



GRENADA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

**THIRD SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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**SENATE**

TUESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2024

***Sitting of the Senate  
held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2024  
at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's***

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***Sitting of the Senate  
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***Attendance***

**PRESENT**

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

Senator the Honourable Adrian Thomas	Minister of Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture
Senator the Honourable David Evlyn Andrew	Minister of 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 of Legal Affairs, Labour and Consumer Affairs
Senator the Honourable Gloria Ann Thomas	Minister of Social & Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs (Social Security)
Senator the Honourable Dr. Myanna Charles	Opposition Member of the Senate
Senator the Honourable Dwight Hosford	Opposition Member of the Senate
Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis	Member of the Senate (Labour Rep.)
Senator the Honourable Salim Rahaman	Member of the Senate (Business Rep.)
Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair	Member of the Senate (Farmers Rep.)

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***Attendance***

**ABSENT**

Senator the Honourable Norland Cox

Opposition Member of the Senate  
(Deputy President)  
(Excuse tendered)

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***Prayers  
Minutes***

**The Sitting of the Senate began at 9:19 a.m.**

**(Senate Prayer was said)**

**Madam President:** Honourable Members, join me in prayer.

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

**Madam President:** Pray be seated. The Senate is convened.

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

**Madam President:** Honourable Leader of Government's Business. Senator, the Honourable Adrian Thomas, I correct myself. Thank you.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Good morning, Madam President, your team and the staff. Let me say good morning also to my colleagues and also my friends and comrades on the "Other Side" of the House. And I must say, officially, I mean, I'm just getting the chance to say welcome to Senator Myanna Charles. Welcome to the Senate, and I look forward to working with you and having a very good time in this Honourable House.

Madam President, I rise for the confirmation of the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Building, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Friday, August 30, 2024, to be taken as read.

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***Minutes***

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes taken as read.**

**(Sound of gavel)**

**Madam President:** Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I rise for the confirmation of the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Building, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Friday the 30th of August, 2024, be confirmed.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes confirmed.**

**(Sound of gavel)**

**Madam President:** Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I rise for the Minutes of the proceedings of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Third Session of the Eleventh Parliament of Grenada held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Friday the 4th of October, 2024 at 10 a.m., be taken as read.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes taken as read.**

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***Minutes***

**(Sound of gavel)**

**Madam President:** Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I rise for the confirmation of the Minutes of the proceedings of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Third Session of the Eleventh Parliament of Grenada held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Friday the 4th of October, 2024 at 10 a.m., be confirmed.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes confirmed.**

**(Sound of gavel)**

**Madam President:** Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise for the confirmation of the Minutes of the proceedings of the Special Joint Sitting to celebrate the life of His Excellency, the late Sir Daniel Williams, former Governor-General, held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Tuesday the 15th of October, 2024 at 10 a.m., be taken as read.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes taken as read.**

**(Sound of gavel)**

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Announcements***

**Madam President:** Honourable Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I rise for the confirmation of the Minutes of the proceedings of the Special Joint Sitting to celebrate the life of His Excellency, the late Sir Daniel Williams, former Governor-General, held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Tuesday the 15th of October, 2024 at 10 a.m., be confirmed.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes confirmed.**

**(Sound of gavel)**

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

Item 6 – Announcements by Madam President.

**Madam President:** Honourable Senators, again, a warm and pleasant good morning, and my apologies for the early mix-up of the Minutes. We are meeting on the eve of our annual Christmas celebrations, “the eve”, by 14 days (**laughter**) thereabout. It's possibly our last or penultimate meeting of the Senate, and this is not the time to look back comprehensively; we can certainly do that at the beginning of next year.

But since we last met, a number of activities have occurred, and it's important and, I think, critical for us to at least be collectively in the same space and understanding of some of the more important ones. I am certain many of you will speak about the number one item on our mind, which is the passage of Hurricane Beryl and what it did to the country as well as what it allowed the country, especially down here in Grenada, where

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we were least damaged to do, to rise to the occasion of this almost inexplicable environmental harm.

In the immediate passage of the hurricane, within hours, within days, within hours, really, our Executive and volunteers were in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. We first want to commend them for being so vigilant regarding the warnings and being so attentive regarding the immediate response. I'll come back to that.

But I also wish to note that at least one Senator who's in the room today told me that within two days, he and his organisation were on the ground in Carriacou, and he may speak to that.

But again, the leadership of the country, from among that leadership, was a very swift response. On my part, it took me five months. **(Laughter)** I am a bit ashamed to say it took five months to get to Carriacou, deliberately in some way because I did not want to go and drink water and look for shelter and so on, at a time when the country was unable to provide for all who wanted to be there and then the crush of life. But I did go to Carriacou and Petite Martinique last weekend, and I will circulate for you, through the Clerk, sometime later today, the report of that visit. Let me just take the opportunity again to do three things.

First, to repeat that the Prime Minister, NADMA, and national and international organisations have left a footprint of relief, reconstruction, and resuscitation of society, and certainly, from the Office of the President, we commend them.

Secondly, we'd like to say that the people themselves have risen to their own occasion, and we want to continue to applaud and encourage them. In this moment of trauma, they turned it into survival and resilience building.

And thirdly, I'd like to give you... And I should say that... The political leadership on the island, Minister Tevin Andrews and our own Senator Norland Cox, their names have been called to me when I was there and that, to me, is indicative of the fact of the work they did, in addition to whatever we know or saw in the media. So we can feel proud

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that our political leadership has been involved and leading as they should in this time of disaster.

My visit occurred, as I've already said, in the fifth month following the passage of Hurricane Beryl, which was, as we know, a category four storm when it passed and lingered over Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I understand the eye of the storm lingered for 30 minutes over there. Despite the passage of these hundred and thirty days, it was important for the President of the Senate to meet persons and to visit institutions which had suffered in the storm and to bring the ears, the eyes, the observation, concern and the solidarity of Parliament and parliamentary oversight of this wing of the State to these sister isles.

I did meet with the Member of Parliament for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs in his Parliamentary Office. Senator Cox was unavoidably off-island. I also met with a number of administrative staff, bureaucrats, technicians, leaders of organisations and the general public, school teachers, and schoolchildren.

And maybe two observations; the first is that we observed, what you all know, that the impact of the storm was massive, and the destruction still remains. Damage was widespread, and it was disruptive to all aspects of living, livelihood, operations of governance, and more. The natural environment and the habitat, built infrastructure, especially homes, office buildings, roads, water tanks, fishing boats, and motor vehicles, all still bear signs of destruction and damage and repair. People kept telling us that we would have seen worse had we come earlier, and that is true.

However, our second observation is that it's clear that the Government has led the return to normalcy. Shelters have been largely emptied, except we did find a small number of the elderly, the very poor and children in one shelter. I think the number moved from hundreds to, I think, 20 persons, and in the case of that shelter, one woman said she had gotten the materials to rebuild her house, but she hadn't had labour. And that was a refrain we heard a lot in Petite Martinique because apparently, apparently, we know that Petite Martinique is a fishing area, so **(laughter)** some of the fishermen said, we could fish, we can't, we don't really know too much about construction, and my biases came

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out. I thought every, every, every male knew a little bit about construction, but clearly, not enough, you know, for the rebuilding of homes.

We found also that homes were being rebuilt. There was a village in the Dumfries area that was being rebuilt, and we saw it there. In another place, Limlair, we saw houses being reconstructed. The Minister for Housing is clearly aware of that and could speak to it, but it was... I mean, people were really celebrating that they were getting a good house and so quickly. So that, again, was part of our observation of the build-back. There is a bounce back. There is a bounce back to normalcy and I think that speaks to the Carriacou spirit, the Grenada spirit.

We visited a school that was fully functioning; they were practising parang. We ate at a restaurant that was fully... You know... A three-course meal including my favourite, you know, a complex chocolate dessert (**laughter**) made onsite. We did see supermarkets in operation. We did see boats coming out onto the sea and, of course, homes with running water and electricity.

So our conclusion is that life is picking up and going forward amid the mountain, the mountain of continuing need. The garbage dumps have come down considerably, but they are still there, and houses—so many houses—are either without a roof or a temporary tarpaulin. So the work is far from done, but we do pay tribute to the efforts that have yielded in our actions on the part of the public.

And so, I encourage you, all of us to continue our work in the various ways that we are needed. I also want to encourage the Government, NADMA, and those agencies. We visited the NAWASA site and lots of organisations, which you will see in the report. I need not take your morning.

Morning, Senator. Thank you for coming. I neglected to say that you did send in an apology for your lateness, unavoidably, as you said. Thank you, Senator.

The second point I'd like to briefly discuss is Grenada's participation in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC), the 67th Session, which took place in Australia in the early part of November. As a region, as a CARICOM region, we contested

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two positions: the Chair and the Head of the Small Branches Unit. The Chair was contested by Barbados, and we fell one vote shy (**laughter**) one vote shy of securing the chairship of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Yes, it was bittersweet, but it did bring out a great CARICOM spirit. Our Speaker, Honourable Leo Cato, and I were there, and we did Grenada's part in fighting for CARICOM.

The other post that the region contested was the Chair of the Small Branches Association. Belize contested and won comfortably with a lot of work. Let me go back and say that the winner of the Chair was one of our regional allies, a physician from Zambia and we continue to work with the Africans.

Lastly, let me report on the recently concluded ParlAmericas session that was held in Trinidad and Tobago, from the 4th to the 6th of December. We've just returned. And it was a session that looked at the role of Parliament in ensuring the effective participation of women and men. The shorthand for it, you could say it was a session on gender leadership and the redefining of gender-sensitised Parliaments. I will circulate a summary because you can anticipate the Speaker and I will aim to implement the four basic principles of a gender-sensitive Parliament.

And one of the outcomes of the meeting was to clarify that when we speak about gender, a point I've been raising for years, we are not just speaking about women. In some context, I think even in our society, when we talk about gender, we say that it has something to do with women and let women handle it. Gender is a relationship. Gender is a learned and unlearned cultural set of norms. Gender is connected and not connected to sex. Gender is connected to socialisation, and so on and so on. And therefore, we will try to make the Parliament friendlier for men and women.

Honourable Senators, thank you for your time and I believe this is all that I'd like to report at this time. Thank you.

**Deputy Clerk:** Item 7 - Ministerial Statements.

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**Madam President:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. I pass the floor to Honourable Gloria Thomas, Senator. Minister. Champion.

**Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. Morning to colleagues on “Both Sides” of the House. It is my pleasure to be here this morning to just share with you a little bit of the achievements of the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs.

Madam President, 2024 has been a challenging year for us, but I can say we have risen to the occasion and continue to press on. My Ministry continues to deliver on programmes while responding to the social fallouts experienced by Hurricane Beryl. As the saying goes, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going”, and that is indeed what we're doing at the Ministry.

The Ministry of Social Development with the World Food Programme is in the process of implementing the Beryl Relief Income Support Programme (BRISP). The programme aims to provide income support to qualified households whose incomes were affected by Hurricane Beryl, especially in Carriacou and Petite Martinique and the Northern side of the island, namely Saint Patrick, Saint Mark, Saint John and part of Saint Andrew and this programme will be rolled out for six months. An assessment tool was developed to determine the socioeconomic situation of the household and then prioritise the households. This is being done to ensure that the most deserving households receive the benefits.

Factors of consideration include the socioeconomic situation of the household prior to Hurricane Beryl, the employment situation of adults, sets of employment, dependency ratio and assets owned and lost through Beryl. The Ministry benefited from the Hurricane Beryl Relief grant from the World Food Programme, which forms part of the Ministry's response. A grant of \$271,600 was received from the World Food Programme (WFP) to support immediate response efforts post-Beryl.

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***SEED Programme***

We currently have 7,725 beneficiaries on the programme, and that is households. This month, having received approval from the Appeals Committee, an additional 20 persons will be added.

***Cash Top-up***

Seed beneficiary households in Carriacou received a cash top-up of \$330. 394 beneficiary households benefited from a grant: 295 in Carriacou and 99 in Petite Martinique.

***The SEED ATM Card***

Madam President, I am elated to highlight the launch of the SEED ATM card in November this year, which was last month. The card will enable beneficiaries to receive cash transfers directly to their bank accounts. The card will allow ATM withdrawals at any Connex machine on the island. All charges associated with the transactions will be borne by the Government of Grenada. It will eliminate the need for beneficiaries to stand in long lines to receive their benefits and to help mitigate the challenges in disaster situations. The card is currently piloted by 60 beneficiaries throughout the island. The intention is to include more beneficiaries in January; after all the glitches are addressed, all beneficiaries will receive their card.

***Relocation of the Elderlies and Families***

The Top Hill Elderly Care Home was significantly damaged in the hurricane. As a result, the residents of the home were relocated to the mainland. Subsequent to their relocation, it was determined that the Ministry needed to expand its response to accommodate more of the elderly citizens, bearing in mind the high level of risk that they face. 51 elderlies were relocated to ten different locations on the island. Additionally, to date, six families, comprising 23 individuals, have been relocated to the mainland and accommodation and all needs are being met by the Ministry of Social Development.

The Ministry wishes to inform that the repairs and retrofitting of the Top Hill Home have been completed through the initiative of the Ministry in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Grenada. The Ministry is presently in the process of finalising arrangements to

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return the residents to Top Hill, back to Carriacou, to allow them to spend Christmas in their familiar settings.

***Psychosocial Response***

A 20-member psychosocial response team provided social support to Carriacou and Petite Martinique. The main objective is to promote psychosocial well-being after Beryl using various disaster mental health interventions to safeguard against post-disaster mental health issues. The intervention method used was psychological first-aid and trauma-informed care counselling. The Ministry of Social Development has established a partnership with UNICEF to support early childhood education. The unit in Carriacou and Petite Martinique was severely impacted by Hurricane Beryl. A grant of \$21,360 was given to expand the units reached and impact to benefit a greater number of children in need of essential care and support.

***Gender Agenda***

Madam President, this year marks a defining moment in our journey to foster a resilient, inclusive and gender-sensitive society in Grenada. The Division of Gender and Family Affairs, as part of the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs, has continued to uphold its mandate to advance gender equality through its robust national gender machinery. Last month, Grenada hosted the UN Women Steering Committee meeting for the Build Back Equal project. The meeting was co-chaired by UN Women Caribbean Representative Multi-Country Office, Tonni Brodber and yours truly, Minister for Gender Affairs. At that meeting, Grenada received the country report on the economic costs of violence study. The report revealed that violence against women and girls... The study was conducted in 2019, and the cost to Grenada is an alarming \$63.6m US. That is how much it costs the Government of Grenada to deal with Gender-Based Violence issues. At that meeting Grenada came in for high praise as leading on gender issues in the region. **(Applause)** Madam President, we'll continue to press on to ensure that Gender Based Violence is no longer a threat to anyone. As part of the development agenda, my Government took the decision to increase the staff of the division to facilitate improvement in our service delivery. Currently, the staff of the Division

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of Gender and Family Affairs include the Parenting Unit, 9 members; Gender-Based Violence Unit, 7 members; Gender Equality and Inclusion Unit; and the Men's Bureau, 6 members. All units are led by the Senior Programme Officer, who reflects enhanced organisational capacity. However, there is still a need to increase the capacity and efficiency of our operations. This should include the gender analysis, the gender analysts, GBV case responders, and technical officers with legal, climate-resilient, and project management capabilities.

***Implementation of Key Gender Projects***

Build back equal: 40% of the project has been implemented. The main focus of this project is to strengthen the capacity of the Government to integrate gender into policies, programmes, strategies and services to better reflect the needs, perspectives and interests of the most vulnerable groups, including women, girls, youth and persons living with disabilities.

The Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan has been revised and costed. Ongoing reforms are aligned with the revised and costed Gender Equality Policy Action Plan. A national Gender Equality Commission will be established and operationalised to monitor the action plan and facilitate gender-responsive policy. The Ministry is in the process of completing the National Disability Policy. The policy is being developed using a consultative approach, and the consultant now is currently in the process of finalising the report.

The Government, through the Ministry of Social Development, has requested and received support from the United Nation Fund Population for the development of a national population policy in its quest to create a modern, innovative, and productive economy in which Grenadians are fully equipped with the skills to compete in a dynamic global market.

***Awareness Campaign***

We recognise the importance of providing continuous training, public sensitisation, and psychosocial intervention in an effort to influence positive societal changes. In this regard, our national Gender Sensitisation Programme has been scaled up targeting

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leadership, public servants and community members to deepen awareness and drive action on gender equality. As part of our Gender-Based Violence Sensitisation initiative, GBV sessions were conducted with Primary and Secondary School students in St. Andrew. GBV awareness campaigns were also conducted in 17 secondary schools throughout the country. This intervention approach is necessary both in terms of addressing issues of our young people that they are already and serving as a prevention method to stop the perpetration of Gender-Based Violence in our society.

***Parenting***

The Parenting Unit continues to deliver intervention programmes like Spicy Parenting, Parental Sensitisation, etcetera.

***The Boys-to-Men Programme***

Through the men's desk, the first cycle of the Boys-to-Men Programme was completed.

***Project Stop and Think***

201 participants from high-risk communities graduated from the programme two weeks ago. **(Applause)** Behaviour Modification Specialist Doctor Neals Chitan and his team facilitated the training. This programme is a crime reduction intervention programme that aims to assist young people to get on and stay on a path of change and peace.

***Housing***

Our Ministry continues to provide housing assistance for citizens of the Nation. With the passage of Beryl, the housing needs became more acute; just over 100 houses were completed through the Social Housing Programme; 150 repairs were completed and 51 bathrooms were completed, in addition to the build back better houses. In Carriacou, 27 prefab houses were handed over to Grenada by the hands that serve from Trinidad. These homes will be outfitted with stoves, refrigerators, beds and chairs. The final touches are being done, like construction of the steps, so that the beneficiaries can occupy their homes. An additional 20 homes will be built **(Sound of Time Bell)** by another company in the coming weeks. One more moment, please. Project 500 is

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moving ahead. The well created some setbacks, but the project is in phase one, getting the model up for display.

**Community Development**

We see the commissioning of the community centres and the upgrade of five. Community Education sessions were held in various communities addressing topical issues. A number of skill developments were done: fashion designing in Saint David is ongoing, sewing and tailoring classes completed in Saint Andrew, and electrical installation is ongoing. A number of solar lights were installed in various communities, as well as the construction of by-roads all over the island.

Madam President, as a ministry, we continue to be at the fore of development to ensure that all our people enjoy the quality of life that is deserving of humans, a life of dignity, safety and respect.

And as I end, let me take this opportunity to wish everyone here a blessed season and a holy Christmas. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Today, the 10th of December, is the 76th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that all human beings are created in dignity. It is, therefore, quite welcome to hear your report, Senator Thomas, concerning the creation of dignity and rights in the social sector for Grenadian human beings. Thank you for your report. Senator St. Clair, Roderick St. Clair the independent Senator for Farmers and Fishers.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Madam President, and good morning to yourself and, of course, good morning to all the Members of this Chamber and, of course, those on the outside following and the staff and others on the premises.

I rise, Madam President, because I always like to get the reports from the Honourable Minister Gloria Thomas because it's a Ministry that can get left out in a mix of everything in the country. It's very critical the span of issues that are covered within

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the Ministry, Social Affairs, the fabric, no matter what we do, those are key issues, the gender issues and so on. So I want to commend, and I look forward to getting these sorts of updates because while we might be happy looking at whether roads fixing, whether tax collecting, whether police are doing their work, these other issues transcend the whole country.

So I've two particular comments, two sort of questions. One relates to the issue of the card because I know as we try to digitise and so on and most importantly the Member mentioned the issue of the glitches and, of course, we have to understand that issue of technology and notwithstanding, there might be certain things you cannot say based on security issues, I don't know, but it will be interesting to know what are some of the challenges that might have already being absorbed in any pilot. And, of course, we know things have to be fixed right, but we like to know if there are challenges or issues that immediately pop up, particularly with some of these folks; some might be disabled in different ways, and some may not at that because only on the weekend I went to the ATM and I saw two gentlemen there because one has to sort of help an elderly person using the ATM and so on. So how do they handle all of these issues, quality control issues, maybe you're go and use your card not only to go to an ATM but to go to the point of sale and buy stuff, how they manipulate that? What are some of the feedbacks?

And the other issue has to do with... Interestingly, you know, I'm not sure how a Minister gets to increase staff. I mean, I am not saying that it's not budgeted, but a lot of other Ministries, like my pet Ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture, seem to not know how to get it done. Again, maybe you need to teach them how to get it done because they have a serious staff deficiency there. You'll be interested to know how you've been able to find a way to get it done. That is my question. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Minister Thomas, I think we all want to know how you get such a big staff. **(Laughter)** You have the floor, Madam.

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**Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President, for allowing me. I just want to respond to Senator St. Clair's concerns. In terms of some of the glitches that we currently observe with the piloting: there is a delay some time to move forward with the transaction, and the bank might take back the card. The machine is pulling the card. So this is one of the things that we observe. We had a training and I think persons, beneficiaries, were really up and moving with it because some persons already had a card and they used the card. For those who are home bedridden and cannot move out, the same agent who used to be collecting for them and bringing it home is the same person who was trained and entrusted with their business.

So yes, little glitches. Yes, but I think, by and large, we're working well. The point-of-sale feature has not been activated, as yet, so later on, Co-op Bank says that they will gradually roll out that feature.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. Senator André Lewis, you have the floor, Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you, Madam President, and thanks for the report from Minister Thomas. I just wanted to make a request or bring to your attention the following as we continue to do work in Carriacou. And thanks for your report, Madam President, on your recent trip to Carriacou. And that is good. It is really great when someone of your stature, as the President of the Senate and someone for whom you have been known, is able to touch base in Carriacou. That is great.

Our union was in Carriacou last week and we spent about three to four days on the ground as we have been doing. And it is important that we bear in mind that as the work continues to be done, the aspect of psychosocial support and other support is really needed because we know as we try to build back better, it may take time, but we also have to find that balance between getting everything done perfectly and meeting the urgent need of the people.

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So, for instance, we came across a number of workers who have been trying to make it on their own because they are resilient people. But listening to them, you can hear their voices crackling sometimes because they are still in the tents. In some instances, the tents are providing challenges with the rain. I'm using this here to make an appeal to my colleagues, comrades, and everyone in Carriacou, Grenada, who has influence. I know my business colleague here will understand that and appreciate that.

It is something I've opposed, and Labour has opposed, especially during Ivan and after Ivan. It's the principle which says that maximising profit, even at the expense of people where things are scarce, exploits as much as possible. That's not how they word it, but that's what it means.

We came across a number of colleagues in Carriacou, who, for the like of us, we couldn't understand that even to get assistance with putting on a tarpaulin, people are charging and charging exorbitant amount of fees. I mean... Yes. So I am making that appeal to our colleagues in Carriacou and Grenadians and others who are going to Carriacou to help that people have tarpaulins and they are not able to get their tarpaulins on because people are charging \$900, \$1000; I've heard \$2,000 being called. Yes. As I said, we are on the ground, so I'm making that appeal because it is not easy. I mean, I've heard cases that I verily accept based on who I've heard it from, that there are elderly people who basically got ripped off because they needed to get a tarpaulin on.

I mean, we expect that as a number of people went to assist, the community will pull itself together and assist in times of this crisis. So I'm just drawing this out to our colleagues in Carriacou to say we're on the ground, and whoever else can lend a voice so that some conscience will take place to assist that.

And as we speak of International Day of Human Rights, Madam President, as you introduced it, our thoughts and concerns go out to the people of Haiti, to the people of Gaza, to the people of Sudan, and to the people all throughout the world (**applause**) right, who does not know what that means today. And I know we'll get to the Terrorism Bill when it all depends on who you fought against yesterday and today, you may no longer be a terrorist. Because of the upheaval in Syria, the "leaders" are the faces who were

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designated as terrorists a few years ago, but now they are being seen prominently in the Western media. I'll just leave that there for the time being.

But I just want to once again call on all of us to continue to give our colleagues in Carriacou and Petite Martinique whatever assistance we can. I know it is quite easy to forget as time passes, but let us undertake to do whatever we still can while the Government and other agencies continue to do as much as they can.

I would also request through you, Madam President, that I do not believe that this is something that is done at the leadership level. So let me make this point because I understand how these things do go, but many times your activists on the ground can bring in what I'll call "political considerations" into the need for assistance. So, we need to keep preaching to our people to take a humanitarian approach to this matter and let us put our internal or petty differences apart. Thank you very much, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank the Labour Senator, Senator André Lewis, for his observations and appeals and join with you in asking for continued vigilance and continued support. Thank you very much, Senator Lewis. Senator Quinc Britton, you have requested the floor, and you have it, sir.

**Sen. the Hon. Quinc Britton:** Thank you very much, Madam President. A pleasant morning to you and the Members of staff of Parliament and my colleagues on the "Opposite Side" as well as members in the gallery.

I stand this morning, Madam President, just to give a brief update from our ministry, Ministry of Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture. In Tourism, in recent times, we had Tourism Awareness Week and in that regard, Madam President, our staff at the ministry, together with Saint Patrick's Environmental and Community Tourism Organisation that's SPECTO, went on a clean-up campaign and cleaned up the Bathway Beach area, Levera area last week. So we did that. This is something that is very commendable, you know, we taking the day off just to, you know, provide that kind of assistance and so on, caring for the environment, Madam President.

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Just let me zero in a bit into Culture. The Division of Culture, Madam President, in recent times we hosted a visiting group from China. This was a Chinese group. It's a Wu Opera group that's in line with our ongoing cultural exchange initiative. The division hosted the group, as I said. They are from the Zhejiang province in the Eastern part of China, Shenyang in China. My Chinese is not to... **(Laughter)** ...So please forgive me for that.

It was a prestigious event that took place over the weekend of November 9 and 10, Madam President, with a concert that attracted a significant amount of attendees. The performance showcased traditional Chinese music, dance and theatre, offering the local community an opportunity to experience a unique aspect of Chinese culture. The event was well received and fostered a stronger cultural bond between our Nation and China. This initiative is our broader strategy to promote international cultural diplomacy and enhance cultural awareness.

Madam President, in most recent times, we had the Arts Festival finals. The Division of Culture they also organised and hosted the Arts Festival. The finals of the Arts Festival, an important bi-annual event that celebrates artistic talents and various disciplines. This year's final saw the participation of over 20 schools, each showcasing remarkable performances, including dance, music and theatre. The level of creativity and skill exhibited by the students were very outstanding, Madam President, and the event is a testimony to, we say, the growing artistic talent within our educational system. And I'm sure my colleague is very happy. I really hope that the Ministry of Education could include that as part of the school curriculum and make it mandatory, you know, arts being a part of education.

So, Madam President, the work must be commended, and the final was an excellent platform, as I said, for our young artists to showcase their abilities and receive recognition for their hard work. So on that note, this Thursday, the 12th of December, in celebration of the Arts Festival winners, we are going to host and honour the participants. So we are having a Winners in Concert following this year's competition. So we invite everyone to come down to the Trade Centre at 5:30 in the afternoon so you can witness

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the performances from all the various people that took part in this year's festival and we will be having the award ceremony shortly after where we recognise them together with their teachers and so on, everyone who had contributed. Pardon me. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** And it is absolutely free. So, zero cost to you. We expect to see a pack performance.

I think Grenadians generally support culture. They support the arts. Just two days ago, I witnessed the RGPF having their Christmas Concert, and that was very well attended as well. So, putting it out there, there are a lot of ads out for the Winners in Concert. So, publicly, I would like to invite everyone to come down to the Trade Centre to witness that.

Madam President, I must commend the hard-working staff. Even though they are very small, we hope to grow from strength to strength in 2025 and beyond as we prepare for the next staging of the Arts Festival in 2026 because we're doing a bi-annual festival until we have the capacity where we can host it annually. We welcome whatever suggestions and as well as corporate sponsors, you know, coming on board to assist us as much as possible. Because it's a platform for young people, ordinary Grenadians, to showcase their talents and be recognised for it because, you know, with the Creative Economy and so on, Madam President, it's a, we say, a multimillion-dollar industry and we want our people to have a platform whereby they can showcase what it is that they have to offer.

So, Madam President, I thank you for listening. If I don't get the opportunity to speak again, I just would like to wish the entire of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, everyone who's listening, who's watching on in the diaspora, a very merry and blessed Christmas, remember the reason why we are celebrating, look out for those who are not able to care for themselves. It's an opportunity for you to, you know, go and give back to them and so on. So enjoy what is left of the rest of the year. God bless. Thank you. **(Applause)**

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**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Britton. Thank you very much for your kind wishes. The floor is offered to Senator St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Madam President. I just want to, well, again, thank the Member for the update. Your update is so important, not only for us, but for the Nation such that they know what is happening.

Particularly on the issue of Tourism, Madam President, I just want to make remarks on this important sector and the partnership that was mentioned with SPECTO in the north. At the same time, I want to note from my side, the Agriculture side that we have had, from the Grenada Cooperative Nutmeg Association, increased collaboration with the Board of Tourism, which is the main implementer of tourism policies in terms of the connection of more spice replanting and culinary experiences, and so and so.

It's a very important relationship that is forming among these two organisations, and I want to flag the prospects of that collaboration. It's not only about the food component and the attraction part but also ensuring that we remain spicy in its generic form of plants and so on. So, I guess much more will be outlined as we move forward. But I think it's an important collaboration that the Member would also want to sort of monitor and see how we can move forward because that linkage, we still know, is still not sufficiently strong to maximise the real potential that we do have and it shouldn't just be when something happens, but it should be a *modus operandi* if you want to say a normal way of operation. So we will continue to be available and continue in that space and support tourism from that end because you would be able to gain much income for the country and, of course, provide employment nationwide. So, let us keep that close in our hearts. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. Thank you for your continuing collaboration and this brings an end to Ministerial Statements except for Senator the Honourable Seville Francis, you've requested the floor, madam.

