to be spent throughout this fiscal year, why did the Government see it necessary to make a request for \$269m as opposed to \$181m?

Madam President: Can you take a question here? Am I correct? You're looking at the Total Expenditure column?

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: Yes, Madam.

Madam President: Estimated Outturn?

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: So those line items are listed below.

Madam President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: So, Employee Compensation and other line items there.

Madam President: Yes, Employee Compensation starts at \$346.8m. Am I in the right place? Right.

(Inaudible comment by a Senator)

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: Right. I'm happy. I am happy, Madam President, that the Honourable Leader of Government's Business made that interjection.

Madam President: I did not hear it. We did not hear it.

(Inaudible comment by a Senator)

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: The Government has a lot of time to go. The intended use of the Supplementary Budget is from January to December 2024. We are not able, based on the information presented, to identify definitively what has been spent already for the year or what is intended to be spent between now and December.

Madam President: So, how did you get 89? Where is your 89?

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: The calculation of the variances, Madam President. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** That's the savings. So, Madam President, these are questions I'm asking that the Government provide answers for because, like myself, there may be citizens out there who will ask when they get hold of the document. They would ask questions about these things and it is taxpayers' money.

Madam President, I move now to the free barrel initiative. I understand the intention, hopefully, of the Government to provide some sort of relief. When the free barrel initiative was announced, it was announced as a Hurricane Beryl relief. Of course, I thought, let's see how this goes. I would wait for the actual policy directive to be explained. I heard some sort of explanation given at the time, and there were a lot of questions, Madam President, that I asked myself, and I think it's fitting to ask at this point in time.

I'll use this Honourable House as an example. Currently, save and except for the Honourable Gloria Thomas, there are 12 of us sitting in this room, including you, Madam President, as Members. One of us lives on Carriacou. We know that based on the Government's document, Hurricane Beryl destroyed approximately 95% of Carriacou. One would, of course, think that Carriacou should receive priority, or the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique should be prioritised in whichever incentive the Government intends to implement.

So when I heard of the free barrel initiative, as an initiative to provide relief to Hurricane Beryl affected persons, I thought this was interesting, a good direction, but the policy was implemented across the board. So, referring back to the example of all of us in this House, 12 minus one is 11. The majority of us would reflect 92%, just about 92%. A blanket policy benefited Hurricane Beryl-affected persons. The only Member affected seriously by Hurricane Beryl would be Senator Cox. The one. So, how do we justify giving the same advantage to people unaffected and to people affected? All of us have the same access to the same thing. It is unfair, and it is not equitable.

The same reference that Senator Cox made to the gentleman who was clearing a number of barrels, only two he could have gotten free through the initiative. Again, my

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

assessment of this is based on equity, and I'm not being selfish. I, along with other Members who were not living in Carriacou at the time and who were not affected by Hurricane Beryl, may not need the two barrels. Somebody in Carriacou and Petite Martinique might need three, but I digress.

Madam President, I move now to inflation. As indicated in the Medium-term Report, at the end of 2023, the Medium-term Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report 2024 to 2026 indicated that food inflation was at 8.7% at the end of 2023 and fuel inflation was at 1.2% at the end of 2023. That is in Grenada. That was a document provided during the Budget Debate. This Mid-Year Review Report indicates that food inflation increased by 2.5% and fuel inflation increased by 0.4% for the first six months of this year. In this case, Madam President, I think it's safe because the document doesn't say what food and fuel inflation is at this point in time; it indicates an increase of 2.5% and 0.4%, respectively, for food and fuel. This would then bring food inflation to 11.2% and fuel inflation to 1.6%. That is significantly high, Madam President.

While I understand the need to deal with the physical challenges that are now being experienced as a result of Hurricane Beryl, I am simply pointing to the Government that this is significant and needs to be considered as well. Because while the people of Carriacou have to focus on rebuilding, finding shelters, finding food and so on and providing for themselves generally the basic necessities of life, they also have to deal with this 11.2% and 1.6% food and fuel inflation. What does the Government propose? And I'm saying this in the context of the Supplementary Budget. I haven't seen anything indicating that the Government intends to deal with this as a serious issue.

Additionally, Madam President, the Molinere Project, as brought up by Senator Cox in his presentation, is \$12m. We see it being requested again. I have to say requested because the Supplementary has not been approved as yet, and, of course, we all know that it can be treated retroactively and so on. So, based on my calculations, Madam President, from 2022 to 2024, approximately \$28.4m has been budgeted. Some of it has been spent. The 4.7m as indicated in the previous budget's actual outturn, and now we see the anticipated \$12m. So in aggregate, that's just about close to \$9m

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

budgeted for this year, which would be about \$28.4m.

I remember when Senator Cox mentioned the issues and the challenges that arose as a result, rather, of how the initial contractors were treated, and the response from the Government was that there was no superior design and all of this and that and the other, but we all know what happened there. But this \$28.4m is significant, Madam President. I would like to know, as well as the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, what exactly \$28.4m was spent on? Don't get me wrong. I have no issue with the completion of the road; we need it on the western side, but at least tell us what that \$28.4m was spent on.

Another interesting observation, Madam President, is the balance of trade. I think the private sector representative may be interested in this. The Mid-Year Review Report indicates that there was a 2.7% increase in the balance of trade deficit for the period January to June, and that can be found on page 37 of the Mid-Year Review Report. And, Madam President, what stood out to me was the figure compared to 2023 for the same January to June. In this document, it says, and permit me to quote from the document, Madam President. "This analysis revealed a 2.7 per cent widening of the trade deficit in the first half of 2024, with the deficit increasing from -\$767.6 million over the period January- June 2023 to -\$788.3 million over the same period in 2024."

Madam President, every document that has been presented in this House from the time I first sat in this House to now, I've read in detail. Some figures I don't forget; some things I remember immediately. And I remember the previous report for last year indicated that the trade deficit at that time was significantly higher than what is indicated here, so of course, I reviewed it. And that document from last year, the Medium-term Report, indicated that the trade deficit for that period of January to June 2023 was at \$984.6m. That is a major discrepancy, Madam President.

I am not saying or implying any improper motive against the Government. However, these discrepancies in my view, raises questions about the authenticity of the documents being provided to the House and of course, Madam President, I think it is important for the Leader of Government's Business, if he can, in the context of the debate

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

provide an explanation as to why that maybe so.

Madam President, I move now to MIT. One line item that stood out to me under the Ministry of Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation was, and Senator Cox raised it earlier, I would like to reiterate it for what it's worth. \$15m for Hurricane Beryl relief, and it says, "Reconstruction of approximately 200 homes on mainland Grenada in the parishes of St. Mark and St. Patrick. \$50,000 per home, this includes labour and material and equipment cost if deemed necessary".

I found this interesting, Madam President, because throughout this entire Supplementary Estimate, I did not see such a breakdown for Carriacou and Petite Martinique, indicating how many homes were damaged, the cost to repair individual homes and an overall budget for rebuilding houses in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. And I'm asking these questions, Madam President, based on what is presented in the document. \$15m to rebuild or reconstruct, rather, 200 homes at a cost of \$50,000 per home. That would require a \$10m budget. 200 by \$50,000. So there's a \$5m surplus or excess that is unaccounted for; we're not sure what it will be used for.

I raised this to refer to one of the initial points I was making in response to something that Senator Francis said, as it relates to the large amount budgeted for Capital Expense, which naturally students of economics would not disagree with, but as I said, the intended use and how that money would be spent. So the document says, we can account for \$10m out of that \$15m. What happens to the next \$5m? In a time like this, Madam President, the Government can't be wasting taxpayers' money, and this Government is one that has championed the mantra, "accountability, transparency and good governance". I do not want to say that they have deviated from that or they have said it for the sake of saying it, but the document, Madam President, the document says something else.

I remember when Senator Cox was making reference to CCRIF and the amount of money disbursed. One of the Honourable Members interjected by saying, "That's not no money", another said, "It's a drop in the bucket". \$15m, Madam President, was budgeted under the Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs for, in essence,

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

rebuilding the economy of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. \$15m was budgeted for 200 homes on mainland Grenada in two parishes, and \$15m is budgeted to rebuild the entire economy of Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

I am not a trained mathematician. I am not an economist by profession, but, Madam President, I don't think that \$15m to rebuild an economy is sufficient, and I think that is a fair assessment given what \$10m could actually do in Grenada in two parishes only. Madam President, 200 homes in Grenada, specifically in St. Mark and St. Patrick, I would have loved, honestly, Madam President, to see a similar breakdown for Carriacou. Not to satisfy me, Madam President, I do not live in Carriacou, but of course I empathise with the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I was quite young when Hurricane Ivan hit. I was actually in grade one. It was my second day in grade one when Hurricane Ivan hit.

And I think it was Senator Douglas who was making reference to the reopening of school, and there were people before who did it and who understood the dynamics of getting students back to school. I remember, Madam President, I returned to school not long after Hurricane Ivan, I think it was October, and the system that was implemented was a two-tiered system where the younger students went to school in the morning and the older students went to school in the afternoon, and I went to school. I took classes in one of those churches in Happy Hill, the Open Bible Church in Happy Hill, and I think those classes did me well. **(Laughter)** And I am saying, Madam President, we've experienced a major hurricane before. We won't get everything right, but there is a rubric. There is a rubric that we can go back to. Everything that was done before cannot be implemented now. However, there are things that worked then, I believe, that can work now. **(Applause)**

Earlier on, I heard one of the Members indicating, "come across"... You know... Collaboration was suggested. You know... It is a simple phone call to the Leader of His Majesty's Opposition or a simple dialogue with Members of the Opposition who were there in 2004. **(Inaudible comment by Senators) (Laughter)**

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

(Sound of gavel)

Madam President: Order.

Sen. the Hon. Neilon Franklyn: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, simple dialogue, I believe, could fix a lot, and we tend to revert or resort to tribal politics to make each other look bad or good, but I think in times like these, there is a need for collaboration. I would like to say that before actually the hurricane hit, I had a conversation with whom is now a former colleague Senator LaCrette and subsequently having a conversation with the Leader of His Majesty's Opposition and a lot was done to assist the people of St. George North West who decided to go to the shelters because we were uncertain as to what would have happened. **(Inaudible comment by Senators) (Laughter)** Madam President, that is what Grenada should be like, and we see collaboration between the sitting MP for St. Andrew North West and the Honourable Senator Gloria Thomas in this House. These sorts of collaborations are necessary in the interest of the people, in the interest of each and every Grenadian, especially in times like these. **(Applause) (Inaudible comment by Senators) (Laughter)**

Madam President, generally I understand the intent, however I have concerns like my other colleagues and people throughout Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, especially in Carriacou and Petite Martinique, about the response in St. Patrick and St. Mark, about the response by the Government to the economic challenges, a lot of Grenadians face at this point in time and the prospect for improvement in the future. That, in my opinion, Madam President, is even more significant, the prospect for improvement in the future. How do we move from here, and I do not think, Madam President, this Supplementary Budget sufficiently, sufficiently steers us in that direction and with that, Madam President, I thank you for allowing me to present. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Franklyn. I offer the floor to Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph. You have the floor, madam.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to give my full support to the Motion before this Honourable House, tabled by the Leader of Government's Business. Madam President, before you are the Supplementary Estimates for 2024, for which we seek the approval of this Honourable House.

Before I commence, Madam President, I make the general point that these estimates are to augment and support the estimates that were approved by the House in December for the year 2024. The first point I would like to make, Madam President, is that this is an annual exercise which is sanctioned by the Public Finance Management Act. It is not a novel exercise. It is not an exercise that is required simply because of the passage of Hurricane Beryl. In every financial year, it is customary for the Government to come back to the Parliament around this time and seek Parliamentary approval for additional spending to support the government's work. This year is no exception. It was done last year, and it was done 10 years prior.

It happens every year, no matter which administration is holding the seat of Government. So, for the benefit of our youthful and inexperienced listeners and viewers, I think that's the first critical point that should be made. The notion that this Supplementary Appropriation Bill is only before the House because of Hurricane Beryl is inaccurate. It is, in fact, an exercise that happens annually.

Why does it happen annually? In order to stay within the confines of the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act, sometimes the allocations requested for certain line items by the various ministries are not fully approved by the technocrats at the Ministry of Finance and ultimately by the Cabinet because it would take us outside the threshold permissible in the legislation which now stands, I am speaking from memory now, I think is 13% of GDP. That's the first point. So you may budget for a line item in December of 2023, expecting to execute during the course of the year 2024, and this year, sometimes even earlier, the amount budgeted is exhausted because you did not get the allocation you requested in the first place.

Secondly, the Supplementary Appropriation Bill makes provision for items that

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

were unforeseen, and it need not be a natural disaster. In this case, the most unforeseen event that occurred this year is Hurricane Beryl. There are instances where unbudgeted items are unforeseen. For example, under the Vote of the Ministry of Climate Resilience, there's a Sargassum Seaweed Conference that is to take place in Grenada, which we have to fund, and that wasn't budgeted for in the last budget. Under the Prime Minister's Ministry, the CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting was not budgeted for in the 2024 Estimate. We had to spend on hosting that event, and of course, the major unforeseen event was Hurricane Beryl. So that's point one.

Whether it is the now-Leader of the Opposition as Prime Minister or Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell, whoever sits in the seat of Government, every single year, there is a request for a supplementary appropriation. So let's not make politics about something that is a matter of fact that happens, and the law allows for up to two supplementary requests each year.

