



GRENADA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

**THIRD SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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**SENATE**

FRIDAY 25TH JULY, 2025

***Sitting of the Senate  
held at Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's  
on Friday 25th July, 2025***

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***Sitting of the Senate  
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on Friday 25th July, 2025***

***Attendance***

**PRESENT**

Madam President

Senator the Honourable Dr. Dessima Williams

*in the Chair*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Senator the Honourable Adrian Thomas      | - Minister for Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture   |
| Senator the Honourable David Evlyn Andrew | - Minister for Education   |
| Senator the Honourable Quinc Britton      | - Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry of Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture with Responsibility for Culture |
| Senator the Honourable Seville Francis    | - Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry of Youth and Sports  |
| Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph   | - Attorney General and Minister for Legal Affairs, Labour and Consumer Affairs   |
| Senator the Honourable Gloria Ann Thomas  | - Minister for Social & Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs (Social Security)                            |
| Senator the Honourable Norland Cox        | - Opposition Member of the Senate (Deputy President)   |
| Senator the Honourable Dr. Myanna Charles | - Opposition Member of the Senate  |
| Senator the Honourable Dwight Hosford     | - Opposition Member of the Senate  |
| 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 Mondy André Lewis - Member of the Senate  
(Labour Rep.)  
(*Excuse tendered*)

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***Prayers  
Minutes***

**The Sitting of the Senate began at 9:00 a.m.**

**(Senate Prayer was said)**

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

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

**Madam President:** Good morning, all. Pleasant, good morning, and welcome everyone here in the Chamber and elsewhere.

**Deputy Clerk (Ag):** Item 3 – Oath of Allegiance or Affirmation of a new Senator.  
Item 4 – Confirmation of Minutes.

**Madam President:** Leader of Government's Business, Senator Adrian Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Pleasant morning, Madam President, and the staff. Good morning to my colleagues on the "Other Side" of the House. Pleasant, morning to my colleagues on this side of the House, Doctor Alexis, KC, and his team. I am quite happy to have you all here this morning.

Madam President, I stand and I beg that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate held at Parliament Building, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Tuesday the 1st of July 2025, at 9:00 a.m., be taken as read.

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes taken as read.**

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***Announcements***

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

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Building, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Tuesday the 1st of July 2025, at 9:00 a.m., be confirmed.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes confirmed.**

**Deputy Clerk (Ag.):** Item 5 – Messages from the Governor-General.  
Item 6 – Announcements by Madam President.

**Madam President:** A pleasant, good morning again, and greetings to our special members in the public gallery. I believe I see two of our notable, distinguished legal experts, Mr. Francis Alexis, KC, take a bow. Thank you for joining us. Thank you for the work you've been leading, and next to you, sir, if my eyes serve me well, I believe it is Attorney Layne. No? Is it Ewart Layne? It is Ewart Layne. Pleasure to have you with us, sir. You have gotten younger and more handsome, so my eyes deceive me... **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** Especially at your age, but that's what intellectual work does to you, it gives you youth. Thank you for your work as well.

All other members welcome. I think our numbers ought to swell with the young people a little later on. I want to again, as per our last Sitting, warmly congratulate all the families who have graduating students who have now just about graduated, every class for the year 2024 to 2025.

The Education Minister, I'm sure you're please that you've turned out what another 2000 secondary school grads, several hundred TAMCC students, and others not just to join the labour market, to join something we call the adult world, and I trust and pray that

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all families and students find the reward for the investment they have made in formal schooling and other forms of education.

May I also congratulate the nation on its first-ever marking of the first of August as Emancipation Day in Grenada? It's an important beginning, legal Emancipation from chattel slavery and enslavement of our people. And I trust that with all the festivities which are proudly being anchored in St. Andrew, this year, we will find a nation standing on its feet, looking forward as we continue our Emancipation journey as royal and distinguished human beings. Congratulations Grenada.

And I also want to wish us a very safe and enjoyable carnival season that is around the corner. Here ends my announcements for the moment.