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**Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis:** Thank you, Madam President. Let me, before I proceed, say pleasant morning to my team, my colleagues, my colleagues on the “Other Side”, members in the gallery, Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique via whatever medium you are viewing or listening to this Sitting from, including those in the diaspora. I bring greetings to you from the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Madam President, before I proceed in bringing some of the updates from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, particularly the Division of Youth, I want to commend the staff at the Ministry of Youth and Sports for their commitment, their hard work and their dedication, for without them, we would have no achievements and updates to provide to this Honourable House this morning.

And it is even more commendable, Madam President, because, one of the things that I noticed when I joined the Ministry of Youth and Sports is that the staff is of a youthful population, and so a lot of the programmes, initiatives, the visions, the execution of those are all coming from young people, and that shows a lot in terms of the direction for our country. So before I proceed, I wanted to place on record my thanks and appreciation to them, especially because we are at the end of the year, it shows all that they have done for the year. **(Applause)**

So, let's move on to the achievements for 2024 thus far, and I'm saying thus far because we still have a few more weeks left in the year, Madam President, but I want to start off with our youth leadership development.

So, the Division of Youth has conducted two workshops, one in November and one in October, engaging over 80 young leaders in leadership challenges, decision-making, collaboration and project management. These workshops aim to strengthen grassroots organisations throughout Grenada by empowering our future leaders. And we know that we can have leaders, but if you do not harness and if you do not continue to empower them, it's very easy for them to fall by the wayside, Madam President.

And from that, we had our Youth Parliament on a parish level, so we've had five of those and a total of about 96 young participants debated on critical and crucial policy topics. Emerging from that, we had our very first, and I'm smiling because I'm super proud

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of that, our very first National Youth Election, Madam President, where we had over 2,000 plus young people registered to vote. **(Applause)** Madam President, that is definitely commendable.

The National Youth Elections, we had 14 youth parliamentarians successful, 14 candidates successful, and they will have access to \$5,000 in community grants for impactful projects in their constituencies. And, Madam President, if I may just briefly... So we have Miss Shanida Shade, Sean Williams, Kerri-Ann Marrast, Joshua Andall, Amanda Japal-George, Kamran St. Cyr, Akim Phillip, Sashanna McVean, Tariq Miller, Angela Bowen, Akim Williams, Jonathan Mitchell, Vernique Lewis and Ramiah Griffith, and these are the successful candidates from the National Youth Elections. And, Madam President, I am so proud of these young people. **(Applause)** They will have continuous access to mentorship and continuous leadership training that will support these parliamentarians and the lessons learned will guide improvements for future elections. And we could appreciate that this is our very first. So yes, not everything was smooth, but I am proud to say that it was successful.

I want to move on to the MPower Programme. Now MPower 3.0, we have 220 participants who received grant funding for education or entrepreneurship. Madam President, the MPower 4.0 Programme that we are now seeing through, we have 461 young men enrolled, with an additional 20 from His Majesty's Prison with skills training ongoing. Madam President, I am not sure if we heard. I said we have 20 young men in the prison who are part of the MPower Programme. **(Applause)** It means that we are ensuring that they are rehabilitated properly so that when they get back out into society, they can contribute meaningfully, and their lives will not have been lost.

Madam President, I am happy to announce that the stipend that the trainees have been receiving has been increased by \$200 as of the 1st of December, and the grants will now be increased from \$2,400 to \$3,000. The certificate and direct skills training began on December 2, 2024. **(Applause)**

For the month of November, we had the Youth VOLUNFUN initiative or "volunteer weekend", which happened from the 16th and 17th of November and the 23rd and the

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24th because of the rain and the flooding that we had some of these activities had to be pushed back. But we saw projects that ranged from school beautification, beach clean-up, tree planting, and mangrove conservation across various parishes, fostering environmental stewardship and community pride, Madam President.

Our YOUth Talk event. So we have engaged over 1,000 young people in uncensored conversations with Government Officials. And I also want to thank the team that, even though it was an initiative by the Division of Youth, had other Parliamentarians and Cabinet Members join us at those YOUth Talks to ensure that there was representation across the board and not just from the team at the Division of Youth.

Madam President, these young people addressed their challenges and they proposed solutions which were most ideal to us. They presented us with the solutions for the challenges that they had. And, Madam President, I personally want to commend the young people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. And I said that, and I got goosebumps because, despite the challenges that they're currently facing in the aftermath of Beryl, Madam President, they turned out in their numbers. The room was filled overflowing to capacity, and they presented the Division of Youth, the Ministers and myself with a vision for 2025 for the young people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)** Madam President, they showed that they know what they want, and we are here to facilitate that.

We had our National Youth Rally and Recognition Ceremony, which was just about two weeks ago, under the theme ***“Empower, Engage, Inspire:...”*** and, Madam President, I can tell you that our young people, they were indeed inspired, they definitely engaged, and they were definitely empowered. In fact, we had our guest speaker, Ms. Tyeisha Emmanuel all the way from Anguilla, a beautiful and dynamic youth leader in her own right. Madam President, our guest speaker, shared with me some of the messages that the young people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique shared with her, sent her messages expressing their gratitude and how much her presentation inspired them. And Madam President, it shows that we definitely did something right, and our event was indeed a success. The Radisson Crown Ballroom was filled to capacity, Madam President. **(Applause)**

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For the National Youth Rally, we had the recognition ceremony aspect of it, and I am happy to announce that our sports enthusiasts and our young sports athletes were recognised, and they were gifted, or granted rather, what was promised to them a very long time ago, Madam President. And let me just highlight that Miss Afy Fletcher received a diplomatic passport and \$80,000 for her contribution to West Indies Women's Cricket. **(Applause)** Madam President, Lyndon Victor OBE and Anderson Peters MBE, Olympic Bronze Medallist, they received, finally, their deeds and plans for land, something that was promised **(applause)** to them before we even got here, Madam President. Madam President, Mr. Rennie Gilbert, a Chess Champion, received academic support for university studies of his choice. Tyler Smith and Ishonna Charles, our Paralympic athletes, were both granted US \$5,000 each for their participation. Coach Paul received his land and deed plan as well, Madam President. **(Applause)** Finally. Dr Deborah-Ann Stevens-John received an official passport and US \$5,000 for her appointment as Ringside Doctor at the Paris 2024 Olympics. **(Applause)**

We also had our logo competition. The Division of Youth logo came about because of a competition that the Division of Youth held, and Miss Leandra Narine received her recognition. And I'm happy to announce that along with that, she has mentorship with the Grenada Office of Creative Affairs (GOCA) for six weeks and \$1,000 towards a short-term course in any creative field of her choice. Madam President, I am happy to report that. **(Applause)**

We also have the launch of the Elevate Her Programme. So we have the MPower Programme for the males. The Elevate Her Programme continues... Well, we have registration ongoing and so far, we've had over 400 participants or registrants, for that matter. The Elevate Her Programme is addressed or tailored to address the unique challenges faced by young women between the ages of 18 to 35, and it provides our young women, in particular, with a second chance where they were not able to complete secondary or primary school education for that matter. The Elevate Her Programme is aligned with our National Sustainable Plan for 2020 to 2035 as it supports the pillars of human capital development.

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Madam President, we also had our job preparedness and job fair, where we trained over 200 participants in resume building, cover letter writing, and interview skills. As we know, a lot of the time, it's not that people are not qualified, but they just don't know the appropriate way to bring across their qualifications. So we had to ensure that our young people were equipped with that knowledge.

Madam President, we also had our AI Youth Summit. We know that the world is emerging, and AI is now a part of us. So we had to ensure that our young people are with the times and equipped for that. We introduced 60 participants to AI technology applications, where they focused on entrepreneurship, remote work, and innovative revenue generation.

I want to just touch a little on the upcoming programmes that we have scheduled for 2025. We have the Elevate Her Programme expansion and the Youth Ambassadors Launch. We have community grant funds for any community groups that want to access funding to develop their communities, and they can access up to \$5,000. We have Enterprise-Based Training Programmes. In January of 2025, we have the Heavy-Equipment Operations Programme that we're about to unfold, and we have continuous youth leadership programmes. Madam President, I just want to say that all of these programmes align with the National Sustainable Development Plan, and they emphasise that we are interested in our human capital development, particularly youth empowerment and economic stability by investing in the youth, the Government aims to create a resilient and self-reliant future for the young people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Madam President, let me also take this opportunity to thank the young people of Grenada for believing in us, engaging with us, holding us accountable, and, most importantly, taking the initiative to participate in all the activities and support the Division of Youth and the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Merry Christmas to everyone. If I don't get the opportunity to do that again or to say that to you and to our young people, I want to encourage you to be responsible for the festive season. I know it is very easy for us to get carried away by the festivities, but

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let us remember that there is life after the festivities and let us be responsible in everything that we do. Thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Francis for this comprehensive and enthusiastically delivered update on a range of activities for the young people. It's very important to hear, and if I may make a quick little plug, that the Parliament has also been participating in the Youth Parliament Election. We did provide logistical support, food and transportation, a little bit of financial support and hosting. So, the Members of the Senate must feel connected to what is happening with the advancement of the youth of Grenada. Thank you. Senator St. Clair, you have the floor, sir.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Madam President. I feel compelled to rise on the very detailed and profound presentation by our new Senator Francis. I think it's a good example for her colleagues on her side to keep the temperature up, and I always commend my sister, Gloria Thomas. Of course, I am happy to see the energy. I could imagine the young people listening to this feeling so enthused by all of these things.

Of course, I take it that they need to scale up, you know, 2,000, 400, 300, when we're supposed to have like 60% youth population, we're supposed to be talking about almost 40,000 youths, maybe 16,000 in schools, so you have another, maybe at least about 20,000 that should be, what I call "exposed" within the unemployment, maybe shifting jobs, looking for opportunities and so we need to find ways to scale up. We need to find ways to translate this into real income so that they can become independent and spend their own money. It's a good start. It's a good start. Don't say it's not a good start.

I like the idea of heavy equipment because I know we speak about that here when we look at the change of age. That was a very good initiative, so you can see how that is translating our farm roads, our farmers, and so on can benefit from some of these direct skills, ploughing services, and so on. We say hurry up and come with it. Let us see what happens in 2025 with this opportunity.

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More importantly, Madam President, I was very happy, and I always speak about that, and we must not lose sight of this, our Sustainable Development Plan. A lot of money, time and effort was spent in this thing nationally, cross-political, cross-gender, cross-age everything, and it is our bible of development, connecting it also to sustainable development goals. And I was very happy to hear the dear Senator connecting a lot of these activities to those points in that document. And this is highly commendable, and it shows focus, and it also would cause more persons, nationally, to have a copy of that document; it is almost like the Constitution; have it there because that is how we hold our Members accountable, we can go there now and see. And I know for sure the issue about the age issue was a key issue for using heavy equipment and creating opportunity, and here we see it. And so those two things, in particular, struck me. Of course, we will look forward to more, not 25 and 600 but 10,000 and 5,000 in 2025. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you for your observations, Senator St. Clair. Senator David Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Thank you, Madam President. I greet you with the warmest Christ-birth greetings possible. I greet my colleagues on the "Other Side" and those on "This Side" and to our listeners listening everywhere. Good morning to you.

I want to start, Madam President, simply by echoing words of thanks and gratitude to the staff at the Ministry of Education even as I rise to bring a brief summary of three important initiatives being undertaken by the Ministry of Education at this time. And I want to give commendations and expressions of gratitude to my staff at the Ministry of Education who continues to work tirelessly in the business of education for the over 25,000 students we serve, their parents, the other local agencies like unions, the regional agencies like UNICEF and UNESCO and all of these bodies and partners that we have in the business of education and they continue to work well so commendations to them.

Madam President, the first of the things that I want to bring to our attention and to the nation's attention is the Government of Grenada's alignment with Monroe University

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and the impending launch of the first-generation scholarship for Grenadians. Now, this is an initiative you know the Government plans to see at least one university graduate in every household.

This, we know, will strategically help to break the cycle of poverty that has crippled and paralyzed sections of our population, and we continue to have this as a pressing priority for us. And so, in collaboration with Monroe University, we are going to launch, becoming effective in January 2025, the First-Generation Scholarship. Now this targets young persons who are eligible to enter the university by the university requirements in whose household nobody before has had the opportunity to do a first degree. So this would be breaking ground for these young people. **(Applause)**

And in the first cohort, come January 2025, we anticipate having 50 persons, 50 persons from these households where nobody before has had a first degree. The agreements have already been signed, well, not signed but agreed upon, and we anticipate that the president of the college will be with us. He couldn't come in this December, so we anticipate, probably very early in the New Year, that we will sign and do the official launch of this transforming initiative in education, the first-generation scholarship opportunity.

Some of the areas being considered... And let me say, Monroe University has campuses in Saint Lucia and they have in New York as well. And so, some of the areas being considered at the undergraduate level are Allied Health Science, Community Health and Wellness, Health Services Administration, Medical Administration, Accounting, Business Administration, Business Management, Finance, General Business, Sport Management, Criminal Justice, Energy and Disaster Management, Human Services, Hospitality Management, Computer Information System, Computer Network and Cyber Security. These are just some of the important areas. As you can tell, there are several of those areas cyber security, hotel and tourism management; a lot of areas are critical to Grenada's trajectory and our priority areas. So, we look forward to the launch of this genuinely transforming initiative.

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And so, for our Grenadian citizens and young people across the island, I encourage you to go to the Monroe University page and apply because to get selected, you must have received an acceptance letter from the university. And so we encourage Grenadians, particularly in the rural communities. As Minister for Education, I am not happy to report that most of the scholarship opportunities stayed in Saint George and then a little less, but closer, in Saint Andrew. So I am speaking to every young person to the furthest corner of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique; from Petite Martinique, Carriacou, Sauteurs, Saint Mark, Saint John come all the way down. I will say here, Madam President, I'll be happy to have a bias for the rural communities in this regard to ensure that persons from those areas go to Monroe University's website and apply and get this opportunity. We have the first cohort in January 2025, and we will have a second cohort of another 50 in September in of 2025. So these are golden opportunities, the first-generation study opportunity.

I want to bring to your attention, Madam President, that as we speak, the Ministry of Education is making significant headway in processing the payment for teachers for the marking of SBAs. This was part of the collective bargaining agreement with the Grenada Union of Teachers, and we have discussed the framework to operationalise the payment for SBAs because there are several technical elements of it in terms of marking and uploading to CXC. And so that has been discussed with the Union, and they are pretty much in approval of it, and the Ministry has made all the necessary arrangements to begin the payment. I am optimistic that probably some of them can be paid this very upcoming pay cycle, but that's yet to be seen. But, all of the groundwork has been done. The consultation with the union has taken place, and payments have been processed.

The other thing I would point out is to reassure our teachers, our hardworking teachers, that apart from the 111 or 112 teachers who were initially regularised, there are a further 240 teachers (**applause**) whose documents are prepared and being sent to the Department of Public Administration for regularisation. At the Ministry, we are committed to serving the interest of our teachers, to serving the interest of our education fraternity with the hope and the quiet assurance that we want every child in our nation's education

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system to benefit and to benefit optimally from our programmes, our plans and our interventions working along with all our partners and stakeholders. Thank you very much, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you advocate for the rural sector in the field of education, otherwise known as Senator David Andrew, Minister for Education. Thank you, Senator. I pass the floor to Senator Rahaman. Senator Rahaman, you're next.

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Madam President. A pleasant good morning to you and to my colleagues, those listening abroad and in Grenada. I want to congratulate Minister Andrew on what we've just heard with regard to the steps being taken toward tertiary education in Grenada. I think that there has been a barrier for many, many years, and it has been an economic barrier. We have seen scholarships before, but we're happy to see a direct engagement with such a university.

And I would like to suggest to him that I didn't hear, of course, cyber security, computer science and the like. It's very important, but also very important to us, is energy. Alternative energy and technicians and degrees and qualifications in those areas such as solar, wind, electric and other systems of energy, so that we can enjoy the benefits of these new systems and these established systems to lower our costs because the more you keep is the more you really earn, the more that stays with you. And if you're paying a significant amount every month in energy costs, we can do a lot more with that, even in the areas of education and betterment for our families.

I didn't hear you mention the recent training on Cyber Security, which I thought you would mention, so I would like to mention it for you, perhaps, **(laughter)** and to congratulate you on that **(applause)** because... **(Inaudible comment by Senator Adrian Thomas)** Yes, yes. **(Laughter)** ... Because I have been fortunate to attend the Opening Ceremony of that Cyber Security Training of, I believe, 100 young people, which is very, very much needed in Grenada.

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We see and we know of Grenadians whose accounts have been hacked and who have lost significant sums of money recently within the last few months. And we see that all sorts of things appear on our feed or the internet about what is being offered, even, somewhat, what the Government of Grenada is offering, and these are just phishing sites to get information, to get access to your computer and your email which is eventually to get access to your accounts.

So training on this for individuals, governments, and businesses is very, very important as we pursue digitalisation in our economy. Very, very important. We want to move ahead and not have these setbacks, and we have seen in the past what hacks can do to companies and the havoc they can do with regard to people's personal information and so on being stolen.

Today being... As you've mentioned, Madam President, today being International Human Rights Day, I wish that we could have a pause in all of the wars, at least for that day, in respect of people's human rights, irrespective of which side you're on. And I hope that the United Nations could call for something like that. Because if we can't pause the killing and the injustice, irrespective of whether you claim you are right or wrong for one day, then what is the purpose of having that day?

We see violence in Haiti within our own region. We see that, to my knowledge, there are still people in Guantanamo who perhaps have not been charged with any crime for decades. We see sanctions on Cuba that I think, by now, are unfounded, old or outdated. We see what's going on in Sudan and the injustice there. We see over 400,000 people killed in Ukraine and an equivalent amount or close to that in Russia. We see over 40,000 people killed in Palestine, most women and children in Gaza and that continues. We see people being referred to as "human animals", sub-human less than human and we thought that those things were left behind with the abolition of slavery. We thought that as a people we left those things behind, those concepts behind. So we wonder whether we are moving ahead in some cases or moving backwards as a people, as a human race.

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And I would just like to congratulate—listening to all the reports here this morning on what we are doing because we can't control the entire world, but we can have an effect on our little Grenada. And what's being done in Carriacou, in Social Affairs, what's being done with Youth, what's being done in Education, I would like to congratulate the Government for the good work that they're doing, and we are seeing the effects, and we want more of it. We want it to continue. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank you for your suggestion, and I certainly hope that we will find a space and methodology by which to think about it and act on it, possibly to pause in recognition of World Human Rights Day. Thank you for reiterating the list; such a longer one is still there. Thank you for your sensitivity to the rights of people everywhere, Senator Rahman, and I passed the floor to Senator Claudette Joseph; you have the floor to...

**(Inaudible comment by Senators)**

**Madam President:** ... For questions and comments on the presentation, you have the floor, Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you very much. I also wish to acknowledge the presentation by the Minister for Education and to ask and, at the same time, to make a recommendation. As we identify the challenges of our rural communities, with not being able to access or not making use of the opportunities for the scholarships, to make a concrete proposal that you give serious consideration to having at some pre-organised time, publicly announced, where you can go to different community centres for instance, to have engagements and to bring consciously... Because we have recognised that Saint George is more or less and Saint Andrew... The task is on us who have identified these to bring it to the people. So I'm making this recommendation for your consideration.

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Also, to acknowledge the recent cyber workshops and awareness and at the same time to recognise a Grenadian hero along that line, and I just use the word “hero” it just came out, but a stalwart, a stalwart Jarvis DaBreo from the ICT who has been constantly... I think we need to give him a round of applause. **(Applause)** He has been almost every morning (I do not wish to say every morning, although it can be every morning, I have not heard him every morning) calling on the different platforms to bring to the attention of the public the need for this awareness. And he is someone who gives freely of his time. As a matter of fact, he has gotten so good at giving his time that he is now into farming and planting and explaining to people what needs to be done. He is into writing.

And I am saying this so that the State can make more use of him and encourage him not to be daunted at any time but to continue what he has been doing to make more use of, to make more use of the different platforms and community engagement. I know the State has been using him. I know he has been doing that because he is the “ICT guy”. But I am saying I am of the view that it is likely that there can be more community-localised engagement. And I am of the view that he will be willing to do this but specifically to use this opportunity to ask him never to become discouraged, I don't think he can ever be discouraged, but to go on every, and all platforms that invite him to make presentations on ICT matters because these are extremely important for us.

So I just wish to recognise him as we were speaking about the ICT engagement because he has been doing a very wonderful job in bringing to the attention of the community the need for the elderly and for the youth, and I know the focus was on the youth, but for the elderly and for everyone to be are of this. So this is just what I wanted to bring to the attention of the House. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**(Inaudible comments by Madam President)**

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**Madam President:** ... For Jarvis DaBreo, we recognise him. As a senior citizen, he has come to my rescue because senior citizens are persons like myself, are targeted. **(Laughter)** I wanted to make sure the young senators know that I acknowledge my status as a senior citizen. **(Laughter)** Yes, Senator Joseph, you can smile. **(Laughter)** We are grateful to him and all others for the work that they do in our general protection, and in fact, as you mentioned, he is a multi-talented or multi-giver gentleman. Thank you, Mr. DaBreo.

**(Madam President and the Clerk converse privately)**

**Madam President:** Senator St. Clair, you have the floor in regard to a comment on the presentation just made. Thank you.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** **(Inaudible comment)** ... Madam President, to not speak... And, and... No, and put my support to the point that Senator Lewis has made... Because sometimes, we say okay, someone said it already, don't say it, but sometimes we need to flag those things. And the two points he made are so critical pertaining to the issue of rural communities. I mean myself, Senator Lewis and Senator Andrew grew up in the same community. I mean **(laughter)** young boys, we grew up in the same community, and we know what it means to be able to have access to tertiary education and how it has changed our lives and our families and the examples that led our communities in a time when maybe just one or two scholarships were given in the country way back when, when we were young, youth. And there is so much more now, but the access...

So the issue of looking at the methodologies. And I am happy that the Minister was able to say that he wants to see more, and I am, and of course, Senator Lewis from the rural communities; we are adding our voices and calling on all our youth outside there to participate, let the parents ensure because it's better than a bank account. The value

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of these scholarships can be in excess of almost EC\$200,000, a quarter million dollars; some of them don't even have enough land papers enough to go to a bank and even get this money to send their child to school.

I am saying this because we understand and to highlight the need for them making the efforts, but also for the efforts to get out to the churches, the community centres, you know, whether it's the QR code to get into those spaces so that we can able to ensure that there is participation. And maybe, maybe it might be a policy to really create some sort of quota. And so we want to make sure at least 50% or how much per cent goes out to these areas. I don't think anyone will fault you for that. We need to really lend our voices to you on that. I really wanted to comment on this particular issue, Madam President.

On the issue of the payment for the SBAs, I am really happy to see that. I mean, as a teacher myself, I remember doing double award SBA in Agriculture with 30 and 40 students in a class, and you have two sets of SBAs to do apart from all the other work. And so I think it's an important consideration for the teachers, and that's why you never give up on fighting and struggling for anything because the day of glory and happiness must come as we see now, so we have to continue the struggles at all times.

**Madam President:** Thank you very much, and the Minister for Education will respond and we will come to you Senator Joseph.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Thank you, Madam President. I just want, Madam President, with your leave, to thank my colleagues on the "Other Side" for your comments. Indeed, at the Ministry of Education, we do have outreach, and in fact, we do go to communities. Sometimes, the Scholarship and Human Resource Department goes to various communities; they go to Sauteurs, they go to Grenville, they go to different places, they organise career fairs, sometimes in a car park, and try to promote this.

But, I am happy that you are saying that because I think the appeal is for our communities to do this more because the Department is relatively small, and I am not

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sure how many days we can engage in those kinds of outreaches. We've tried to look at additional methodologies for promotion: Facebook and the radio. They were even on the radio a couple of months ago, maybe, advertising scholarship opportunities. So we've looked at different modalities to publicise what is being offered.

But, we would be happy if, as you mentioned, Senator St. Clair, churches and other responsible community leaders could spread this news in our rural communities more so that when these opportunities come, all of us could push to see that our young people, particularly in those rural communities, take those opportunities but we will continue to do that. So I appreciate the additions that you have made to that. I just wanted to stress that we look forward to other community leaders joining this to ensure that more of our young people take it.

And, I want to thank Senator Rahaman for pointing out the Cyber Security training. Now, I was trying to be pretty brief because my colleagues tell me sometimes I stay too long so I try to stay within the timeline. But one of the things you can look forward to, as well, is our scholarship policy. Now, that is another fascinating piece of document that currently, we have a draft and a sub-committee of Cabinet has been identified to review it. As we speak, my officers at the Ministry are fine-tuning it and that scholarship policy will determine how we treat the priority areas, including cyber security, in a more sustained way.

So, apart from the training that was just launched, there would be other areas of priority; the Health sector, Agriculture, Food Security and a number of other areas we will focus on. And those areas would be prioritised for additional study opportunities. I am excited about that, and when it is fully approved by the Cabinet, you will hear more about it, but a lot more of that would be done in that kind of forum; the National Scholarship Policy that is being finalised at this point. Thank you, Madam President.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator, and to reinforce that, if I look at your side of the room, there are five of you, five of you from the rural sector. Educated products of the rural sector. **(Applause)** Therefore, I am sure you appreciate the value of that and

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you will continue to expand that. I could look at the “Other Side” of the room, and it’s not surprising then that you applaud and welcome this initiative.

If you are not from the rural sector, Senator Rahaman, your father, your grandfather, your mother, or your grandmother are. **(Laughter)** Senator Lewis, Senator St. Clair... Well, Senator Dwight Horsford, I do not know where you are from yet **(laughter)**, but the young physician sitting next to you is from the rural sector. So this is a seasoned legislative and executive, in the promotion of education for the rural sector. Thank you. Thank you all for your contributions.

On my way back from the meeting in Trinidad and Tobago, I had the pleasure of boarding the aircraft with a legal team from Grenada who was returning, having presented at the highest court, the International Court of Justice. And my chest was so proud that Grenada has presented before the International Court of Justice. Leading that team is the woman who is about to speak to us, our Attorney General and Minister for Legal and Labour Affairs. The Honourable Senator Claudette Joseph, you have the floor and welcome back from the ICJ.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Thank you, Madam President. And I imagine even if I didn’t intend to give a statement today, you’ve kind of put me on the spot. So, Madam President, I would, with your leave, like to update the court on two matters... Sorry. **(Laughter)** ... This Honourable House on two matters. I guess I am still in ICJ mode. **(Laughter)**

Madam President, in my capacity as Minister for Labour, I would like to reiterate our firm commitment to the workers of Grenada and **(applause)** reassure them that every step we take as a Government in relation to workers will be in their best interest having fully taken all relevant matters into account.

Madam President, this Government inherited a situation at the Ministry of Labour where we were woefully in default of our obligations under the International Labour Organisation’s Convention. We were not, as we are required to do by Article 22 of that Convention, reporting, filing regular reports or responding to questions and comments

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from the ILO and other states. There are various ILO Conventions, many of which we have signed onto and ratified and, as such, have certain obligations in accordance with international law.

One of those obligations, Madam President, is to file regular reports as required, some conventions require reports to be filed every three years, some every six years. The last report that we filed, as the records show, was in 2015 thereabout, and after that, we filed none. So if you went onto the ILO's website, you would see Grenada as one of those countries in default, in the red, not looking good on the website. Madam President, I am pleased to announce to this Honourable House that on 16th September 2024, we filed 18 reports that were outstanding (**applause**) some of them, as I said, for over a decade.

And these reports range from matters relating to Workmen's Compensation in Agriculture to Occupational Safety and Health to Freedom of Association and the right to organise as we speak today of, you know, the day being International Human Rights Day, we were not filing our reports in relation to these matters as they connect to workers. Public Contracts, Protection of Wages... Just like previously, we were not amending the minimum wage order, and we were not filing reports in relation to the protection of wages. The Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining, Minimum Wage, Tripartite Consultation, Domestic Workers, Maritime Labour, Occupational Safety and Health... So, these are just samples of the 18 reports that we have filed, which now have us in compliance with our obligations to the ILO's Convention.

One of the benefits, Madam President, of filing these reports and staying on top of them is that they allow states to readily recognise gaps in your domestic legislation that need to be filled to enhance the lot of workers. So, in preparing the reports for filing, we were able to identify certain gaps that we hope to fill when we do the comprehensive amendment to the Labour Code, which we aim to accomplish before the end of the first quarter of 2025. We meant to do it this year, but we are to ensure that we have full and rigorous consultations in relation to some of the amendments that will come. So, Madam President, I am pleased to report to this House that we are now in compliance with our

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requirements under the ILO and ready to do as we need to in 2025 and to stay in the black, so to speak.

Madam President, the second matter on which I would like to report to this Honourable House is the one that you alluded to, as you referenced climate change, in your opening statements when you were reporting to the House and as we know, climate change is a well and present danger for all states, but particularly small-island developing states such as ours. We don't need to be convinced because we are first-hand victims of more ferocious hurricanes, more extreme weather events, longer and harsher dry seasons and torrential and devastating flash floods; we experienced it all.