Madam President, while this Supplementary Bill caters, in the main, for the relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts in Carriacou, Petite Martinique and the other parts of Grenada affected by Hurricane Beryl, there are other matters that are provided for which align with our current focus as Government. So, for instance, Madam President, the last time we were here, we passed the Firearms (Amendment) Act, and we spoke of the Government's focus on tackling what appears to be an upsurge in crime and, in particular, gun-related crimes.

We see that the steps taken by Government are not limited only to those relating to legislative reform such as we did with the Firearms Act, but also we see, Madam President, that under the Ministry of National Security, for example, there is allocation there for \$530,000 for law enforcement to increase efficiency in fighting crime. So, law enforcement equipment to enhance the ability of the police to treat with the crimes that we are now increasingly facing.

We also see allocation, Madam President, for the reconstruction or renovation of police stations across the island, and there is a budgetary allocation there in the Ministry of Infrastructure.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

So there is a theme. There is a focus. We are strengthening law enforcement. We are strengthening legislation. We are also engaging in social and community uplifting programmes such as project STOP 'n' THINK, all aimed at fighting crime, Madam President.

Madam President, let me say, though, as I agree with the other speakers before me, that because of the unexpected and the unprecedented natural disaster that was Hurricane Beryl, by the way, the strongest recorded hurricane in history this early in the season, Beryl was no ordinary incident. So, naturally, the bulk of the allocation, as you see going across ministries, is centred on relief, recovery and reconstruction as a result of Hurricane Beryl.

First, Madam President, let me pause for a moment to extend sincerest condolences to the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique who suffered any kind of loss as a result of Hurricane Beryl, but more significantly, the loss of human life. And, Madam President, the lone fatality from Beryl on the main island, Grenada, occurred at River Road in the constituency of the Town of St. George, and we lost a vibrant and well-loved member of the River Road community in the person of Rhon Davis. And I here again express sincerest condolences on my own behalf and on behalf of the Government and people of Grenada to all of the victims, but especially to Alison, Rhon's wife, his sisters, and his family and his neighbours. He indeed was a great loss for the community.

Madam President, it seems to me that coming out of Hurricane Beryl, there are some who would like to rewrite history and present alternative facts. Madam President, I think the chance to do that is being taken because a calculation is made that either one, many of us who did experience Hurricane Ivan and its aftermath have forgotten, and then the majority of our youthful population, close to 60%, was simply too young to remember or were not yet born. **(Applause)** So, Madam President, I will take a few minutes, as a former history teacher, to rectify and correct the record.

Hurricane Ivan was a category three hurricane that struck Grenada on 7th February 2004. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** Sorry. **(Laughter)** 7th September 2024. Yes. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** 7th?... Yes, I have some good students.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Yes. Quick to correct. ...September 7th 2004, at around two o'clock in the afternoon. Madam President, and the current Leader of the Opposition, was Prime Minister at the time. He led a Government with a one-seat majority in the Parliament. Honourable Tillman Thomas was the Leader of the Opposition, having seven of the seats in the Parliament at the time, and Hurricane Ivan struck just over one year after an election. So while most of the Members of the Opposition in the Lower House were new to the Parliament, many on the "Government Side" were not new because they had just come from a full sweep of majority, a super majority in the Lower House, having won the 1999 Elections, 15-nil.

When Hurricane Ivan struck, one of the first things... Well, initially in the early hours following Hurricane Ivan up to the following day, we, the people, did not know where our leader was. We did not know where our leader was, and we learnt that our then Governor-General, Sir Daniel Williams, apparently also did not know where his Prime Minister was, and he walked from Upper Lucas Street to Red Gate... That's where his house is? ...Westerhall, St. David. I know it was from Lucas Street, my neighbourhood, to St. David, he walked, because Government House was utterly destroyed, the official Governor-General's residence. We found out later that our Prime Minister was somewhere out there in the sea on a ship seeking refuge. Right?... A battleship that roves the Caribbean Sea and is ready at short notice when disaster strikes. That's where it turns out our Prime Minister was.

Shortly after that, as happened with Beryl, our regional neighbours and friends rallied, so the nation of Trinidad was among the first to come forward. There was a helicopter flying around, and then we learnt that the Prime Minister was taken to Trinidad by helicopter. Next thing, there were reports that the Prime Minister indicated that Members of the Opposition were trying to overthrow the Government, taking the opportunity of the disaster to overthrow the Government. How did that come about, Madam President?

It happened because the then Opposition, seeing that the devastation caused by Hurricane Ivan, called or offered support, and I think in one way expressed it as having a

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Government of national unity, everybody coming together, Opposition and Government alike, to rebuild. To that, the then Prime Minister responded, “No, two man rat can’t live in the same hole”. So the offer at national unity to reconstruct after Hurricane Ivan was rejected, and then a complaint was made to our neighbouring Prime Minister, then, Patrick Manning, that those guys, because, of course, there were some guys in there who had a revolutionary past. The current Member for the Town of St. George, Mr. Nazim Burke, and Mr. George Prime, all of these people were in the Opposition, and they were accused of trying to overthrow the Government, and they had to go down to Trinidad to meet with Mr. Manning themselves to disabuse the notion. So that’s the background.

We know for a fact, Madam President, that up to today, 20 years after Hurricane Ivan, virtually all of the Government buildings that were destroyed by the hurricane remain in ruins; York House, Government House. Virtually, all of the district medical officers' residences were because, indeed, there was a time when the district medical officers had government residences. So there was one in New Hampshire, I think, St. David, all over, St. Mark. All right?

So, all of the government buildings that were severely damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Ivan remain today. The Old Barracks on Melville Street, the Drill Yard... I could go on and on because the only government structures that were eventually repaired, and I guess out of necessity, were the schools; were the schools and not even all, because I can immediately think of St. Luke Primary School in Grenville Vale that was never rebuilt. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)**

So that’s the legacy we’re talking about. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Yes. So, if you’re talking about leadership and legacy, these are historical facts of what transpired in the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan. In terms of private residences, the majority of those residences were rebuilt by people having their own insurance and through their own efforts. Yes, some of the lower-income homes had assistance from the Government of Guyana; there were some Vincentians who came in. Yes, that happened. But, there are many homes that were never rebuilt after Hurricane Ivan because the people could not manage, and they got no assistance. Take a drive up the Bealieu Main Road and

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

look to your, if you're heading to Grand Etang, focus on your left, and you will see quite a few of those homes because Bealieu was an area that got seriously damaged by Hurricane Ivan. I think there was a fatality or two up there as well. So that is the history; that is the legacy.

So, yes, my dear colleague Senator Franklyn, we will look, we will learn, and we will take a lesson in what not to do. **(Laughter) (Applause)** Contrast, Madam President, with the passage of Hurricane Beryl, a stronger hurricane than Ivan. Smaller space, in terms of square mileage, yes, but doing arguably much more damage. I went up about two or three days after Beryl, and I think things were worse than they were at Ivan.

Madam President, as we speak, almost all the government structures on Carriacou and Petite Martinique are nearing completion for renovation. **(Applause)** We are two months after the hurricane, Madam President, and reconstruction and recovery are a process and a long one too. Not a two-month process. Not a two-month process. A long, arduous process. Most of the government structures, the police station, the court, and the admin building, most of them are already being renovated, and some are nearing completion. Most of the schools are nearing completion.

Madam President, after Hurricane Ivan, schools reopened the following January. So this notion that we should suffer a category four devastating hurricane and reopen schools as scheduled is just straight impractical and for those who know better, dishonest. For those who say we could do it, we can be ambitious. We can try. We can make efforts, but when those efforts do not come to fruition, it is not a point at which the Government should be bashed because, after Hurricane Ivan, it wasn't until January that schools reopened.

So, Madam President, I spoke about how our then-Prime Minister reacted after Hurricane Ivan. The current Prime Minister, when it was clear that we were going to take a direct hit, what did he do? He found himself at the NADMA central command, and he stayed there. **(Applause)** He stayed there for days and weeks. Only briefly, after a while, he got a shower, but in the beginning, he didn't even get a shower. **(Laughter)** Madam President, he stayed there with the disaster relief workers.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

He gave us constant updates and briefings. He took charge. He did not go and accuse anybody of overthrowing him. Instead, he embraced all assistance offered and immediately brought hope, particularly to the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, so that we understand that this too shall pass. Our Prime Minister, and that is admitted by some people who are known to be more supportive of the Opposition than the Government.

Our Prime Minister was a shining light, he stood out and he showed real leadership and if my colleagues on the “Other Side” do not believe me as Bishop Devon Rachae. **(Applause)** Because there were people such as him who commended the Prime Minister for his handling of this disaster. And it is said, “You know a good leader not based on how they lead in times of peace, but how they manage and lead in times of crisis. **(Applause)** And for sure in the Honourable Dickon Mitchell, we are lucky and blessed in Grenada to have him at the helm of leadership in this country. **(Applause)** So, when you think of trying to bash and complain, think again, go dig up the old articles online and compare 2004 with 2024.

Madam President, in this Supplementary Budget, every ministry, almost every ministry, is seeking supplementary support for the relief efforts in Carriacou and Petite Martinique and the northern part of the island of Grenada. That is because, Madam President, all hands are on deck. We are working together to rebuild our country. So, Madam President, the Ministry of National Security, for example, secured 11 vehicles because in the days immediately following the hurricane, when we went up to Carriacou, we didn't all go together, we went some at a time and one of the obvious things there was lack of sufficient transportation on the island.

Almost all the vehicles were damaged by debris, and a lot of them were down. So, a lot of the relief, a lot of relief was coming in, a lot of stuff to be done, a lot of volunteers, but not enough transportation to move people and items around Carriacou. So, 11 vehicles were purchased in short order and sent up to Carriacou. I think there were a couple of others, three or so, subsequent. So, in all, about 15 or so motor vehicles of different types were sent to Carriacou.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

The hundreds of volunteers from the mainland and from Carriacou and from neighbouring CARICOM countries and beyond were able to use those vehicles to get relief supplies into the nooks and crannies of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I saw with my own two eyes, I moved around with him for a little while, the MP for the constituency of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, Kayaks, your real choice. You chose right, by Tevin Andrews. **(Applause)**

I moved around with him for a bit, and as we were moving around, people were stopping and people were indicating, well, we didn't get relief in this village, we didn't get here yet. He was physically going and making sure the areas that were not touched were supplied with relief. He worked hard, hands-on with his PS and their support staff, and we must really, really commend and give them applause as this House would normally do it. **(Applause)**

Madam President, the Ministry of Economic Development, Agriculture, and Planning. They are also supporting the relief efforts for farmers and fishers with one-off payments. I can't remember the acreage, but it is \$5,000 one way and \$9,000 the next. I think over five acres is \$9,000? Yes, and below is \$4,500 and many other initiatives by that particular ministry that would bring relief to our people who have been affected by the hurricane.

The Ministry of MIT. Well, again, I think the Member for St. George South in the "Other Place" deserves a table knock in this House, you know. I think so. **(Applause)** The Ministry of MIT has been at the forefront of the recovery and relief efforts, particularly the cleaning and clearing of debris. That ministry led by the Honourable Minister has been mobilising, literally, hundreds of people every weekend to go up to Carriacou.

Madam President, and the speed with which the bulk of the debris was cleared because of these efforts, put the efforts in 2004 to shame, because we were in garbage for a long time in 2004. Those of us who remember well, it was the Venezuelans and the Trinidadians, thanks to them, who came and started cleaning, and then we joined long after. But here we have a leader and a Government that could mobilise its own people **(applause)** to lead that effort. You would see, Madam President, virtually all of the

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

appropriations under the Ministry of MIT are designated to Hurricane Beryl recovery and reconstruction.

The Ministry of the Environment is also contributing heavily to the relief and recovery effort. We see there an appropriation for the Solid Waste Management Authority and also for cleaning up the marine spaces because, of course, we have to get the sunken vessels out of the water before fluids, oils, and so on start leaking into the water. Arrangements have been made for that to be done through the Environment Ministry, and we see the allocation there in the budget.

Madam President, my brother, Minister for Education, will speak for himself, but you will see there, Madam President, allocations for providing relief, again, to the people who have suffered as a result of the hurricane. Also, you will see an appropriation there to take care of our workers at TAMCC who were not otherwise provided for in the 2024 Budget by way of salary increases commensurate with that which was given to other public workers. So, the TAMCC staff are getting their 4% as well, and this has to be provided for in this Supplementary Budget. **(Applause)** Yes. We are a Government for workers, and the workers know it.

Also, Madam President, and I guess the timing was perfect because we were also down-spirited because of the hurricane, our athletes went to Paris and did us proud. Madam President, our Kirani James, Lindon Victor, Anderson Peters, Till Collymore, Zachary Gresham and Halle Hazzard, all of them represented us well, and we are proud of all of them, and we congratulate them. But, Madam President, we celebrate and congratulate Lindon Victor, the Caribbean Ironman **(applause)** and Anderson Peters in relation to whom the Olympic Medal was long overdue, in relation to whom the Olympic Medal was long overdue; we knew ultimately he would have medalled at the Olympics, and he did it.

And so, Madam President, what our athletes have gotten used to is a lot of talk when they do well and a lot of pronouncements, but no real delivery, no real and proper celebration of them. We thought it; especially in this year of our golden jubilee and with Grenada coming home with two medals from one Olympic and topping the globe for the

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

country with the most medals per capita **(applause)** in addition to which having one of our very own with his name written in the books of Olympic history as a record holder... Lindon now holds the record for the discus? No... In the decathlon. He has a record now. Then, of course, our javelin thrower stamped his name in Olympic and world athletic history as one of the best of all time.