**Deputy Clerk (Ag.):** Item 7 – Ministerial Statements.

**Madam President:** Honourable Senator Gloria Thomas-Samuel, you've requested the floor? You have it, madam.

**Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. Pleasant, good morning to all in this Honourable House. I take this opportunity to bring this House, the nation and the wider community up to date on activities and initiatives that we have carried out over the last two months or so in the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs.

Madam President, our ministry continues to be one of the most active ministries in the Government of Grenada, and we pledge to continue to deliver on all fronts. Madam President, we held a high-level sub-regional consultation on the Inter-American Model Law to prevent, punish and eradicate digital gender violence against women and girls. This was held at the Radisson Beach Hotel.

The initiative was a huge success. It was a two-day consultation, and we saw participants from local, regional and international stakeholders. The consultation aimed to foster a participatory space for dialogue, exchange and reflection with the goal of

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enriching the draft model law through the experiences and contributions of stakeholders. We had a representative from our Government, civil society, academia and an international organisation. Participants engage in focused working sessions to analyse and contribute to the draft. The result of this engagement was very rewarding and promising for the future establishment of that law.

The Chinese Ambassador, Wei Hongtian, paid a farewell visit to the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and General Affairs during this month. During the visit, the Ambassador expressed his deep appreciation for the cordial and meaningful working relationship that was developed over the last few years. The Ambassador assured us that wherever he can continue to influence, he will do so to ensure Grenada continues to receive support and assistance from China. We wish Ambassador all the best as he leaves our shores for his homeland.

Madam President, we observe World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15th. The observance commenced with a message on television by yours truly, Minister for Social Development, and on June 17th, the Ministry of Social Development hosted a forum to observe World Elder Abuse Awareness Day under the theme, "Expand the Discussion, Recognise the Signs, and Reduce the Risks".

The initiative focuses on recognising, reporting, and preventing the mistreatment of older persons. The activity saw presentations from three distinguished persons: Doctor Wendy Crawford-Daniel, who presented on the topic, "Older people in Grenada"; Mr. Jervis DaBreo, who presented on the topic, "Avoiding cyber abuse, safety navigating the digital world in my older years" and Ms. Jasmine Redhead, who presented on "Legal issues affecting the elderly". In her presentation, there was a surprise for most of us because she explained to us that if children refuse to look after their parents, they could be prosecuted.

The event helped in understanding elder abuse, how to identify it and how to report suspected abuse and supporting elder adults who may be experiencing it. Madam President, the ministry held a two-day high-level policy dialogue on disability inclusion, rights, protection and state responsibility in Grenada. As a ministry, we continue to

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collaborate with social partners to ensure the active participation of persons with disability in policy development.

**The SEED Programme**

Madam President, we have completed the rollout of the SEED cash card in St. George. In St. Andrew, the activity is 90% completed, and we will be continuing this work in St. David in the next two weeks. Madam President, the issuance of this cash card has brought great relief to the beneficiaries who have received their card, and the long lines at the revenue offices have dwindled tremendously.

**WASH**

The Water Access and Sanitation in Homes. On June 23rd, the Ministry of Housing held a closing ceremony of the WASH Programme in the community known as Lakabarka in St. Andrew. Twenty-three bathrooms and toilets were handed over to residents in the community. Stakeholders who assisted in making this project a reality include NAWASA, L. L. Rhamdhanny, Nation Builders and other business entities. They all had representatives at the closing ceremony, and they expressed satisfaction with the quality of the final product.

Our ministry is currently engaged in a number of community development infrastructural works as well as people empowerment initiatives. We are constructing a bathroom and toilet facility on Hope Beach. We have road works ongoing at Post Royal, Café and St. Patrick West. We have a summer programme for children at La Filette School. We have an electrical installation programme ongoing in the Happy Hill community.

And so, Madam President, this is just a snippet of what we've been doing for the last two months. And I continue to ensure that our people at the community level continue to receive services and opportunities geared towards their enhancement and development. I thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank you, Minister Thomas-Samuel. It's always very, what should I say, uplifting for us as Grenadians to hear about the progress of our brothers and

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sisters in any field. I thought you were going to give a definition of who constitutes an elder, maybe by age, and I just want to be sure that I'm included among the elders and to say thank you to Grenada for recognising the ending of abuse of the elderly through an awareness day that is celebrated globally. So many older persons are abused actively or inactively, and this is an important stakeholder that we can eradicate. So thanks to the Ministry.