So, Madam President, in 2023, the UN General Assembly, by consensus, referred questions to the International Court of Justice requesting an ICJ opinion on the obligations of states in relation to climate change, and particularly in relation to larger states and their obligations to ensure that the lot of smaller states, that are in disadvantageous positions based on geography or economy or so, that they are not particularly prejudice by the actions of larger states. It was opened to all Member States of the UN to make legal arguments and submissions before the ICJ since it led the charge, which resulted in the UN General Assembly referring the question to the ICJ, and Grenada was at the forefront of this. **(Applause)** Madam President, Grenada led in ensuring that as many Caribbean states as possible participated in the ICJ.

For many of us, including Grenada, our states had never appeared before the ICJ in any matter. And, Madam President, what we did was that we led the effort that saw us hosting a Write Shop in Grenada in February of this year **(applause)** and the purpose of the Write Shop was to apprise states wishing to participate in the hearings on how to proceed before the ICJ; how to prepare your submissions, learning the rules of procedure for the court and also helping persons who were going to be advocates before the court.

So, in Grenada, we hosted almost all the Caribbean countries in February, and then, as the hearings drew near, there was a second workshop that Barbados hosted. So, in the Caribbean region, we coordinated well in presenting our submissions to the court. Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Barbados, Grenada, Saint Vincent and

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Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Dominica, and most of us took part; these are the ones I can remember by hand. And... Jamaica was also there, and most of the Latin American countries, the Dominican Republic, as well.

As I said to the court, I was quite honoured and privileged to be given the opportunity to lead Grenada's delegation in presenting our oral arguments before the court. From all of the feedback we've gotten, and I dare say from some of the reactions of the members of the bench, I think we were the only country that was able to draw some kind of reaction (**laughter**) from some members of the bench because we presented a very impactful video narrated by the Prime Minister to open our submissions which basically told the story of our experience of the devastation caused by Hurricane Beryl and some other environmental issues that we argued were caused by climate change. And, of course, we presented other evidence and legal submissions in writing and orally to the court.

The hearings continue until the 13th of December as all the participating states and organisations present to the court. So it's ongoing now. And we hope in 2025, we don't have a date yet, to get an opinion from the court. And we believe, based on the submissions that we heard while we were there and that are ongoing, that the court will render an opinion favourable to small-island developing states and to states that are particularly affected by climate change in general. So we look forward to that and were quite pleased to be representing on this international stage.

The other members of the delegation included Crown Counsel Miss Rae Thomas and Doctor Justin Sobion, a Trinidadian national. He is a subject-area expert and lectures at the University of Auckland in New Zealand. Of course, our ambassador, Raphael Joseph, provided excellent support to the delegation.

I would like to place on record here our profound thanks to Minister Kerryne James and her staff at the Ministry of Climate Resilience for supporting us in preparing and for first alerting the AG's chambers of the need to participate in these proceedings and also to the staff at the Ministry of Legal Affairs who helped with the preparation and a lovely lady, I know her as Mrs. Singh, she had hand knitted some bright scarves for us in the

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national colours that caused us to stand out among all 100-plus nations. **(Applause)** So, thank you very much, Mrs. Singh, for outfitting us as we made our appearance at the highest court in the globe. Thank you very much, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** And let the record show that the Senate of Grenada extends its thanks and appreciation to all those you have named and clearly and particularly to the delegation that made the presentation with you at its helm.

We want to thank you very much for advancing the cause of climate justice for SIDs and the rest of the world. Thank you, Senator Joseph. Thank you also for your report on meeting our legal obligations with the comprehensive reporting to the ILO. I was glad to hear you say that you're then allowed, in the reporting process, to explore and identify gaps because it's a continuous process, and I was thinking of where you can keep going in the interest of rights and justice for workers. Thank you. And the floor is offered to Senator André Lewis, Labour Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you very much, Madam President. And thanks for the brief update from the Minister for Labour. I wish to place on record our acknowledgement that the Ministry of Labour has been making some strides. We have a long way to go, still, but at least there are some strides.

Certainly, one of the points that was not mentioned is the increase in staffing, which is really good. Certainly, with the increase in staff, one looks forward to continuous training and upgrading of the knowledge base of the members of the Ministry of Labour. Yes, we are part of the process that is looking at the review of the Labour Code, and that has been going on for a while, but there is a matter that needs urgent attention that the Privy Council have already opined. And for us, as much as we are and have demonstrated our willingness to work within the confines of the Labour Advisory Board, we still think that this matter can be pulled out, which we call "*Access to the Court*".

As a matter of fact, the Privy Council did not mince words. And, you know these people, they choose their words in a particular way. And the fact that they were able to

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Speak about certain bad-minded employers who can make use of the “gap” or whatever it is you call it, which we do not agree with, but that’s what they have said, and they are the highest court. Yes. Simply said, we need to come to the House and state clearly that the workers have a right to go to court. Simple like this. ... Amendment of the Law. In other words, so, we are using this opportunity because the Minister has raised the aspect of the amendment to indicate what is needed on this matter.

Because as we speak, as we speak in respect to the power relations, where an employer could constantly say no, no, no, no, no, it, therefore, means that even if we decide to seek redress in the court, the Privy Council have accepted the arguments of the lawyers who made the arguments for their bourgeoisie class that we do not have right to go to the court. Right? So it is our responsibility to do this. So I’m just flagging this, Minister.

Secondly, allow me to make a connection. As we address workers' issues on the legislative front and as we increase and improve our reporting to the ILO, there are some practical matters: the question of transport, the question of transport because it’s a worker issue. The question of transport for workers to be able to get to work on time and the question of workers being able to get from work to their home. Yes? I know that the State has indicated that they are giving some focus on transport and they are in the process of getting applications from private bus owners, but that is for a school bus pilot project. But as we do that, the question of productivity that rears its head so many times...

When we pass workers on the road after seven in the morning, after eight, minutes to nine, and after nine who have been out on the road since minutes to seven but cannot get transport to go to work; when workers, especially in the south of the island, where our multi-millionaires live, right, because it’s the hotel belt, and in many instances, in this the day of human rights, International Human Rights, where our sisters, our females, those who are most exposed have to trek their way from the south of the island after bringing in millions of millions of dollars to our people in the south and who do not care as to whether or not they get home safe and the employer has a duty of care to ensure that the worker gets safely to and from work, especially from work, what will happen, what account would

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you give to the Nation and to the mothers' young children and their mothers if they were to leave your place, your five-star, four-star and three-star hotel after completing a hard day's work and a hard night work and they aren't able to reach home because they have disappeared because they flagged a ride? Yes. We have heard cases of the challenges our female population has gone through and what they are faced with getting rides to go home.

And I am saying, I am calling on the State. We cannot get everything right, meaning that we are not able to line up all of our ducks. We cannot put all 12 in a way so that we can shoot everyone down properly. If we believe, as we believe we ought to do, recognise that transport is a major problem, the State must invest and probably take some of the monies from the, is the IMA Grenada, the former CBI Programme. Right? We boasted last year, proudly so, I think it was last year, about the amount of money and revenue we raked in. We have not yet heard how it was spent, and some people speculate it may be for the houses. I mean, all good. But we are saying, take some of these and get to transport, whatever amount of buses you want to bring. Colleagues, we engage our workers ever so often, and I can tell you about their challenges. So I'm using this opportunity to call upon the State; whatever it is you have to do, go into the private sector or bring in your own transport, whether you run in on the hour from six in the evening or whatever it is along the major corridors, it will assist.

Also, it is great to hear that a number of public officers, namely teachers, will be regularised or "made permanent"; that's the term, and the Government must be commended for that. It is better late than never. But at the same time, I know it was the... the Minister for Health is not here, I mean, he used to be here, but he is not here, and I am not sure who is reporting for Health, yes, but I am not hearing anything for the doctors and the nurses. So we are calling. We would like to hear, not just for doctors and nurses but all the public officers. We would like to hear more of the others that will be made.

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So I'm saying that we recognise, Labour Minister, what has been done and what continues to be done, but there are other factors that we need to pay attention to. You see, the office can start to function properly as it is doing, but we also need to address these matters and transport... **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Well, I am aware that if there are 15 people in a Cabinet, you can have more than one step at a time. All 15 people could be making different steps. In other words, one step at a time may be for one person because they have different responsibilities. I know that the current state has demonstrated that when it wants to make a decision, whether it consults or not, it makes that decision. **(Applause)** And therefore, I'm saying what that tells me it is a matter of what you prioritise.

So I am asking on behalf of Labour, on behalf of the worker, organised and unorganised labour to make transport a priority. I said that I am aware of what is being done or what is about to be done in relation to school children and that's commendable. It is not yet done, but I can see steps in that direction. I'm saying that we also know that you can make one step at a time, but as we say you can either do one today or one tomorrow. **(Laughter)** Right? One today, one tomorrow, or you can do a number today. You can do a quick march. You know? There is something called "quick march or slow march".

So I am making this appeal and to end once again by indicating that we in Labour would like to see the directives of the Privy Council because that's our present highest court, to be addressed with what we call making a slight amendment. In our view, we have made a proposal, it is a change of a word to give access to justice for the ordinary workers. I was asked by a worker... I would not tell you what some of our colleagues said. It crossed my mind, but I didn't verbalise it. One of our workers asked, "Well, look, if we are dismissed or so and there is a problem, it is now more than dismissal, and we can't go to the court; how else should we solve that problem"? I leave all to consider what that answer may be. Thank you very much.

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**Madam President:** I thank the “quick march”, Labour advocate for his observations. Thank you, Senator. Senator St. Clair, do you wish to make some observations?

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

**Madam President:** Sure.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you. Yes. Thank you...

**Madam President:** Thank you.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Madam President. We have to commend, of course, the Minister and Attorney General for these actions. As my good friend Senator Lewis said, we have to take many steps because there are a lot of different Conventions and so on that need to be activated. I guess there might be some that might be easier based on the situation. Because... The lack of reporting... It's a matter.

Sometimes, you are doing research or writing up a project, and you are trying to get certain data, and you cannot, and then it creates a problem. Sometimes you have to report to some of these project agencies, you know, what is the percentage of males or the percentage of youth. Then your data is different to what the nation has because the nation has zero, so you have to make up something, which is also very highly risky because during the monitoring and evaluation process, the realities might be different. Then, you create a whole issue of jeopardising.

So I say this in passing, but the substantive point, Madam President, is one of the conventions I understood from the presentation by the Minister that was addressed was the issue of Workmen's Compensation (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 12). I guess that is the specifics, as I did the research quickly while she was speaking. And what Article 1, which is the most important part of that, says, because each of the Conventions

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has an article, and this one speaks to, "*Each Member of the ILO which ratifies this Convention...*" meaning Grenada, "... *undertakes to extend to all agricultural wage-earners...*" So basically, all agricultural workers who are involved in the Agriculture Sector, "... *it's laws and regulations which provide for the compensation of workers for personal injury by accident arising out of or in the course of their employment*". I interpret that there's supposed to be some data being collected and so on, and then this is reported saying 20 persons or 40 persons such that they can start looking to see if there's certain trends and implications for, again, workers' rights, that's what ILO basically is dealing with.

And so my question really is, sometimes we sign on to a lot of these things, but we don't put the internal mechanisms in place. My understanding, based on the presentation by the Attorney General, is that 2015 was the last posting of data. I am not too sure if this particular one was never reported on, if it was last 2015 or if it was 2012. So I am interested in sort of getting some history on that; when last did we really report, what are the internal mechanisms in the country to capture this data, how do farmers who employ workers get this information through, it is when you go to the doctor and the doctor capture whether you are an agricultural worker or not, does the doctor report that?

So sometimes certain things don't happen because the mechanisms are very difficult, and then I guess some person might not want to doctor certain figures. Being in the sector, this is very critical because it has an impact on productivity, it has an impact on training, it has an impact on our NIS, our National Insurance Scheme and all of those issued. It has been a major sector in this country with almost 10,000 farmers and fishers. The impact of that... If everyone hires at least one person, immediately, that's 10,000 workers, already.

So it would be interesting to know what is going on around this and in what way we within the Agricultural Sector can collaborate and provide justice in that space of time. So, it seems as though the farmers are having justice issues, the workers even seem to have justice issues... Thank you.

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**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. Thank you for raising these important labour issues in the important sector, Agriculture. Senator Rahaman.

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Madam President. So, I would just like to congratulate Senator Joseph and Grenada for leading that mission. A very important mission to highlight to the rest of the world what we face.

With regard to the labour issue and regard to what my colleague just mentioned about transportation... Transportation is a major issue for employers in Grenada as it is for employees in Grenada. There are a lot of different challenges in growing an economy. Labour, on a whole, is an issue. We see it in Carriacou. There is a shortage of carpenters. Almost everywhere you pass in Grenada now... I mean for the last few years we've had an increase in tourism-related activities and we hope to see the same increase in 2025 and beyond in agriculture to meet the demand of tourism, in terms of consumption. And we are seeing an increase in construction as well, over the same period, and that is good for our country.

But, what that means is that, we have a shortage of labour because you can't scale a country without addressing the labour supply. As we continue to grow and our GDP continues to grow and construction continues to grow and develop, we will need to work, we will need a more robust supply of labour. And I can tell you, it is the one issue that the business community is facing, not even the business community. If you want to build a home, if you want to build a home try to get a contractor, try to get a tiler and see how difficult it is to get a tiler to come and do your job at home, to do your bathroom. If you want to add on to your garage or you want to build something see how difficult it is to get labour to do the job. So that's a challenge in terms of drivers, forklift operators or tilers.

As we scale, it is something... We have to train, and we have to have training programmes locally. We have to identify what is needed and what we need to scale and train within first. But at the same time, if it's not available, we have to make sure that we make temporary arrangements with our neighbours, just like Guyana is doing. Right? If our economy is growing and we get into other areas of industry through growth, areas

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that we don't have expertise in, we have to bring in the expertise and we have to make sure that we have a seamless progression. First, we make sure that it is available locally, and if it is not available locally and the industry needs it in order to scale, we need to look regionally in the same way Guyana has done, and Trinidad has done, and Barbados has done and throughout CARICOM. And so the system needs to work for individual islands and also for the rest of the region.

With regard to transportation and whose responsibility it is... I mean, as we grow, we hope that jobs will be more available throughout the country. We see now with hotels in Saint David that people in Saint David don't have to leave to come down to the south of the island to get a job in tourism. And as we grow and the economy grows, we hope to see more of that because, I mean, you shouldn't have to go to work in the South. You should be able to get a job in your own area. But if you want to go to work in the South, then you should have a transportation system to be able to support that and to be able to pay and make some arrangements either through the employer, with the Government or with yourself for that purpose.

So that's one of the challenges that I see with regard to what Senator Lewis has just mentioned on the labour issue. And it is definitely a conversation that the Ministry can have with the Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel Association, and the Business Community to make sure that we are all on the same page as we grow our economy. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you, thank you, Senator. A comprehensive discussion of labour from the point of view of transportation as well as productivity and others. I think we have heard all the Ministerial Statements and comments that have been requested of us to hear this morning.

I want to thank all of you, all the Honourable Senators who are privileged to be in the administration of the State, and to hope that you have received the congratulations and you've also received the recommendations. Thank you very kindly. Item 8.

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**Deputy Clerk:** Item 8 – Presentation of Paper and Reports from Select Committee.

**Madam President:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you very much, Madam President. It has been a nice discussion surrounding the Ministerial Statements, but before I go into the Presentation, Madam President, I would like to use this opportunity to also congratulate Senator Dwight Hosford. It is my first opportunity to sit together with him. I was absent for the last Sitting. So, I'd like to congratulate you and your appointment to this Honourable House.

And, Madam President, I would also like to make a little comment in regards to blowing our own trumpet. I mean if we go to blow our own trumpet we can do that for the entire morning, but I'm happy to see that my colleagues on the "Other Side", reminding us of some very important issues that need to be highlighted, especially the transport and the cyber security issues.

And I also want to remind the House that some of the issues that we are raising were questions that have been asked maybe for decades in Grenada, and we are happy to be addressing some of them finally, especially the transportation issue, as we witnessed yesterday that very important issue by the Transport Commission.

So, Madam President, I would like to present the seven Papers and Reports from the Selected Committees:

1. Report of the Director of Audit on the Public Accounts of Grenada for the year ended December 31, 2016;
2. Report of the Director of Audit on the Public Accounts of Grenada for the year ended December 31, 2017;

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

Thank you very much.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Adrian Thomas. Honourable Senators, these seven Reports, some going well back, at least one into 2016 and bringing us right up to date. The Report of the Fiscal Resilience Oversight Committee it's a 2024 Report. The September 2024 Report gives us an opportunity to look at the direction of travel of the public accounting and public accounts system in the country. Any comments or discussions? The floor is open.

**(Madam President converses with the Clerk privately)**

**Madam President:** First, let me request of you with your permission to have the papers laid before the House. The Papers are formally laid before the Senate House. Seeing no request... Senator Rahaman.

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Madam President. So, I would like to make a few comments. The first is the audits of public accounts. The private sector is required to make more up-to-date audits, meaning, audits in a more up-to-date fashion.

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We are reviewing 2016 to 2019, which is a long time ago. It's important. I mean, in 2016, the Government was still paying loans from Ivan; they were still paying back debt from Ivan. So it's important that we have relevant financial information to review.

The document from FROC gives us some relevant information, and that is their report on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. We note that this Bill, the Appropriation Bill, was funded through the insurance policy that the Government had, also a small amount through grant funding, but most of all, it was funded from local, what you call domestic revenue reserves of \$145m. And I want to commend the Government for that because what they have not done is taking on additional debt. **(Applause)** That's very important.

So even if we realise that the Government has moved away from its financial targets in terms of the 1.5% and they have moved away as it says in the different reports from those financial targets that they have agreed to, that FROC regulates, they still funded this Supplementary Budget largely through local means, through what they call domestic revenue reserves. And while that may have an impact on the reserves, what it does is save us some interest payments for years and years and years and years and years down the road.

So currently in 2016, from looking at the reports, we paid about \$84m in interest, the Government of Grenada. In 2017, it was still in the 80's and then in 2018 and 2019 it moved into \$64m and \$61m and so on, in interest payments. And as a percentage, when you average it out, so you add all of the interest and you add all of the revenues, it's about 9%, 9% of our revenue and that's not including the principal. I don't believe. It just says, "Interest payments". So 9%.

So, that is the reason why there are targets and in 2035 we are supposed to go down to 60% of our GDPs debt-to-GDP ratio. But we want to go below that. That 60% is what the European Union has set for themselves. But we are not the European Union. We can't raise funds the way they can raise funds.

I would like to see a lower target, meaning, closer to 50% by 2035, if that can be achieved. But we know with the passage of Beryl that the Government has had to move

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away from these targets, naturally so, because they're faced with all of this damage and all of this infrastructure work and they have to get the money to do so. So we see the effect on it this year and we note the effect on it next year, next year will also be negative based on the projections.

So what I would like to mention to the Government... It says in a report here, the report from FROC, about data collection... Let me see if I can find that. Give me a moment. It speaks to the lack of certain data and it has been mentioned three times, twice in this FROC document and once in the Midterm Report. I would like those who prepare the financial information that is being given to FROC to pay special attention to what they are saying in this report because if they don't have access to the data that is needed... Right. It says here... *"As indicated in the Mid-Year Review Report..."*, and I quote, *"... data challenges persist. In collaboration with other countries in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union, a strategy should be developed to address the data deficiencies"*.

Now, if we have data deficiencies in reporting, it affects the work of FROC, and it will affect our reading of these documents. So these documents are only as good as the accuracy of what is presented to us here. None of us go into details. But if we are asked to go into detail with the documents that are presented to us, we need to make sure that FROC is getting the data that they have asked for.

Again, it says here that, *"The estimate for economic growth is a reflection, in part, of the data challenges associated with the determination of the GDP"*. So if we have data challenges, I hope the "Other Side", the Government, is taking note that they need to look into that and consult with FROC to see where those data challenges are. I did reach out to FROC to get some more information, and they would be happy to provide that to the Government so these gaps can be met.

In terms of our revenue as a country... In 2016, our actual revenue was \$728m. It then went up to eight something, and by 2019, it was at \$935m and, from this FROC Report, the total revenue estimated for 2034 is \$1.4b. So clearly, we can see growth in the economy, in Grenada's economy over the year, significant growth, and that is

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something that we are all contributing to, and the enabling environment for that growth needs to continue, and that's why I mentioned the issue about labour and the challenges there.

Finally, with regard to the audited statements. It is the opinion of the Auditor in his comments, for example, for 2019, where he states more or less that the public debt under the 2019 accounts is overstated by \$102m. How could you make a mistake like that in these documents? There are mistakes in the document that I have been able to identify. I wouldn't bore you with that going through it, now, but there are certain inconsistencies in terms of the reporting that need to be looked at. And I'd be happy to mention it.

So, for example, in 2017, under the detailed statement of revenue, I'll just give you one quick. Under the detailed statement of revenue in 2017, the revenue is stated at \$858m, and in the detailed statement, it is \$1.6b; that's a wrong figure. So, it's not a major thing because we recognise that it's a mistake, but more attention needs to be paid to the final statements that are presented to us. That's it for me with regard to that. I thank you.

**(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I want to thank the Business Representative for your comments which I think are germane both to business and to general interest. The question of debt management is significant, and we'll come to that as I cead the floor to Senator Lewis.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you, Madam President, and just in relation to the FROC Report on the Supplementary Budget. If we were to look under the Wage Bill, that would be page nine of 11. It's on page nine of 11. It speaks about the inability of the Committee to really make an informed assessment based on the fact that the information presented was really lumped together. It was not disaggregated.

Why am I flagging this? I'm flagging this because in our discussion on the Supplementary Budget and sometimes other documents presented by the "Government Side", my mind goes back to the 50th Anniversary celebrations when the document for

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the... Was the 17.5m? Or eight? Whatever amount... Came before us lacked detailed information. In other words, you're doing a Budget but did not give any projected line item.

We raised a similar concern when we were doing certain aspects of the Supplementary Budget, and I recall the 200, is the 200 homes by 50,000... Something that came up to, I think, \$10m versus \$15m... **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** ... Either 20 by 50, whatever amount that gave... We flagged this, and I am saying that the FROC "Committee" is also making an observation. All that we are doing on "This Side" is to call for more detailed attention to be placed when presenting that information.

The Senator for Business picked up some information from 2017 and 2019 that was done. Yes, these are oversights and errors, but it is important that when these documents are coming to us or to anyone or to any organisation, due diligence be taken, in terms of oversight, to make sure that you minimise the errors as much as possible because sometimes they are reading to us like this. When these documents are reviewed by international organisations and trade secretariats, they sometimes come to the conclusion that we are not too focused on what we are doing.

So I want to use this opportunity once again to call... And I know my colleagues on the side here are not the ones that are preparing the documents. So this is not at you, but obviously, you are the ones presenting it, so we have to speak through you. We have to speak through you, we have to speak through you, and therefore, it is he who presents; it is his or her responsibility to take ownership.

So this, we hope, will be taken in the spirit of which it is intended so that when we are reviewing the documents, we can be sure that what we are reviewing basically reflects as accurately as possible that which ought to come to us and I just highlighted page nine of 11 for you under Wages. Yes. But before I end, we must recognise and compliment the fact that we are trying to bring our accounts, in terms of reporting, up to date.

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator Lewis, for your observations. Other comments? Leader of Government's Business, Senator Thomas.

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**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I would just like to express my gratitude for the observations that were made from those Presentations from the “Other Side”, and I will definitely take the information to the necessary authority and highlight it to them so that at least those errors would not be made in the future.

**Madam President:** I thank the Senator. As the Reports and Papers were read all together as a package, and indeed they are a package, I'd like to continue to take them as a package in seeking the Senate's approval. In which case, Honourable Members the Papers and Reports proposed for your endorsement are placed before you. The slew of Reports are acknowledged and accepted by the Senate.

**Ag Clerk Assistant:** Item 9 – Petitions.

Item 10 – Government Notices.

Item 11 – Unofficial Notices.

Item 12 – Questions.

Item 13 – Personal Explanations.

**Madam President:** Senator St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Madam President. I stand here on a very personal note for the records. And it would be remiss of me not to have it in the record, basically, to give my personal thanks to everyone, yourself, the colleagues inside this House, of course, Members in the “Other House” and staff both here and in the public who has been very supportive during my time of grief. I want to just keep it at that and say thank you to everyone for the records. I cease. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you for your thanks, Senator. You would know that our basic obligation, duty and sentiment is exactly as you have said, to stand with our

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colleagues, sisters and brothers in times of grief. We trust that you are recovering from that loss that is irreplaceable that you have suffered. Thank you. Any other personal statement? The microphone is offered to Senator Rahaman.

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Madam President. I just want to make mention of a business that is a very unique business in Grenada. I have had employees who are differently abled. I currently have at least one such employee. Two.

There is a company by the name of "*Attach a Leg Grenada*". "*Attach a Leg Grenada*." It's a gentleman from Iceland who is a Prosthetics Engineer who has made Grenada his home since 2005, I believe, or so. He still has to pay for his work permits and all of these things today, and the service that he is providing to Grenadians; I don't think that can be provided by any Grenadian. He is a Prosthetics Engineer, so when somebody loses a leg, he will design a leg, get it fitted, get the materials and measure the individual. When they come out of the hospital, he will be able to bring relief so that that...

I have one particular employee who lost both legs and was down for several months, and now he's back on the job because of that service. And there are certain things, certain industries and certain individuals that—I have no connection to this business, by the way, personally. If a particular business is beneficial to Grenadians and it cannot be provided here, I'm not saying how to treat that individual, I'm not making any recommendations, I'm just saying that this has been my experience and it has benefited Grenadians and more than one that I know of. And so, perhaps, when these people are interviewed by the Labour Department, perhaps, they can pay special attention to what service they provide to the Grenadian public especially if there is no such qualification other than what is being offered on the island. I just want to share that. So, whenever that comes across the desk of the Minister responsible for Labour, perhaps, she can delve into that and look into that issue. Thank you.

It has been a positive experience for me with regard to those two employees having their mobility back because if it had not been done, at least one of them would have still

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been home. It's depressing to be home, but it gives them a new life, and it gives people like me an employer an opportunity to keep somebody employed. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Rahaman. Before we begin with the Motions followed by the Bills, items 14 to 16 on our Order Paper, we will take a short pause to refresh, regroup, and return. The Senate is, therefore, adjourned for 10 or less minutes. You can come back before 10 minutes, no longer. Thank you.

**Senate adjourned at 12:14 p.m.**

**Senate resumed at 12:27 p.m.**

**Deputy Clerk:** Item 14 – Motions

**Madam President:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, before I read the Motion, I would like to kindly request an amendment to the Motion: For the fifth line to be amended from "The said Address be now debated by the Senate". I would like to ask for an amendment which should read, "The said Address be further deferred to another day to be announced". And which... the Motion should now read:

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

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the said Address be further deferred to another date to be announced.

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**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** The debate, sorry. Be it... Madam President, I'll read over this.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the debate on the said Address be further deferred to another date to be announced.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. Would the Clerk read the amended Motion?

**(Madam President and the Clerk converse privately)**

**Madam President:** Thank you. Thank you for your advisory. Please read the Motion as now amended and I will place it on the table. Clerk.

**Clerk:** The Motion as I have it now reads, "**WHEREAS** debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Third Session of the Eleventh Parliament on Friday 4th October 2024 was deferred to a date to be announced; **BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the said Address be further deferred to a date to be announced".

**Question put.**

**Madam President:** Senator St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Yes, Madam President. It is more a question from the public, not that the public asked me a question, but I'm just thinking. We repeatedly go through this process of "deferring of the debate", initially, fine, and then at some time later on. The Motion is really the Government's Motion, so the "Other Side"

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really cannot debate it unless we move a Motion that it be debated, and then we debate that to know whether or not we will debate it. But the fact that it can be deferred to a date to be announced, somehow the date specifically to deal with that never really comes. And so it tends to get wound up into the general Budget Debate, sort of, and I don't know... I am just raising it as something that ...

**Madam President:** This is a Point of Order, Senator, from me. Let us agree to put it on the Table before you discuss it. You are discussing the amendment...

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** No, I am not debating it. It's just a comment.

**Madam President:** Yes, but I think we need to officially agree to comment.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** I understand. Okay. We have not done that yet? Sorry about that.

**Madam President:** No.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Okay, good.

**Question proposed.**

**Madam President:** Proceed, Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you. You're correct. And because we got into the mode of "it's deferred, and it's just going through",... I am just raising this as a matter so that we don't lose sight. Whilst the Budget Presentation by our dear Governor-General... The Throne Speech... Is the Throne Speech we are speaking of? Yes. ... It's a policy position. Of course, that is a Motion on the Table for discussion, and then we

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get to discuss the Budget, which is really if you know what a budget is, it speaks about expenditure and revenue specifics, and the policy that supports it is two different issues.

And if we go further to the normal practice of any law that we have, there must be a policy that supports it. That policy should have some discussion and some rationalisation independent of the Budget. It tends to always lose the gist because most of the time when you get to the Budget itself, it's a different type of discussion, whilst the policy part, the Throne Speech, should look at more policy relevance in that context. I think it's something that needs an opportunity for discussion and discourse and it's done sufficiently and in time to even assist the Government in the framing of the final budget document.