Of course, the undisputed King James. The most celebrated quarter-miler in the history of the sport, whether you talk World Championship or Olympic Championship. **(Applause)** He is the most celebrated. The only one to have won all of the medals. At age 31, he ran a faster race where he placed fifth. He ran a faster race than he did when he got the gold. So, he is getting like fine wine, better with age.

So we have so much to be proud of with our athletes that it would have been remiss of us if we did not celebrate them and bring them home in fine style. And so, Madam President, in the Supplementary Appropriation here we see an allocation of \$1.2m for our Olympians in terms of the celebrations and the homecoming ceremonies, but that wasn't all, Madam President.

This Government, beforehand, we didn't wait for them to do well to celebrate and jump in the front, beforehand and quietly behind the scenes, we supported and invested in them, in their journey to Paris. The Government provided \$574,000, thereabout, for them to take part, let me get the exact figure; \$573,963 for our athletes to be able to be ready and to compete at the Paris Olympics, and that's what we mean when we say we invest in our youths. We spent money on all of them to get them to Paris and to have them comfortably competing, and by the way, we supported some of the sports administrators as well, who travelled to Paris with them. And this is another item provided for in this Supplementary Budget, which was not catered for in the Budget in December when we read it.

So, Madam President, with these observations, I wholeheartedly support the Bill and I urge my colleagues on "Both Sides" in this Honourable House to do the same. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President, just before I take my seat, I would like to pause to extend on

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

behalf of the Government of Grenada, heartfelt congratulations to our very recently retired Chief Justice, who has been appointed as a Member of His Majesty's Privy Council and as we all know here the Privy Council is our highest court. To have our own Chief Justice appointed to this August institution, it's really a shining, joyous, and proud moment, not just for the Eastern Caribbean but for all of the Caribbean. So, congratulations to her Ladyship Dame Janice Pereira. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you. Thank you, Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph. There are three Senators on the left, and the floor is being taken by Senator Roderick St. Clair. You have the floor, sir, and it is 4:20 p.m., just about.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, Madam President. They said they want me to speak first, so they're sure they will leave early. If I speak last, then we may stay longer. **(Laughter)** So, I understand.

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to make my contribution to the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2024. Of course, there has been a series of explanations as to why we need this supplementary and all of those issues. I think the explanation has been good because many times we have to provide some knowledge and civics to our citizens so that they understand the context. Of course, we may even ask ourselves why it has to happen so late; shouldn't it happen earlier? You know. So, if you know that it's happening, shouldn't it happen earlier, in April or May? Sometimes in November, something happens, and you may need to even have another one, you never know. Okay?

As customary, I always like to have a theme to help me and to guide me, Madam, President. So, as I ponder for today, I've considered my theme and my topic to be at their crossroads because this is what I'm hearing in this Honourable House and the world too; many options, many decisions to be made, many priorities, how do you decide, how do you contemplate? So the issue of "at the crossroads"; there are many decisions to be made, many opportunities ahead of us and with us and how do we decide on those areas.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

However, Madam President, before I go into the budget, budget issues, I want to also make some cursory remarks on the Papers laid; the Medium-term, Mid-year Review Report. I may make some connections in the presentation, but I just want to make some remarks and some observations.

A key observation that I have made in this report had to do with the whole issue of the need for better data, better information to inform the whole process. In fact, very early in the document that came to light, I would refer to this in a while, and not realising as I read to the end, I saw the Cabinet Summary Statement which literally asked the Minister for Finance to ensure that there is proper systems for data collection and analysis.

I think, Madam President, it is more than the Minister for Finance. Whilst, yes, the staff are in there and they are doing good human work and contribution to prepare those reports, the whole issue of data, data analytics and data collection is something that really, and maybe it is not just a national problem, it's a big issue having data. So, I think it is something that the Government as a whole would want to look at and not just the Ministry of Finance and the Minister, who looks as if it's he, because a lot of the information that is compiled there is sourced from other places. So, this is one of the areas that I wanted to flag, and I was happy to see that Cabinet, in its own wisdom, realised that's an issue, so we need to look at it. And, of course, in Agriculture itself, we know that a lot of this information deficit, particularly when you deal with the informal sector data collection, some people feel is tax information you want, so they wouldn't share information with you.

In fact, that brought me to an interesting observation pertaining to the MNIB. There are some statements there in terms of MNIB would have purchased 30-something per cent more bananas than the previous year. If you do your research, you would realise that the major players who were involved in bananas, may his soul rest in peace; Mr. Harford would have passed, and as a result of that, most of the farmers would have now gone back to the MNIB to sell. So the question is, did we really have a net increase in production in the country? As I look around, you can't even find a ripe banana in most places. I went to Real Value three times this week, and there were no ripe bananas.

The point is that... And then the irony of it, when you look at the same report, there

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

was a superscript two that speaks of the MNIB data being used as a proxy to speak of the national production, especially in the fruits and veg sector. And so, we know that MNIB has been dwindling for the last few years, and so if you use it as a proxy, then it also tells you how calibrated the instrument that we are using is, and the result of the information that we are looking at. So it says again the issue of data collection and analytics; we really need to do that. And so, when I saw this up there, and then I saw the Cabinet spoke in the end, I was happy that they picked it up and of course some support provided, well, of course, not in this budget, there was no supplementary support for that, but at least maybe in the next round.

Another observation that I also made in the report is that the whole issue of the construction and agricultural sectors being flagged constantly as two of the sectors to really revitalise the whole economy. In fact, somewhere on page 39 of the report, there is a paragraph that speaks specifically to agriculture and manufacturing to push the whole economy and link back to the whole issue of our food security. But at the same time, the report speaks about the food import bill rising, an increase in the import of frozen meats and so on.

So it tells generally that... Where is that strategy? I think the report should have left us with some more strategic ideas on how to move forward. For example, we know there is the well-spoke-of World Bank Food Security Project, EC\$27m, and while we are not aware of how much of that has been spent to date, I think in the outlook that is perhaps the single most important project that has so much of money allocated for it to make the sort of difference in food security. I think the report should have flagged that as a hope because there is no hope in that area.

Of course, the report highlighted the issue of nutmeg, cocoa, and fish as main exports in Agriculture and, of course, it speaks of animal feed, which we know, of course, the Caribbean Agro is a major producer. At the same time, the report highlighted, Madam President, an increase of some 43% in local feed production and linked that with increased hope for stimulating the whole livestock and feed industry in Grenada. To me, I associated that with an increase in feed prices and an increase in raw material prices

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

rather than the increase in real availability on the local market, because we know that the last few years the cost of feed has been rapidly rising, up, up, up.

My good friend, Senator Lewis, who represents the workers there and is in direct contact, knows my view on the intelligence on this matter, and so I am not too sure if that conclusion is a proper conclusion. Of course, there are some other areas like inflation and food index. I think Senator Franklyn spoke on that, so I wouldn't really go there because he is more versed, I believe, in this area than I am.

Early in the report, though, Madam President, there were some areas that were highlighted as factors that can be linked to our whole agricultural performance. Interestingly, climate change is a big threat to everything, not just agriculture, which was not even mentioned. But, the issue of roads, infrastructure, input and so on, of course, those are issues. Labour, in fact, there are persons I know, over the last year or so, especially since this minimum wage has been spoken about, and how we get better performance of workers, have been speaking of the importation of labour so that we have more persons to perform work in this country, particularly, in the agricultural sector. Somehow we seem to be shy on it, but we are open to having imported labour for many other things in the county. So sometimes, you know, we have doctors, we have lawyers, we have engineers, we have... You could name it, chefs and everything, but when it comes to agricultural workers, we seem to have some sort of fear. It is something that we need to open up on and we need to cater for because the need is even more urgent now, bearing in mind all the devastation from the hurricane, than ever. Have a new way of thinking, do things differently, fear not to go further, and that is why, Madam President, I say we are at a crossroads; crossroads where key decisions have to be made for key outcomes, should be made with no fear.

The issue of roads is a big issue. Farm roads are a big issue for our farmers. I say this in light of the fact that when you look at the Supplementary Budget, in particular, it is exciting; emergency roads, 10 small roads. I think \$15m is catered for those areas under the Infrastructure Ministry. I am happy to see that. Farm roads are roads, too. If you take out a farm in front of it, maybe they will fix it. They are roads. It says small

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

roads. It's interesting how we prepare things. So, maybe it is small farm roads. I don't know. When I look at the number of roads that are under Infrastructure, I think Infrastructure may need to take on some of the slack there and do some work.

I say this because I want to segue a little bit. I travel Grand Etang Road every day and I am sure many other travellers on the road would want to compliment, well, I wouldn't say the Government, the Ministry, because sometimes when the Government has an idea, the Ministry does the work. For widening... **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** No, well, you are travelling on the road too, you know, and you're not speaking about it. I will speak about it. Right? No. Moving off some of the stones and widening the roads is a good thing.

I just trust that the drivers don't try to take advantage of the situation now that our site is longer and try to overtake, and so on, but the slippage potential. I must say that this is something that is good. It is happening in a way that is not really disturbing or interfering significantly with the flow of traffic. So the guys working there are also doing well in facilitating the movement, and so on. So, we want to see it there. We want to see it also in the bi-roads on the farms because it means that we know how to do it.

So, sometimes, Madam President, I ask myself how we know sometimes to not do the right things. So, if this is the right thing, then let us do the right thing and help fix those other roads. So I trust that before the year is up, we will see a similar initiative getting in on providing some support to the farmers, because if they cannot get to their lands properly, this rebuilding that we need to be doing right now would definitely be a problem. I am speaking here about Grenada. I know Carriacou also, they have their issues, Dumfries Road and all of those roads, but I am happy to see that.

At the same time, Madam President, as I was discussing in a sidebar with my colleague earlier, Senator for Business, we flagged SAEP. I personally have been involved in the selection of these roads, about 15 or 20 roads, about four years ago, and it's interesting that I see about five of those roads showing up now to be fixed. The notes pertaining to it are that, well, you know the \$15m is needed because they didn't anticipate it would have cost so much, so we need an extra \$15m. I tried going back to the original

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

2004 Budget to see what the original amount was that was budgeted for, but I couldn't see it. I didn't really get around to it.

But I do hope, as Senator Cox was raising, that these roads can actually be completed within the year, because they are farm roads. It is not like just putting pitch. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Yes. Yes. Yes. Farm roads. Yes. Sorry. Sorry, Madam President. So, for example, if I list some of the roads. They speak about the Mt. Reuil Bridge, the Requin Road, Spring Garden, Dumfries, Mt. Dor Road, and Badia Bridge. Right? Farm access roads. I am familiar with the groundwork for these, but the point is that we should have seen we needed that \$15m long; we are quite down in September. So, by the time you do the scope of work, this and that and mobilisation, these roads might be ready by next year. So I trust that SAEP and its leadership can really make this happen, but we are happy to see that this is here because this is always a big issue for our sector. Right?

The other point I also want to make, Madam President, pertaining to the budget, is that we speak about \$375,000 for hydroponics for the schools. I guess the 4-H and so on. This is also commendable because we have to show the younger ones at the school level the technology, and so on. So, the key thing is, at the end of the day, Madam President, are two things. One. We have to be careful.

Sustainability. You may have a teacher who is fully enthusiastic and everything now and next year they are retiring or they move to another school. We have seen that. The same Junior Achievement that my dear friend spoke about earlier... A lot of those initiatives are because of personnel changes, so we have to ensure that there is proper sustainability in terms of succession and continuation. That's one angle.

The other angle relates to maintenance. It is always good for someone to give you something, but sometimes, how do you maintain it? People involved in these things know that maintenance... Sometimes the plastic bursts, and you have to get money to repair it. The school itself have money to get so many other things. How would it be maintained? We could say, well, it could be done as a business, when they sell products, they can ensure that some money remains to be able to maintain it.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

I am not saying no, but what we're saying is that whoever is supervising and managing that those things are in place, otherwise it will end up with just the frame, weeds growing, or it will be something of the past. I have been around in the same teaching sector, and you have seen it. The teacher changes, and everything is abandoned. I really urge that both the Ministry of Agriculture and, of course, the Ministry of Education, because it is connected to the school, have some sustainable approach to ensure that these good practices will continue.

Madam President, as I go further down in the Supplementary Estimates, I want to flag... Right. I was to flag also, Madam President, under... It's hurricane... Just let me get the right heading so you can follow with me. It's under the Ministry of Economic Development, Planning, Tourism, ICT and the Creative Economy. It's basically the last row which speaks about livelihood and recovery support for SAEP beneficiaries. Right? Sum \$2m. It says the rationale is to support damage assessment and institutional arrangements to develop and implement the Hurricane Beryl Economic and Social Recovery plan. The explanation for it is to provide support to SAEP beneficiaries.

So I am kind of a little bit confused, that is why I flagged this, because if it's to provide support to the beneficiaries, even if you are doing an assessment, I should see somewhere in that last column stating that we expect to have 50 persons benefiting, or 300 persons benefiting. I am not seeing that. I am seeing it more as an institutional arrangement and damage assessment. It didn't speak of providing benefits to beneficiaries. So I sort of flag how this budget line intends to, in addition to what it says it will do, bring the benefits to the beneficiaries. That is not clear to me. I am a little bit shaky on that one. So I would like some explanation on that.