And to the WASH again, the lifting of sanitation levels across the country, particularly in rural and low-income communities, is something to celebrate. So, thank you for doing that and all the other social development work in the era of the STGs. It's extremely important if we are to emerge as a truly middle-income country. Thanks to the ministry.

Any other Ministerial Reports? The floor has been requested by the Minister for Tourism and other related portfolios. I'm not sure what he's going to speak about. You have the floor, Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, yes, I do have quite a few departments in the Ministry of Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture, but this morning I just want to make a small statement on the carnival.

The fact that this will be the last sitting of Parliament of the Senate before the carnival season, I am just in anticipation, Madam President. I just want to welcome many of our visitors to Grenada for the carnival season. I've met quite a few of them. People have started coming in already, and I can anticipate that in the next couple of weeks, a lot of our friends' families, visitors for the very first time, will be coming to Grenada to participate in maybe the best carnival in the Caribbean.

Madam President, I also want to welcome our visitors this weekend from the continent of Africa for the Afreximbank Bank Conference that will be taking place here. I think it will be a very good opportunity to reconnect with our brothers and sisters in Africa. What a time. We are sitting here today continuing on the road of emancipation,

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emancipating ourselves from mental slavery and all other forms of activities that will demonstrate our lack of sovereignty as a people, and we'd like to welcome those visitors from Africa and the Caribbean also.

Madam President, I will also want to really and truly appeal to the community outside there to let us have a good carnival. Let us enjoy ourselves violence-free. I call on all citizens of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique to cooperate with the Royal Grenada Police Force. Over the years, we have had success in terms of having a peaceful carnival, and I really hope that we will have a better carnival this year.

I also want to make an appeal to our friends and young colleagues who really and truly want to enjoy themselves and maybe think that the consumption of alcohol... I want to appeal to the young people, appeal to my colleagues to be very cautious in the consumption of alcohol. It's a time of the year when maybe we feel we can go the extra mile, but we know what the disadvantages of over-consuming alcohol are. So I want to really and truly appeal to the community to take it easy.

Also, the issue of driving on our roads. We have recognised the number of vehicles that are in Grenada today, and how frustrating it can be to get from one point to the next. During the carnival season, I really want to appeal to the public to drive cautiously and with care and attention.

Madam President, this weekend we'll be having the semi-finals. Progress Park will become a live. Last night, we had a successful Groovy semi-finals there. Tonight, we'll be having, maybe, the best semi-finals for the Soca Monarch so far. The artistes are excited. They are of good quality. The music is sounding good. So I do pray and hope and appeal to my good friend on the side there that we may need a little extra hour this afternoon to attend the show, so if we can leave it by 6:00 p.m., we'll be happy.

Madam President, on Sunday, we'll be having the semi-final for the calypsonians, "the kaisonian", and also we would not forget our good friend in St. Mark, Victoria, and I'm urging all Grenadians to maybe visit Victoria on Saturday. From dawn to sunset, we'll be having the Traditional Mas. Maybe, throughout the Caribbean, the Traditional Mas has survived the most in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. We are very proud

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of that. This Administration has placed a lot of emphasis on promoting and protecting the traditional mas of Grenada, Carriacou, and Petite Martinique.

The following weekend, our children will get the chance to participate in our carnival, and it's normally a long procession for our kids, and we really want to come out and support them. Then we go into the carnival weekend.

So once again, I want to urge Grenadians to participate, patronise and be good citizens throughout the carnival season. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** We thank you. I can see the Minister breaking protocol here. Thank you, Senator, for the updates, and I'm sure the entire Chamber joins with you in welcoming and cautioning. Thank you. Senator Roderick St. Clair, you have the floor, sir.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Madam President, and I would say good morning to you and, of course, both sides of the aisle. I want to say good morning to everyone and, of course, the staff and others, inside and on the outside. Of course, I always comment on our dear Senator Thomas Gloria Thomas's update. It's very important that we don't lose that fabric, and I want to commend her for the areas of focus. It's very innovative and creative, the whole issue the digital abuse, if you want to call it that, what I understand, with women and girls, and how do you deal with that, that whole conference. I know it was not just there was a local conference, and those initiatives help to bring light to the new dangers.