So, it is something that bothers me as we sit here. We constantly, and not just us but those before us who just let it go, and it becomes like a silentness because you have to respect it. It is a serious document. It is the Government's intention, and we seem to just let it go and deal with the money part. And I think it is something that we need to look at in terms of how it is done. We may not have to deal with it now, but I raise it for whatever it's worth. Brother Hosford, I don't know if it is US\$450 or US\$500, but for whatever it is worth, I thought I wanted to raise it, Madam President.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. I'd like to proceed by calling the question on the amended Motion. Then we can discuss it later on.

**Question put.**

**Motion approved as amended.**

**Madam President:** We now have before us an amended Motion. And now... is there a... And now we must vote on the Motion itself.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: (Inaudible comments)**

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**Madam President:** We have, we voted on it now.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: (Inaudible comments)**

**Madam President:** Alright, we proceed. Thank you. So, Motion letter B. Leader of Government Business.

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

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

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

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put.**

**Motion approved.**

**Madam President:** Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I would like to nominate the following Members: Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph and Senator the Honourable Salim Rahaman.

**Madam President:** Thank you, and the names proposed for this Committee...

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**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President... With the President as Chair.

**Madam President: (Laughter)** The names proposed for the Committee of Selection of the Senate are as follows: The President of the Senate as Chair, Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph, and Senator the Honourable Salim Rahman as Members.

**Question put.**

**Motion approved.**

**Madam President:** Senator Thomas, Thank you.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas: WHEREAS** Standing Order No. 63 (1b) of the Senate Standing Orders provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the President as Chairman and two Members to be known as the Standing Orders Committee, which shall be elected as soon as may be after the beginning of each session;

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

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put.**

**Madam President:** And the Members are?

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I would like to nominate the following Members to the Standing Orders Committee: Senator the Honourable David Andrew, Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair with Madam President as Chair.

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**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. And the Members are the Chair, President of the Senate, Members, Honourable David Andrew, Senator and Honourable Roderick St. Clair. Senator.

**Question put.**

**Motion approved.**

**Madam President:** Senator Adrian Thomas.

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

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

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

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put.**

**Madam President:** Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President. I would like to nominate the following Members to the House Committee: Senator the Honourable Gloria Thomas, Senator the Honourable Noland Cox, with Madam President as the Chair.

**Question put.**

**Motion approved.**

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held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2024  
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***Motions***

***Bills: Bank Holidays (Amendment) Bill, 2024***

**Madam President:** Honourable Senator Adrian Thomas.

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

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

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

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question proposed.**

**Madam President:** Senator Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I would like to nominate the following Members to the Committee of Privileges: Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis, Senator the Honourable Adrian Thomas, Senator the Honourable Seville Francis and Senator the Honourable Myanna Charles.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put.**

**Motion approved.**

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

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***Bills: Bank Holidays (Amendment) Bill, 2024***

**Madam President:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to introduce the first reading of a Bill for an Act entitled, Bank Holidays (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

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

**Madam President:** Senator the Honourable Adrian Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the Senate be suspended, to enable the Bill to be taken through all stages of this Sitting.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**(Sound of gavel)**

**Madam President:** Senator Thomas, Adrian Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move that the second reading of the Bill be taken.

**Question proposed.**

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**Madam President:** Senator Adrian Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, confronting us here today is a very important Bill that we want to present to this House. It's a Bill that we have been contemplating for a very long time as a nation. And even though our party, our political organisation, was in Opposition, it was of concern to us. Added to that, while we were thinking of celebrating our heroes, there was the call for this important date in our history to be observed. And one may argue the point that, yes, it was observed, how, by whom, and to what extent. Madam President, we contemplated those two issues, the bank holiday and the date itself. And we believe it was a foregone conclusion by our ordinary citizens in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique that a National Heroes Day is needed.

We must recognise our history. We cannot let things just go like that. And therefore, when we decided to consider October 19th or consider any other day, it could have been March 13th, Fédon's Day, the 5th of January, the 6th of March, the 12th of April, May, you name it. But we wanted a name with meaning. A day that signifies something to the Grenadian people and means something.

While many of us may have been going about our daily lives on October 19th, doing our work, others were mourning; others were grieving. And, Madam President, I had, I don't want to call it the "privilege", but the opportunity on October 19th, I personally had the opportunity to lead St. David's Catholic Secondary School from St. David to St. George in a mass demonstration on that particular day. The rest is history. I would not go into details. To many Grenadians, that day means a lot. And therefore, when we, as this Administration, listened to the cries of the people and our nation, we thought this might be the most fitting day, October 19th, to dedicate to National Heroes Day. And so today, Madam President, we bring this Bill to this Honourable House for their consideration. And it's a very short Bill, straight to the point.

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Madam President, it consists of two clauses. Obviously, clause 1 provides for the short title. But clause 2 of the Bill, Madam President, seeks to amend the Schedule to the Bank Holidays Act to insert the 19th day of October as National Heroes Day as a bank holiday to be observed in Grenada. Madam President, there are many discussions surrounding this important day.

And last year, Madam President, we didn't have the opportunity of this law. So obviously, we had to go to the Governor-General and seek permission by proclamation. But, going forward, our people, the workforce, and the schools will all make the necessary preparations because we know that it will be a day commemorating our national heroes. And as we make the necessary progress, Madam President, the time will come when we will name our heroes. The time will come when we will secure an important spot to commemorate our heroes. And as we grow as a nation, our children and our people will understand the importance of celebrating and commemorating National Heroes Day. So, Madam President, without much ado, I now commend this Bill to this Honourable House for discussion, and obviously, I'm seeking your support. I thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Thomas.

**Question proposed.**

**Madam President:** How dear I? **(Laughter)** Now that we have had the presentation of the Bill by the presenter, the floor is open for debate...

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Close the debate.

**Madam President:** ... then we'll take the reading a second time. Let me welcome you again, your first substantive participation or your first participation in a substantive

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rather than a Ceremonial Sitting of the Senate, Doctor Senator Myanna Charles, and offer you the floor. Thank you.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Myanna Charles:** Thank you, Madam President. Greetings to Members and colleagues of this Honourable House. And to the Leader of Government's Business, Senator Adrian Thomas, I, too, look forward to working together. Madam President, today I rise not in Opposition to a National Heroes Day but rather in defence of the unity of our Grenadian people.

Heroes are not only those who die for their people. Heroes are those who live for their people. Heroes are those who sacrifice for their people. Heroes are not only defined by titles or tragedy. Heroes are also defined by their spirit of overcoming; overcoming fear, overcoming injustice, overcoming the obstacles that stand between our people and a brighter future. Overcoming! Why, then, are we anchoring the legacy of our heroes to the trauma of October 19th?

Madam President, when I sat there and I heard the comments by the Leader of the Government's Business, Senator Adrian Thomas, a question popped into my mind. And that question is, what unites Grenadian heroes? What is that, that unites Grenadian heroes? It is not political affiliation. It is not the offices they held. It is not the era in which they lived. It is that spirit of overcoming.

And I'll just name a few. I mean, a lot of things I'm going to say here today is stuff that I was told, I haven't lived it. But you know, I do read history from time to time as I'm very fond of it. And if we were to go back and just list a few persons who overcame; Julien Fédon overcame colonial oppression. T.A. Marrayshow overcame barriers to unite a region. Sir Eric Gairy overcame resistance to establish workers' rights. Maurice Bishop fought to overcome social inequality, our national hero. I think I will backtrack on that. Our beloved, I say, Kirani James overcame a medical condition to become one of the most decorated track and field athletes in the world. This spirit of overcoming is not

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confined to the past. Let our hero's day be a reflection of that spirit of overcoming, not a day tied to death and tragedy, but one that causes our children to aspire to greatness.

Madam President, if this day is to be called "National Heroes Day", then the Nation must decide. The whole nation. **(Applause)** Heroes do not belong to a particular party. Heroes belong to all of us. It is our history. It is our national pride. So I call on the Government to at least, you know, call for public consultation or even a national poll. And if October 19th is truly the will of the people, then let the people say so. If it is not, then let us choose a day that we can all embrace with pride: a neutral day. **(Applause)**

Madam President, I continue to beg your indulgence. And I say we cannot afford to get this wrong. The next generation will look back on this moment and ask if they led us forward or if they led us back to division, and that I will not stand for; division, I will not stand for. Let October 19th remain a day of reflection and remembrance. But let us choose another day to honour our heroes, a day of unity, not a day of division.

Madam President, and Honourable Members of this House, as we choose a day for National Heroes Day, let us look back at a very powerful lesson from within our own community. If denominations within Christianity, and we do know that we have quite a number of denominations within Christianity in Grenada, each with its own history and with its own practices, can come together to celebrate December 25th as the birth of Christ, surely we, too, can choose a day for our National Heroes Day, that transcends the division. And I beg all of you to consider that.

This is not about rewriting history. This is our history. **(Applause)** It is about defining our future and the way forward. If we are truly serious about moving forward as one nation, as one people and if we are truly committed to unity we will choose a day that brings us together, not one that tears us apart.

So instead of guessing, you know, I implore the Members of this Honourable House, and I call for national consultation. It is a time for us to look at what unites us and not what divides us. And I really do look forward to an outcome that makes us all proud as Grenadians. Thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

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**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator Charles, for your contribution to the Bill. The floor is open. Senator Seville Francis.

**Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I stand to lend my support to the Bill brought before this Honourable House.

Ever since the topic of conversation came into play, I've had informal, formal debates about the relevance and the significance of this Bill, or the day in question for that matter, Madam President. But, Madam President, it's interesting to note that, or have you ever heard the saying that if you do, people will talk, and if you don't, people will still talk? Madam President, the day in question is creating this significant debate. Why are we choosing that date? But, Madam President, if we choose a date that is neutral, let's say November 22nd, April 16th, a day that has no significant historical relevance, I can hear, I am sure, as Honourable St. Clair said a while ago, the public did not ask the question but sometimes he hears the public ask the question in advance. So I am hearing the public asking the question, why are we choosing... What is the significance of choosing November 23rd to recognise as National Heroes Day versus October 19th or March 13th or any other day?

Madam President, to me, the importance here is that we are recognising that we have national heroes among us, some who are alive and some who have gone to the great beyond. God rest their souls. Madam President, I think that is what our focus here should be—the fact that we are stepping in the direction of honouring those who deserve to be honoured.

Madam President, you know the debate; it baffles me, and it confuses me sometimes as to why we are really debating this. And, as our eloquent Senator... Let me take the opportunity also to welcome another young female Senator to the House. **(Applause)** I did not get to do that before. But as my very eloquent Senator on the "Other Side" referred to King James as our national hero before she backtracked, I loved the fact that she mentioned Kirani James as our national hero. Now, Madam President, he was not formally given that title, but to the Grenadian people, he is our national hero.

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I can't recall this Administration naming any heroes at any point. So what is the confusion, or where is the confusion? I am sure history has shown that this Administration is big and loves consultation, so I'm sure we're going to continue to engage in consultation. But, Madam President, it is also interesting to note that our Constitution, which we love and cherish, affords us the freedom of choice. And, Madam President, even if we have the consultations, and I am all in for consultations, would we ever come to a decision?

Madam President, just look at the number of us in here; we're small in numbers, and we can't agree on many things. So imagine we open the consultations, and don't get me wrong, I am all in agreement for the consultations. There's a context to what I am saying here. Imagine we open the consultations to the public. Would we ever come to a consensus, an agreement, about which day it should be? Because I'm sure, Madam President, I would love for National Heroes Day to be on my birthday. **(Laughter)** I am sure you would have, you have another date that you would love for National Heroes Day to be as well.

So, there are some times when tough decisions have to be made by those who are in authority. And, Madam President, that is what is being done. Now, imagine you have a child, and, Madam President, that child wants to wear to school a red hat, with pink shoes, yellow socks and a green dress. I am sure you would not allow your child to leave the house like that. There are some times when you have to be the parent and make those tough decisions. And Madam President, as the parent, you have to be the parent and you have to make those tough decisions. Madam President, as the parent of this country, the Cabinet, the leaders of this country, we have to make the tough decisions and do what needs to be done.

Madam President, I love it when I'm given the opportunity to make reference to the future of our country, the young people. So, it would be very remiss of me to stand here to add to this debate and not show or illustrate in any way how this is significant for our young people. And, Madam President, in my research, I looked at other countries that have National Heroes Day and I asked myself, what would be the benefit of having a

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National Heroes Day as a bank holiday for the young people of Grenada? Yes, we love to fete. I love to fete, too, but there is a time and a place for everything. **(Applause)**

And, Madam President, I draw my memory back to October 19th of this year. And I drove throughout the country to get to Progress Park, where we had that event and there was a stillness in the country, a very calm and peaceful vibe in the country. And, Madam President, I asked myself while I was driving and I wondered, I said, the people who may have lost their lives or who we're honouring, how are they feeling to know that there is that level of peace and tranquillity as they reflect. As you know, that solemnness where I can sit with my family and we reminisce, whether it is traumatising or whether it's a moment for us to celebrate. But you can do that in with comfort and with ease without the noise and the distractions happening, Madam President. And I felt good as a Grenadian to see that, for once, we have some level of... How should I put it? The lawlessness was put on the back burner for once, and we had that opportunity as a Christian society that we love to boast about; we were able to behave like Christians for once, Madam President.

Madam President, let me get back to the applicability of this Bill to our young people and the possible benefits that it can have. I know that, and Senator Andrew will agree with me, that we're trying to ensure that in our education system, Madam President, we have history at the forefront because a lot of the time, we teach about other people's history, but not ours. And I see that this day, being a holiday can spark questions among our children and our youth in their families. I can envision the young people asking their mothers, their grandmothers and their fathers what happened on that day or what it was like for them. I can see that, and I'm sure Senator Thomas will agree with me, that in the home, the parenting programmes and all of that, that they're trying to implement, that, you know, family unity and all that, all of those things can emerge from having a day like that, being recognised as our National Heroes Day no matter the heroes we name going forward.

Madam President, the increased awareness for me is something that I value with that day being recognised as National Heroes Day. Madam President, I also want to...

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For me, I appreciate that on the day, we can have youth participation in meaningful activities. And when I say meaningful activities, this is what I mean: initiatives that would promote teamwork. I can see our community groups coming out and hosting events that are not too boisterous and lawless but that can ignite that... I can see a youth group coming together and holding a forum, for example, discussing what the day means to us, our history and all of those things. Madam President, I want us to think, look at the bigger picture and let us not just look at the date or the significance of the date, but I also want us to recognise that national pride, Madam President.

Whenever I stand to speak or represent Grenada, I always do it with a sense of pride. And I recall when I had a conversation with the same young lady from... our guest speaker from Anguilla and as we drove from Maurice Bishop International Airport, and we came down the highway, and she said this highway is named after the man that said "*Forward ever, backward never*", right? I got chills, Madam President. Do you know why? Because the things that we take for granted, other people are appreciating it.

And I recall one time when I represented Grenada in Malaysia, and I had the opportunity to walk throughout the conference, holding that flag and I got on the stage and the tears bathed me as our national anthem was played. It feels good to be a Grenadian. It feels good to know that we have a rich history, something that we can appreciate, Madam President. And I truly believe, that this day, whatever date we choose, but in the context of here, October 19th will instil a different level of national pride and patriotism for our people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, because we would learn about the contributions of our national heroes, that instils the pride of our national heroes and it will motivate us to contribute, it will motivate other young people like myself and Senator, Senator Charles to contribute positively to society.

Madam President, this is my contribution to the Bill. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you. Thank you, Senator Seville Francis. Senator Dwight Horsford. You have the floor, Senator.

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**Sen. the Hon. Dwight Horsford:** Thank you, Madam President. I rise following in the gentle and diplomatic footsteps of my distinguished friend, Senator the Honourable Dr. Myanna Charles. Madam President, though this may be a foregone conclusion, given the configuration of this House, I must record our contribution, our sentiments on behalf of the Opposition in relation to this Bill, and what we see underpins it.

We do not oppose the observance of a heroes' day, a National Heroes Day, not in the least. We do not oppose the observance of a National Heroes Day, but October 19th is a day of its own significance. It has its peculiar tornado of sentiments. Indeed, October 19th is known practically for the same thing in Grenada, as it is known externally to the world in relation to what happened in Grenada on that day. There was nothing glorious about it, quite the opposite, inglorious.

And my sister is quite correct. And wise persons would be willing to listen to that view, which is that you do not anchor something that is broader than the tragedy of that day. You do not anchor celebrating heroes, who I imagine, must be people from all walks of life and who have contributed in diverse ways to building our nation, particularly as we celebrate the milestone of 50 years of an independent state. Why confuse people?

But there seems to be, and forgive me if I don't have the same dexterity as my distinguished friend. Two things that seem to be inspiring a focus or a fetish with that day. One, an obsession or this nostalgia of some past glory days by some, and an infatuation with certain figures on the stage at that time by some; and second, Madam President, the serpentine slither, a cunning hand by some, who desire a different narrative, or a slightly different historical narrative regarding those events on that day.

That day is remembered, Madam President, for tragedy. **(Applause)** The bitter, shocking and traumatic culmination of an experiment in this country. Perhaps our most important frontline lesson from it is what can happen when there is disunity, division and power grab. **(Applause)** How is that fitting as a day of remembrance of heroes, generally, that have contributed to the development of this country to this point of 50 years?

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And if indeed, particularly the fixation is that day, who are the heroes? The slain officials? Civilians who were collateral damage in the counter-coup gunplay or is it the villainous few who survived to tell a different story now? Who are the heroes in relation to that particular day? Do not confuse the people. **(Applause)** Then again, one can only confuse the people if you are confused yourself.

Madam President, a hero's day must be observed. We must mark it after 50 years. We would have ample social memory on record of those who have triumphed in many ways to define, refine and mould what Grenada and Grenadianism are certainly to this point of 50 years of statehood. And it must be within our grasp and must be at our fingertips, the recall of these varied contributions by varied persons, not only since the time of independence, but those who laid the foundation for it because this journey of statehood is just that. It is a journey. It's not an event. It's a process of our own national evolution. And this is an unnecessary controversy, because there is so much trauma wrapped up in that particular day and its events that touches various households even to this day. To this day!

And so, that is why we say, like my distinguished sister, this does not bring any closure; this does not bring any clarity, quite the opposite. This does not bring healing. This does not bring any unity. **(Applause)** So why undertake it? We have said, and I will repeat it here, that we support observing a hero's day. This particular day has its own unique significance in relation to what you are undertaking now, which only serves to open wounds and revive abated heartache. Choose a neutral day, and let us celebrate all kinds of contributions and heroes of all kinds.

Now, I've heard in another place reference to days marked in relation to struggles in World War II and the independent struggles of some African and European countries. Quite so, but what is the distinction? Those days marked a liberation struggle. In the case of some African countries they struggle for a republic, an independent republic away from British colonialism. And quite unlike our independent struggles, these were struggles by taking up arms, so people lost their lives. The distinction is obvious between such days of remembrance and the one we have fastened on today. There is a big

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difference between the tragic implosion of an experiment that almost broke the soul of a nation and the remembrance of a people fighting and struggling for national identity, freedom and self-determination years apart, miles apart in significance.

But, Madam President, I had the occasion to make a comment on this before, and I recall a verse in a song where it was mentioned that you know, “*A fool loses tomorrow by looking back at yesterday*”. As my distinguished friend said, we have an opportunity now to sit or stand on a mountaintop and survey 50 years to this point and look at the panoramic view in front of us. Having done this and having gone through all of this, having achieved this, all of this, where do we now go, rather than, as I see my friends are bent on, looking backwards to reignite an old wound and old controversy?

So, Madam President, my friends will do as they decide that they will do, but for posterity, we have recorded our caution by those things which I have just said. And with these words, these are my contributions on behalf of the Opposition in relation to this Amendment and I thank you for the time. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank the returning Senator for his contribution. If this is the end of the discussions, I offer the floor to Senator Adrian Thomas, the mover of the Bill.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** I was about to wrap up if you guys are not talking.

**Madam President:** Senator. Senator Lewis, I'd like to hear what you are saying.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis: (Inaudible comments)** I was just. Well, I said, we could ask. We sort of alternate, so I know that they were looking at us, so I was... That's all. That was the secret I was saying.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Don't make that assumption.

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**Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis:** All right. I would wrap up. **(Inaudible comments).**

**Madam President:** Hello. The floor is offered to Senator Britton. Thank you, Senator. Proceed.

**Sen. the Hon. Quinc Britton.** Thank you, Madam President. Well, since the... my colleague, I indicated what has taken precedence where, you know, we go vice versa, one presentation on "This Side" and on the "Other Side". I, too, rise with the sentiment expressed with the Bill put forward by the Leader of Government's Business on "This Side" of the House, Madam President, in support of the National Heroes Day, recognition and the Bank Holiday Bill, Madam President.

I know October 19th has a lot of significance. Well, it's a part of our history, and we should take the opportunity to recognise what happened or reflect on what happened during that time rather than just being passive about it. I strongly support the initiative put forward by this Administration to recognise first and foremost the contributions made.

The Government has not announced any national heroes. We leave that up to the general public to do so when the time comes, but recognising the day and its significance... Imagine a leader or a Prime Minister and his entire Cabinet or some of his Cabinet members, colleagues were executed on that day, and we just see it like, you know, it's anybody who passed. I think it's something that we do not want to continue, as you know as just being passive as a nation. Every time on November 1st and 2nd we remember the souls of those who passed and so on. It doesn't matter how many years they have passed.

So, having to take that initiative as an Administration, I think that is commendable, and I just want to record my support for this Bill. My full support. 150%. Madam President, thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Britton. Thank you.

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**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** I'll go.

**Madam President:** Senator St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Yes. **(Laughter)** Madam President. I wish to make some contributions to this Bill that is before us, entitled the Bank Holidays (Amendment) Bill, 2024. I know that this Bank Holidays (Amendment) Bill, 2024, captures two components. **(Laughter)** I hear us speaking about one. It speaks about one, "The second Monday in August, and the day following which shall be known and referred to as the Carnival August Celebrations", and it also speaks about October 19th as the National Heroes Day. So we're speaking about two issues. That is my understanding of the Bill before us, essentially saying that the Tuesday is written in the legal language, but basically, what we know as Carnival Tuesday, I interpret the Bill as saying, look, it says, "The second Monday in August and the day following", so the day following Monday to me is Tuesday. Sometimes, we try to make things too complicated unless we feel that the names of the week or the days of the week, the names of them will change, and it wouldn't be Tuesday, so it's better to just say the day following.

Anyways, Madam President, I want to profess my overall presentation and say that there has been a call from the private sector, over and over, that we have too many holidays in this country and we are holding up productivity. That has been a private sector call. In fact, many people were very happy when Rainbow City Tuesday was off the books because the business community got another day for business. In fact, you'd find now some of the businesses opening on Saturdays with longer hours, these banks, of course, because they want to encourage more business.

So we must not lose sight of this. I know we have the Business Senator here, but I want not to lose sight of this in the argument. Because farmers, ourselves in this sector, lose business too because every time businesses close down, they can't sell their produce or they have difficulty. Because people, as my dear Senator Francis said, are

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having fun and feting, so they can't work the day before; they can't work the day after because they are still feting and the effect.

So let us not lose sight of what the Bill is in front of us. There are two issues. So now Carnival Tuesday is a day businesses know that if workers have to come to work for some means or format, it's a cost. You have to pay them double pay, you may have to send transport to pick them up and all of those consequences. So, I say this to say, sometimes, as legislators, we have to look at the impact of what we're trying to achieve. And so when we pack these two things together, is what I refer to as a hoodwink, because up to now, I'm the first person speaking really and mentioning this Carnival Tuesday, because it was silent in the document to the public, to us we're seeing it. So it's not just heroes' day.

The other part of the Bill, as presented to us, speaks about the famous October 19th. And so, if I make some preliminary statements based on some of the statements that were made, for example, the Leader of Government's Business and presenter of the Bill spoke of what he led long before the NDC Administration was in Government that has been a pledge and people have been calling and so he responded. It's politics. It's fine, so we have to do it. As Senator Dwight Horsford said, "So, it's a commitment you make, so you deliver". Okay. And then we get into the sentimentality and say, "Well, I led a demonstration, I was leading". **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** ... Well, I don't know. I mean... It's a campaign to be a hero also, too? **(Laughter)** But it's a different discussion.

But you see, Madam President, we deal with many Bills around here and many Motions, and this is to me it's what I call "a social conscience Bill". In that, the relevance, the impact is not one of regulation, not one of managing some law to ensure public safety, to ensure, you know, to keep order. It's something nice to have. So you have a second Carnival Tuesday; it's nice to have a social conscience. This one is not necessarily a social conscience, but how it's being presented, it sounds like a social conscience to make people happy and to conform to things.

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The truth is, do you really need to recognise outstanding people who have done... Any country? Of course, yes. And so, I also listened to my good friend in the West, Senator Britton, speak about the dear Prime Minister who was killed, and so I equipped to my good friend Senator Rahaman, I asked well, what date was Jesus Christ crucified, and he laughed.

So sometimes, we have to be careful how we connect things. How we connect things... Right? **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** So there was a day, so we found another day. And so, we have to be careful about the benchmark that we are using. And so I then asked myself some other questions surrounding this.

The issue of regulations. Where are the regulations that would guide how this is done? This is not the public. The public... And the interesting thing about this is when it happens, post. So, the debate on these issues happens post-post. Yes, the Governor-General, we cannot bring her name into dispute in the proclamation, et cetera, but this is discussing a matter that was closed technically. You know... Because it done happen already. And if this plan had to happen so long, there would be no regulation; it's a simple Motion of two lines. This could have been presented earlier, enough time before the real date of October 19th. Its two lines, not a big ten-page document. So I'm trying to figure out, as Senator Lewis was saying, the steps. This one didn't get caught in a quick step because this could have been done long, way ahead of October 19th.

So, do we need heroes? And I think this is the question: what do you do as a country? You have a day, you have a special holiday for this? It could be a holiday. It could not be a holiday. And if you're going to have a holiday, the question then is, what do you really do for this holiday? How do you... What are the protocols? How do you go about this recognition? What are the things that would constitute this recognition? Of course, the world has many countries, and there are many other countries which look at heroes, and there might be certain protocols of activities that they do. We'll be watching to see what the things are. The first one that took place, fine, its initiation. You're starting.

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You're learning. But if you're going to have a law which is going to be happening in this space, there must be regulations and protocols for those who come after us.

Now, it takes me to the next question, Madam President, the issue of... I'm saying, who are these heroes? Who will they be? Because how we frame certain things makes the minds think in certain ways and was clearly alluded to in public on October 19th, your mind tends to concentrate on things, people, and events. That's how the mind is; they will tell you that in psychology. Because this is a significant time, so when we speak about the death of Jesus Christ, we know that solemnness around that space of time, how things are framed. We know when carnival, for the Carnival Monday and Tuesday, we know how things are framed for that.

So I'm saying this to say we all know what October 19th was. And so, was that a suitable day? I think that's another point of consideration. And sometimes, there are ways to do things, and there are ways to do things. And so you wonder if this was sort of slipped in because the debate would come and say, well, you know, maybe we find another day, etcetera, so you slip it in, in the back. And these are all strategies, but they come back to the whole history of social conscience. Social conscience. And this day, October 19th, is a national sacred day, in my opinion, that shouldn't be tampered with.

**(Applause)**

What we are doing with it is that we are... **(Laughter)** It's like you have grapefruit juice, 100% grapefruit juice, but somewhere along the lines, you find you want to put water in it, or you feel you want to put salt in it, or you feel you want to put sugar in it. And so the truth is this could never be grapefruit juice 100%. It will be some drink that contains grapefruit and many other things. And so the question would ask, would October 19th be October 19th? It will never be. And so you'll find all those who like grapefruit, that would be their day; those who like sugar, that will be their day. And so, on that day, you would have a diversity of issues because you have too many things in the pot. In Saint Vincent, I think they call it "Boileen"; too many things in the pot.

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And it comes back to my fundamental point, Madam President, you'll have to put regulations to control all these sets of things that are going on because we are creating too many options. This is why technology comes with apps. With apps, they take complex things and do simple activities. So it has many apps, but when you focus on this, this app is for that, and I think we are making things complex.

Now, in our sector... See... We are late. We are very late. In our sector, in the Agriculture and Fishing Sector, where we may have a few MBEs, OBEs recognised by the Queen and the King, etcetera, we ask ourselves, where do they fit in this heroism business? Do they have to see you as a champion running down behind an old thief? So they run down a man, and so they're a hero? Where is the hero? They run down some thieves thieving their goat or their sheep or something, or they come up with some special technology and so on, and they recognise their contribution to innovation and stuff? So mentally, they ask themselves where they fit.

And so I went back to some previous readings I had, Madam President, with what they call the "principal of the October 19th", Maurice Bishop, then Prime Minister of Grenada. I call him the principal because everything surrounded him, as my good friend, Senator Britton, mentioned on the day he died. And if I may just quote here for the record because I think sometimes we miss little things.

Sometime in 1981, Maurice Bishop was giving a presentation. Madam President, and it could easily be searched on [www.maxis.org/history/grenada1981/education/04.htm](http://www.maxis.org/history/grenada1981/education/04.htm). Basically, at the inauguration of the N.I.S.T.E.P Programme, which is for teachers, he was speaking on many topics as he normally would do. And he spoke about this gentleman from Saint David again, another hero, Coonyahr, I think they call him. A 55 year-old. He developed this technology with beetles to control the beetles in cocoa because that's a big issue for cocoa. 127 acres. The whole history is there. And if I may say, this was done using no chemicals. He was using some African breadfruit (I'm not too sure what tree that is actually) plant that was attracting the beetles, and he set up a trap and held up to 205 beetles in a day. That's a lot. That's way back in 1981.