The other area I want to speak on is the Ministry of Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation, and it seems like everybody must go there. The whole nation is involved. My flagging is not about whether Carriacou get houses or Sauteurs gets houses. My flagging there is, what is the protocol? What is the process? Would there be people filling out forms? What are the criteria for making the selection?

You see, because sometimes people may have hope, but their hope may not be a

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

proper hope when they realise the criteria, and so they don't get anything, and so this, I think, would be interesting to know. Of course, I know it's not something that may be put in a document like that, but it is always good to know what the procedure is so that one can appeal, one can say, well, why I didn't get it.

I mean, I've been speaking to someone in the north recently, and they said to me Mr. St. Clair, don't worry yourself because my roof is gone. The whole roof peeled off. I don't even have anything. I asked NADMA. I asked whoever. They came, they took all the information, and she really needs help to at least get a tarpaulin, while she knows others have a tarpaulin. I was shocked. She said, "Don't worry yourself", and I said, "Wow". You know, so, I don't know.

I am not into the politics about who gets and who doesn't get, but the fact that she raised that to me as a farmer, and she said, "Look, this is the situation", and I said, "But no, did you speak to NADMA"? She said, "Yes, I speak to them". I said, "They collected"... She said, "Yes, yes." I said, "Don't worry, I didn't even see these 200 houses support." I said, "These things take a while. I know these things do take a while. So you have hope." She said, "Mr. St. Clair, I can't even get current because you know I don't even have a roof so GRENLEC wouldn't even come." I said, "I do understand. Just hold on. It takes time. Something will happen". I am not worried, but I am just raising what was raised with me, but I would like to know the procedure, the protocol. You have to make a decision at the crossroads. You must make a decision based on the severity of the situation.

Right. So, under the MIT, Madam President, again, Vote 29, it speaks of \$8m—rehabilitation and construction of small roads within the parishes throughout Grenada. This represents approximately 20 small roads to facilitate the completion of 26 houses and the completion of 15 new houses in St. Patrick. So, in addition to the houses, there seem to be some 20 small roads. I am saying, well, we are really not doing good work in Agriculture because 20 small roads? They don't seem to be farm roads. They don't seem to be road helping... At the end of the day, Madam President, whilst yes, we need those roads, simple clearing, de-bushing, and some binders are all the farmers want so that

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

they can get to their farm. Right?

So, this is a special call to MIT that you might be able to do five or six small farm roads within the budget you have. I know, as my dear sister, Senator Claudette Joseph, AG, asked for a table knock in “This House”, it means that we could send a message over to the Honourable Minister. Please include us in the farming community for some small farm roads, please.

As I go further, Madam President, the Ministry of Climate Resilience, The Environment and Renewable Energy. It is good to see that we are actually getting close to finding out how we could use this geothermal. It may work or it may not work; we don't know. The fact is that there is nothing wrong with exploring those possibilities. I don't think we should run away from those possibilities. Of course, I do understand the nature of the budget request now, because sometimes in your analysis, you put in a figure too early, you may not be ready based on the analysis and all those things you have to do. That is fine. It seems to be a project in a project document that yields that.

The Sargassum Conference would be interesting to see where we go with that. The conference is good, but what is the legacy of that conference? Would we be able to do something with the sargassum, et cetera, and so on? We have to see how we can engage the different research institutions to find the sort of innovation that we need. I have no objection because sargassum is a big issue for us, the fisher folk, the sea moss, the tourists, and even the regular beach users.

At the same time, Madam President, it would be remiss of me not to find out why; maybe again, the money is too small. The whole issue of registering and becoming a member of the World Meteorological Organization is less than \$10,000, we know, a year, which would give us significant access to weather information and all of those things. I don't know why we are running away. Maybe as I said, the budget is too small for that. It is very important.

So, for example, the storm. We just went through Beryl. Our folks down at the Maurice Bishop International Airport, Mr. Taylor, his team, Ms. Johnson and others would be much better equipped to provide much more information and be even better prepared

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

in times of these disasters. I make a special appeal, we need to become a member of this. You know. The staff in there knows that. I know they have communicated that. Many who have gone before would have communicated it, and the obligation is very simple. In fact, if we didn't have the budget, we could have used the same CCRIF money that we got to take out \$10,000 and pay for it, because all that is part of building resilience, information, data, analytics and improving. So, when we speak about improving data collection, improving data analytics, this is part of the infrastructure.

So, this, I thought, would have been present. I thought that was an oversight. I hope that there could be some way that funds can be allocated to help with that. At the same time, we have to commend the folks at the met office for providing the marine advisories on a daily basis to assist the fisher folks and overseas travellers in their actions. You know. They're still trying even if they don't have it, which is good. You know, some people, if they don't have it, they just don't do. They are still trying even though they don't have.

Madam President, as I move on to the next section, Ministry of Infrastructure, Physical Development, Public Utilities, Civil Aviation and Transport. Again, it speaks of emergency roads, and I think maybe Grand Etang might be part of these emergency roads. However, access to some of our farms, even now, is still emergency roads, and so I trust that we can provide an inventory of some of these roads, such that between MIT and Infrastructure, something can happen to our farms.

Because if your Mid-term Review says, we have to focus on agriculture, focus on manufacturing, then the question begs, how do we get to where the resource is? How do we get to where the land is? How do we get to where the crop is? How do we get to it? Maybe take a helicopter? I don't know. How many of us could afford to take a helicopter to get in and out of our farms? There must be a concerted effort.

In fact, this morning, a farmer sent me a photo. It's funny. It's a photo, so I cannot do like Senator Cox and read the text. I don't know how to read the text of a photo, but he sent me a photo showing me the access to the Boulogne Propagating Station from the Paraclete end. Since after Lili, the politicians would deal with that aspect of which

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Government was in power at that time... But, since then, it's some logs of wood that they have over a ravine to cross.

This is what I am saying, Madam President, MIT and the Infrastructure Ministry, these are the sort of things that we need to pick up and could enable the lives of 30, 40, 50 farmers and provide employment, easily. Simple things. And this is why I say sometimes, we are at a crossroads, because sometimes the decisions are simple and the information is simple, but you ask yourself why the decisions are not being made; maybe because of a lack of data analytics, maybe. I don't know. So this is an area.

At the same time, as I said, I am not getting into which Government was in power or who left what building, they didn't fix what building and what building didn't fix, but maybe next round I will get into it. It's important to note the repairs on the building that are targeted. In fact, the police stations, not because of whether or not I'm supporting the police or I am not supporting the police, the police are an important infrastructure for us in the agricultural sector in terms of the praedial larceny support. Now I could understand how they would do anything if the house where they are staying is not well?

So, I fully support the fixing of those houses, their places of abode, so that they can have restful nights. Of course, as a result of that, we might be able to see an improvement in the whole praedial larceny enforcement on the ground. I guess they are frustrated and they are not happy, so they just do the minimum.

I am also happy to see that the extension office in Grenville. The Agriculture office is also targeted because this is a matter that has been raised with me over and over by several persons who visit the office and who work at the office. To see it being flagged there, down for repairs, is good news. Whether it could be fixed between now and December is another story, but of course, it is down. So we will monitor the progress and see where we reach from there.

As I go further, Madam President, the issue of the Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs, Local Government. I am not getting into the local politics. I want to say on this, particularly as it relates to... Of course, before I go further, I should say that Carriacou is seriously devastated.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

I mean, I have no family, but a lot of friends and associates, in addition to the farming community. It is a place that I visited very often in my previous work because we had a location up there, so I am pretty much understanding the situation, and so my heart reaches out to Carriacou with its fullest support. I have been in phone conversations with many of them and, of course, I committed that in September, as my good friend Senator Lewis says, when school reopens, I plan to visit the island.

That's the concern, Madam President. What really is the package? What really is the announcement for the fisher folks and the farmers in that community? We have not heard anything publicly. Notwithstanding, I have been made aware that plans are being put in place, and Carriacou would be treated differently. I appreciate that because the level of damage, the nature of rebuilding, et cetera, is important, and so we look forward to the rebuilding effort and the support of the sector.

At the same time, their request pertaining to... Because Carriacou is a place that is livestock. Livestock is a main thing. So, the issue of water storage. The issue of fencing. Those are very critical for them at this time, so that they can get their stocks back and manage that. So, whatever is being done, in addition to income support, and whatever it is, Carriacou needs to have that major support. I am aware that there has been some support out of Trinidad with some feed and so on to provide some feed support for the animals, but they need to have them secured because stray dogs are an issue we know also in those areas. So that is our query that is out.

As we move further, of course, the issue of our Olympians and who could run well and so on. I join in the efforts of celebration, and I wouldn't tie up my time in that space. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator) (Laughter)** Pardon me. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Yes. I will not tie up my time in that space. Notwithstanding, I tried to run once or twice in my school sports, but I didn't get very far. **(Laughter)** You know. But it's good.

Lindon is the one from St. David. I met him at the Independence, and we had a nice chat. He was telling me about his pig farm and all of those things, and so on. So, I say this to say that whilst we may say they are out there doing their thing in the Olympics,

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

they also have grown in the agricultural sector. So I thought I wanted to create that connection, that's why I went there.

As we go further down, Madam President, the issue of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries, which at the same time is the substantive support, I will say at the Grenada end. We have to recognise and I will speak to that, the support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Grenada, for the whole agricultural sector. Of course, we have to understand that with the passage of Beryl, it's tough. A lot of people, particularly in the north, and, of course, whilst the Government came in with the income support, this in no way will help you to rebuild your farm or rebuild anything. So this money must be used wisely by the farmers, you know, such that they can be able to use some to keep their lives going, but, of course, some to get their farms back.

We have to, at the same time, from the cocoa, nutmeg farmer sector, thank the Government, in addition to previously thanking them, for their quick response in contributing half a million EC dollars, which was publicised in the press conferences, towards the crop insurance, which provided significant assistance in this difficult time. This is a very important thing and the call here is for farmers, whether you are a fisher folk, whether you are in agro-processing, whatever it is, to really try and sign up for this crop insurance parametric plan for the next season, such that, even if the Government makes some contribution you already have something for yourself and that has to be a major aspect.

The other thing I want to connect to that, Madam President, is the need for NIS. Our farmers, our vendors, and everyone need to try to be NIS-registered so that in times like these, you can get some sort of benefit for you and your employer. These are the things we need to start doing for good businesses. Right?

What I want to say is, we also want to recognise the support for our fresh-produce exporters also, the involvement in exporting the products, the agro-processors and people involved in nurseries and all the livestock. So, overall, the intervention, we must say, is wide and encompassing. You may want more, but you cannot get more now, but we expect more.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

And so the issue of what the plan is for the future and what the support is, we are still waiting on the ministry and the Government to hear that plan. I heard the Minister in the “Other Place” spoke about Government estates and, of course, we trust that the Government estate will become a key part of our food security plan because that is where you can produce many products at good prices, and you need to also connect that back with the MNIB. The MNIB is very important for our food security. We can jump up, we can jump down. It is very important.

Madam President, let me tell you something. After Hurricane Ivan, we can go back in history...

Madam President: Please don't...

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

Madam President: Might I suggest...

(Laughter) (Applause)

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: No, no... Because you see, Madam President you have to learn...

Madam President: If I might suggest...

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: ... You have to learn from the rubric.

Madam President: If I might suggest, Senator, I respect you.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: We are learning from the rubric.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Madam President: Yes.

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

Madam President: We have three more Speakers and...

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

Madam President: ... 70 minutes and a Bill to pass.

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

Madam President: So I know you are giving me your cooperation.

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

Madam President: Thank you, sir.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Yes, yes. Don't be worried. I will not relive Ivan's story. It wouldn't be 15 minutes.

(Inaudible comment by a Senator)

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: No, it wouldn't be long. The banana farmers were able to regroup with the support of the MNIB and the Ministry of Agriculture to start shipping within one year, an average of 800 boxes of bananas to Trinidad every week. The fact is, what I am trying to say to you, Madam President, to us, and to everyone, at these crossroads we have decisions to make, and some of these decisions are not difficult. But we have to ensure, as Senator Franklyn said earlier, to look at the rubric,

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

what you have done well in the past. These farmers, most of whom are still around. We need this sort of food production. Right? So this is what I am trying to share with you.

The other aspect, Madam President, we noticed that there is an allocation of \$25m, I think it is, pertaining to GDB for support to MSME, small businesses and so on. Again, I think that was raised earlier. I trust that the application process is not cumbersome and frivolous, such that access to the funds becomes so difficult that it is a challenge. In fact, what is interesting is that if you read the notes connected to this, it says over two years. I thought that was very interesting. **(Laughter)** Over two years! So, why not one year, why not six months if you want to stimulate? You know. So I think these two years are a little bit too long in the process.

So with all of this said, Madam President, and Members in this Honourable House, my final message connecting to this Supplementary Appropriation Bill, particularly as it relates to our agricultural sector, our fishing sector, that whole food sector, is that we accept and we support the direct support that is committed it to and we expect it soon. We will make the best use of it, but at the same time, we need to put a proper plan in place. We need to put proper resources in place and proper storage in place, so we have Tania and Dasheen and all of those things stored up for our future. We need to have that.

At the same time, we want to urge the nation to continue to recognise the implications of our food import bill and the impact on our health. This is important, and I haven't heard that today. In fact, with so many issues we are hearing about health, we don't see anything really about health. When you have food issues, we have to be concerned about health issues, dietary, balanced diet and all of those types of things. And so, we should not miss that, maybe through health education and all of those things. There might be more pressure on our school feeding programme. Right?