You know, we speak about hurricanes and climate change, but those are those sets of changes that influence the people and in all places, whether it is in the workplace or whether in the home environment or business environment, and she has to continue to build on those for which we learn. Sometimes we have a regional conference or international conference, the question is how do we take this and replicate it at the village level, at the community level, such that it doesn't go far away? I know that that will not be far-fetched from her, hearing the work that is being done in the summer. She spoke

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about the electrical and all those different activities to get people engaged.

Not only individuals maybe from school or unemployed, but it's something that could happen all the time, especially not only just the unemployed, but a lot of elderly who might be home, might be retired, although we haven't gotten the definition of "an elderly" as yet, may want things to do whether is to learn a foreign language, play an instrument, you know, do something,. So it's a challenge that I think the ministry has as we all grow old, but I know that she and the staff are up to it and they can create many different nuclear throughout the country to keep those persons engaged.

Some people volunteer, which is okay to do things, but a lot of others want to learn to do new things, maybe to crochet, to do different things, to sew, to draw and those things. So I'm just sharing some additional ideas that can come out from this, and, of course, commend you for that whole issue with the session, particularly the digital part with the card.

There can be so many different spam. They are online, they want to connect, and they see things popping up and so on and, of course, Mr. DaBreo has been doing an excellent work, we know, in whatever means you call him, he's always there.

So my comment is to commend you for that and to continue going ahead, and we look forward to great things from you and your staff. We know your staff are to be really proud of you with the support that you've given them, and you are proud of them with the support that they've given you, too. And, of course, that is my comment I wanted to make initially.

And it was good to see the Leader of Government's Business, Senator Thomas, making a Ministerial Statement. I think that's the first time he made one. I want to congratulate him for doing that. Yes, yes, yes. On the issue of carnival, I think I would want to endorse those comments that he made in terms of all of those areas and in particular that original mas in Victoria. It is something that I didn't even realise was happening, and it's sort of funny.

When I went to a special session by Doctor Marcel, where he was doing a biography, and I know he is the main man in orchestrating those things, and that was part

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of his legacy repertoire, and that's when I learned about this thing the first time, and he explained it to me. And so now that I am hearing it about it again, I would try to make some attempt to be in Victoria, one of my second homes or my third home. I love it in that area. So Senator Quinc, I will plan to be up there tomorrow at some time.

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator St. Clair, for thanking the workers in the Ministry of Social Development through its leadership and its representation here in the Parliament. Thank you for your thanks to the people. Senator Adrian Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Yes, Madam President, I just want to correct my colleague on the "Other Side". This is not my first Ministerial Statement, for the sake of the records.

**Madam President:** Call it morning exuberance. Thank you. Senator David Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Good morning to you. Good morning to Clerk, all staff and Members of this Honourable House, all distinguished guests in the Chamber and Grenadians and others following this feed, this broadcast at home and abroad, wherever you are. I'm happy to bring some brief updates on some very key initiatives taking place within the Ministry of Education.

But even before I do that, I want to point out that we are in the summer vacation period, and I want to make an appeal for the safety of our children. In fact, we've begun the practice in the Ministry of Education of sending a release out to parents and to guardians because this extended vacation period is a period when we have increased risk to our nation's children, and so I'm appealing to parents, I'm appealing to guardians, let's ensure that we know where our children are, that we know with whom our children are, where they're going, what they're doing, and we ensure that they have supervision.

You'll already realise that there have been quite a few house fires, and so safety,

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ensuring that the flammable agents are out of their reach, and so there's always supervision. So I appeal to our population to ensure that we keep our nation's children safe during the summer. We want to be able to receive them warmly come September without losing any of them and without having them suffer undue stress, emotionally and psychologically, because of the losses that incur when there are these fires and unsafe elements.