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But if I just quote the Honourable Prime Minister, then. He said, "*That is what I mean by creatively applying Science and Technology. The only technology that this brother—his name is Brother Coonyahr—knew was cutlass technology*". Yet he found new ways to do things. So, hear what he says. He said, "*So we don't have to use these chemicals now*"... **(Laughter)** Now, he's talking about not using chemicals. He used too much chemicals. "*... and a lot of farmers in the private sector are also seeking the services of Brother Coonyahr because they want his trap.*" But hear this, he says, "*He's become a kind of hero!*" Its way back in 1981. So this hero thing was there a long time ago. And so it wasn't October 19th.

And so the point I'm trying to make in this case, Madam President, is we need to relook, repeal and amend at some point, this day, where it can become a day that belongs to itself. And I think maybe that is where the consultation is needed in finding that suitability day, the day that would be so significant for the whole country. A time when nothing else is bothering it. Grenada, as an isle of conflict; we know almost every month, there is some funny thing that has happened that could taint us from January right down, but we could find a time. February seems to be a nice time because carnival used to be in February; we moved it to August. So things could move. We have a history of moving dates, Madam President. So moving a date is nothing unusual to us. And I think that is something that we need to consider.

But at the same time, I want our farmers, our fisher folks **(Time bell rings)** and many others in this country to know, that this hero's business, they can be a hero. It doesn't have to be on October 19th. They don't have to be a victim of October 19th. They don't have to have anything pertaining to that.

And so we want a day, in light of that, that is not October 19th. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** Okay... So we want a... Okay... So we want a day... We want a day that is not October 19th. I think the people would like a day. We would like a day. We would like a day, but it must not be... You know, sometimes we're afraid to say it, let's find another day, and I think it's fair, and I think it's just. If you do a poll, you may realise it might be the 18th; it might be the 21st. Let's find a suitable day and let us try to

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be inclusive so everybody feels that they have an opportunity to be a hero. It could be a five-year-old; it could be a three-year-old and let's have the regulations, let's see the regulations that pertain to this. I thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator. And I solicit the next participant in the debate. Is Senator Thomas? Gloria Thomas. You have requested the floor, Senator? With pleasure, please proceed.

**Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. I rise to support the Bill to amend the Schedule to the Bank Holidays (Amendment) Act CAP. 25.

The second Monday in August and the day following, which we refer to as Carnival August Celebration, is one where, despite not having the official day set as a holiday, we had to make a recommendation to the Governor-General to get the proclamation to have those days observe as holidays. Every year, we continue to do the same thing, and we have to go through the same process. I think taking the position where we could amend the Schedule now will save time in going forward.

On the second point of the Amendment to amend the Schedule, which speaks about October 19th, I want to say that I support October 19th to be considered as the day for Heroes Day. We speak about a neutral day. What is a neutral day? And I would like someone to answer that for me, please. There is no indication that the day we select is tied to any political party or any grouping. I think because there was this incident on the Fort, everybody just has it to believe that only this group of people we're considering as heroes. Heroes are yet to be born. We have current heroes who are alive, so Heroes Day is not tied to the grouping on the Fort. And I want us to be very clear about that. **(Applause)** Let us view this with optimism. Why are we tying this opportunity to the loss of life, to many things other than the possibility of positive things? So I just want us to be a little more broad-minded in our thinking.

We speak about people who are still traumatised, and if we have people who are still traumatised, I think, as a Nation, we have failed these people. Because after an event

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like that, such a traumatic event, and as Government, we did not put things in place to make sure that these people get the proper therapy and the proper counselling, and we come here and talk about people still traumatised. Whose fault it is? As a Government, I think we failed them. So it is not too late, and I think if we recognise people are still traumatised, there are ways to help them with healing. We know it is a very sensitive matter. We know it's a very traumatic situation, but we need to get people to work together to go past all these hurts and disappointments. We cannot give them a timeline, but after 41 years, I think probably, as a Government, we should work with them to make sure they go past those hurts and that trauma. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Thomas. I see the room is, if I may say a little bit, yes, the room is hungry **(laughter)** because restlessness has stepped in. And therefore, at the ripe hour of 1:57 p.m., with your leave, the Senate is suspended for lunch, and we will take up starting with Senator Lewis. The Senate is suspended for lunch. 45 minutes. Thank you.

**(Sound of gavel)**

**Senate adjourned for lunch at 1:57 p.m.**

**Senate resumed at 3:01 p.m.**

**Madam President:** The Senate is reconvened, and I trust you enjoyed your sumptuous and brief lunch. And the floor is passed to Senator André Lewis, Senator for Labour. Please proceed.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you very much, Madam President. And on this Bill before us, my understanding and I will start from where my colleague on my side here, colleague St. Clair made an observation that it was two bank holidays that we're trying to bring in. My understanding is that... Just for correction, that's not the case.

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I remember sometime last year, well earlier this year, during the Carnival season, someone had checked me in relation to this, and my review had indicated that sometime last year or so, Carnival Tuesday, which traditionally was a half bank holiday, was made a full holiday. So my reading of the Bill before us is that what we are seeking to do is to include a new bank holiday and not to make Carnival Tuesday a bank holiday because it is already a bank holiday. That's my understanding. If I'm... I'm just double... **(Inaudible comment)**. Okay. Thanks. ... Just for the record's sake.

I wish to start by... It would be redundant because whatever I say here is public, but to say publicly, I applaud the Government and thank the Government for taking the step to recognise October 19th as a public holiday. Yes? **(Applause)** So hear me. "October 19th", as a public holiday, in my view... My contribution will be different from declaring October 19th National Heroes Day. I want to make that separation.

I have listened to the contributions from many people, and even this morning here with my colleagues on the "Other Side," and there is conflation. On the one hand, it is said that National Heroes Day has nothing to do with the events of October 19th, and then it is said that National Heroes Day is to recognise what took place on October 19th, and it all depends on who is speaking from the "Other Side". And I wish to advance that National Heroes Day must not be, or should avoid as much as possible, opening up the can of worms that comes up every October month.

I know it is 41 years, and I know that some have advanced because 41 years is a long time. But, if we look at Northern Ireland, even if we look at South Africa, although they had more public processors to address some of the issues of their history, it is obvious, certainly from my end, and I know from others end, that there are certain events in their history that once it comes up, even 100 years after, even in the case of the Middle East, things that have been fought 1000 years after, it is spoken about as though it has happened only today. And do we want when we are observing our heroes, whoever they may be, that we must have heroes to be recognised? So, I have no difficulty with the two issues. The issue I have is putting both of them together.

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I want us to be able to recognise our heroes. Yes, there might be some people who may say, well, look, this person probably did not rise to the level of being a hero, but it must not be married to the emotions and controversies that October 19th was. And whichever side of the fence you fall on, if the emotions are raw, the emotions are raw.

One of my colleagues or two on the “Other Side” asked what a neutral day is. But certainly, a neutral day cannot be October 19th because of the emotions that it evokes. Be it Kirani’s birthday or be it T.A. Marryshow’s birthday... These are not married in controversies, and these are not married in our traumatic experiences.

I want to be able, and all of us want to be able, when we are recognising National Heroes Day, whatever national activity that is taking place, we will be free to observe it in a way even with music or someplace that the state does not feel obligated to decree to us that it should be done in a solemn manner or it should be done in a way that there is no loud music or music in public spaces.

If there is a hero from Labour, we want to be able on that day to have an activity that may take whatever form. If there is a hero from Sport, from the sporting fraternity, I’m sure that they will want to be able to mark that day, apart from the national activity, in some form that they do not have to be prescribed as to how it should be observed.

I understand why it may have taken us so long to declare October 19th a public holiday. And I’ll put something on the table here. I am of the view that our current leadership, at the highest level, was in the best place because of the time of birth and the time of probably non-direct involvement of the period of 1979 to 1983, to not carry certain emotional connections, so that the people experience.... Because, I mean, hundreds of years ago, Julien Fédon led his rebellion in the revolution, and some of us may speak about it today as though we were there. As a matter of fact, some of us will use it as the fire that ignites us as part of that fight. So that’s not the connection that I’m making. But I’m saying for those who are involved in the leadership of the country, whichever political party that was there, and I’m speaking about from 1984 to 2023, in some way, were directly involved either on “This Side” or “That Side”, who got locked up, who didn’t get locked up, who relatives lost their lives and who saw October 19th in a particular way.

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I don't believe there will be much resistance to October 19th being observed as a public holiday because it stands out. The issue that I have been coming across, and I've spoken to people from all different sides of the fence, and if we want to say that there aren't different sides of the fence, I think we'll be putting our heads in the sand.

What we have learned to do, which is something unique about us in Grenada, is that despite the differences that we have, which may materialise itself at a certain given time in history or at a date, we have been able to live together. I've come across people who wonder how we are making it, who are wondering, well, wasn't this person on one side, wasn't this person on the "Other Side"? How are they sitting together, serving on committees together, organising together? So that's one of the uniqueness of the Grenadian spirit.

So I stand in complete recognition and admiration of the Government, as I've said, for recognising October 19th as a public holiday. So there's absolutely no doubt in my mind about this. But, we must all agree that we cannot impose on people, especially family members, on different sides of the fence because people died on either side of the fence. People die on either side of the fence. It all depends on where you sit. I'm speaking about the people who are directly impacted, and I've spoken to some of them even up to this morning.

Because I want to... It's not about me. It's not just about you. It's not about because we are in the Senate or we are in Parliament, and we can just come and pass a Bill into law. And I don't think it should be just because we sit in the halls of government that we figure that this is the right way and this is what should be done. There are some things you need to do that. I totally agree with that because you are elected to make certain decisions, but we cannot deny that October 19th is not one of the regular days.

Do we wish... The month of October... I have seen colleagues, I've seen comrades, I've seen friends that once October comes, who are intellectually and academically advanced, who can sit and dissect impassionate history, who can sit and dissect events from near and far. However, when it comes to October, you sometimes wonder where some of this reasoning interplays.

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If it is the wish of the Government to add fuel to this fire, then so be it. I don't believe that's your wish. I don't believe that your wish. I believe that your wish is to have October 19th as a public holiday to recognise the day and to allow people in their own way to recognise it, and the state can be involved. I believe it is also your wish, correctly so, to have National Heroes and to have time for that. Could it be separated? Yes. Could it be separated? Yes. And I think that it ought to have been separated so that when we all attend a national function as National Heroes Day we would not be debating or arguing things that have had that traumatic impact upon us. I do not believe that it is within us to tell someone that 41 years have passed. That's enough for you to let go. Each person lets go on their own time. Each person lets go on their own time.

If it was possible for the "Other Side" to argue, because they are the presenters of the Bill, to argue that National Heroes Day has nothing to do with October 19th, then that would've been fine. But it's totally impossible in the Grenadian context, and I dear say within the regional context, and even internationally, for colleagues and comrades, and others who are ordnance followers of the process '79 to '83, to, on one hand, speak about October 19th without bringing back the events of '83. Once the events of '83 come up, it evokes passion and emotion. And, yes, there are people with different objectives, and that's okay. But we have a responsibility to take an approach if we agree to that day in our history as to what it signifies. I heard my colleague in his opening speak about certain roles that he played that day, up to a point. It speaks to the fact that it was only 41 years ago, and there will be different views. There will be different views.

It is my ardent wish, through you, Madam President, that as we seek to observe a National Heroes Day, in whatever form, that we can do it with the least possible controversy. It is my wish that as we do a National Heroes Day, we give an opportunity to those who have gone before us or those who may come or those who are among us that when their day is being celebrated or observed, it is done with as little controversy as possible. Allow the controversy to be as to whether or not that person deserves it. And I do not believe, I have confidence in us, that there might be more controversy as to who may be excluded rather than who is included because the pie is big. The pie is big.

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And give us, and the people who are being directly impacted, the opportunity on October 19th to not have to be “sharing”... Sharing is not the right word, but I will use it because I can't come up with a better word at the moment, but I'm hoping that my intention would be understood... Not to share with positive emotions because our heroes would be viewed with positive emotions. I'm expecting that. Yes? Because it's emotion... It's also emotional... Not viewed with positive emotion that day, when to them... And especially in the context where there's a major outstanding, and because the colleagues on the “Other Side” have introduced it, I'm going to go there.

I wish to place here, identify with, and call on the powers that be. A lot of research has been done by the PBC leaders, etcetera, to help locate the remains of those on October 19th we have not been able to find and therein lies part of the controversy. So I stand here. It was not my intention to go all there, but it is impossible to speak about these two matters on October 19th in the context in which it has been advanced by the presenter or the “Government Side” for what they have introduced for us not to go there. Our people deserve that; people deserve that. I know there are generations now that may not have been emotively involved, but it is for us to appreciate what the families on both sides, the families on both sides, right, the families, and what it means for them on that year.

So, Madam President, I wish to end by recognising and applauding the Government for finally declaring October 19th a public holiday. But I do not wish to support; I do not support the twinning of October 19th with National Heroes Day. Thank you very much, Madam President.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator, thank you for your clarity. Senator David Andrew, you have the floor, Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Madam President, I rise in full support of the Bill as presented by the Leader for Government's Business. Before I substantiate my support for this Bill, even as we begin to discuss the matters surrounding October 19th, I want to

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express again, condolences to the families that lost loved ones on either side of that day in history.

The very fact that we are discussing and talking about how traumatised people feel is evidence of the real pain that obviously still exists. And so, as a current Member of the Cabinet, not because I had anything to do with it, but I expressed deepest condolences to the loved ones and the surviving relatives of all who perished from the former wife of the former Prime Minister to other local Grenadians who died. Whether in service as ex-PRAs or those who died as former Ministers, I expressed condolences again to the family. This Government is committed to working with you and working with all stakeholders to unite our people around what is obviously an undeniably shared history that we cannot get away from.

Madam President, one Member asked about the underpinning behind October 19th, and for me, that's clear. The underpinning behind the selection of October 19th is the preservation of Grenadian's history. You see, colleagues, there will come a time when people younger than myself will not even know that there was a day, October 19th, if we don't take certain key actions. **(Applause)** You see, Bible history, for instance, Madam President, tells us that there was a time when Joseph ended up in Egypt. He became king and saved his people, and he was good friends with the Pharaoh and all of that, and then eventually, they came generations after that and did not know Joseph nor his people. And so they didn't understand the significance Joseph played for the survival of Egypt as a nation. And when I think of this, I think that we are on the verge, if we don't do what we are proceeding to do, of making that same error.

I'm not saying this light-heartedly because, you see, I appreciate colleagues, Madam President; lots of people were hurt, and I'm hearing the emotions in people's submissions. As a person trained in the sciences of human behaviour, I acknowledge that, I appreciate it and there is a place for it. And it's a shame that we have not allowed, officially as a nation, an opportunity for genuine national ventilation on a matter that has so significantly hurt our people and our nation.

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And that's why a lot of this is coming up now, you know because, for the first time in Grenadian history, we have tabled this matter seriously and put it on the national, you know, **(applause)** legislative agenda and brought it forward. And so the emotions that are coming up as if it has happened yesterday. But this I assure you, Madam President, is part of the healing process that this country must go through. **(Applause)** Needs. You see for 40 years, we kept it like if, well, it's just another day. It's too emotionally raw to deal with it. Let's leave it aside. Let's forget it. Let's pretend it didn't happen. Let's go to work as usual! Let's have school on the day as normal! But this Government is prepared to take the bold decision to make this a matter of legislative decision, and that's why it's brought to this House, so that two, three generations down the road, every Grenadian will know that on October 19th, something significant happened.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, there are two issues here: Why October 19th, and do we need Heroes Day? So why October 19th? I mean, we could all agree that we need Heroes Day. We want to have heroes. However, we define them and select them, and those criteria are not publicly discussed yet. But, however, we select them. However, we define them. However, they will be defined and selected by the Grenadian people, we agree. We want to have our heroes.

But let's look at October 19th, and as painful as it is, Madam President, that day reflects for me and for us one of the darkest days in Grenadian history since our independence and probably since associate nationhood and statehood. But, it reflects a day when a sitting Prime Minister was assassinated. A day when sitting Members of his Cabinet were gunned down. That is extremely significant. You see, the families, with God's protection upon them for as long as he wishes, will die. The surviving relatives will die. Mr. Lyden Ramdhanny reported that he was the last standing Member who served in the Cabinet. That was last year. I think he said that. I hope I'm correct about it. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Somebody else? The last standing Member of the Cabinet. I think he said that. I'm quoting him. Okay, so there may be others. I stand to be corrected. But the point I'm making, colleagues, Honourable Members, is that in a couple of decades, a lot of the surviving family members who are now hurt, which we

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must deal with, will be gone. What is going to be there to share the story, to mark this history and mark this?

And on October 19th, in my mind, the ultimate sacrifice was made. The ultimate sacrifice was paid for what the leaders then believed was the philosophy that guided governance. Whether I agree with it or not, whether we agree with it or not, these were the people in office. Whether they died defending or opposing, there were strong philosophical perspectives that, at the point of governance, they defended and supported. And to give a life up is an ultimate, heroic sacrifice that be made. And so, for me, if there's any day that signifies heroes or that tells a story of what heroic acts look like, it's October 19th, so it sets an appropriate context for that day.

Now, I can appreciate that there is a dilemma that some people present, Madam President, that while heroes can be of any description this seems to be pegged to a tragic day that we want to keep in a very solemn way, but yet we might have people like Doctor Kirani and some of the other known heroes or heroic figures. How do we celebrate while you tell me to be sombre, but we can't celebrate those people we want to jump about and scream about? But I see there are opportunities for that. The proper discussion could allow us to. There are several options, Madam President. We could name heroes on October 19th and honour them on Independence. We can apportion the first part of the day for solemnity and the national services and then have a certain time within which celebrations could take place. There are several permutations that, if we distil properly, could see that address. I can appreciate the dilemma. It doesn't have to be all or nothing, but I see we have a golden opportunity to do both.

You see some persons mentioned on the "Other Side", we're perpetuating a divide. But I want to ask, what is creating the divide? What is creating the divide, which is being spoken about? Are we talking about the hurt and the emotions that people are entitled to because they lost loved ones? Of course, they are entitled to it. Do we want to crystallise them in that space? Psychologically, it will result in a pathological response as a nation and as a person. As a clinician. You don't hold people crystallised in some emotional

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space for longer than it is necessary for them to be there. In fact, you encourage them to debrief. You encourage them to express, to catechise and to get it out.

And so, I appreciate all that's happening. The discussion... It must. The differing views are what creates the divide? But you see, Madam President, if this is what we are alluding to that creates the divide, it means we have yet to learn some of the important lessons that the Revolution and its demise taught us. The need for tolerance. The need to respect opinions, differences, and dissenting voices. These elements contributed to the forlorn Revolution and the collapse in 1983.

And I listened very carefully to some of the speakers as they addressed us at the very first October 19th Celebration at the stadium, and they talked about the lessons we need to learn. The tolerance; even though my neighbour Senator may have a different view, I don't have to pick up a gun and shoot him. We condemn that. And we don't have to remain insular because you have a different view of me, and the revolution taught us the need for that. And if we don't take that lesson and we continue just the way, we're going and say, well, it hurts, and it causes pain, so let's keep it there, let's leave it there, we are going to remain for the next 40 years in the same place. **(Applause)** We don't want that, Madam President.

And I'm quick, I'm hasten to add that this Government is keen on working with all family members. In fact, we've made outreaches to past PRAs. We've made outreaches to the families, and we have many more of these undertakings on the card to reach out to all of the family members and other persons who may be hurting, who never had a chance to engage, at probably this kind of level, to be able to do that. We are going to support this process till they feel sufficiently ventilated and that the bigger picture is seen. Because, at the end of the day, the families are hurt; yes, we appreciate that, but Grenada as a nation was hurt. Grenada. All of us, as Grenadian people, our democracy and our independence were traumatised too. **(Applause)** And while we can facilitate the families in their grief and in their loss through a clinical process, how do we as policymakers take note of that if not through policy, if not through legislation to cement what is arguably one

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of the darkest days since Grenada's Independence? We have to do this. But we are prepared to support the families.

Madam President, I think we've waited much too long to get to this point. If we had had this conversation 20 years ago, do you think we'd have been in this place? If we had this conversation 20 years ago, we'd have the same kind of outcry we are having now, but do you think we'd have been there? We wouldn't have been. We'd have been far more advanced. And so we understand, yes, it's a painful pill, but I see no better day than October 19th. We can discuss the permutations that would allow us to preserve all of the various interests that need to be accounted for. This Bill gives us an opportunity to marry both heroes so that people understand it has to be something of significance. And whenever my grandson, I don't have any yet, down the road or my great grandson asks one day, what happened on October 19th, why did they call it Heroes Day, we'll get this chance to tell the story again and keep our history alive.

So, Madam President, I fully support this Bill, and as Minister for Education, with all of the pushes that we have made to advance Grenada's history in school, all of this is part of who and what we have to embrace to help solidify and redefine our identity. George Brizan wrote "*Grenada: Isle of Conflict*". But, I think if we don't learn from the pages of those books that talk about the conflict, and we don't learn the conflict mitigation and conflict management strategies, we are doomed to repeat the same thing and create further conflict probably volume two and that's not what we want.

So, Madam President, having said all of this, I'm very satisfied to offer my full support to this Bill and recommend it to my colleagues for their support likewise. I thank you very much.

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator Andrew, the first generation after the Revolution. I offer the floor to Senator Salim Rahaman.

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**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Madam President. I hope to be brief, a lot has been said and I don't want to be too repetitive, but there are certain things that need to be said.

One, is that I would like to also join with my colleague André in commending this Government for recognising and identifying and putting it in its proper context. I was there last year at that first October 19th service at the stadium, and it was a beautiful event. It was an event of healing. It brought emotions and tears to many people, and even for someone like myself who was a lot younger, you could feel the emotion in a lot of our elders, and you could see it. It was very important, and I'd like to commend them for that.

**(Applause)**

The idée in Grenada, where we have a solemn day, a day of reflection, is important for the health of our conscience as a people. It's not, every holiday must be a jump up and a fete. And from a business perspective, every time you have one of those holidays, the day after, people don't show up to work. **(Laughter)** That's the reality. They need to recover from the rum or whatever it is that they were doing, the activities, the exercises that they were doing. So, we don't need more of that. We have that in carnival and an abundance of that. We have that end-of-year, old year's night. Anytime you look twice, that's what we have. You don't need to give a Caribbean person an excuse to have a fete. **(Laughter)** So, we need a day when people will reflect on the past when our children and our grandchildren will reflect upon what happened. I understand that there are certain heroes that you want to celebrate, and I understand that conflict, but this is something that I shared with my colleague, Senator Andrew, about Independence Day; my thoughts on Independence Day.

Independence Day is a day to celebrate our democracy. And if we want to recognise a living hero on that day and his contribution to our democracy, we can do it on that day, as well. There's nothing barring us from doing that, but we need to have a day when we reflect, and perhaps I will give a suggestion to this Government. Perhaps Heroes Day needs to be reserved for Grenadian Heroes who have passed on. And when we are speaking about living heroes, we celebrate them on our Independence Day.

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**(Applause)** And that could be a possible solution. That could meet all the requirements of everyone. Independence Day is a day to be happy, a day to celebrate and Heroes Day is a day. So, our former Governor General, Sir Danny Williams, who just passed away, could be celebrated on October 19th, Heroes Day.

So this would solve some of the divide. But we definitely need a day when Grenadians need to reflect, a day when we have events, and we build them out. We might not have... people say, what are you going to do on that day? We've never had it before, so it's something that we need to build out. If you have another day of fete, you will know what to do on that day, people will find things to do on that day, the same thing they do on all the other holidays where they... you know... as mentioned before.

So, that is my contribution. I hope that they can, perhaps, consider it. We don't need another feting day. I applaud the Government for taking a bold step. It is something that they didn't have to do, and the reason why it's causing all of this discussion is because it is something that is still very, very raw in the minds of a lot of our elders and our people, and we're not going to be able to heal unless we address it.

And finally, I want to mention that not because something negative happened on a day it means you can't get good out of it. **(Applause)** Because when you look at Independence Day, let's say, the United States people died to get independence, but they celebrated every year. Right? So, we have to understand as a democracy and mature a little bit. But if it is, that is the feeling of the country that this is so sensitive that they don't want to mix the two; as I mentioned, we have Independence Day to celebrate our living heroes, and we have the solemn day of October 19th to celebrate our heroes that have passed on. I submit that for their consideration. I thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Rahman. Thank you for your suggestions to the Government. And Senator Claudette Joseph you have the floor.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to lend my full, unreserved support to the Bill before the House. Madam

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President, I first register my endorsement of the sentiments expressed on “This Side” of the House, especially those expressed by Senator David Andrew. In fact, he has, by the contribution he made, caused me to be able to truncate my contribution because I was going to advance some of the same suggestions that he made in his presentation.

Firstly, Madam President, from where we sit in Government, and I will make bold to say from where I personally sit in choosing a National Heroes Day for Grenada, I could not think of any other day but October 19th. Madam President, it is not disputed either here or in the “Other Place” that a National Heroes Day is a welcomed initiative. As a matter of fact, if I recall well, and I will make bold to quote the Leader of the Opposition in the “Other Place” from memory. He said, “*A National Heroes Day is a necessary initiative*”, and, of course, he added the “*but*” because when you're in Opposition, you're there to oppose. That's how some people see it. And I fully agree with him in that statement.

It's a necessary initiative and the particular day chosen was carefully considered for some of the reasons already advanced by Senator Andrew and my other colleagues on “This Side”. And also, Madam President, because if you look historically at almost all countries that celebrate national heroes, and I have some of them jotted down here: Jamaica, Philippines, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, East Timor, Indonesia, Mozambique, Paraguay, the United Kingdom and several others, what they have in common apart from having a national holiday declared, National Heroes Day, is the genesis of that holiday, nationals of those countries, for one reason or another, national of those countries paying the ultimate sacrifice most times while serving their country. I will repeat that. Nationals, that's the genesis, nationals paying the ultimate sacrifice in service or defence of their country and having chosen those days that co-inside with certain specific events, heroes of all hues, colours, backgrounds and contributions are chosen, commemorated and celebrated on that day, but that's the genesis.

We in Grenada, in choosing October 19th are no different. We are no different. Whether you subscribe philosophically or not with the people who were on the receiving end of the bullet on October 19th, we cannot deny the fact that they died because they

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were in service of Grenada. They died because they were Members of the Cabinet serving. They were Members of the Government, that's why they died. That's why some of them died in the way that they died, not by crossfire but by execution. So the genesis of October 19th as our National Heroes Day is well and truly grounded and accords with what happens internationally.

The other thing, Madam President, is this. We need to forever cement and immortalise certain key days in our history. **(Applause)** So, just naming it a day, we don't have the option of two holidays. I think Senator Rahaman would agree with me on that. It's one holiday. We can't give two holidays because some, as Senator St. Clair points out, already argue we have too many holidays.

Madam President, one way of immortalising what occurred on October 19th is by making it a day that our country will always remember. Even as we celebrate heroes who have performed heroic acts and are recognised for all their types: sports, culture, literature, arts, whatever, when a child 100 years from now asks their parent, why is today a holiday or why was the day chosen as National Heroes Day, the story that will be told would be what happened on October 19th, 1983. Not that we're hanging onto it, but that we must never forget, and, too, we must never repeat. We must never repeat.

So we choose the day to remind our people where we were in that moment, how we are transitioning and how, ultimately, we will transcend that moment while never forgetting the lessons. Because, Madam President, if my memory serves me well, there was another massacre in Grenada on October 19th during the Fédon Rebellion.

If my memory of history serves me well this wasn't the first October 19th tragedy on this land. We don't remember the other one because we never cemented, and we don't cement these events in history. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** And as we mature... **(Laughter)** So we're repeating it? So we're repeating? If it wasn't October 19th, that I believe it was from my recollection, but if it wasn't October 19th, a similar event happened in the Market Square during the Fédon Rebellion, where the leaders were killed. So we must know that we must never go back. And by marking that day to

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commemorate our persons, some of whom would have made the ultimate sacrifice, some of whom would have brought us glory by their accomplishments, their feats, we are also reminding present and future generations never again. That's all we're doing.

**(Applause)**

So, Madam President, to suggest that we choose a neutral day with no particular significance, to me would be, with all due respect to my good friend, Senator Hosford, would be an act of cowardice. You just, what go in neutral, straddle the fence? Well, men know what happens when you straddle the fence for too long. **(Laughter)** Right? So, the suggestion of a neutral day or another unnamed day, I think that is not the kind of... **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** No. **(Laughter)** That is not the kind of leadership that the Grenadian people bargained for. No. And while we may say, okay, choose Marryshow's birthday or choose some other day, those days, with the greatest of respect, do not ring true to the current population, and mind you, Marryshow died on October 19th, I think. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Yes. Was in 1956 he died or '58? October 19th. Check it out. Right? So that day has a lot of significance in our history. Right.

So, Madam President, I fully endorse the sentiments supporting the Bill. And I'll repeat. In our analysis, this is exactly the kind of day. We couldn't think of a better day to undertake this very necessary initiative, as the Leader of the Opposition puts it, than October 19th. And may I remind you that sometimes we don't just sit in Opposition just for the sake of opposing. You don't disagree with people in authority and leadership who are in leadership by-elections because you don't agree with decisions. **(Laughter)** A Government is elected to lead and to make decisions.