So, I raise all of these because we may not have plans right now, but there may be things that will pop up on us. So, with this, Madam President, I commend my comments on this Supplementary Bill, 2024, as presented by our Leader of Government's Business. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

Madam President: Well, I thank you, Senator, and I apologise for any interruptions. I welcome your contribution. May I remind us that we have, I believe, three more potential speakers and just a little over an hour, and we still have to finish the Motion and get to the Bill. So, either we stay a little later. The Clerk will leave at 6:15 p.m., promptly. He has informed me. The Deputy Clerk will remain with us, and we will wrap up today or return tomorrow. I stand...

(Inaudible comment by a Senator)

Madam President: Yes, I know it's Saturday, but if the business is not done today, it can be done tomorrow, and if not tomorrow, we'll resume on Monday. But bear in mind that some of us will not be here on Monday. So let's just go and see, as you ponder this, see what your wish is. I am guided by your wishes.

So our three options are: to complete within 70 minutes, to return tomorrow, Saturday, to a short meeting, or to return Monday with a different configuration. Caucus amongst yourself, or at least with yourself, actually, because I do not want two conversations in the Senate at the same time. The first one will now commence with the next speaker. Should we break to caucus on how we proceed? Just consult? **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** Consult? Let us consult so we know exactly what we're doing. It's not a break. It's a consultation. Leader of Government's Business, what say you, sir?

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I want to suggest that we finish this debate tonight. The fact that we were scheduled for today only means that everybody else may have plans for other things. I guess the reason why we want to hurry tonight is that tomorrow might be the same, because I think the issue is from six to six, Friday to Saturday. So, I want to suggest that we wrap up this debate as quickly as possible today. I myself will be leaving the country tomorrow at 3:30 p.m.

Madam President: Opposition, what say you, sir?

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

(Inaudible comment by Senator the Honourable Norland Cox)

Madam President: Therefore, we have two speakers on my left and one on my right. So three speakers, 70 minutes and then the proceedings. So, may I offer you each 15 minutes? Is that right? Maximum? Clerk, 15 minutes each is 45 minutes for the three speakers, and then we have a few minutes for the procedural matters. Think about that Clerk.

(The Clerk converses with Madam President privately)

Sen. the Hon. David Andrew: Madam...

(The Clerk continues to converse with Madam President privately)

(Members of the Senate discuss privately)

Madam President: Our goal is 70 minutes, but as I said, we have the Deputy Clerk, and we can continue beyond if we are not finished. But we do not want to short-change anyone, and of course, the Leader of Government's Business has to wrap up. So, I think we're, we're good. Senator David Andrew, you requested the floor? Not yet? Okay. Senator Salim...

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: Yes.

Madam President: ... Rahaman.

Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman: Thank you, Madam President. In the interest of time, I will try to be as succinct as possible.

So, to begin my comments on this important supplement, which is being sought,

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

first, is to give credit where credit is due. I would like to commend the Government for their swiftness in terms of their response to Beryl. **(Applause)** I would like to do so because it is evident for all to see what effect it has on the ground. Those who are on the ground could tell us best, but in terms of their response, and in particular the Prime Minister as the Chief Minister, as the word “prime” would suggest, his response was on the go from the onset. And I don't think that is debatable, because we all saw it.

(Applause)

I would also like to commend them, or the Prime Minister, rather, led by the Prime Minister, shortly after, for meeting with private sector individuals in Carriacou to assess the damages and the impact of those damages that it had on their businesses. Because as we know the Government relies on the private sector to pay a significant amount of taxes, especially on the port in addition to other taxes, so it is the interest of the Government as well as the rest of society who rely on the private sector for their groceries and their services to make sure that when the aid comes to them, to help them to get back up on their feet that it is sufficient. I'll come back to that.

But I want to draw, Madam President, your attention to the macro as we have been focusing a lot on the micro and to look at the total of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill that is being sought. You will see that the total is \$269,598,086. Whereas the total in the Supplementary Estimates that we have before us, which is the detailed explanation, is a different figure, 300,000 different. The total there is \$269,898,086, not 598. So there seems to be some mistake. I stand corrected if I am making a mistake, but that's how I'm seeing it on the documents that have been provided. What is being asked for is \$300,000 short. I move on.

Hosting the Heads of CARICOM meeting in Grenada. At the very time that our Prime Minister is taking up the seat as the Chair of that very important body, a historical body, it was very timely, and I would commend them for that as well. Because in light of the stats on the 2024 mid-year review, when we look, we see a 25.6% increase in visitors in the Caribbean. So it is well placed **(applause)** to host the Leaders of the Caribbean at the same time that we are experiencing increased visitor arrivals from our neighbours, in

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

particular, the island of Trinidad. According to that mid-year review, it says, stayover arrivals from the Caribbean rose by 26.7% over the same period of last year, and 18.1% of that increase is from Trinidad alone. So that's very nice stuff because when these foreigners come to see our beautiful island and our culture and our lovely seafood, which is unlike any other in the Caribbean, they will spend money and they will enjoy Grenada, and indeed they will want to come back, as my father did by the way.

So, moving on. Vote 20. If I could bring your attention to Vote 20, which my colleague Senator Roderick St. Clair mentioned. It speaks of two bridges and five roads, which we also support. With additional roads and connectivity within our country and farmlands, you cannot have a strong tourism sector without a strong agricultural sector. One feeds into the other, so we support that. My concern is the reason given, and the reason given is very vague, and it's a lot of money. So we are speaking here about Vote 20, that's \$15m? Am I correct? Yes, yes, correct. Item 26. The first is \$15m, and that speaks to the roads. When you look at the reason given, it's the same exact sentence for both of them.

It says, "The cost of construction exceeded the original 2024 Budget Estimate." Now, my colleague explained why they would have to be extended because, at the beginning of a project, they cannot truly price the project. But you're talking about a budget estimate. An estimate is supposed to be a close figure. It's estimated to cost this. So if it is estimated to cost this, you cannot add \$15m to that afterwards. That's not a small amount. If it is \$500,000, \$1m, something within reason or maybe \$2m, because unless it is additional scope of works that you're adding... **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** But it didn't say that, and it's not giving us enough information there, and that's not a little bit of money.

So that raised my, you know, attention. In the future, they need to be more... I mean, this, look, we are responsible to the people and we are not just, you know, suspecting anything, but we want to make sure that when they speak of these things, which are additions to what is already passed, it must have a proper explanation attached to it.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Trying to move on swiftly. It would have been interesting to know how much Ivan cost us. How much was the supplemental budgeted amount for Ivan? Even though I agree with my colleague Senator Joseph, the fact is that Hurricane Beryl was stronger and did more damage because I had the opportunity to visit two days later. I was there on the ground in Carriacou, along with some other business people and people who volunteered from the mosque. You wouldn't find many business people coming without electricity and water to sweat it out and distribute stuff, but they will give. They did give, and we were able to spend... We spent two days there and we were able to distribute to 450 homes very, very, very early in the game. **(Applause)**

So I would have liked to see a comparison with that budgeted amount back then. Because while Hurricane Ivan was not as strong as Beryl we have more infrastructure in the south so the dollar value would have been significant and to use that as a gauge to measure against this one, to say okay, of course, taking into consideration perhaps 20% to 30% inflation just to wrap our minds around this value as compared to that value. But I didn't have that information available, unfortunately.

When it comes to drilling, which is the Capital Expenditure, Geothermal Energy Development, I am very, very happy to see this. Because we have, it is no secret that our electricity costs the highest, if not the highest in the region, the second highest. It is very, very high.

Recently, in my trip to Guyana, we saw them investing in a \$750m natural gas plant, which will cut the electricity bills in half. Now, their land is seven feet below sea level, and they have had to, you know, significantly, maybe 20% of that is just their foundation cost. We have solid land in Grenada, and so we don't need that type of scale, 300 kilowatts of power. But, the point is that they are investing in making efforts, the Government is, to lower their energy cost.

When I see this, that our Government is having, is testing, is drilling to see what they have, in addition to what they said they were doing by saying they were investigating the opportunities for oil and gas, you know, it shows that they are probing and I would like to see that continue and I commend you for that. So keep it up. Where that is concerned,

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

very good. **(Applause)**

I would also like to make mention... You know, sometimes when you have people on the ground... We have two people on the ground. One in the Lower House and one in the Upper House, and both of them spoke today, well, one of them spoke today. And the Senator who spoke today spoke of his experience. Of course, they're on opposite sides of the political fence, but if we read through the lines, we can maybe pick some of the things that are weakening and look to improve on them.

So he mentioned that vehicles came, but perhaps the vehicles are not being put to the best use, which could be looked into to see how they are being used and whether they are being used adequately. He mentioned concessions. That's an important one because we know that the Government is giving concessions. We've heard it. We know. But, are the concessions adequate? That also needs to be looked into on the ground.

And then he mentioned about the sporting fields which should be cleared as soon as possible. We understand that if you have garbage everywhere... I've seen it. I was there, actually. I passed him on the road when I was there two days after the hurricane. Right. I've seen the devastation in the garbage first hand, it's so much, so obviously the first clear space you have, you want to kind of start to neaten up the areas because there are so many different areas to neaten up. But to clear them out as soon as possible, because it is a means of relief for youth to be able to get back to some sense of normalcy. So those are three points that I took from what he said that I would, you know, advise you to look into.

There's something that was mentioned to me by a farmer. Many of you know me, maybe, I am also a registered farmer, probably not very good at it, but that's where my mom's side of the family comes from, that side of the island. And somebody recently mentioned to me, "A sponsor, a Spice Tree Programme", maybe you can call it "Spice It Up", in collaboration with the GHTA that the hotel sector and at the airport we can use Beryl to raise awareness to get some additional support from visiting tourists in the hotels and the tourists that are arriving. Perhaps, we can ask them for a contribution of US\$10 per tree so that we can replant our spices, so that it does not fall only on the Government.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

The fact is, Grenada is the Isle of Spice. We have no choice but to replant and to replant quickly. Many of our farmers are older, and I have heard some of them say, "Well, I planted back after Ivan and now I'll lose a lot, and I don't know if I am going back into that again". So even if they were to get the money, they need to be monitored to make sure the labour is also there and the plants are there to ensure that they do plant back, because once they plant back, they will look after it. When you look at your land and you see that you've lost more than 100, 200 trees, it does... You know, you sit down and you wonder where to start. So that's an idea I just wanted to share for whatever it is worth.

And finally, I promised to be short. Two more. There is another \$15m for the reconstruction of 200 homes on mainland Grenada, where they speak about \$50,000 for each home. There's the kind of detail I like to see because then I could see how many homes are being affected and how much money is going to be spent. So that \$15m, you explained that.

But, then there's another one which speaks to, and mind you, it's right below Vote 30, it speaks to \$4m, which is to be spent on a Housing Support Programme. Well, how is that different from the \$15m from above? Isn't that housing support on mainland Grenada? **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Separate programmes? Okay, but separate programmes for the same thing? Okay, so then it should be... You know... I just wondered why it was separate, but if it's a separate programme, then I understand. But the wording says that it is to address the same issue, so I just want to make a mention of that.

And finally, I would like to commend the Government and the private sector for the recognition that they have given to our athletes and the welcome that they give to them **(applause)** to treat them with honour as our national heroes, rightfully so. They really felt... You could have seen by their reactions how they felt, and it makes all of us, whether you are at home or in the diaspora, and you see that your own when they come back, and they've done so well, and they achieve, and you see them happy, you feel as if you won something too. So I want to commend them on that. A job well done, keep it up. You know, you're doing some good things. There are some areas you will always have

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

to take some criticism to improve in some areas, but generally, we support, and I support the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Rahaman, for the content and for your time usage, and I offer the floor to Senator David Andrew. Senator Andrew.

Sen. the Hon. David Andrew: Thank you, Madam President. Now, I rise to support the Supplementary Appropriation as presented by the Leader of Government's Business and further to commend the Government and its finance team for what I will term as a very "responsive Supplementary Budget".

All sectors have been appropriately touched, budgeted for, allocated for, and a stimulus provided for. Our farmers and fish folks, there's provision for them, notwithstanding the questions about the need for detail, we acknowledge, but that's been provided for. There has been provision made for housing. There has been provision for the social sector, for education, for infrastructure, our athletes...

And even before I say our athletes, I was happy to hear in particular that the Mt. Sealy Bridge and the Marquis Bridge are being considered as well. It's a very important bridge in the network of roads across the eastern district, and we've been making lots of clamour about it. So to see it being considered, whether it's for conceptual designs or initial works, I'm happy to see that happen. Our athletes being featured for rewards and for celebration, all of these things were catered for in this Supplementary Appropriation, and I think it's very well placed.

But before I go on, Madam President, to talk a little bit and give some explanations as to the need for the appropriation in relation to Vote 40, the Ministry of Education, well it says Youth, Sport and Culture as well, I just want to rebut a few things and talk about a few statements that were made on the "Other Side", that I think serve probably as good political statements, good politicking, but sought to really and truly mislead the people. I am not quite happy about that.

So, Madam President, I start with one of the statements made by the Leader of

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Opposition Business, Senator Cox, when he pointed out and lamented that this Supplementary Budget, although some people talked about it being driven by Beryl, only had about 30%, from his calculations of it, towards Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Madam President, my calculation tells me that using his calculation, that reflects approximately \$81m of the appropriation to be spent between now and December. He later acknowledged, and we all do acknowledge, that any recovery process is not a three-month or four-month period; it's an ongoing process.