Also, even as we contemplate as we go into the carnival season, we know that there are bad actors and they are lurking, sexual risks waiting to prey on our nation's children. And so in that context too, I implore our parents, our guardians, to be extra vigilant in protecting our nation's children.

Want to report, Madam President, that within the last two weeks we've had... Last week we had a two-day math symposium. I think prior to it taking place, I did mention it in this House, but I'm happy to report it took place and it took place very successfully. The two-day math symposium was on July 14 and 15.

It was part of a national conversation, a national math symposium, where we had representatives from the Opposition, government officials, ministry officials, past mathematics professors, and invited other stakeholders across the nation to discuss the issue of mathematics nationally. This was part and is part of our national mathematics strategy because we recognise as a nation we cannot wait for CXC to do it for us, we cannot wait for the University of the West Indies, and while we would appreciate the help that they can bring, as an independent nation, we have an obligation and a responsibility to arrest and to begin to discuss, and interrogated the challenge we have in mathematics performances across our country.

And so we had the featured speaker, Doctor Loyce George, who is the Senior Mathematics Lecturer at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica. She was excellent and created very instructive insights into a lot of the practices that we use in mathematics instruction. We had panel discussions, and it was just an energising and very, very instructive to the seminar. That I must say is part of our wider 2025 to 2030 mathematics strategy and that's been built out.

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In fact, the two-day symposium, Madam President, was to ensure we got input from all of these stakeholders to further refine the national mathematics strategy because there are some things we are quite sure about already within the Ministry of Education, some things we are doing, some things we are going to do but we wanted public input to further shape the mathematics strategy that we are going to use in Grenada Carriacou and Petite Martinique. So among these things, other interventions that we are going to pursue as part of the strategy would be to do widespread training and retraining of teachers in how we instruct mathematics.

We are going to interrogate the curriculum to make sure it's a lot more relevant, and so we ensure that teachers and students get exposed to mathematics that makes sense, because not everybody sees the importance of calculus. Not everybody gets to see that. I mean, some who go on to engineering and all that will appreciate algebra and they appreciate calculus and all of those things, but the average person needs to recognise the driving, the kite flying and making, all of these skills require mathematics, and we must make it more practical, and so that's part of it.

So training, re-training, and we've engaged UWI. We've engaged other university partners across the region to ensure that's put in place, so that's going to be on stream. We've also engaged the Commonwealth of Learning for further training, right, and we're working with I think it's ACT—Advancing Caribbean Teachers. I don't remember the acronym, but it's in collaboration with, again, the University of the West Indies to ensure further training of teachers. What we're also going to have for the first time.

We are going to have a specialised teaching of mathematics at the primary level. We did have that in one or two schools, but it was a distinct judgment of the principal in one or two schools. We are moving forward, and we are going to start rolling out specialised mathematics teaching in 14 of our primary schools. In other words, you must have the content, you must be trained in math, you must have the content, and you will teach mathematics across the entire primary school. Presently, Madam President, every teacher teaches everything across the primary level, and we see that as a loophole, as an avenue where several of the deficiencies in mathematics have been crystallised.

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So if a teacher is not particularly competent in this particular area, in mathematics, chances are they may gloss over it, or they may just give the children an assignment, and so over time some of these deficiencies could become crystallised. But we want to make sure the people we use at the primary level, where they are most sponge-like, the students that is, they are being taught by persons who have the content, who are trained in the pedagogy and are able to deliver it well, and so we are confident that this strategy, over time is going to be a good yield. So that's the math symposium and strategy.

I want to say also, we have happening right now in Grenada, for the first time, the hosting of the Caribbean Association of Principals Secondary Schools, CAPSS, as it's called, and that is led by our own. The President of CAPSS is the President of GAPSS, which is the Grenada Association of Principals of Secondary School, Doctor Dianne Abel Jeffrey, and they are hosting principals from across the region right now.

I was able to be with them for the opening ceremony, but this week has been extremely busy, even with graduations and all the other activities we've been having, so I haven't been able to get to many of the other activities, but I'm aware, and I've been receiving reports that it's been going quite well. Yes? So we welcome all of the principals from the region to Grenada, and we do hope that they have a fantastic conference.