And I don't, Madam President, understand the Opposition now when we declared October 19th 2023, as a national holiday, National Heroes Day, the first National Heroes Day, which we indicated would be commemorated yearly going forward. A lot of the people who were making a lot of noise now congratulated us, celebrated the idea and participated in the event at the stadium. **(Applause)** They were there. Some of them spoke, but all of a sudden, we come now to make good and to cement what we declared

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last year, pass it in the law now and it's all of a sudden a lot of objections and some of the people who happily participated and said that "*Long last October 19th is a holiday and better yet Heroes Day*", all of a sudden they're in a lot of grief and its painful.

What is painful about this decision? What? The other option is for October 19th 1983, to eventually die because it was all but dead under the previous dispensation. It was just another day when a few people went up on the Fort, laid some wreaths, sang a few hymns and went back to work. They didn't even get a full day off. They didn't even get a full day off. That is what October 19th was up to 2022. So what we pretending about? If we so want the memories of the people we lost on that day to live on, how better, how better to cause those memories to live on than to make this a national holiday, which was a call for decades? So, you know, the young people have a thing that they say, "*Some people hate what they like*".

So, Madam President, we are satisfied that once more, we are doing right by the people of Grenada, and we could not choose a better day to commemorate our heroes, past and future. And I just make the point it is not just about October 19th, and it's not contradictory. The holiday is not just going to be about October 19th going forward because you have a tradition. You conform, first of all, you acknowledge what has happened, and then you transcend. So it's not about October 19th only.

We have not declared any heroes. The Administration has made it clear, and the Prime Minister did so in his address on October 19th in Progress Park and he indicated that there would be a process which would involve extensive consultations in determining who our first declared heroes would be.

And we are going to set up a hero's park on the old Rivera site near Camerhogne Park, the park that the previous administration literally gave away. Right? We have again acquired that property for the people of Grenada (**applause**) and there we will erect a hero's park, so it's not just about the day. We are serious. So our children and even some of the not-so-young ones will actually have images of who our Grenadians, who have made great contributions, including the ultimate sacrifice, are and were. And so, it's a package, Madam President, which we are very pleased to give to the Grenadian people,

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and we know when all is said and done when all the emotions have abated, the people of Grenada will celebrate and be pleased with this decision of their Government. Thank you, Madam President.

**Madam President:** I thank the Senator, Attorney General, and historian. **(Laughter)** I believe the Leader of Government's Business has requested the floor. You have the floor, Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Joseph:** Thank you very much, Madam President, and after this debate, if we were in the classroom, I guess my colleagues would have done so well. I think by now, the entire population is convinced that we have made the right decision.

But, Madam President, let me thank everybody for their contribution to this valuable debate. I think it is necessary, and I believe that having such a debate in the Upper House augurs well in terms of going forward and people understanding what leadership is all about when the tough decision has to be made, it must be made.

Madam President, I just want to say a few words on the whole question of unity. One of the main objectives of this Administration in designating October 19th as National Heroes Day is the whole question of unity, contrary to what Senator Doctor Mayanna Charles was saying, in terms of our action, that it would not create a high level of unity among our people. I didn't see any evidence presented to really substantiate what was being said.

Having said that, I ask the question, why are we still holding on after 40 years to something that created division in our society? After 40 years, Madam President, people are still making the point that this one did wrong to this one, and that one did wrong to this one, and I'm not talking to this one. Madam President, we have to let go at some point in time. There are people in this country who made 25-plus years in prison because of this activity. They are out of prison and well-integrated into our society. There are people, Madam President, who for 40 years would not come together and sit down as

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man and woman and discuss issues. At the same time, children of those who died are integrating and marrying some of the people and relatives of those who were accused of killing the others.

Madam President, the objective of this Administration is to unite the forces after 40 years. And hence, the reason why today when, this Administration took the decision to produce the \$50 note with Eric Mathew Gairy on one side and Maurice Bishop on the other side. To me, the general public gave the Government a round of applause. Something if I thought about 20 years ago I would not have accepted, but this is the kind of unity that we want to develop among our nation, Madam President.

Madam President, you know, October 25th was declared a public holiday, and we named it Thanksgiving. There was no debate. No questions were asked: why is October the 25th? It could have been any other day. But why was the day October 25th selected when, on that particular day, Grenadians lost their lives fighting? And don't get vexed with people for fighting in that war because many people would have believed and been convinced that they were fighting to defend their country. And those who die in battle, Madam President, they have relatives too. So when October 25th comes, and we're jumping about and feting, those parents and grandparents who lost their young sons and daughters in their 20s are grieving.

We make no noise about that. We don't demonstrate about that, but we are here after 40 years talking about the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues who died. And mind you, let me make that point. It is very important. Very important. Because while some people want to make us believe that conflict never existed anywhere else, the Grenadian people know much better than that. I have never left Grenada for 40 years and saw what in-fighting cost the NDC. They were out of office, and the Grenadian people did not forgive them for that until they put their house in order. **(Applause)**

So when we sit by and we say that what happened during the Revolution was a crime to some people and glory to others, Madam President, it is the in-fighting that caused that, and we must rise above that. We cannot hold onto that for 40 years, Madam President. And, this Administration will continue to bridge gaps. Madam President, we

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must not lose sight of what happened on October 25th and what happened during the four and a half years during the Revolution. And, all the glorious days we speak about during the Revolution must be credited to the New Jewel Movement, but hasten to say that the demise of the Revolution must be blamed on the NJM at the same time. So differences, it's conflict, and we must resolve the issues.

I am good friends with people on "Both Sides", and it's a beauty to see what we come together at times, Madam President. Madam President, all actors on that day meant well for their country. Errors... Don't be afraid to make mistakes... Mistakes are very expensive. Some of us make mistakes, and we cannot even recover from them. Several attempts were made to resolve those matters. We had truth and reconciliation. But after 40 years, some people are still talking about "This Side" and "That Side". Time for us to come together as one nation (**applause**) and that is exactly what we are doing with October the 19th, Madam President.

Madam President... In this House... I've followed Grenada's politics since the days of Uncle Gairy, thereafter, invasion, elections, and democratic rules. This Administration is the only administration, the only administration, the only political organisation that has taken the step for the state to be part and parcel of uniting the people. Everybody else ducking. They ducking! They do not want to deal with the matter and we are going to go further than that, Madam President, because there comes a time when you must recognise your own people as a nation. You must recognise your own people. There'll be more news and there'll be more debate in this House, but the National Democratic Congress will go forward with anything to make sure that the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique are properly and well united, Madam President.

Madam President, on that particular day, October 19th, we were not executing rapists, thieves or criminals; that's not the people that died in this country; we know that. The people who died in this country were sons and daughters that we embraced. I've never seen a bigger crowd assemble in Grenada than on that particular day. I was a part of the crowd as a student and that tells something. And if we cannot recognise that day, what could we recognise? If we cannot as a nation acknowledge that day... We speak

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about Julien Fédon, T.A. Marryshow, Uriah “Buzz” Butler, and Kirani James. We speak about a lot of people. Junior Murray... But those days are very significant. Very, very significant. And when you leave Grenada and you travel, Madam President, people talk about those days. And it does not always bring sadness to you; it all depends on how cynical you are, not how negative you are or how positive you are; you could be very proud of it; it all depends on how you look at it.

And this Administration is very positive and out of what came out of it, Madam President, we will make something positive by uniting the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)** The sacrifice that these people make, our sons and daughters, must be acknowledged and must be recognised.

And so, Madam President, I stand here well associated with this Bill. I stand here, Madam President, proud of it, and I will stand and defend it come what may. And so, Madam President, I really and truly submit this very important Bill for the approval by this Honourable House. I thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator Honourable Adrian Thomas. Honourable House, you have now heard the closing statement following the debate.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

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

**Madam President:** Senator Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill, Clause by Clause.

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**Question put and agreed to.**

**Senate in Committee.**

**Senate resumes.**

**Madam President:** Honourable Members, I have to report that the Senate has resumed, and I have the Honour to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole Senate and passed without amendment. Honourable Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

**Madam President:** Thank you.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Madam President:** Senator Thomas.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time and passed.**

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

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to introduce the first reading of a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Tax Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

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

**Madam President:** Senator Adrian Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the Senate be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all its Stages at this Sitting.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Madam President:** Senator Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I stand here for the second time to bring this very important piece of legislation into this Honourable House today, Madam President, with the challenging issues that vulnerable nations like Grenada face. Madam President, terrorism is a serious challenge. And, therefore, we are very obligated to make sure that we do everything possible to prevent such activities from happening, not only from affecting Grenada, but we do not want to get ourselves involved in the aided and abating of activities that will cause destruction to our nation and to other nations. And, therefore, Madam President, in playing our brotherly role in the global community, we bring this very important Bill to this Honourable House. And this Bill, Madam President, seeks to amend the Tax Administration Act No. 14 or 2016 to enhance the

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integrated legislative framework to combat money laundering and terrorism financing. Madam President, it's a very short Bill and it contains only two Clauses.

Clause 1, obviously, provides for the short title. The substantive part of the Bill is in Clause 2, Madam President. Madam President, its primary objective is to enhance the powers of investigation of the Office of Comptroller of Inland Revenue. This Bill, Madam President, seeks to insert in subsection (8A) and (8B) to section 27. And it provides for an officer so authorised by the Comptroller of Inland Revenue to conduct an investigation if the authorised officer has reasonable grounds, Madam President, for suspecting that information provided to the Comptroller may be incomplete or inaccurate. So some discretionary power is being called here in this piece of legislation that we are bringing to the forefront, Madam President.

But it goes further, Madam President, to say and to indicate that the authorised officer would be required to serve a written notice to a person who has possession or control of any information, any information that is going to aid, Madam President, in solving the problem, any book, records or document which is relevant to the primary investigation and the authorised officer is empowered to produce a written statement, evidencing the information received.

As I said, Madam President, it is a very short Bill, and I now commend this very important Bill to this Honourable House for discussion, and I seek the support of my fellow colleagues on "Both Sides" of the House. Thank you.

**Question put.**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. Senator Rahaman.

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Madam President. When I saw this intent to amend the Act, this Bill, I went to the Act of 2016 to which it refers, Act No. 14 of 2016. And, it refers us to section 27 of that principal Act. And, in reading the section of that principal Act, it speaks about access to information, assets and land, and it starts off

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by saying that “*An authorised officer may enter a business premises, or other premises opened to the public, without prior notice, for an authorised purpose*”.

At first glance, I don't understand why the introduction to this speaks to money laundering and terrorism financing because, to me, that has to do with the other Bills and not the Tax Administration because when you look at the Act that it is referencing and you look at the number 27, it speaks nothing to the sort. It speaks about collecting taxes and what the Comptroller or his appointee is so permitted to do. It goes so far as to say... So I am at a loss for this.

I mean, I have looked at this, and when you go to 27 (8), which it references, it says 27(8) says, “*If a person asserts privilege under law over documents or other evidence which the Comptroller wishes to seize or examine pursuant to this section, the materials over which privilege is claimed shall be deposited into envelopes which are then sealed and retained unopened by an officer of the Division pending an application by the Comptroller to a court of competent jurisdiction to determine whether the items in question are privileged*”. So... So... I mean, are we talking about the same section 27 of that Act? Because I am getting this... my information is from laws.gov.gd. So I would like some clarity on that.

But in any event, if it refers to this Act which it claims to refer to, my issue... I mean, the Government has a right to collect taxes, and so they have a right to pursue that collection according to the law in a reasonable way, so A and B are fine. But C... Where it says, “*Answer questions either at once, or at such time and place as may be specified in the notice*”. The last time I checked, a citizen is under no obligation to answer at once. I believe there is a right to remain silent. So, in any event, if you are seeking to get information out of a business person by interviewing them, most business people know very little about their taxes because other people do it. Most business people, whether small or large have an account or staff that deals with the day-to-day accounts, clerical duties and updating. So, what are you going to ask them and what information you're going to get? So, whilst I agree, as I said and I support, Government has the right

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to collect because you have to pay the nation's Bills, we have to do so fairly and according to the law. That last sentence, "*Answer questions either at once or, at such time and place as may be specified in the notice*", I don't find that that is... I don't see how that could be allowed.

Another point is, can you imagine, Madam President, if you have an officer assigned by the Comptroller? Now we know that Comptrollers at times are appointed by Government of the day, right, of IRD, and the Comptroller may tell an officer to go and do so and so for me, that officer could be working for one year in the department, any authorised officer, so the Comptroller empowers this person under the law, you are authorised to go and do that, go and check so and so. What if that person is a known opponent of Government? There is a real opportunity there for victimisation if you're going to approach a person and interview them and ask them questions on the spot. This Act has given an allowance for officers to enter people's homes with permission since 2016, not this; this has been approved since 2016, or with a magistrate's order, all right, that is what the Act says if we are quoting from the same Act.

So, I find it very, very heavy-handed. As a matter of fact, the wording is very important. And, while we support the Government's equitable collection of taxes to run the country, we need to make sure that in the future, I would like to suggest consultation between those who are preparing the wording and the business community if it has to affect the business community. The Chamber of Commerce is an entity that's over 100 years old, so we have people in there and in the business community that have, you know, good experience, and we would like to be consulted on things as important as this. We understand that it is not possible to consult on everything, and the Government does consult, like the minimum wage and so on.

But I would like to suggest that you either remove the line, point C pending a proper explanation, or you reword it to read, "*The taxpayer or his appointee must answer questions at such future time and place as may be specified in the notice*". So instead of saying that you have to answer at once, you are saying that "*the taxpayer or his appointee*", meaning the accountant or the accounting staff, "*must answer questions*",

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because you have to satisfy the law, “*must answer questions, at such future time and place as may be specified in the notice*”. So nobody is coming upon you in your premises and asking you a set of questions that you have to answer now in that sort of top-down way which can lead to an abuse of power.

So these are just some things that I had to flag because everything else seems fine, so, I didn't know how that relates to terrorism and money laundering. I don't see that connection. It talks about collection, information and records and so on, and it's under tax and the Act that it references speaks to tax collection primarily and so I would just like to submit that.

In closing, I would like to submit, and I repeat again, you either remove line C pending a proper explanation or you reword it to say that “*The taxpayer or his appointee must answer questions at such future time and place as may be specified in the notice*”. Therefore, you get what you want but you're not going into people's place demanding that they give you information now. I thank you.

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator Rahaman. Perhaps, we can have some other comments on that particular point in particular before there is a response to a request for an amendment. Is there any other response or suggestion on that point? All right.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, I rise to lend support to the Bill now before this Honourable House, the Tax Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2024. Madam President, this Bill and the Terrorism Act and Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill are all connected with Grenada meeting its obligations under the neutral evaluations that must take place, Grenada being a Member of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force.

And, as a Member of the CFATF, as it is shortened at times, we are to be constantly evaluated to ensure that our legislative regime is not only integrated but is efficient and as robust as possible to combat the incidents of financial crimes, anti-money

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laundering and crimes related to terrorist financing. And, of course, these crimes are connected with all matters financially, including the administration of the tax regime in the respective jurisdictions. So, in our last evaluation in 2021, we were to strengthen our regime by making certain amendments, and that applies to all countries that are a part of the CFATF globally. So this is basically what we are doing by making these amendments and implementing these measures that will strengthen our regime, our general legislative scheme and also our tax regime to insulate it further from the incidents of financial crimes.

So that is what basically these amendments are. They are required for us to become compliant. In some respects, we are not compliant. In some respects, we are partially compliant. If we do not make these changes... It is not just legislation; some are policies, and some are regulations that don't come here. It is a whole slew of measures we need to take to become compliant. The risk we run if we do not become compliant is that we could be blacklisted ultimately and, of course, we know the adverse consequences to our economy when a country is blacklisted, the limitations on borrowing and so on. So this is what this is about.

The concern raised by Senator Rahaman, in relation to the authorised agent having certain powers and let me just clarify to this Honourable House that the authorised officer is the Comptroller of Inland Revenue or any person authorised by the Comptroller in writing. Let me just correct that. Not just any person. Any employee of the Division of Inland Revenue authorised in writing by the Comptroller that person would be the authorised officer. So it's not just anybody.

And, Madam President, in terms of providing information under the amended section 77 where an investigation is taking place... So, it's not just in a vacuum. It is within the context of an investigation and if questions are put and the answers are readily available, they can be given at once as indicated in the legislation or at such time and place as may be specified. So it's not that answers would be demanded of you that you indicate you do not have and that you must give. So, if you have the information required by the investigation and you can provide it at once, you do. If you don't, you will be given a notice, as the subsection says, as to the time and place where the information is to be

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provided. So there's no harm or prejudice as such as feared by the Honourable Senator, neither is there any opportunity as such for overreach or victimisation because the Comptroller is the authorised agent or a person working in the division authorised in writing. So they would be officers in the division authorised by the Comptroller, and the Comptroller is not subject to direction in appointing the authorised officer; when I say direction, I mean the external direction.

So, Madam President, we are under our international obligation as members of the CFATF and the wider FATF family to come into compliance and be in a position where we have a good rating, which would augur well for our economy and our ability to do business out there as a nation. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Joseph. I see no further requests for the floor. Senator Rahaman may want to respond. Is it Senator Rahaman or Senator Lewis?

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Yes.

**Madam President:** When you are ready, sir.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Madam President, thank you. Just in conversation with my colleague on the side here as part of what we are trying to achieve and because he has already spoken, I am using this to seek some further clarification on the side here.

The principal Act that we are looking at is Act 14 of 2016, on access to information which is section 27; we are seeking to amend subsection (8) by putting an 8A. Yes? So, help me here. But, when we look at the principal Act under 27 when we look at number seven, that's seven before eight, it appears to be speaking about diplomats and those who may have immunity in the existing principal Act. And number eight seems to be referring to number seven where you exert or where you call for privileges under that protection. Yes. And, therefore, we are having a difficulty as we're trying to sort out

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among ourselves here how does the Amendment 8A ties in with this because we are dealing with privileges.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph: (Inaudible comment)** Could we do that when we resolve into the Committee?

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: (Inaudible comment)** Point taken. Once you... okay good.

**Madam President:** Senator Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you very much, Madam President, and I would like to thank the Member on the "Other Side" for his contribution and clarification we had from the AG. And, therefore, Madam President, I look forward to this Honourable House understanding the nature of this Bill and endorsing it for the sake of our country.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

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

**Madam President:** Senator Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill, Clause by Clause.

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**Madam President:** Thank you.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Senate in Committee.**

**Senate resumes.**

**Madam President:** Senators, I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole Senate and passed with full discussion, no amendment. Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move that the Chair's Report be adopted.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Madam President:** Senator.

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

**Madam President:** Thank you.

**Question proposed.**

**(Inaudible comment by Senators)**

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**Madam President:** Senator Thomas are you with Joseph? Are you? You are with us and we can go forward with the third and final reading? Yes.

**(Madam President converses with the Clerk privately)**

**Madam President:** I am waiting for her. Give her a minute. Yes, yes, yes. No, no, no...

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act...

**Madam President:** Just a minute, Clerk.

**Clerk:** ... shortly entitled, Tax Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

**Madam President:** Senator Joseph, you indicated... You... Are you interested in speaking or can I proceed to the vote?

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** No, Madam President:

**Madam President:** Thank you. I'll proceed to the vote.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time and passed.**

**Madam President:** Clerk.

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

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**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** He has to call the Bill. **(Inaudible comment by Senators) (Laughter)** Madam President, my apologies. I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, the Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

**Madam President:** Thank you Senator, presenter of the Bill.

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

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the Senate be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all its Stages at this Sitting.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Madam President:** Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, I beg to move that the second reading of the Bill be taken at this time.

**Question proposed.**

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, this Bill, the Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, 2024, is grounded in the same reasons as I explained during the debate on the Tax Administration Bill. These amendments are to ensure that we tighten our legislative regime and come into compliance with our obligations as a Member State of the Caribbean Financial Task Force.

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The Bill seeks to amend the Terrorism Act No. 16 of 2012, to enhance the integrated legislative framework to combat money laundering and terrorism financing. This Amendment Bill has 11 clauses. Clause 1 really deals with the sort title of the Bill which I have already indicated.

Clause 2 provides for the amendment to section 2 where it proposes to insert some new definitions in the definitions section there, including a definition for “designated entity”, one for “funds or other assets”, and “regulated entity”, and to revise the definition of a “listed entity” and the definition of “terrorism”. The revision of the definition of terrorism will contemplate acts against international organisations and acts involving the use of firearms, explosives, chemical, biological or nuclear weapons and any other weapon or means of mass destruction.

And we have the current definition of terrorism, which involves the use of or threat of action where their action falls within paragraph (b), which I will explain shortly. The use or threat of action designated to influence or designed to influence the Government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public; the use or threat of action for the purpose of advancing political and religious or ideological causes; the use or threat of action which constitutes an offence within the scope of or as is defined in any of the treaties listed in the Fifth Schedule; and also actions that fall within serious violence against a person, serious damage to property, endangers the life of a person other than that of persons committing the offence or the actions, creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public or is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system (that's a new element there) and then it goes on, Madam President, as detailed in subsections (c) and (d).

In the new section, there is an expansion to define terrorism as including a threat of action, whether occurring inside or outside of Grenada or whether or not relating to Grenada. So there's an expansive interpretation of terrorism and also an expansion to include actions that involve serious damage to property wherever situated and actions that endanger the life of a person wherever situated. And then down in paragraph (b), it is expanded to include the threat of action designed to influence the Government or to

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intimidate the public or an international organisation, so it's the public of Grenada or any territory, country or international organisation that is included as well.

And then Clause 3 repeals 3 (a) to improve the provisions for identifying terrorist organisations and the Schedule to the principal Act listing the terrorist organisations. If you go to the principal Act you will see them listed there.

Clause 4 provides for the amendment to section 5 to expand the prohibition against biological toxins and weapons to include the prohibition against the use of biological toxins and weapons. The current conduct that is prohibited is the developing, producing, stockpiling, acquiring and retaining of biological toxins and weapons, so it is expanded to include the use of.

And then, Madam President, Clause 5 provides for an amendment to section 6 to expand the prohibition against causing a nuclear weapon explosion. The current section creates an offence for knowingly causing a nuclear weapons explosion and clause 5 seeks to substitute the following new offences: causes a nuclear weapons explosion either knowingly or having reasonable cause to suspect that the nuclear weapons explosion will occur. So that the latter part there is what is included, "having reasonable cause to suspect that a nuclear weapons explosion will occur".

And then, we have clause 6, which provides for the repeal of certain sections 14A and 14B and the replacement with new sections 14A to 14G. And these provisions relate to the procedure for listing an entity as an entity believed to be involved in terrorist activity. Could I have the...

**(Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph requested the tabletop lectern)**

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Excuse me, Madam President. Yes. Yes, Madam President, so the first feature expands the monitoring requirements that apply to listed entities.

**(Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph received the tabletop lectern)**

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**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Thank you. Yes. Apologies for the interruption, Madam President. So, yes, the expansion of the monitoring requirements that apply to listed entities and creating an offence for regulated entities who fail to apply the requirements and establish a process for the Attorney General to remove an entity from the listing where there is no longer a reason to believe that the entity is involved in terrorist activities and the details are in the various clauses to the Bill.

The second new feature empowers the Attorney General to notify the United Nations Security Council of the names of entities that Grenada has as listed to facilitate global supervision of the entity. Also, a new feature empowers the Attorney General under the... Let me backtrack. Under the Proceeds of Crime Act, the competent authority is the Attorney General (so there is a kind of link between the Proceeds of Crime Act and the Terrorism Act) it empowers the Attorney General to receive notification from another state, that's the other state has listed an entity, so they're allowing for cross-border communication here. We appreciate that terrorism and, like activities, cross-border crimes do occur, and countries have to communicate and collaborate in the fight against such activities.

The fourth feature creates an offence to capture foreign terrorist fighters. A person who knowingly and without lawful cause travels for the purpose of planning, committing, supporting or facilitating the commission of an act of terrorism, commits an offence and would be liable on conviction to \$500,000 or 20 years in prison. As we know these amendments because, in our own region, we had persons leaving the Caribbean region and joining organisations such as ISIS. So it's not too remote for us. And we are, therefore, now required to make provisions for these eventualities in our legislation. So here we have this offence created.

And then we have clause 7 that inserts a new subsection (3) (a) at 2 (a) to expressly capture as prohibited conduct the financing of travel for training or preparation and financing, whether from legitimate or illegitimate sources. So, a person who finances travel for the purposes of training with a terrorist organisation will commit an offence. And an amendment to section 27 to increase the penalties for the contravention of sections

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19 to 22 on summary conviction from \$400,000 to \$1m and on conviction on indictment from \$1m to \$10m, respectively. Additionally, a minimum penalty of \$100,000 is introduced under paragraph (b) for conviction on indictment.

Yes, then we have clause 9, to mandate that the Director of Public Prosecutions examine the appropriateness of freezing orders periodically and to apply for revocation of freezing orders where appropriate. Sometimes an approach is made to the court to freeze the assets of persons who are suspected of or charged with committing acts of terrorism or acts contrary to the Proceeds of Crimes Act, and there are occasions when the person is either acquitted or the authorities deem that the threat no longer exists. So, clause 9 will allow the DPP to review existing freezing orders and apply for the revocation where appropriate.

Clause 10 amends the Fifth Schedule to remove the contents of 1 (a) to be repositioned. So it's just a reposition there. And then clause 11 provides for the new Eighth Schedule.

So, Madam President, these are the amendments to the... Sorry, trying to change. These are the amendments to the Terrorism Act that we on "This Side" commend to this Honourable House. And well, if there are any further details that the Members require, we can do so when we resolve in the Committee. But those are my contributions for now.

**(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator, the Honourable Attorney General. I commend you and your team for this comprehensive review. I tried to follow you Clause by Clause as you went along, and although I can follow you, it certainly was a race **(laughter)** in which I got lost because I think your document is not exactly the Bill itself, but we were able to follow the topic. In your legal agility, I got the gist of the changes and I commend it now to the Senators for debate. Thank you. Senator, St. Clair, you have the floor, sir.

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**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Yes, thank you, Madam President. I have two comment slash inquiries, not an investigation, because this is serious. This terrorism thing comes in different forms every day. And so, I'm curious as to how this Bill addresses two issues.

The issue of what I want to call "education and awareness". Meaning that, we know we are so exposed to online things. I could be in my home and I don't have to go to ISIS to learn these things, but I can be logged in online on different channels and learn stuff. The fact that we speak about the terrorism part is not only about cyberattacks but the fact that we speak about financing and learning it could be of your own financing. You pay for your own internet, and there might be some online places where you're learning things because these people are very smart. If there is any organisation in its form because you don't know what form they can come in, preaching and sharing to train you into a terrorist in the way, they have different ways they do these things, like maybe in a not necessarily like the registered schools, but you could have little cliques. They know how they get into the system cells.

So I am concerned about how this Bill can capture. We may have to come back and edit. But how do we capture this emerging approach, particularly, as it relates to this infiltration in the minds of people who have the intention to do those things? So they go and they look for certain things; how do we capture that inside of this? I'm not too sure. I think some way in the definition of terrorism, for example, someone wilfully, purposefully searching the internet for these types of things or facilitating this sort of education, how to make different things and so on. I think you got the gist of where I am going. I think that something should be catered for that moving forward. That's my main concern.

**Madam President:** Senator those are your two queries? Are they both contained in your comment? Yes. Thank you. So the question is, does this new legislation or amended legislation include responses to online indoctrination and terrorist searches? Senator Joseph.

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**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, I was just thinking in accordance with the Standing Order, the debate will continue, and we will take those questions at the Committee stage. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** We have to go to the Committee stage. Yes.

**Sen. the Hon. André Lewis:** I was waiting for the Committee stage because I recognise we could have just... Just a quick observation. As the Senator and Attorney General indicated, I might just expand on it. Although we are supposed to be an independent and sovereign nation, most of these things are handed down to us, and we are expected to comply. Yes. I mean, I don't know. I know Grenada is part of the international community, but I don't know what we have to do with nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. **(Laughter)** You know what I mean to be hurting my head here... **(Laughter)** You know I am here, and I'm like, well, you know, what is it? You know? And then I said, well, look, hold on, André, you know this is not us, you know. This is not my friend, Attorney General, who got up a night and said well, look, let me see how I can make Grenada safe. Right. Rather than looking at some things to advance more labour rights, you spend time dealing with nuclear weapons. **(Laughter/ Applause)** You know, I mean, that's the irony of it. You know? That's the irony of it.

You know, as we are here, I could just ask under Terrorism, section (2)(c), (b)(i) and (b)(ii), which the Senator gave some explanation. I just need a bit of further clarification as to whether or not ... The section that section that... The last paragraph, which says, "And includes the use or threat of action involving firearms, etcetera", if this is an addition or whether or not... Under the definition of "terrorism", it says, "terrorism means the use or threat of action". So, I'll just take the "threat of action" and go to (b)(i) "design to influence the Government". Right? Because that stands alone by itself. Whether or not what sort of action so? Is this just a standalone, or is it related to the use of firearms or the threat of firearms or explosives or chemicals? Is this what it is referring to? Is this what it is linked to? Because it speaks about where you may be involved in the threat of action to try to influence a Government. Yes? And I want to know what defines, what is that threat.