So if... I mean, we can talk about population differences and sizes, we can compare the population in St. Patrick and in the northern part of the country, compared to the population in Carriacou. We can talk about the number of different things that we can compare. But let those go. Just saying, we are talking about \$81m, which reflects that 30% and is to be spent in that period of time to the end of the year, and this process is ongoing. So a lot more will be spent, and the impression must not be conveyed that this is the sum total of what's going to be allocated towards the recovery effort in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)**

I want to move to the second idea. Quite a bit was said about the Molinere Road Project and the fact that there is a request for an appropriation of \$12m, where the original project was \$9m, and now it is \$21m. Well, I could appreciate that it is significant enough when a project costs \$9m initially, and now you're hearing a few years later that you need \$12m to complete the project. But, there are reasonable explanations that were given prior about the need to excavate and the need to redo the designs. So it's not a case where there are no explanations given. Contrary to what it might sound like, as if it's just woeful misappropriation and careless calculations. That's not the issue, and it must not be conveyed from this Honourable House to try or to attempt to confuse or mislead our listening population. **(Applause)**

Further, Madam President, what concerned me even more was that they linked those sums, and the \$21m, then calculated, and pointed to a lack of leadership. Senator Cox belaboured that. It pointed to leadership and the lack of leadership. I mean, if that was what was said, I quickly remember, a decade plus ago, you see, when we had over

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

US\$80m that was drawn down and Grenadians have nothing to show for it, under the former Administration, not a thing to show for it. US\$80m is approximately EC\$48m, thereabout.

We're talking about Mt. Hartman, and we can cite other projects where millions of dollars were used, were guaranteed, were drawn down on, were spent, and Grenadians have nothing to show for it. And we are comparing that with an important piece of road infrastructure that we have reasons. We have explanations as to why it needed to have the cost increase; change in design, the slippage that wasn't anticipated, all of these things brought to the Honourable House, and yet you compare that to a lack of leadership. So I wonder, when US\$ 80m went up in smoke with nothing to show for it, what do you see of the leadership that you subscribe to? **(Applause)** And we can call a lot of the other things there.

I move along, Madam President. And there's a statement that was made, again, by the Leader of Opposition Business that the representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs indicated that everybody would get support, and he was looking to see everybody get support, and not everybody is getting support. Again, that is misleading. Because the truth and the facts are, there are provisions that benefit every person, Madam President, across the tri-island state. The free barrel, everybody benefits once they apply, for housing. There are tax relief measures on all rebuilding materials. The VAT is relieved. Anything that is being imported on a personal scale for your own recovery, as declared, is exempt from tax. So all these measures are open to "*tout moun bagay*", everybody stands to benefit.

To give the impression that because the MP made statements that he made, not everybody was benefiting, and it was reflecting deception on the part of the Government, is a suggestion that I refute and refuse to accept in this Honourable House. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator) (Laughter)** I will not go to the next step. I will save the withdrawal for another time. We're better than that, brother. All right.

So, Madam President, I refer to another misinterpretation. I happened to be on a visit to Petite Martinique with the Prime Minister a couple of days after the passage of

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Hurricane Beryl. We went in the rain with the Prime Minister to some of the households, and we went into some of the homes of the same elderly. So I heard it being talked about, no elderly in Petite Martinique and the seniors are gone.

But, when we got there, the option was put to those people while we walked into their premises if they would want to be transferred and move to Grenada for safekeeping. So those who have come have come at our cost. Yes, you see it reflected in the expenses here, but it was their choice. They were willing. They wanted it, and life comes before things. People first; things after. So to suggest that there's something problematic about having moved them is to fail to recognise that we have moved to preserve the interests of life and the well-being of our citizens of Petite Martinique. **(Applause)**

Madam President, a suggestion was made for the Disaster Management Plan, and I think Senator Douglas referred to where the plan is; there is a need for the National Disaster Plan. Some calls were made for that. I want to point out that we have just gone past two years in office.

The NADMA we met... We want to commend the officers who are significant voluntary workers. So we meet a NADMA that we talk about that is supposed to have been in existence for all the years prior to our getting into office that is primarily resource through volunteerism without adequate resourcing, supposed to have come through Ivan and all of these other natural disasters that Members of the "Other Side" claimed they have learned so much from and now that we have a disaster 20 years later we still don't have a structure, a seriously resourced structure to treat with those resources. Where is the storeroom? What were the warehouse facilities and the stockpile of material?

When the hurricane came, I personally went across St. Andrew South East, and there were literally no supplies. We hadn't experienced that before. It's our first experience, but the "Other Side" says we've been there, call us, we've done that before. We've been there and we've done that. But what have you left for us with all the experience you've been there with?

I have a problem with that, but I guarantee you the NADMA we met is not going to be the NADMA we leave. We are going to enhance it, strengthen it, **(applause)** and

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

make it better to treat with disasters. It is for that reason that I commend the Prime Minister for his judgment in speedily responding to acquire vehicles to strengthen the capacity of NADMA to respond in such times.

Madam President, I want to speak of one issue here. I think it was raised by Senator Neilon Franklyn when he drew attention to page 27 in the Mid-term Report, and he referenced table five, the Central Government's Estimated 2024 Fiscal Performance. And he asked a very pertinent question, but I think the question, if not carefully understood, could mislead. You see this table says, "Estimated 2024 Fiscal Performance". So, the question was asked, "If Total Revenue and Grants were \$1,404.1m and the Budget was \$1,321.4m and there is a Variance of \$82.7m, in other words, there seems to be a surplus", according to his paraphrasing there was a surplus there, "Why then are we asking for a supplemental of \$2.69m and not this amount, less, this \$82.7m less", that was the question.

The answer is simple: these figures reflect the projection, the estimated projection for all of 2024. We have not gone through all of 2024 yet, and at the time when those... That's the Mid-term Review. So it doesn't say that the money is in hand. It doesn't say... It says, if we continue the way we are going, this is what it's likely to be.

Further, let me read the end, Madam President, of that very line, the end of page 27. It says, "Based on the actual outturns up to June and other assumptions, Grenada's fiscal performance for the full year 2024 shows a notable divergence from the budgeted expectations in Table five". It says, "Total Revenue and Grants are estimated at \$1,404.1m, which is 6.3% higher than the EC\$ \$82.7m budgeted amount of \$1,321.4m. This increase is primarily due to higher-than-expected collections in non-tax revenue, particularly in the Investment Migration Agency revenues, which exceeded the budget by a significant margin of 42.0%". Right? I just wanted to point that out, so it's not an actual figure, it's projected. It's not reflective of savings because it's just an estimated figure.

The final thing I want to talk about before I talk about education, Madam President, is that quite a bit of talk was made about education and concerns about reopening school, and when school would reopen. Of course, in my early interactions, we aimed to reopen

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

as soon as possible, and the soonest possible was the 2nd of September. But even when though discussions were had in consultation with stakeholders in Carriacou and Petite Martinique, we made it clear that we are aiming and that we are fully cognisant that it might not be possible.

We learned since we were in kindergarten to aim for the sky, in case you miss, you fall in a cloud, in case you aim for a cloud and you miss, you fall on a tree top, but if you aim for a low branch and you fall, you fall on the ground. So I don't think there is anything wrong, Madam President, and Honourable House, in having projected and aimed for the reopening of schools in September. It may not have been practical, but it's something to work towards.

It gave a sense of urgency to treat matters, to process things, to do stuff and even now, realistically enough, that before the reopening of school, we can come to the nation and say there is going to be a delay. We still haven't said how long the delay is going to be. We said in the first instance, two weeks, but we are going to look, we are going to monitor the recovery process and the reinstallation of all the utilities necessary to function, and we'll advise accordingly. And in my mind, there is absolutely nothing wrong with that.

We will continue to do that. We are in continuous collaboration with education officials in Carriacou with all main departments, and I'm quite confident. We are working with contractors. In fact, some work has started on some of the main schools, Hillsborough and Bishops. Some have not started as quickly as we wanted them to, for all the estimates and all of that, and some of those things created delays that we wanted to avoid, but they are always options that we are exploring, and we are going to start much sooner than it took under Ivan. I can tell you that.

So, to create the impression that we are in some kind of crisis and we should call and throw up our hands and say, "Well, help us here, we have lost our way", that is nothing near the truth. Why is there a need to carry on historically as if we've lost sight of something in education in relation to the reopening of schools in Carriacou? I don't see it. I don't understand it, and as Minister, I feel quite comfortable that we're heading in a soundly footed direction. **(Applause)**

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Madam President, I move quickly to talk about the appropriation under Vote 40 simply because it included Youth and Sport. Although it was spoken about, I want to pause and commend the performances of our Olympians in the Paris 2024 Olympics. They have done us proud (**applause**), and we can again, we can't command them enough.

And so any amount of spending that this Appropriation begs in support of those athletes, although some of it is already spent, and to reward them, can't be enough. (**Inaudible comment by a Senator**) Absolutely sure! (**Inaudible comment by a Senator**) Absolutely! Well, that's why we are making it known publicly, and that's why we know that some people who were promised things before came to us and said they never got it (**applause**), but we are going to deliver.

And the Honourable Senator, Leader of Opposition Business on the "Other Side" was quite correct. We have grown custom to the phrase as is representative of our operation, "Promise made, promised kept", (**applause**) and he is catching on to it too, so that's good, so that's good.

Madam President, I want to talk briefly... In the Supplementary, there is a request for close to, I think just over half a million dollars for TAMCC, and that's in keeping with the Government's approval of increases for TAMCC staff. At the time, of course, that wasn't budgeted; we've since paid out some, but we learned that there was a calculation shortage that we've had to treat with, and so that is now being reflected here. But we are committed to taking care of our workers. We are committed. We said we were going to do it and despite the shortfall based on calculation we are going to do it and hence it is in this Appropriation because we are committed as a Government to treating labour, to treating our workers fairly, rightly and giving them what we believe we have agreed with them to get and so we do that.

Madam President, there is in that Vote 40 Appropriation an increase in subvention from \$75,000 to \$100,000 for NEWLO, the New Life Organisation. Now NEWLO, as we know, is one of our leading skill institutions. Since the announcement of the free tuition policy and the Government's support there, they have more than doubled their intake.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

(Applause) They have more than doubled their intake, and that speaks to success in getting more students enrolled in the necessary skills. That puts a demand on them for more teachers, more instructors and in some cases, probably for different kinds of facilities and resources. And so we are happy as a Government to respond to that kind of challenge. That's a challenge of growth. That's a challenge of expansion, and so we are happy to support that, and that is reflected in this Appropriation, and I'm happy to see that there.

Madam President, in Vote 40's Appropriation, there is a \$1,500,000 support for the construction of a new school for the St. George's SDA Primary. Now, here is a religious organisation. This organisation came to the Government and said, "Please, we've been raising funds. We have the majority of the money to build a new school. The facilities we have are inadequate. We have an excellent school, and most people will be aware of that. We want to build a new facility, and we'll be happy if you help us. We are asking you to help us with this shortfall". They raised funds, and they have sponsors. They came to us, met with us, and we felt we had no choice but to help an institution like that that is trying to help itself as a faith-based organisation, and we felt we could meet that gap. That is the figure that is being reflected there. **(Applause)** Of course, that wasn't in the budget when we passed the budget last year.

Madam President, I moved to the Special Support Package for students of Carriacou and Petite Martinique attending TAMCC and NEWLO on the mainland. Now, we did have some engagement with students and the education officials in Carriacou, and I think many of them... Many of them felt they were... Many of the educational officials, in particular, felt they were not willing to come to the mainland to do TAMCC. So, we brainstormed about a blended approach. We brainstormed about using a room in one of the schools to do lectures. But when we looked at it carefully, we still realised that there are some serious limitations.

One of the utility companies remains completely down still, and if we're going to do a blended approach where lectures are streamed from the main campus, that's going to be challenging if the Wi-Fi systems are not all up. And so we've decided... In fact,

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

several parents have privately messaged different ones of us asking what support can be had for persons who are interested in coming to the main campus of TAMCC on the mainland.

And so the Government has put together a one-year support package for students from Carriacou and Petite Martinique, I'm sure you're happy to hear that, a one-year support package for students from Carriacou and Petite Martinique who want to come to TAMCC or NEWLO on the mainland. That package will include accommodation, transportation and some food allowance. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Right? Somebody is asking what about the existing? I am waiting on the data to tell us, but for now, we're talking about students who want to come to TAMCC. We don't want their educational journey to be disrupted. I mean most people who started already, probably started had a plan, although this plan could be affected. So we are prepared to look at it, look at the numbers and respond appropriately.

But this package is available. We've done our initial work, and it tells us there are about 30 plus close to 40 persons who were pursuing or prepared to pursue TAMCC studies at the Campus in Carriacou. How many of them are prepared to come to the mainland? We don't know just yet. We are still working with educational officials to fine-tune those, but out of that pool, this package of support is available for one year.

Additionally, for the persons in Carriacou and Petite Martinique who were accepted or who are being accepted into universities, University of the West Indies campuses or even SGU this semester, this semester we want to offer a similar one-year support package.

You see, Madam President, we understand how important education is as a Government, and we know that the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique have suffered in many ways more immensely than most of the rest of us on the island in terms of the passage of Hurricane Beryl.

We don't want to confine our students who are interested in upgrading themselves to staying home and not being able to continue their educational journey. And it is for that reason that those students, too, we know we have at least four already, based on the

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

numbers coming to us, it probably can be, when we consider those who may be there already, it can be another four, maybe. We don't know the final figures yet, but we don't anticipate it's going to be outrageous.