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**(Inaudible comments by Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph)**

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** I am in section (2)(b)(i). Under the definition of “terrorism”. Right? Under the definition it gives a new definition to expand the definition of terrorism. That’s page six, (b)(i). Right? It says, “the use or threat of the action is”, so it flows from the top, right, “designed to influence the Government”, and I am stopping there because I’m not addressing the issue of intimidation. I am addressing the issue of influence. What does one have to do to be classified as the actual, well not just influence, but the actual unlawful? Because it says if we do (b)(i) and (b)(ii) and then it says, “an includes the use or threat”, and then it identifies nuclear weapons, biological, etcetera, etcetera, that seems to indicate to me that these are additional considerations. And if there are additional considerations, what are the considerations that one is looking at before?

Yes? So, because, I mean, we all try to influence Governments. I mean, we are in Labour, and I’m speaking purely from a labour perspective, that’s one of our major objectives. The different interest groups, and we do it quite openly and so on, we do it in different forms. So, for me, especially where these are handed down to us from the outside and you can have an ambassador from up north, right, making quiet, we know the backdoor channels work, we understand how those backdoor channels work. So I would like to know because outside of the use of firearms, etcetera, what can constitute an unlawful activity to deem one a terrorist?

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Lewis. Senator Joseph. Are you still collecting questions?

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Yes.

**Madam President:** Okay. Senator Rahaman.

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**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Madam President. I think my colleague touched on something very, very important in the definition. That new definition that they give says, “the threat of action whether occurring inside or outside of Grenada whether or not relating to Grenada”. I mean, our concern here is Grenada, and I don't mean to be selfish, but not outside of Grenada. That's what our democracy is all about. It's all about Grenada. And so if it says, “whether or not relating to Grenada, weather occurring inside or outside of Grenada the use or threat of action”, that word “threat of action”, does not include action. It's just a threat.

And then we move down to the same point that Senator André touched on. Point two says “made for a specific purpose which may include advancing a political, religious, ideological or other cause”. I mean, in South Africa, during the movement in South Africa that was an ideological cause, that was hugely unpopular at the time, and Western Governments at the time supported the plantocracy and not the uprising. So under this definition, you can see where certain things may lie. So I just want to raise that, you know, for whatever it is worth.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Rahman. Senator Joseph.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Sorry, I am trying to get the right Bill. Sorry, Madam President. I'm trying to get the... I lost it. This is the one we just did. Oops. Right. So, Madam President, I would attempt, I would say, “attempt” because I'm not sure that I would do a good job of it. **(Laughter)** I'm not quite sure... Thank you.

So, Senator Lewis, I understood you to be asking a question in relation to section (2)(b) the definition of terrorism. Terrorism? Okay. Let me just get it. And that speaks to terrorism, including the use or threat of action designed to influence the Government or to intimidate the public. Your question would be, what would be considered as an act designed to influence the Government? Well, take your pick. **(Laughter)** That's not what you are asking. If you might repeat the question because that's the note I have.

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**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you. If I may. Just for clarity. I'm saying I understand that aspect that you're speaking about quite clearly because you identify the means that you are using firearms, etcetera. But where it speaks about, I was asking you, where it says, "an includes the use of firearms", is there something outside of those listed here, and you said yes? So I wanted to hear what those are, what it means outside of those.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Okay. So, "an includes" here just indicates that the list in the definition is not exhaustive. That's all it means; without attempting to define other means, it says what it includes, but it does not close off the list. So, it may be some other act or one of the acts listed in the definition. That's all included there. It just means that the intention is not to close it off to the matters listed. Yes. Does that answer the question?

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** So, if we threaten industrial actions, that can be considered? **(Laughter)** No, it's a genuine... No, no, no, no, hear me. Because within the proposed Amendment, it says that the Minister, the Attorney General, or so can update that list of what may be considered and I genuinely asked that because I know that, because this is just not to Grenada, because this is not just to Grenada, that's the one that comes immediately to mine. Yes, but it's a genuine, genuine question as you gave me that answer. Yes.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** If I may, I don't think that industrial action as we know it will be within the contemplation of this definition. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** Unless there are other methods that we don't know yet. **(Laughter)** So, Madam President, Senator Rahaman was also asking a question which, quite honestly, I didn't get even more than I didn't get Senator Lewis' question. So, if I may be assisted.

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**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** I think it was more of an observation with regard to some of the hand-me-down that we're dealing with. So, it was just more of an observation, not a question. Thank you.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, as I wrap up my contribution to this Bill, I would just say to this Honourable House and to the people of Grenada, these amendments are designed to, as I indicated earlier, ensure that we have a robust and cohesive, efficient legislative regime that will ensure that Grenada is not used in any respect as a platform for the perpetrators of international crimes and terrorist activities. And to ensure that Grenada remains on the list that does not involve being grey-listed or blacklisted.

I could give an example of some of the consequences of that. Now, Barbados and Jamaica are grey-listed at the moment. They were found not to be in compliance with some of the requirements of the FATF, and they have been trying to get off that list and are having grave difficulties. And in the case of Barbados, they have met all the requirements to be removed from the list. But there is this strange rule at the FATF level that when the list is being purged, all countries on the list must be purged at the same time or none are purged. So, they came up recently to be removed from the list. And another country, I can't remember whether it was Malta, one of those specific countries, was also coming up for removal, and they didn't meet the requirements, so they had to stay on, and Barbados had to stay on with them. So, our objective is not to get on at all.

As it stands now, since 2022, we have been taking some rigorous steps to ensure that we come into compliance because we inherited a situation where we were under threat, right, and there were 40 or so steps that we needed to take including passing some of these Bills about 13 or so pieces of legislation. We've done some already, and this is the last batch. I think we only have about two more after this. So we are taking all these steps to avoid finding ourselves in a situation where we are blacklisted. It takes years to get off the black or the grey list and then your ratings drop, and then you can't borrow on the international market and all of the consequences that trickle down to the ordinary

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people and hurt the citizens. This is what we are trying to avoid, if it pleases you, Madam President. So, I commend the Bill to the House.

**Madam President:** I thank you, presenter of the Bill, for your summation and commendation to your colleagues.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

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

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, I beg to move that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill, Clause by Clause.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Senate in Committee**

**Senate resumes.**

**Madam President:** The Honourable Senate resumes. Distinguished Senators, I have the honour to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole Senate, following discussion, was passed without amendment. Senator Joseph.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, I beg to move, that the Chair's Report be adopted.

**Question put and agreed to.**

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

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, I beg to move for the third reading of the Bill.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time and passed.**

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

**Madam President:** Leader of Government's Business, Senator... Senator David Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

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

**Madam President:** Senator Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Madam President, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the Senate be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all of its Stages at this Sitting.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

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**Madam President:** Senator Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Madam President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

**Question proposed.**

**Madam President:** Senator Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Madam President, this Bill, the Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2024, seeks to amend the Proceeds of Crime Act No. 6 of 2012 (“the principal Act”) to enhance the integrated legislative framework to combat money laundering and terrorism financing. This Bill contains four clauses.

Clause 1, of course, makes provision for the short title and so the Bill shall be read as one with the Proceeds of Crime Act No. 6 of 2012, of course, referred to as the principal Act.

Clause 2 provides for amendment of section 32 of the principal Act to establish a more dissuasive criminal penalty for failure to comply with the guidelines issued by the Anti Money Laundering Commission, from \$50,000 to \$100,000. So in section 32, this amendment to section 32 of the principal Act in subsection (4) this amendment will take effect by “deleting the number “\$50,000” after the words “fine not exceeding” and substituting therefor the number “\$100,000”. So if you go to the principal Act in section 32, subsection (4), we will amend it there and increase the penalty there from \$50,000 to \$100,000, making it more dissuasive to disregard the Anti Money Laundering Commission.

There also, we will have the repealing of section 32 (b). Section 32 (b) will be substituted for in a separate section to be spoken about in the next clause. Right. Section 32 (b) speaks of administrative penalties. So the third clause, Madam President, clause

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3 provides for the insert of a new section, section 32 (a) to establish dissuasive administrative penalties for contravention of specified provisions of the guidelines with corresponding dissuasive penalties if the offence is treated as a summary conviction.

This new section, as I alluded to earlier, is what replaces the repealed subsection (b) in section 32. So this new section speaks to an imposition of administrative penalty. And section 32 (a), subsection (1) says, "Notwithstanding section 32 (4), the Guidelines may, in specific cases of non-compliance with, or contravention of any provision thereof, provide for the imposition by the Anti Money Laundering and Combating Terrorism Financing Commission, of an administrative penalty not exceeding \$500,000".

This new Section 32 (a) also goes on to outline the steps and the procedure to be followed, by way of giving notice to the persons found guilty in writing by sending and outlining the nature of the offence resulting in them being written, by sending an outline of the penalty informing them of their rights to representation and to an oral hearing and their rights to appeal. So all of these things are included in that section that is covered under section 32 (a), the new section being included there.

Clause 4 provides for the amendment of section 63 to empower the Commission to compel for information to discharge its functions. And so, this section allows the Anti-money Laundering Commission to be able to summon information and mandate the provision of information in executing its mandate as part of anti-money laundering legislation across the country.

Madam President, whatever legislation that we can do to come in alignment with whatever the international standards are and to allow us to be able to operate in full compliance and to protect the assets and properties of our people and to protect our people as a whole and the integrity and name of Grenada, we commend to this House for its support and blessing. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank the presenter of the Bill, Honourable Senator David Andrew. Senator St. Clair. No comment? Senator... **(Laughter)** Well, that's a historic moment. **(Laughter)** Thank you, Senator. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)**

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**(Laughter)** I can't hear, and I don't follow football, but this means roll along, right?

**(Laughter)** In which case, thank you. Senator Claudette Joseph.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, I rise to lend my full support to the Bill before the House at this time. As indicated, all these measures would work in tandem to make our country safer, financial system safer and our reputation secured. So for all the reasons advanced in relation to the earlier Bills, I support this Bill.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Attorney General, Senator Claudette Joseph. And I offer the floor to presenter.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Yes. Madam President, I want to thank my colleague, Attorney General, on "This Side" and the silent consenting nods of my colleagues on the "Other Side". I think the spirit of this is quite clear. We've been through quite a number of these terrorism-related Bills for the afternoon, and so I think much of this is in keeping with that and I think that's the reason we've come to the place where it's such an easy pass and understanding. So I thank my colleagues for the acknowledgement and the support of it. And so, Madam President, I commend it to you and this Honourable House for further discourse. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you. Thank you, Senator Andrew. And I commend the Bill now to Honourable Members.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time and passed.**

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

**Madam President:** Senator Andrew.

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**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to move that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill, Clause by Clause.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Senate in Committee.**

**Senate resumes.**

**Madam President:** Committee is closed, and the Senate is resumed. Honourable Senators, I have the honour to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole Senate and passed without amendment. Senator Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Madam President, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

**Madam President:** Thank you.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Madam President:** Senator Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time and passed.**

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

**Deputy Clerk:** Item 16 – Public Business.

**Madam President:** Senator St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Yes, Madam President, and Members at this Honourable time. Madam President, I beg to present in my name the Motion:

On Crop Compensation Schedule for Farmers who suffer crop loss from damage by man and livestock.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator St. Clair. Senator Lewis.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Madam President, I beg to second the Motion.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Lewis. Senator St. Clair, you have the floor, sir.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Madam President, as I read this Motion in my name:

**WHEREAS** farmers have been experiencing increased incidents of crop damage from man and livestock;

**AND WHEREAS** the Agriculture Crop (Compensation) Act No. 9 of 1967 and Amended by SRO 32 of 1995:

- (a) Makes provision for the amount of compensation payable for damage to agricultural crops and other trees;
- (b) section 4 gives the Minister the Power to Amend the Schedule by Order if he or she considers it expedient to do so;

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**AND WHEREAS** it is over 29 years since the Crop Compensation Schedule was revised;

**AND WHEREAS** the cost of inputs for the farmer has increased significantly over the past 25 years;

**AND WHEREAS** farmers deserve just compensation reflective of current realities of costs;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Minister (of Agriculture) be caused to act in accordance with the powers vested in him under section 4 of the Agriculture Compensation Act of 1995 to review and update the Crop Compensation Schedule of 1995 so that farmers can be justly compensated when they suffer crop loss or damage.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that section 4 of the Act be modified to protect our farmers' investments by specifying a time by which the Crop Compensation Schedule shall be amended instead of relying on when the Minister considers it expedient to do so.

Madam President, this Motion or the theme may sound like a road march. But, the thing about a road march is that a road march normally gets a title and a road march king collects money. But this is not a road march; it's a sound that is being echoed by our farmers every day.

In fact, Madam President, only yesterday I was attending a court matter in the Grenville Court House and two farmers came up to me and said, "Man, we have to do something about this thing, the tomatoes are chopped down, bananas were chopped down about six weeks ago", and this is their livelihoods for Christmas that interferes with our food security it its own self already.

Then another farmer called me. He said, "Come, come, I want to have a word with you. He said, "Well, actually, it's a sentence". I said, "What"? He said right in his backyard, he tied his goat, he went to bed, and the next morning, it was not there. He was lucky to end up in the court house, and all he got was \$100 compensation after five days of looking for his goat. So, what I am speaking about here is not, by the way. This morning, before I reached here, there was another gentleman in Bylands. He lost 700 pounds of ginger. Same problem.

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The issue here is, we're not dealing with praedial larceny. I'm not even dealing with that topic. The issue here is the compensation. Because you see, Madam President, and colleagues, it's the same issue we just finished dealing with the crime, with the terrorism, moving from \$100,000 to \$1m and \$500,000 to \$2m and all those sorts of figures. As my good friend, Senator Andrew, mentioned, I think the word was "dissuasive" to cause people to not want to do it. And so, if they know that if you cut down somebody's tomato tree, it will cost them \$20, the chances or the motivation would be less. And so, you know, that's nothing. It's 50 cents, 25 cents. If they catch them, it's nothing.

And so, we're not asking for anything significant. What we are asking, Madam President, is for the justice, the justice of the efforts by these farmers. They have to pay increased costs according to the Wage Bill. They are not underpaying workers to rob them. They are paying the just amount according to the minimum wage, even if they might not be getting the amount of hours work on the farm and when their products are lost, we are not dealing with praedial larceny. I don't want to touch that. The compensation. And so all we're asking is for the Government, for the Minister who I've also had some dialogue with on this very said matter, but at the same time, that is an informal matter. And I'm asking through this means here, the highest body, that some consideration be given in short order such that compensation...

This morning, another farmer sent me photos about three weeks ago, he lost three goats to dogs. This morning, he lost two. He said, "Right, not brother, I just want to sell out all of my goats because I am fed up", and, of course, the dog is a different issue, but the fact is the compensation. Nobody is asking the Government to take out money in their pocket. We are saying that when these offenders are caught, they have been made to pay their dues. And that is the issue. It's like wanting to ride on a bus, and the fee price is \$5, but you want to give the conductor \$2 or nothing. And we can't be talking about justice, conventions and all of these things and see the farmers' effort going down the drain.

In fact, Madam President, we recognise the efforts of the Ministry and the Government with some of the support and the subsidised plants and all of those things,

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you know, and this is what makes it worse, because we already know some of the plants from the nurseries, and so on through the Government, are at a reduced price, significantly. Yet still, if they are damaged by these “terrorists”, if you want to call them so, because they are using cutlasses and other things to cut down things, and the just compensation is not being done, they can't even start back.

I think that no one in their good conscience could be sleeping at night, understanding that this plight continues. Of course, one may argue that, well, we're working on this, we're trying to make some effort, is good, but at the same time, while all of that is going on, the farmers are suffering in two ways: loss of income with the damages because no deterrent with the prices and we also suffer as a country with food security issues. It's unconscionable. It's unconscionable, but no effort.

The farmers, I have all the WhatsApp messages and the voicemails, continue to persist. So whilst a bigger picture might be looked at... It's like the name that wants to build a house, you know he has a big dream of building his house, so big that he continues to wet, continues with all kinds of wind and snakes coming through the house, whilst he dreams about this house that he may die, many have died before this house becomes a reality.

And so what we are saying is that, if it is one thing that can happen for these farmers, it needs to be done. 22 years and something, as Senator Lewis said this morning. The steps. The steps. There are enough people. There are a lot of consultations taking place. There is nothing, in my opinion, that is restricting this review from taking place. At least, Madam President, nobody cannot just go and review this thing like that. We are law-abiding citizens, a law-abiding country and the only person, the only person and unless you maybe have to go and have an injunction that could cause this order, is the Minister, himself, nobody else. And, if that is done, and we then get a report, okay we are 50 per cent there, we are 60 per cent there, we could understand. But when nothing is done, nothing, no Order has been initiated, because if this Order is initiated as an S.R.&O., it has to be Gazetted and published. We haven't seen that unless it's somewhere that nobody knows where it is.

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Then it, it really shows as, as a farmer said to me, is that there is no care. He said, tell them to put the same effort they are putting into the gun amendment and all of those things, tell them to put the same effort into getting these things resolved. That is, that is the, that is the, the message. And I could add to it is the same effort with terrorism, because other persons are forcing us to do that. The ILO forced us, Madam President, to do the agriculture reporting, according to the 1912 Convention. But you know what, for the farmers, we have nothing. So nobody bothers. I'm not like my good friend Senator Lewis. We don't have a union. Although the ILO doesn't prevent us from being unionised, when I look at the Conventions, based on associations and so on. But we don't have to go there.

All we are asking, my good friends on the "Other Side", is to please bring the message to the rest of the team. We need to address the compensation issue, pass the order, and give us a time when you think things will be resolved. This message seems to be a very simple message. But I'm not too sure, Madam President, if the message is reaching, officially, officially, officially, officially. Farmers are speaking to me more about compensation than even the praedial larceny part, yes, but the compensation.

In fact, if I just segue for 30 seconds, if we've been following the media over the last few, few months or so, there has been a landmark decision with two of our veteran lawyers regarding no flogging for thieves and persons stealing agricultural produce, which was on the books. I have my opinion about this, which I will reserve at this stage. But the fact now that that has been a ruling by the court, it means, therefore, at some point, we as lawmakers have to agree and decide whether we want to come here and amend the Praedial Larceny Act to remove that because if it's unconstitutional, according to human rights regulations and all of these UN Convention, that was the premise used in presenting the case, you cannot flog them even if they steal your stuff. So you can't flog, the price is still down, the price of labour is up, everything up, I mean come on. Come on. We will have to have a psychosocial intervention sooner or later. Come on...

And then, as a farmer said to me this morning, when we were discussing this matter. He said, Senator, he said, just now the lawyers may even come and talk about

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the right to food, because you know there is the right to food under the FAO and WHO, so when they steal your products, there might be new cases, that well the man hungry, he doesn't have food, he needs two pumpkins and two plantains, and under rights to food, they may even start getting away. This is the frivolousness and the frustration.

At the same time, we have to keep commending our farmers for fighting up inside of this space. As I say, we not speaking on praedial larceny, so I don't want to speak about cameras and security. We're speaking on a very specific thing where we are asking the Minister to pass an Order according to the Act, such that the review can take place.

Now, I didn't look at the Minimum Wage Order and think there is a specification there. And we have to commend the Minister for taking that action and saying the minimum wage needs to be reviewed. And it was reviewed.

**(Inaudible comment by Senators)**

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Every three years. Well, you see. Every three years, and it was reviewed. The farmers still got stuck with an increased payload of workers. Three years. The other one in agriculture, they say, when he feels...

**(Laughter)** Every time it comes to this agricultural factor, there is always a loophole. So because he doesn't specify, nobody bothers, and it's a bad practice.

In fact, this Terrorism Bill that we just finished looking at a while ago says that every three years, there is supposed to be a review of the... If you look at the clause, one of those clauses speaks about every three years, there shall be a review of the list of terrorist organisations. But the farmers, nada. How are we can't sleep at night? We can't sleep at night. We cannot sleep at night. We cannot sleep at night. Please, please, please. I could speak but it's your colleagues who sit in Cabinet. You have to speak.

Madam President, and last point. In the Praedial Larceny Act, we have the issue of the... What's its name? ... To set up the account. Because the Act was there, but the account wasn't set up in the Government system when they were charged to put the money. Right? So, even if you want to compensate... So let's suppose Senator Lewis

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stole your stuff or damaged your things, and he has to now compensate \$100. When you pay this money to the court, the magistrate, there was no place to put the money because there was no Government account, so it ended up being consolidated. I have to commend the Prime Minister who was the Minister for Finance then. We had a one-on-one discussion, and within a month the account was set up.

So now that the account is set up that is an important step. We can put money into the account. So, we're asking now that, just money can be put into the account. I don't need to have a meeting with him to cause the Minister to make an order. No. We don't have to do that. We don't have to make the Agriculture Minister for him to act similarly in the aid of the farmers. So the fact is that there has been goodwill. So don't think we're not recognising goodwill.

We are saying that this is a significant activity, a significant issue and we're asking for good hearts and good conscience to prevail. We passed a whole thing. October 19th. And we're happy about it. We even do it before it even passes. The same farmers we want to make heroes... Well, heroes... **(Laughter)** In fact, they will be heroes because if they could survive under this difficult situation... Cut and contrive, according to my mother, then they are heroes.

But we have to do better than that. And not because I'm presenting a Bill, or Tom presenting a thing. It's not about that. This thing is a simple thing that we should just see a press release that the Order is issued. I don't know what is so difficult unless there is a lot of pile of paper filling up and we haven't reached there as yet.

So, Madam President, as you say, I wouldn't say what they will say, but I would ask for good conscience and reasoning. I will continue to pursue informally and formally. So, this is not going to stop here. Right? I'm not going to stop. I'm going to continue because something is not right. When the farmers are calling for compensation. Is the compensation... That is all they keep... Where is the compensation? Of course, you can spread it and speak about many other compensations and many other things, but sometimes in life, as I said, we start with what we have rather than trying to create something so big that we come up with nothing.

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Two years have gone by for this Government. We are going to years three, and if we cannot get that done within that space of time, then based on probability and mathematics, there's a high chance that five years could come, or even less than five depending on how the thing is going and we end up, another Government again has come, and the farmers are in the same position. This is my concern.

**(Inaudible comment by a Senator)**

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** No, no, no, no, no, it's not a one term. It is just that we want it to happen in this term. **(Laughter)** Right? Alright, Madam President.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator St. Clair. I offer the floor to Leader of Government's Business, former Minister for Agriculture.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you very much, Madam President. What a pity the message from the Senator was not live. I don't know if it's being recorded. I thought he would have cut it shorter seeing that the media was not there. And please, Madam President, excuse me for the little break that I took there, but I was really catering for a 7 o'clock from the Senator. So it's, it's a little surprising that he finished in half an hour.

But, Madam President, the crop compensation that the Senator is presenting here, and as he rightly said, for the last 25 years, it has not changed. I don't want us at any moment to believe that it's for the last three years it has not been changed. But I want to assure the general public and the Senator that this job will be done before the next 25 years. For sure. Rest assured. **(Laughter)** So if you're frightened that the three years is going, but it was there before. So it's not three years. It's 28 years, if you if you want to go further or 26 years. That's the figure we have to talk about, and not just the three years that this Administration was in office. We have to come better than that.

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Madam President, we are not, we are not dreaming. This Government is not dreaming about a palace. And unless we cannot build a palace, we would not build a house for shelter. But what we are saying is, we will not build a house without toilet and bath. Put that in your pipe and smoke it, because we want to do it properly.

Madam President, I have no doubt whatsoever, despite all the claims from the presentation of the Bill on this matter. A Bill was presented previously. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** Previously, a Bill came to this House, and an explanation was given as to why we're not going in that direction. Today, the Motion is coming on the same subject matter. And, Madam President, I wish, I wish to mention to this House that I had the privilege of reaching out to the Senator even yesterday and discussing with him the direction that the Government wants to go and the work that has already been completed. So when the Senator stands in the House and says to the House that nothing is being done, I do not understand who I was talking with yesterday. And, as a matter of fact, he moved away from all disruption, went to his vehicle, put on his AC, I assumed, so the conversation was between him and me. But, Madam President, a lot has been done.

I have no doubt, to disagree with the Minister for Agriculture whom I consulted on the matter. I have no doubt, not to believe the people in the Ministry of Agriculture whom the Minister has consulted, in regards to the farmers' cry and every occasion I hear the Senator repeat and continues to repeat that he got calls, he got emails and he got WhatsApp messages, but it's yet to be presented to convince me. I'm not convinced.

But, I... Madam President, the question is while we are concerned about crop compensation, and rightly so, the question is, the goats that were attacked by the dogs, are we concerned about that too? The cattle that the farmers were deprived of, are we concerned about that? The farmer who is only doing apiculture and bees, are we concerned with him and his losses? The farmers who are involved strictly in nursery production of seedlings, are we concerned about him too?

Madam President, I raise all these issues to bring to the table that the old law that compensates strictly for crops is not sufficient. It is lacking in terms of farmers' compensation. And therefore, in this day and age, if you're going to deal with a law from

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1967 to today and it is the same old, same old, Madam President, the change will not be worth the while.

So I'm saying to the House that the Ministry of Agriculture already completed a symposium with workers in the agricultural sector. Farmers were invited to that symposium. I attended that symposium, and I gave the brief remarks. And the decision was, rather than just adjusting the schedule, let us amend the Act to make coverage of all aspects of farming.

And therefore, the matter will be going to the Ministry of Legal Affairs to change even the title of the Act from crop compensation to agricultural commodity compensation. I mentioned that to the Senator in the last presentation we were talking about the Bill, and I mentioned it to him yesterday again. Madam President, there are even crops like a simple thing like soursop that are not in the crop compensation. Soursop is a key crop today. Are we going to just change the figures to what was there before and leave out Soursop? Let's do it properly and let us help in the process.

Madam President, how are we going to attach figures that the Senator is advocating for? Are we going to do some arbitrary figures? Matters and documents were sent to the Ministry of Finance, and I'm not... I'm telling you this because I know. It was sent to the Ministry of Finance to take into consideration for the last 25 years what was the inflation rate, how did we come up with a figure to put to the loss of crops, animals and equipment. And if you were in Carriacou, you would have understood, Madam President, what it would have been to suffer the loss of your vehicle on a telephone post. Write it off. These things have to be in this new dispensation and that's what we call transformation. We want to transform the law, and I think it's reasonable.

Yes, we're going to press on we pass this law, we pass this law and three years it's coming, but why are you going to measure this requirement based on this Administration? It's not fair. So we got to do better than that and be reasonable. This Administration has done much more than a lot of people who were there before. And not only about the farming community, but our society is moving on, and you must recognise that. **(Applause)** Don't come here and pretend that this Administration is not the farmers'

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friend. We paid out over 5,000 cheques recently, and you know that, Mister Senator. \$29 million to the farmers. **(Applause)** These are the people we love and not a note was said about this. It's about, we're passing this law and that law and we're not studying the farmers. This is not fair. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** This is not fair.

And listen, the 5,000 cheques that were paid out, it's not \$100 and \$50, you know **(inaudible comment by a Senator)** was almost 6,000. It's not the voucher we used to give up for \$50 and \$100 to go to some little store in town and pick up some little gadgets you know. Senator. These cheques were \$4,500. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** And you haven't mentioned it here? You have to say it! \$9,000. **(Applause)** This Administration is concerned about these farmers.

And don't come ... What we are dealing with, yes, it may take a little while, but you cannot accuse us of not paying attention to the farmers. It may take a little while, but when this Act **(applause)** is being amended, and we take into consideration agricultural commodities that encompass everything, I think you, I will give you that Bill to present, and then, I will second it and "This Side" will speak to it. I promise.

Madam President, another aspect of the law that is not present... Who made the assessment? This present law, does not, with due respect to who did it before, assign the right people with the skills and capacity to make the assessment. And therefore, we'll be assigning the Chief Extension Officer to make that assessment. Must sign off on that. And if you want to appeal, we go further. The Chief Land Officer will be the one dealing with the matter if you appeal and you don't agree with what the Chief Extension Officer has given to you.

So, Madam President, a lot of work has been done and we will continue, and I will carry the message to the Ministry and the Minister that the work must continue, but it will not be on the terms and likeness of any individual. It will be in the interest of the farmers of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. So having said that, Madam President, I don't think if I support this Motion, and if this team supports this Motion, we'll be working contrary to the work that is already being advanced, and we'll continue. And with that, Madam President, I rest my case. **(Applause)**

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**Madam President:** I thank the Leader of Government's Business for his intervention. Are there any other speakers before I ask Senator St. Clair to decide on the way forward? Senator Lewis, you have the floor, sir.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you very much, Madam President. And, while listening to the exchange my mind went back to how Madam President started this session by identifying on "This Side", at least five out of the six, or probably 5.5 or 5.75, because there are people from the urban area that always like to claim their rural heritage, so I'm making provision for that, that there are five persons here from the rural areas and about probably three or four out of the six are here.

And I mean, although farmers are not necessarily only from the rural areas, I was wondering while I listened to the presentation from the Leader of Government's Business and the comments made by the Attorney General of one step at a time or step by step, I was wondering about the possibility, given the fact that there is a framework in relation to a number of crops being already identified from way back when from the last time in, I think, 1995. And the common refrain I've been hearing from the "Government Side", specifically as it relates to crops, is the use of the example that Soursop is not included in that list.

So I was wondering, given the fact that we all know that this is a burning and practical issue... I mean... We listen to the news every day. We see it. I mean, I saw recently, about two weeks ago, a farmer complaining about a set of watermelons, I think, that were just totally destroyed. Whether or not, as we fight to get everything right, my brother on the "Other Side" and colleagues, I'm speaking about the aspect of lining up the ducks, whether or not an approach can be taken, I don't think it's any rocket science to find out what the inflationary rate was from whatever time to now, to come up with a package to deal with the crops. You are not forgoing agriculture or agricultural commodities. You are not doing that. But because this one is advanced and you already have a listing, and because you have already identified that soursop ought to be included and whatever other crop, I mean one, two or three or one, that you make this a priority

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area with the understanding, and the public pronouncement, that this is not the complete package.

As a matter of fact, as we stand right now, farmers are getting some compensation, if ever, where it is totally inadequate, based on the listing. So if, if, if this can be pulled out because it's a part of negotiating—I mean, it's a package—you pull out what can be dealt with. At the same time... **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** I will respond not just across the table, but you know, it's something I've been hearing for the longest while. When it pleases the "Government Side", they are speaking about what they are able to get done within two and a half years or three years. We are here speaking about now. So it was not done 25 years ago. Why put the Senator through this? He only became a Member of the Senate, representing farmers, about two years ago or three years ago. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Yes, so what I'm saying, he is taking charge of what he is responsible for.

And I ask of my colleagues, I ask of my colleagues, this is a non-contentious issue. This is farmers. And the colleague, the colleague... As a matter of fact, I wouldn't... While he was speaking and before the Leader of the Government's Business spoke, I said most likely, he may have to give consideration for a farmers' march for justice or a farmers' march for just compensation for damages. To be frank with you, I wrote it here. I wrote it here. I wrote it here because you need to, you need to probably influence the Government. And I'm saying, I think it is rather unfortunate, with all due respect, my brother, maximum respect, to be saddling the Senator. The farmers have elected him to represent them. He was not here 25 years ago.

A number of the issues that we are addressing, we take credit. The Ministry of Labour did it correctly so. The minimum wage was not addressed. The last time was probably 12 years ago, but you didn't say, well, it's 12 years ago, so I'm not doing it now because there might be more political mileage and great for the workers because we marched the streets, and there is political capital to be gained from that so the farmers need to be given consideration to this. Because every time I hear this comment about it's 25 years ago. So what? It is now 25 years after, and I'm making a proposal for your

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consideration, through you, Madam President, that while the Government seeks to get all its ducks in order and do everything properly to pull out the crop compensation aspect. There's a Schedule.

As a matter of fact, when I went through the Order Paper, and because the Motion came immediately after the Bills, my thoughts were that yes, the Government has done that. I didn't make the connection in the beginning that it was the Motion that came back from Senator St. Clair. It was only yesterday or the day before when the last Order Paper came out, and I was scanning through it to see if there were any changes. Sometimes these things can happen. It then dawned on me, but no, this is Senator St. Clair, because I saw it nicely put together, the aspect of the crop compensation. I found that it looked rather small. But as a matter of fact, I thought it was something that was redone. I thought... **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Well, the Senator is saying he thought the same thing, too. And you know why I thought so because Senator St. Clair has been championing this cause for the longest while.

He has been championing this cause for the longest while. And every time I keep hearing we are in agreement with you, but we are taking our time, and we want to do something comprehensive. But, so many things have come here as an amendment, as an amendment, because it's a living, it's a living issue. And I wish to compliment and commend the Senator for his intuitiveness, for raising this issue constantly. And this is not about himself. I mean, I know that the Standing Orders speak about not imputing improper motives. I know that was not where my good colleague was going. But to indicate that the Senator may not be speaking the truth, that farmers are calling him on the matter because they are speaking to the Minister for Agriculture and he might be saying something different. I find that, to be quite frank with you, Madam President...

The vast majority of us here, my brother, we toil the soil. I mean, come on, man. We toil the soil. We know what it is. I know, through you, Madam President, the Clerk who is into farming has experienced those things, and many times he feels like giving up. The Senator is not speaking here. He's not speaking here about praedial larceny. He's not saying, okay, we're not getting enough manpower, the police are not doing this, or

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you're not. He's saying for that which is existing, for that which, through the direct intervention of the Prime Minister...

And he made a point to me that may have been missed, or probably it was not missed, through the one and one, somebody got something done. And what was done, was to get a separate account set up, something that he has been clamouring for quite a while. And that is why many times, Madam President, unless we make public noise, and I'm saying "we" collectively, saying "we" collectively because many times we sit in the comfort of our air-conditioned offices, saying that we need to make sure that we see all the dots connected when there are times you can skip to get something done. In project management, a number of activities can take place simultaneously. Different timelines.

I find it difficult to accept, with all due respect to you, Madam President. I know it's the Senator's Motion, but it's something that has reached out to me extremely deeply. I find it difficult to accept and recognise that to do a comprehensive review, to include things that were not included, commendation must be given to that. So if animals were not included... Because farmers are losing animals, too. They are losing equipment, too. But at the same time, we all know that there is a major issue. And there is a start. There is a basis from which to start. The Leader of Government's Business said it. He said, here what, we have to work out how inflation has moved from then to now. That's not rocket science.

Madam President, I wish to sit, but I wish to strongly, strongly urge the "Government Side" to break from the tradition where governments... Well, it was said that they elected to make decisions, well make decisions, and that's correct, you are elected to make decisions. Do that. Do that. Many times I long for the day, and I really thought we would have gotten that from the "Other Side" here, I mean, in the early days, but I recognised that, but it's like, some profession outside there, I wouldn't want to single out the profession, in terms of driving, but you might be driving good, and once you have to drive something else, you're behaving in a particular way. When they're on "That Side", there is something which says, look, you can't tell us what to do. It is taken. It is not taken

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as to be taken on board to work with. There is nothing to gain. The Senator as an individual. As a matter of fact, it's something that the Government can take praise for.

Rather than taking all the flak right now, all the issues that you have not done anything yet, and not for farmers, I'm not saying for farmers, I'm speaking about crop compensation. I'm speaking about compensation, let me put it this way. Because I don't think my brother was saying, the Senator was saying that the Government hasn't done anything for farmers. He is focusing on the resolution before us.

Therefore, through you, Madam President, I'm making this appeal. If you can use your good office... I hope I'm not out of place to make that request. If you can use your good office as a farmer yourself, someone with a farming heritage, and someone who, based on your interventions and interactions with the farmers and others on the ground, hears the cries and who knows that one day, one day, I hope it does not happen... But the guy that... Did he win road march? **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** He won road march? The warning signs are there. The cry is there. Let's do something. Let's do something to demonstrate that even if we cannot do everything at the same time, and that will be understandable, that will be understandable, but at least we have taken that, which we can do something and explain to the beekeepers and the others that we are working on something for you.

So I wish to support the Motion as moved by Senator Roderick, in terms of... As a matter of fact, there was a timeframe, and there wasn't any timeframe suggested, but the need for a timeframe and to ask that some urgency and priority, it's a matter of prioritising, be given to this matter. Thank you very much, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator Lewis, for your furl and passionate intervention. Any other speakers? Senator Rahaman, is that you?

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Yes.

**Madam President:** Thank you.

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**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** I hope to be brief, given the time. But there is a saying that, "While the grass is growing, the horse is starving". And that's what came to mind when I heard my two colleagues speaking. I know that the Government has done quite a lot. I am a farmer, although not a very good one, perhaps, but that's in my genes, so you know I have to try something.

Government, after Hurricane Beryl, visited farms in the north of the island, in addition to Carriacou, and they were very efficient in doing that. And I remember receiving a call from them, and so on, they went they visited the extension officer. They have been doing a lot of work with farmers, but in this specific area, it's been quite some time since he has been raising this particular issue. And it hasn't been touched since 1995, as we know, and prior to that, 1967. So previous administration, both NNP and NDC, you know, well they were both, right, within that time, they have not given it the kind of importance that it needs. And time has marched on. Inflation has taken its effect. And this is important, because their crops, or their stock that's their inventory. And if my inventory is worth \$500 today on a particular product, but you are still valuing it, the insurance company is still valuing it at \$50; when I claim for loss on that \$500 goods, I'm getting \$50 from the insurance. No business would want to accept that. So you could do what you need to do to fix it in the long term, but in the short-term try to address some of the values from what is existing. So that would be my recommendation.

I mean, nobody's saying that they're not working on it. They've said publicly they're working on it, and they have shown that they have been doing things. And, you know what, when a hurricane hits, and you're on track to do something, and all of a sudden, you have to shift and focus so much of your energy and your supplemental budget, and all of these different things and so much more work, 10 times the work comes with one little, one hurricane, you know. It's a lot. So I'm not knocking you but I'm just saying that this has been there for a long time. We all agree on it. This is not something that we disagree on. And so, perhaps they could, you know, you could do something. Put a little plaster on it. In the meantime, while you're going to get the medication to clean it, put a plaster on it. So that would be my recommendation. Thank you.

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**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Rahaman. The last word goes to you, Senator St. Clair. I think you have a lot of food for thought.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** David seems to... David wants to go, so... Thank you, Madam President. Well, I want to, of course, appreciate the feedback from everyone in this process because it's an important issue and Senator Rahaman raised a very important point. The issue of value. And, of course, the schedule of valuers, which has been normally been all extension officers. Existing extension officers have been doing this sort of valuations that have been going to court and so on. It's not that the court has not been ordering people to pay in case of damages, but the question is the value.

And so, what we are doing here, essentially also, Madam President, is that we are also undervaluing our agricultural outputs in Grenada. **(Laughter)** Because if something is worth \$10 and really and truly we have it at a book value of \$1, we have a problem. Further to that, if we do bank proposals and project proposals, and you say you need to do such and such, and you start adding up the maths, the bank will ask where you get these figures. The Crop Compensation Schedule. It's, basically your official record. We can't ask the court to issue something higher. I'm not too sure if the magistrate is using all these discretions. And so, we are essentially also devaluing our agriculture contribution to GDP, which is a very important thing. We may be devaluing it by as much as maybe 1000% when you look at the sort of value that we have right now for things. So that's one aspect.

The issue, as Senator Lewis raised, is crop compensation. This is the issue here. The issue about Beryl pay out and so on, I decided to speak about that in the Adjournment because I don't want to confuse the argument and introduce parameters such that the debate will segue and we lose focus. It's a very focused intervention. I don't want to draw the debate out into areas that it's not supposed to be going. The focus is on that which, someone damages, they cut down your stuff, your animal destroys it, you let your animals destroy it, and you go to court. So it has nothing to do with a storm pass, a flood

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pass and so Government feel to help you. That has nothing to do with that. It has to do with a law. The Crop Compensation is a law, and it goes to the court, and there is adjudication and a judgment. That is specifically what it deals with. So, I don't want us to lose sight of the issue.

Of course, for my good friend, no one is saying the Government is not doing. In fact, those were said maybe when he went out, but specific to this. And I don't think... These are just icing on the side. The issue is to get it done. I'm happy to hear that some action was taken by the Ministry of Finance to get inflation. You go on the ECCB site. You go on the Ministry of Finance website. We don't know inflation for the last how much years? I don't think the Ministry of Finance has been sleeping. I'm sure if I call them in the morning, we can get that data. Right? So, I don't think this is unavailable.

My good friend Senator Rahaman spoke about while the grass is growing, we all know that proverb. Senator Lewis offers a palatable consideration; you work on what you have. And of course, we're not going to dispute about whether who called me and who didn't call me and this and that and the other because those are smokescreens, red herrings in the discussions that... **(Laughter)** I want to stay focused on what the real issue is and what is holding us back from getting that done.

I think that the comments, of course, by the Leader of the Government's Business, in terms of all the actions that are currently taking place, are commendable. We have no problem. We said it's good. But if my foot is cut and it is bleeding, I cannot wait for amputation of the ambulance to come when Senator Rahaman knows how to solve the problem by putting pressure and tying the area, and those things, rather than leaving me to bleed to death. This is what leaders do. This is what great decision-makers do.

And so, in this spirit of progress, a caterpillar doesn't just turn into a butterfly, you know. If you look at it, they teach us, you take a little worm and you watch it for, I think, 21 days before it turns into a butterfly. So, in transformation, there are steps; that beautiful caterpillar didn't become a caterpillar. It is processed and all of them have outputs. So, there are different outputs. So, whilst the law is being worked on, which we hear that

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there's a draft going on, this component could be worked on in the meantime because it already has a premise on which to on which to act.

And so, Madam President, I think the spirit of the Motion is very clear. The intention and the objectives are very clear. I **(laughter)** don't want any personal recognition or anything like that. I'm not into this for that, at all. That is never. And persons who know me individually would know that. But what I do like is justice and fairness. I really like that, and I'm very reasonable and understanding. But at the same time, all of this comes with what you call responsibility and responsibility is linked to accountability, and accountability lives with the execution of things for the people.

So, I thank you, and I thank all the comments, and I trust that we can see something happening. I wouldn't say for Christmas because Christmas is already here, but we would expect that something will happen in the New Year and I will continue outside of this Chamber to act; not get on May Day in demonstrating because I feel by May Day, we should see some results by them so I don't think we have to get there Senator Lewis. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Okay. All right. With these words, Madam President, I commend this Motion for the records of this Honourable House.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator St. Clair. I have to forgive my asking. You commend it for a vote or you're commending....

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: (Inaudible comments)**

**Madam President:** You commend it for a vote?

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: (Inaudible comments)**

**Madam President:** Correct. All right. Honourable Senators, the Motion is as read. Clerk, do we... Would you please?

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**(Madam President converses with the Clerk privately)**

**Madam President:** Thank you. Let me then just read the resolved section.

**Question put.**

**Motion failed.**

**Deputy Clerk:** Item 17 – Adjournment.

**Madam President:** Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move the Motion that this Honourable House be adjourned *sine die*.

**Madam President:** Senator Rahaman.

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Madam President, in closing, I'd just like to wish my colleagues...

**Madam President:** (Inaudible comments)

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** I thought it was done already. Okay.

**Madam President:** Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Okay. Sorry. So, thank you for the opportunity. So, I'd just like to take this opportunity, this quite possibly, most likely based on the past, it's the last Sitting for the year. And I would just like to wish, I mean, we don't have most

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of the Members here, but I'd just like to wish everybody a happy holiday, and also the very best for the next year.

We are committed to doing what is best for our country, and, you know, some of the things that we mentioned and we give the reasons for mentioning it, it is to assist in the democratic process, to help to make sure that we are helping the process along so that development can come because it's not an easy job to run a country and we have our role to play in that.

I would like to thank all of my colleagues for their work. I mean, look at the time. It is about 7:15 p.m., and we've been here since 9:00 a.m. So that is a testament to, you know, every individual. It speaks volumes about what we are prepared to do and what we have done before for our country. So, I just would like to wish, you know, all of my colleagues the best and the business community as well, good sales and safety during this time. This is the time when there are a lot of opportunities, including the opportunity for theft. And so, I want to, for those business people who are listening, and also all of us, you know, don't take your safety for granted. In times like these, when there is lots of activity, we also have activity in terms of pilferage and theft. So keep your guard up. Enjoy the holiday period, you know, and be responsible. God bless. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Rahaman. Senator Lewis.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Just quickly. On behalf of Labour and the Grenada Trades Union Council, I just wish to bring to the attention of our wider membership and colleagues here the passing of one of our stalwarts, Sister Ann Simon, who served the Labour Movement, TUC Secretariat from Saint David, as a matter of fact, she'd be buried on Friday, for over 30 years, almost single-handedly running the secretariat. She was the administrative assistant to general secretaries such as Comrade Ray Roberts, Burt Patterson, Sister Claris Charles and others. Yes? And some of the great presidents like Sister Madonna Harford, Derek

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Allard, Anslem DeBurg and others. So, I just wish to recognise her and to, well to the family and to pay tribute to her.

It's a pity my colleague here from the business community has stepped out. But there is a business venture and the gentleman that I wish to just take note of even within the tourism sector and transport, not the big transport, but you'll see the connection. I'm speaking here of one Junior George, that's the guy with Ride Along who has introduced some novel business ideas. And he's rural in his family background. It shows his braveness and his level of innovation with these e-bikes that allow the use of, not the traditional fuel, etcetera, but electricity, and allow people to be able to see the inner parts, the innermost parts of Grenada, even for locals, foreigners alike and regional people and the most recent one is called "Tuk-Tuk". Yes? I see these as novel ideas. And I wish to encourage him, regardless of what obstacles he may meet, to continue. Whatever assistance that can be given from the level of the state, in terms of making things easier... I'm not saying it's not being done. I'm generally speaking because I know most times when...

You see, I look at... And just bear with me. When I look at Grenville, right, and I look at Saint George, and I recognise that we don't have a local private sector, my brother. In our local private sector, very few people are involved in business, let us say, in Grenville and Saint George. And I see Junior George with "Tuk Tuk" and the e-bike, which goes a long way in terms of enhancing the tourism product. And not just the tourism product, because we also have to look at what it does to us as a people. And it's good to see one of us, I'm just singling them out, one of us doing this. Yes? Speaks volume. And I really wish to encourage him to continue his innovative ideas.

As a matter of fact, apart from "Tuk Tuk" and the e-bike, I think he has some flotation with tubes, right, with tubes on our rivers and our seas. Right... Right... "Dinghy Doughnut." Right... It's highly commendable. It's highly commendable. And I know many times, that these things can be difficult. I know many times there'll be naysayers, there'll be... but I'm confident that he will not allow anything to dissuade him. I wish to encourage him to continue doing what he's doing.

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On the question of the... Well, Senator St. Clair spoke about road marches. I wish to repeat about four items here as we close the year, whether this is our last session or not. I look forward to the reinstatement of the Carriacou Five, that's five sisters that were dismissed from their jobs, I think, in 2022. And my clear recollection is that their letter of dismissal stated that it was done further to some existing laws in relation to the Public Service Commission. I know the others who were dismissed; the Administration learnt from that, and they found a way around it without mentioning that. That provision, S.R.&Os make provisions for a particular procedure to be followed, which was not followed. So I continue to call, and I know the Public Worker's Union is expected to continue the call for their reinstatement.

I also call, and probably that would be a good thing for Christmas. As I look towards, through you, Madam President, from my Saint Andrew crew, I'm saying my Saint Andrew crew and I'll pull in St. David too because you know all the parishes border Saint Andrew, but it is known, it is known that Saint Andrew has a special place with Saint David, more so because we had loaned them Ajamu. **(Laughter)** Yes? Remember, Ajamu is Saint Andrew, but we had loaned them until Rootsman Kelly and others came around. But I'm saying that my Saint Andrew crew, for the sisters from the Faith Organisation who had worked, and I know you have been arguing that the company should pay them, and there are some legal matters. I continue to call for them to be paid. These are ordinary, ordinary working-class people regardless of where they fall politically.

I had a sidebar with my colleague on the "Other Side", and I said I would still raise it. But, I sat in this House (it may be, I think, I was a bit lower down here because I might have been about number eight, sorry, because there are six of us, I might have been about number five, close to the end) when I applauded the comment made and the commitment made by my dear colleague, through you, Madam President, Minister for Social Services, who had said that, what was then said as having a time frame for the less fortunate, in terms of a \$150, that would have continued in 2023 during the 2023 Budget that took place in November, December of 2022 and it was redrawn. I know that they are receiving more now, but I think it is a matter of principle, a matter of principle and

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a matter of commitment because this was committed inside here. I still continue to clamour for that payment to be made. Right. I still clamour for that payment to be made.

And last, let me just extend the best wishes to our workers, the working class and everyone that I'm associated with, just in the event that we do not come back here, and ask us to pay attention to our security and our safety. Our security and safety begin with us being aware of our surroundings. And I know the use of social media these days; everybody like to say or most people like to say when they are not home and when they're travelling but these are means to allow people to know to come visit you, those who have bad intentions. Let us pay attention to our health and our safety.

And the police officers and all the support staff... I am convinced that, Madam President, who the Clerk is, given his background, that the support staff that is making these long hours here with us, we've offered ourselves for this, they have to stay, that they will be adequately compensated in terms of the overtime. I know that will happen and I know that they will be dropped home. You know the employer here is not like those in the south that I was speaking about that will not ensure that their staff reaches home safely late into the night. So I wish to compliment you and thank you for everything for the accommodation and the work that you have been doing. So please extend to the rest of the staff.

Now, last but not least. We look forward to our members in the Public Service receiving some extra payment as a bonus for this year for the consideration of the employer. It is a tradition in Grenada that most employers are worth their salt. If it is done, I haven't heard about it, and if it is done, it is a chance for the "Government Side" to say it. I ought to have heard about it. I know in the past, I think, last year something may have been given, or the year before, so I know that the workers will look forward to receiving some form of what we may call a "thirteen-month payment". So, I wish everyone all the very best and I know we shall be in touch. Thank you very much.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Lewis, and the mike is passed to Senator St. Clair.

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**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Yes, thank you, Madam President. Some closing comments. It's about two comments actually. One, I want to mention and speak about the issue that my dear friend says I'm avoiding, but I like to keep focus. The whole issue of the income support from the Beryl income support. I was happy to hear that some 5,000 cheques were printed, and I guess other accounts were credited, they will call that or debited, whichever, but monies were put into their accounts. We know that the impact of the hurricane has been significant to the farmers getting restarted. We know that is not a lot of money to get them restarted, but it will help in some ways. The call has always been for the farmers to use the money wisely and see how they can best organise their lives and at least get some food to produce for the upcoming holidays.

This, we know, has been a challenge, but as we see over the last three or four weeks, there have been some increases in the local vegetables, in particular, bananas, some plantains, and so on which is good. Of course, there were some challenges and delays in the farmers' expectations as to when these payments are going to be made and that has created a lot of, you know, different sentiments in different circles. The Government might have gotten what I call a "bad name"; they don't have money, where is the money and all kinds of stuff. And again, I'm in the midst of all of these calls. I didn't record the calls, but from where I sit, you get those calls.

I know personally, from involvement in all of this, that the action was being taken, but there is a process. So, there was a first pay-out, which I was present to witness, and then there's a second one, which started sometime, I think, this week or late last week. And so we trust that everybody, and I will say everybody, it might have one or two that may have some little challenges in getting their fund, but I will trust that most persons, almost 99%, would receive this money, I don't want to say for Christmas, but ahead of Christmas. So, notwithstanding what they may have used out of their own personal monies, they can be able to at least do something, but still use it wisely to get back into their farming enterprise. So this, we have seen. Most farmers started getting, especially last Thursday or Friday... Some commented up to yesterday, saying we're receiving payment. So this is good news. Right. This is very good news.

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The other note I want to speak on is basically, as we are going into the holidays as Senator Lewis was mentioning, to wish not just the farmers and stakeholders but the nation, everyone, including everyone, all Members here and the whole staff, supporting us being here, it's a lot. We come here, and we talk, and we're working hard, and they are saying, what's happening to those boring guys? We just have them standing, sitting around, but we have to appreciate them, appreciate their interest in this and without all of them, whatever we do here will be very difficult.

And so, we have to recognise that and trust that with God's strength and grace, we will come back into the New Year with more work ahead of us as we collectively work towards one goal. We all have the same interest; to make Grenada better, to make life better, and the debates and exchanges are about how we get that distillation for betterment. We all have the same goals. And so we have to continue working harder into 2025 because there will be more challenges, more opportunities, more things we have to look at as it becomes more challenging for us. When we got here maybe one year ago, we didn't realise we had to look at the Terrorism Bill and all of these things. There are challenges, and we ask that God keep us healthy and keep us strong, you know because it's very hard work. We all have other responsibilities. You have your ministerial responsibilities. We may have other professional responsibilities.

To prepare and to be here, and even you, Madam President, sit there and follow. You may ask what is happening to these guys with this stupidity they are talking about, and they need to stop talking right now for standing up with us and really tolerating us. And I would say, given the leeway in such that you don't feel tight-squeeze, I think you have done well over the last few months in terms of understanding the temperature of the House. I think you have to be commended for those verses like the first few months, you were like, okay, stop that, stop that, don't do that, but I think you understand, and we really appreciate that, and everything would come down to goodness and the due respect that is exercised among each one. I think we all have to be commended for that as a House. **(Applause)**. You know, we debate strongly, but we have respect in this House.

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This may be the only House of all the Houses of Parliament where we respect each other, and we debate fiercely, but we are doing it for one good. I thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator St. Clair. You feel happy that you have a lot of leeway from the Chair now? **(Laughter)** Let's see. Senator Thomas, Gloria Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. I need to respond a bit to Senator Lewis and add some clarification to one of the statements that was made. And in terms of the SEED, he requested that we replace the \$150 that was taken out. I want to inform the Honourable Senator that \$200 was replaced, \$200 was replaced. **(Applause)** Yes, we did. We did. Yes. Yes. We promised to keep the \$150 on when we came on, but when we assessed the programme and recognised that there were so many irregularities, we couldn't continue with it. So we did a recertification, and after we did the recertification, we added \$200. **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** Yes, so we put it in.

And I want to make the point, now that the BRISP money is for six months, only six months. So after six months the BRISP will finish, so I don't want it to be said we take back the money. **(Laughter/Applause)** It's a six-month allocation for the persons affected. So after the six months that's the end of it. So, please don't come here and say we take back the money. **(Laughter/Applause)** It's for six months. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Thomas. I was reminded that we are not in debate mode so I accept that in the spirit of clarification mode. Thank you, thank you, Senator. Other speakers? Hearing or seeing none, let me just make a couple of quick comments. First, I would like to report, and I apologise for not reporting before, that I did receive an excuse from Senator Noland Cox, the Deputy President of the Senate, who is attending to urgent personal matters outside of Grenada and could not attend and sent his apologies which I should have given at the beginning, this morning.

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Secondly, I'm sure you would like us all to join in congratulating our Prime Minister for being named by TIME Magazine as one of the 100 Global Climate Leaders who are finding climate solutions. **(Applause)** So please go online and look it up. In fact, you know, he's one of the newcomers and he's cited for finding climate solutions as well as climate solutions around climate finance as well as advocacy, both of which he stepped up after Hurricane Beryl or he was noticed after Hurricane Beryl but he is well regarded as a Global Climate Change Leader.

And, he is joined by another Grenadian who has been in the trenches likewise, coming from one of those devastated parts of Grenada, former Senator Simon Steele, in his capacity as Executive Secretary of UNFCCC United Nations Convention on Climate Change. He has also been named as a Climate Champion. They are in different categories, but he was also highlighted at the global level. So the Grenadian advocacy combined those two with our presentation in front of the International Court of Justice, and I think we have, if I may say taken some leadership again in climate advocacy.

One of the things cited about Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell is the fact that he was able to get the Caribbean Catastrophic Risk Insurance Facility to contribute, is it \$44,000,000 to our country, which is the first time we got this pay-out, this climate change risk pay-out. And for those of you, almost everyone who followed his leadership in the wake of Beryl, clearly, and if the global community can recognise him, so can we.

Colleagues, I want to say that, I'm a little bit tongue in cheek here, our mace, our mace is intact. **(Laughter)** It has not been thrown on for a whole year; neither was it thrown out in this Session. We are in the good direction of travel towards sustainable development, towards mutual respect and towards expanded democracy that we are holding and crafting in our own Grenadian style. So we are to be proud of our work here and we are building and changing as we go.

I want to thank all of you for your additional commitment to service. Today, we did have the formation of our Committees, our Senate Committees again, for the coming year of our work and I look forward to more robust participation. I'm named Chair and I will

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continue to rely on the Clerk and the staff to make sure our Committees undertake the work that they are designated to do.

I really do want to say what a pleasure it was today and a learning experience to hear the Ministerial Reports and the discussions around them. Leader of Government's Business, please convey to the Executive that this is a real service. I know it's a standing commitment in the legislative agenda, but it is a service whether you are reporting good news or not, and it turns out that a lot of it was good news. But, we do want to send our thanks to the Executive branch of Government for undertaking as much as it did this year and repeatedly reporting on it. Part of what we already said is that the gaps, difficulties and shortcomings will be and must be addressed in a shorter time as possible. We get that sense as well. And coming from Carriacou and Petite Martinique, I tell you there's quite a bit there to be done in the shortest possible time.

In closing my statement, let me just thank the Clerk and the staff of Parliament. We are in the same spirit of enhancing the Parliament and it's led by the Clerk. He darts back and forth. He's always called by the Ministries and Parastatals and I think the Speaker and I do expect him to be as vigorously engaged as he is. Clerk, we thank you for your response and for your team, and we look forward to supporting you to fill all the gaps that are institutionally identified. Thank you very much, and convey our sentiments to the staff. We have our internal work to do, and we do want you to let them know that we appreciate it. I mean, staff members are still around. We've been going for just about an hour short of 12 hours, and you are here with us as we take the nation's business forward.

Thank you all for your collaboration, Senators, from wherever you come, whichever side of the aisles you are. And I also must report that both Senator Myanna Charles and Senator Dwight Horsford asked to be excused for the second half of the meeting. Senator Seville Francis indicated to me in writing before she left an hour ago, that she had a commitment which was two hours late by the time she had left.

So, there is continuing interest and commitment to our work as Senators, and I want to thank, congratulate and encourage all of you. Thank you very much. Have a

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wonderful, happy and blessed holiday to you and your family members, your work colleagues, to all the constituents that you have. If we combine or if we look at all the constituents and put them together, it's a whole country for whom you are all responsible. So thank you, and bring the greetings and sentiments of joy, peace, happiness, progress, solidarity and unity to the country of our beloved Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. You've worked hard, have a good rest.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**The Sitting of the Senate adjourned sine die at 7:44 p.m.**

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