We are offering a one-year support package, where we pay the rest of the fees that they would have had to pay, be it at SGU. We pay the additional 10% and support them, so that the parents, the father who probably was a fisherman and his boat is out of commission, probably no longer has to stress and wonder that if he has to take his child away from St. George's University or if he has to foil that plan to send his child to Cave Hill or Mona.

And so, we have that plan, Madam President. Having said those things, these are the critical elements that inform the almost \$10m appropriation request under Vote 40 – Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. And so, having said that, Madam President, I commend this Appropriation Budget to this House. I offer my first support, and I covet the support of all of my other colleagues on “This Side” and the “Other Side”. Thank you very much. **(Applause)** I didn't do too badly.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Andrew. And I offer the floor to Senator André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Madam President. And for the record, it is correct to state that the Supplementary Budget is not anything new, and it's normal, and I don't think that that's the main focus. When we review the supplementary budget, we can't help but also make a request for consideration that we can be given some more specifics, even some for comparative purposes.

So, for instance, the explanation given by my colleague Senator David is that whatever savings mid-year is a projection, because the year has not ended yet, obviously, but also, the Supplementary Budget is a projection. Yes? So what we are saying is that it will be good to have comparative figures to know where we reach, where we reach, where we reach. **(Applause)** That will help. When we did the review at our office, I'm

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

now speaking here, that was one of the things. In speaking to some of my colleagues, that was just one of the observations.

Basically, I want to start here. Give me a ... I want to manage my time. I have this here. I know I have an hour, but I want to stay kind of within the... Yes. Okay. As representing workers and the working class people, whether unionised or not, I wish to focus on what I call the human side of things to start. And that is why I noted quite clearly that the Leader of Government's Business, and correctly so, identified with expressing his sympathy, empathy with the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique and the northern part of Grenada, based on the impact of Hurricane Beryl, and that is well placed. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that I'm offering a word of advice, if I may, to ourselves as people with responsibilities, that regardless of the challenges we face, we often have to think twice.

Social media, as well as, as much as it is a useful tool for communicating, we have to be careful because while we empathise with the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, it does not help when our leaders make comments that will single out our public officers, like teachers and public officers, and indicate that their salaries are still running and they are on social media making noise for water, which implies that if there was an opportunity to cut their pay, it would be done, because they are not using their pay to get water.

I mean it's a simplified inference, but it is important. You see, it's important for me to spend time on this because it can affect the morale of people. **(Applause)** And it is important, colleagues, that even if we have a particular feeling, we have to be sensitive. We have to be sensitive. As an advice to my colleagues on the "Other Side", my colleagues on "This Side", to my right in terms of the party politics may not like this, but I'm reminding my colleagues on the "Other Side", that a few years ago, a political leader of your party may have suffered a fate in Carriacou with the comment about the free barrel mentality.

I'm placing this on record because it deals with the human feeling. As the Workers Representative that's... At the end of the day, people cannot use their political cards to

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

get assistance at the supermarkets from Beryl. Therefore, it's about bread and butter, and in the instance of Carriacou, it is about calling people to work together.

It is also important for us to note that, with the spending of our resources, we need to make sure that we use our money wisely. I heard a lot of emphasis being placed on the road, and that's good. Take, for instance, True Blue. I was very pleased to see the amount of work that was done on the True Blue Road. As a matter of fact, it was closed to traffic, the road was done at night, but at what cost? I am seeing the road being constantly dug up. The road is being constantly dug up, and that will be an additional cost for us. And I am not sure if it was done just because SGU contributes 20-something per cent to our GDP.

What I do know is that the 47th or 46th Heads of Government opening took place at SGU, and the work appeared to have been rushed in order to have that road, so that our dignitaries and others, the media, can see a good road. But now, at the speed that we did it, we are digging up the road. All I'm saying, colleagues, is that with our scarce resources, let us ensure that we do work properly. **(Applause)** Let us do work properly.

I express solidarity, sympathy, and empathy with the people of Carriacou, Petite Martinique and the northern part of Grenada. I recognise and pay tribute and salute the workers who have laboured day and night, and in many instances, themselves being impacted negatively by Hurricane Beryl. I have spoken to colleagues who have been out in the trenches while they are not sure what is happening to their families at home, in many cases, with young children, but having to restore the utility services that are very much needed. I salute them: GRENLEC workers, NAWASA workers, Solid Waste workers and all the other workers who have done that and continue to do that.

The regional workers who certainly dropped everything and made themselves available. These are part of the working class, and at all instances in history, it is the workers who are always at the forefront. We also need to recognise our police officers, who have been keeping the peace, doing the security work even in circumstances that are not favourable to them. **(Applause)**

I could have started over, I would have started over by mentioning the following:

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

Kirani James finished about two and a half hours ago in second place in the Rome, Italy Diamond League. **(Applause)** I think we need to be very grateful for that. Right?

(Inaudible comment by a Senator)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I think 44 point something. The one who came first did it in 43.99. Yes, almost 44.

(Inaudible comment by a Senator)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes. Very, very commendable. And what these things do, colleagues, it spurs us on, assists us, and tells us we can continue despite the challenges that have been on many. As we are on this, I wish to commend the Administration for their continued recognition and the practical recognition of the athletes coming out of the Paris Olympics. That must be commended. **(Applause)** For their recognition of Coach Phillip, which has been long overdue. **(Applause)**

Coach Phillip is one who has continuously carried a number of our athletes, and he has not been recognised correctly. I'm very pleased that he has eventually gotten a diplomatic passport. **(Applause)** Because many times, when travelling with our athletes that we have been praising, when he reaches that counter, that immigration counter, the athletes are able to go through, and he has to fight up.

I commend that, but at the same time, I'm asking for the following. As much as I'm pleased with the recognition and the fact that he was given a few thousand US dollars, I still do not think it has been enough. Given the fact... And hear me. I think he got US\$20,000...

(Inaudible comment by a Senator)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: No, not... In comparison. No, hear me.

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

(Inaudible comment by a Senator)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes, you see, because everything is relative. Everything is relative. I mean, our athletes got US\$100,000, a hundred and something thousand, and that's good. But in comparison to, let us say, other international athletes, that's small, but for us, it's a lot. So I'm saying everything is relative. So when I say, given the contribution that that coach has made, and I'm very pleased that at least US\$20,000 or US\$25,000 is more than nothing. But I'm saying in value with his contribution, he has contributed, right, to our high-flying athletes.

So I'm not condemning, colleagues, what he has given. I would really want to make this clear. But I sat there and was very pleased that he had gotten something, it dawned on me that we needed to... and I'm saying probably US\$75,000. That's what my mind crossed. Yes? US\$75,000.

(Inaudible comment by a Senator)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes. **(Laughter)** I also think... No, I want to be clear on this, because we have to place value. We have to place value. We negotiate salaries for workers because we think... I also think that next time around, we can review, because each of the athletes who made it to the Olympics, I know, has been recognised, but I also think... It is 5,000 that was given to those who did not place? I also think that, that should be more, because to reach to the Olympic, you have to qualify. And you are qualifying with a particular time that is world standard. And therefore, in terms of the value, we have recognised what has been done. So I'm not diminishing that. But I'm placing it on the table for consideration and to salute our athletes.

If I come now... Very quickly. As I said, a lot of contributions have been made, so I would not go into much detail. I just wanted to highlight these. If I come now to the Supplementary Budget, as I said, I would not go into much detail, but I would just highlight some of the observations. On the issue of Vote 16 – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trading

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

and Export Development, we recognise that the Grenada London Office would be relocated as a concern for occupational safety and health issues, and that is commendable.

But I had an experience this morning. I went to the Ministry of Labour yesterday. It was yesterday because I was here first thing, and I entered the Ministry of Social Development, and I was hoping that our Minister for Social Development would be here, because I'm concerned about her, the other staff, and the workers' health. Once I walked into that office, you could have smelled the change in the atmosphere. My nostrils burned, and the office felt abandoned. It's not abandoned.

They are doing repair work there and I know the same thing. I've heard that the same thing happened at the Ministry of Education and other departments within the ministry. We need to ensure... I know work has been done, but I'm concerned about the state of that ministry. The scent. Yes? Workers that I've spoken to have complained about it, so I'm flagging this.

It would be useful at some stage, Vote 20, the Ministry of Finance, support for business reactivation. So, if there could have been some more details. Some of the hotels, for instance... So, for instance, in the northern part of the island, some of the hotels, I think, let me say a few of the hotels have been identified. Yes. So I back off on this. But the concern that we have is whether or not \$25m can be spent in the remaining three or four months. We can't answer this question because we can't say what was spent in terms of what was budgeted for the start of the year to now.

Under Vote 26, we have also been faced with not being able to make comparisons as to where we are, in terms of actuals, because we are now in August. So, if we are doing from January to June, we ought to be in a position where we can have some actuals to be able to determine what has to be done for the rest of the year.

Vote 29. We recognise that MIT is now like the major Ministry of Works, and a word of advice, observation, or caution. We sat in this Parliament, whether we individually agreed or not, but the Senate passed the amendments which move the, in terms of being able to allocate contracts. It was moved, I think, from 15,000 to 100,000, where you do

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

not have to do a tendering. Colleagues, even if you had moved it 100,000, because that has been done, it is necessary to ensure, in our view, that you just do not hand out contracts to individuals just so. It is important to get at least three. So, you don't necessarily have to tender. It's not tendering. You're looking for bill heads, and you're looking to see what's best. Normal financial or prudential financial management, even in small workplaces, will have you seeking quotes from two or three different people.

I'm placing this on the table because we are on the ground. We represent workers. We are on the ground. When we passed this here, I never thought that we would have to be giving consideration as to whether or not 100,000 or less is just given by identifying whether or not a civil servant, a public officer, or someone has the authority to make a decision unilaterally. So, I'm making and flagging this. I guess a response can be given to us as to whether or not our concerns are misplaced, but we have to manage our resources.

Vote 26. This has been spoken about, but I just need to flag it still. \$2m to deal with Hurricane Beryl in terms of response to livelihood. "Intended use – Livelihood and recovery support for SAEP." That is under the... It says, "Intended use". Under the rationale, it says, "To support damage assessment and institutional arrangements to develop and implement the Hurricane Beryl Economic and Social Recovery plan". So I don't know if it's a style of language, but there seem to be two different... One is the intended use and the rationale. There seems to be a mismatch there.

Vote 29—that has been spoken about, but I'm just highlighting it. \$15m for 200 homes at \$50,000 each—that came up to \$10m. We don't know what will happen to the other \$5m. And I'm saying that there are all kinds of talk on the outside, so we have to be careful. There are talks on the ground. We have to be careful. We are sitting in this House.

The \$15m for Carriacou did not give any specific breakdown. I'm hoping that this is not a sign that we may not have plans in place. In other words, we put \$15m there and... This is not questioning whether the money will be used for Carriacou. This is just saying that when we come to this House... You know, it's a point that we raised and we

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

have given a commitment to the best of my memory. When we came here with the \$15m, I think it was for independence, there were no line items. There were no line items. We raised this matter, and we're back here with a similar circumstance, where we are debating this matter without a breakdown. **(Applause)**

A general observation, as I try to speed up. A general observation is that there are too many instances in the budget for us where they were a significant underestimation. Yes? Significant underestimation. We know that you do not always get it right because the budget is an estimate. But it becomes a bit concerning when it should be closed, as my colleague from the business sector, the private sector, has indicated.

I go quickly now to the Mid-year Review Report. Just to pick out the following, page 5, under International Development. The following figures have been given for the global headline inflation for the following years: 6.8% for 2023. That's the global headline inflation: 2023 was 6.8%, 2024 so far was 5.9%, and 4.5% for 2025. That's in relation to inflation.

Now, because we import inflation... Grenada imports inflation. Yes? We are a consumer society; that's why, for the likes of us, when we sit at the negotiating table, we can't understand when the employers and government, in particular, are telling us that inflation is under 1.5% and 1%, et cetera, et cetera. Something just can't be right. You see, it normally comes out, you know. **(Laughter)** We do our research. We do our research at the supermarkets, but it comes. If we import inflation, are you saying we are doing better than what's happening, in terms of the average, globally, and so much better? Then it kills the argument of our importation of inflation.

However, when we see the overspending... Yes? There are a number of instances in the Supplementary Budget where we're overspending. He said it's because of the significant increase in cost, you know. It is accepted that food has increased the most, and the majority of our workers and most of us inside here, a higher percentage of our salary goes towards food and transport. I'm just highlighting this because even in the CARICOM Region for 2024, it has been said so far, estimated at 5.5% and 3.9%, ECCU, in terms of inflation, that's page 7. Right? And yet still in Grenada, we are saying, yes,

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

that it is minuscule. Yes.

4.1.5—Wholesale and Retail Trade. Page 17. It speaks about the high importation of food and other items by large hotels. This is an opportunity for us to work together with our colleague from the Ministry of Agriculture, to ensure that there is consistency so that we can have our large hotels **(inaudible comment by a Senator)** getting our local products. There are opportunities. **(Applause)** There are opportunities, and that's what we need to do.

Under manufacturing, page 19. I note that there was a significant increase in beverage and tobacco. Just noting that. Consumptions.

An important part again is in relation to unemployment. Page 22, that's 4.2, page 22, that's under the Mid-term Report. For 2023, it says, "Unemployment among men decreased significantly by 25%. In contrast, female unemployment increased by 8.2%". Therefore, these are indicators that must be used by all of us because we represent different interest groups and the state in particular, to focus our interventions.

There's no doubt when it comes to our learning institutions, there's a higher percentage of women, our female, womenfolk in the learning institutions. It is said that there is a high percentage of our menfolk liming on the blocks. However, what we are seeing here is that the unemployment rate for men has decreased significantly.

We need to do some intervention. We need to study these things, and not just speak about the figures, but we need to study them. They can be lessons there for us. If we do not diagnose the problem, we might be using the wrong treatment. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Treating amongst... In other words, the document is telling us this is not a projection. It seems that there is a significant decrease in unemployment among males. Now I know construction et cetera, et cetera, whatever form it took. **(Applause)**

I found that... The document under 4.4, page 28, Public Debt, spoke about the debt-to-GDP ratio, but it did not tell us... I'm interested to know what the state of our debt is, you know, has our public debt increased? In other words, you can have a reduction in terms of the ratio because a ratio compares one to the other. Yes. But we would like to

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

know what the state of our public debt is. The document did not tell us that; it just spoke about the debt-to-GDP ratio. **(Applause)**

We also need to recognise and compliment the decision makers for the steps taken in Carriacou to provide facilities to move the senior citizens from the Top Hill Home, in particular, to bring them to Grenada. The government needs to be complimented for that. **(Applause)** That was swiftly done, and to also make provision for the workers to be in Grenada to tend to the workers. And they were housed in a particular building in True Blue, and that must be, that must be commended.

You see, colleagues, these challenges present opportunities for us, and it is likely to get harder before it gets better. And that is why, as leaders, and especially on the "Government Side", you are tasked with the specific responsibility of addressing these issues. You don't have to take our advice. You don't have to take our advice, but you see, when we use social media and we highlight everything that we do right, which is commendable and that's okay, we cannot be surprised or have difficulty when there is an apparent shortcoming.

There will be a high level of expectation. There will be a high level of expectation. We are all in this together, in the Carriacou, Hurricane Beryl issue. The season is not yet over. The threat is not yet over, and therefore, we need to learn quickly. We need to see what systems we can put in place as we prepare for what is possible to come. Also, colleagues, the psychosocial aspect, the psychological aspect of the workers and people in Carriacou, not just the workers.

Hurricane Ivan, 20 years ago, has taught a number of us that even among the classes, the bourgeoisie class and those who may have, we are all impacted psychologically, as a matter of fact, many times, many times. I'm calling for the human aspect to take precedent in this period. Right? Even if we think that there are people who are in better positions to help themselves, what we need to do is to prioritise, have a means test, so we do not shut off people. Right? We do not make people feel that, boy, we have a difficulty in helping you. It is better to say, well, Madam President, I'm not able to help you first, because when I did an assessment of what you have, when I discussed

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

the matter with you, I recognise that the Leader of Government's Business is in, relatively, a worse off position than you. And therefore, I need to assist them first, but I may help you down the ... I'm not saying... this is just hypothetical. **(Laughter)**

Madam President: Senator Lewis, I saw that subtle reference. **(Laughter)**

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: No.

(Inaudible comment by a Senator)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Well documented. Yes. But yes. But it is important, as we address these matters, that people can see and understand what we are doing.

Madam President, given the commitment that we have given, in terms of helping to manage time. I went through this, and these are the comments that I would like to make. I wish everyone all the very best as we seek to cope with the challenges of Hurricane Beryl and its aftermath and to compliment all those who have assisted and continue to assist. Thank you very much, Madam President.

Madam President: Thank you, Senator Lewis, and I offer the floor to the Leader of Government's Business. Senator Adrian Thomas.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I think my colleagues have done a fantastic job in terms of rebutting some of the concerns and providing clarity that my colleagues and the "Other Side" were concerned about, so I don't have much to say.

However, I still just want to highlight, to bring some level of relaxation to my good friend on the "Other Side", Senator Norland Cox, on the whole question of the conditions of the loans and grants under the control and watch of the GDB. This organisation will

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Motions

be coming very soon to outline some of the conditions.

Obviously, if you want to be qualified for an event of that nature or to be assisted with that facility, you have to come to the table. And it's not everything you could outline in a budget debate as we go forward. I can say that this project and this assistance, basically, would not be handouts. It will be hands up. We want to assist people in a very sustainable way.

The “two barrels” are just part of the relief effort. It's just a small portion, and people have been calling for it, and we are responding in that manner. But we definitely know the distance it will go. It will not go that far, but however, we still believe it can assist in some way or the other.

Madam President, we have to appreciate the fact that, and I like the term that was used by Senator Noland Cox, after this event, it will be a new normal. Things would not continue in the way that they used to be. I know that when my brothers and sisters in Carriacou and Petite Martinique are contemplating on the way houses are being constructed and the expertise that they will need to guide them along that way.

I remember in 2022 or 2023, we were still assisting Grenadians to revamp their businesses affected by COVID-19. In 2019 and 2020. So the impact that was created by Hurricane Beryl will not go away completely in 2024 or 2025. It's a process and we're going to take our time, plan well and make sure that we do it properly. As I said in the beginning, we have to build it back better, we have to build it back bigger.

Madam President, the question was asked, and I think Senator David answered that question, in regards to our future plans for disaster management in this country. I want to state here quite clearly. Had we not taken NADMA seriously prior to the hurricane, we would have been worse off. **(Applause)** So I think their effort in terms of how they managed from the time this hurricane was pointing to Grenada, we were in the engine room guiding our nation. And I think NADMA did a fantastic job and it deserved a knock table for them. **(Applause)**

And finally, Madam President, I just want to make the point here that, and I know my good friend is not attempting in any way to throw cold water on our efforts to recognise

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

our good talent. But, I want to make the point that the coach, Paul Phillip, is a guy that we recognise. And we were not doing anything, in any way, to make him feel less than the others. US\$20,000 basically is one-fifth, and the policy speaks to that, one-fifth of what the athletes are getting, and that only goes to the, you have to be a Grenadian as a coach.

In the next Olympic or in the next game, because if you read the policy carefully, you'd realise in a year or two these guys could medal in one of the international games, and when they are back home, they will be entitled to the benefits of the policy. So it's not a one-off policy, it's not a one-off thing, that you would not see in the future again. It will be an ongoing thing. It's for the future generation, future coach, and I think we must commend the government for taking the initiative.

But it must also recognise that it was \$100,000 for gold, \$75,000 for silver and \$50,000 for bronze. When we sat at the committee meeting, under the guidance of our leader, we decided that it wasn't going to cut it, and we started from the bronze and went up. So the bronze US\$100,000, silver US\$130,000 and gold US\$150,000 now. That is what it stands at now, and the coach is one-fifth of whatever the athlete gets. I have no problem if we need to review, but that's what the policy is all about now and as we go forward. So I just wanted to state that on record.

But, Madam President, I want to thank my colleagues here and my colleagues on the "Other Side" for the contributions that they have made today. I think it was a fantastic debate, and I think the camaraderie that we are observing inside this House is a good example and a good sample for others to follow. I want to commend my colleagues on "Both Sides" of the House, for every one of you remaining here for the entire debate. **(Applause)** It's good. The nation is looking at that, and I think the nation will tap you all on your shoulders whenever they see you all in the community.

Madam President, this is fantastic, and I want to commend the Leader of the Opposition, Senator Norland Cox, for guiding his flock and keeping them **(applause)** in the House for the entire debate. **(Applause) (Laughter)** He must be commended. **(Laughter)** I think it's a good example and I think he has a bright future, Madam President,

Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's

Motions

(laughter) in being a prospective leader for the “Other Place”, at some other point in time.

(Laughter)

Madam President, it will be remiss of me also if I don't say a thank you to all the people who participated in Carnival 2024. It was a fantastic celebration. We have our ups and downs. We have our little problems to sort out, but I think the organisers, the participants, the people who patronise with us, the people who came to Grenada to visit us, I think we must all recognise the importance of their presence and we must acknowledge them for the fantastic celebration that has been put on in 2024, and we look forward to 2025 celebration.

I also want to commend the organisers and the people who celebrated Grenada Day in Toronto. It was a fantastic celebration, also. It was an opportunity for Grenada to put on show its culture, its food. The exhibition was fantastic. The participation of the people, the wearing of our colours in turn, is a good indication of what the people in the diaspora are doing to make sure that people come to Grenada, people come to our shorelines and see exactly what we have. So I think kudos to them out there.

And finally, Madam President, as I stand here today, last night I left my office and I was going home, and when I reached Westerhall, I heard about the sad passing of Mr. Rayanson Bullen, a very good gentleman. He was a male nurse many years ago, and he passed away. May his soul rest in peace. I want to express my condolences to his family and wish them all the best in this time of grief.

And, Madam President, with that, I now close this debate, and I ask the Members of the House to support and approve. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Madam President: Thank you, Senator. Honourable Members.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Bills: Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2024

Deputy Clerk: Item 15 – Bills.

Madam President: Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I beg to introduce the first reading of a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2024.

Deputy Clerk: A Bill which seeks to make provisions for the appropriation of an additional sum of EC\$269,598,086 to service the State of Grenada for the fiscal year 1st January to 31st December 2024, shortly entitled, Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2024.

Madam President: Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Orders of the Senate be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all its stages at this Sitting.

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Madam President: Leader of Government's Business.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

***Bills: Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2024
Adjournment***

Madam President: Clerk.

Deputy Clerk: A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2024.

Madam President: Leader of Government's Business.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Deputy Clerk: A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2024.

Item 16 – Public Business.

Item 17 – Adjournment.

Madam President: Leader of Government's Business.

Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: Madam President, I rise to move the Motion that this Honourable House be adjourned *sine die*.

Madam President: Thank you. As we come to the end, I'd like to say that this has been a historic meeting. I think this is intended to be our last Sitting until we meet again. I believe not in September, but in October, after the recess and the new Parliament will begin, unless there is reason to meet in September, I anticipate we will not meet. So we could look back at a full year capped by today's Sitting.

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Adjournment

I believe this has been a historic Supplemental Bill, because it takes us, as Senator Cox and others have said, to a new normal. First of all, it's in the context of our 50th Anniversary of Independence, and some money has been spent already, and some has not. It's also in the context, perhaps most importantly, of the post-Hurricane Beryl response of the nation to the trauma and loss that we have suffered from people and property.

And the Bill is also in the context of Grenada chairing CARICOM. We want to congratulate our Prime Minister on becoming Chair of CARICOM and to send him support, some of which is in this legislation. The passage of the Supplemental Appropriation Act is also in the context of Grenada being a double Olympic winner this year and we celebrate that, and we are happy to support it financially.

And of course, it's a year in which we have also had a Gun Amnesty, and a year in which we have raised the bar for the acquiring of formal education by persons under 18. So it's been a really historic year, a historic moment. We are proud of the work we've done, and I have a long list of suggestions that have come forth from you, distinguished Members, starting with the recommendation to make sure that our circulation of seven days in a timely manner takes place.

I believe it is all that juggling Senator Lewis that occurred with the rescheduling of the two Sittings as a result of Hurricane Beryl. I believe it's the first time it has occurred with us, and there is no intent to disrespect the House. I think all our regulations are taken quite seriously. All the other suggestions are there, the compliments and the solidarity. Most more than anything I believe that this Senate today has marked itself, by not only the call for a new methodology for doing work in Carriacou, but by extending extreme empathy and solidarity with our sisters and brothers who have been hit by Hurricane Beryl in Carriacou, Petite Martinique and in the northern star area, St. Patrick.

It has been historic also because we received one of our young Senators into our fold, and I ask you to give a round of applause again (**applause**) for being with us and coming to work with us. We hope that we will be gentle and supportive of you. And you said that the Bill is really an opportunity for us to go forward in a new way. It's a long-

**Sitting of the Senate
Held on Friday 30th August 2024
At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**

Adjournment

term development.... You said it gives long-term development a view and hope. And perhaps that's the best characterisation that we have received because when I did the math, the capital expenditure is eight and a half times that of the recurrent expenditure, and the capital expenditures certainly suggest permanence, resilience building, and sustainability. So you already beginning to be insightful and to give us a perspective of the future, consistent no doubt with your being a youth. So, thank you.

Gentlemen, ladies, Senators all, thank you for your support of the administration of the Senate. The Clerk and his team, and on your behalf, I thank them for the years of work of preparation and support. Let us go forward at the end of August and throughout September, as we wait for the reconvening of our Houses, let's rest and refresh and return ready to do God's work, which I think is the people's business. Travel safely and remain safely, whether you are in Carriacou, St. Patrick, St. David or elsewhere.

Please make time for our families. And once again, we congratulate the Government of Grenada. And those of you who are here as Cabinet members, we congratulate you for the work that has been done, in preparing us and passing us through Beryl and aiming to get us to a higher level as a small island developing state. We want to thank all Grenadians everywhere for being steady and steadfast, hopeful, visionary, committed and giving. We anticipate that that will continue whether you are living at home or in the diaspora, whether you're carrying a Grenadian passport or some other, thank you for your support and your solidarity.

Question put and agreed to.

The Sitting of the Senate adjourned sine die at 6:53 p.m.

PREPARED BY

HANSARD REPORTERS

Ms. Shanta Joseph

Ms. Akeda David

Ms. Leasha Francis

Ms. Jasmine Redhead

Ms. Jelissa Alleyne

EDITORS

Mr. Andrew Augustine (Clerk)

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