Madam President, I'm happy to report as well that the Ministry of Education has received confirmation from the Cabinet to go ahead and procure devices for, and not devices, let me be specific, military grade quality devices for form one and two students going into secondary schools, and in addition to that we are also going to procure electronic copies of the books that are on the book list.

Now, this is significant, because formerly we've made attempts or formally attempts were made to have eBooks, but those eBooks were not aligned with the book list. So you had eBooks with content material that obviously could have been used, could have been adopted, but they were not aligned to the book list. So the uptake for that was never strong, because it turned out to be double work for our teachers. It turned out to be a teacher having to say, "Well, in your textbook, it's on page 12, and in the eBooks it's on page 40, and so we found, from our review, that that was one of the factors contributing

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to the poor level of uptake. So we are happy to announce that the books that are on the book list for the form ones and twos.

We are going to provide the device. In fact, let me not just say provide. We are going to sell at a very cheap price. You could pay to own. It wouldn't be anything that is prohibitive, but we have found that when people pay even if it's a dollar for something, there's a greater sense of ownership and responsibility, but when you own it, it will become yours. Right? It will be a one-off. Whether we charge you EC\$100 and you get a laptop that ordinarily was EC\$1500 we just know that you will value the EC\$100 you paid for it, but we will tell you what those figures are and you'll pay to own, and the ministry won't have the responsibility to continuously repair. So we pray that you will take care of the devices, but the eBooks will be available there, so be aware.

The rest of the book programme continues as it has been, so the books within the programme will circulate and will be available. The ministry will make releases to that effect as well.

I want to report also, Madam President, that at this time the Ministry of Education has a community library summer programme. It is taking place in the community libraries in St. David, St. John and River Sallee. At the moment, we have over 100 young students between the ages of seven and 12, gathered in those library facilities, actively participating in this programme, and the programme runs from the 14th of July to the 31st. This is happening as we speak, and it aims to ignite a passion for literacy, to provide unique opportunities for exploration of reading material, and to generate renewed interest in our own community libraries.

So, in the absence of the national library, which eventually will come, we are making good use of our community libraries, and we thank our community librarians and Ministry of Education staff for pushing and presenting. Yes? The Ministry of Education expresses huge thanks and appreciation to all of our partners, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Climate Resilience, and the Grenada Solid Waste Management Authority, for collaborating to see the library summer project take place. There are a lot more things I can share, but I would rest with those few, just to be brief. Thank you very much.

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**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. I know you do have a very active ministry. May I say that we don't have a military in Grenada, and I think militarism is not particularly a great institution? So military grade equipment could be replaced by the concept of higher-grade or... Leave that military language out of it. Thank you. I'm quite serious about that, and I am excited about the math symposium, so I'm going to give you some kudos on that because the figures reported previously were really dismal for the pass mark in math. I was listening carefully to figure out, you know, if the symposium was on strategy or was overall if it was really on the capacity to teach for learning math, and then you spoke about the fact that math will be taught by specialised math teachers in primary school. That has to be well-received. I know times have changed because I think I learned my best math in primary school. It wasn't from any special math teacher, but if that's the case, we have to inculcate a learning and competence in and love for math in primary school. So congratulations on that and all the other wonderful things you reported, and those yet to be reported. I thank you, and I pass the floor to Senator Salim Rahman. You have the floor, Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Madam President, and good morning to fellow colleagues, those listening at home and abroad. Pleasant, good morning to all.

I would like to commend my colleagues on the information that they have just given us with regard to what's going on in the particular ministries, especially, I could start with the Ministry of Education. Math has a direct implication on business and trade, and when you focus on the foundation of math at the primary school levels, and you have what has just been announced as specialised classes in math, you then change the next generation. We have seen, and many of us have spoken about this, and we're happy to see that change is being implemented there.

We also know that socially, there are poor lifestyle habits within the homes. Many homes, children don't receive this type of support, even from their parents, and there are bad actors in the community on the blocks and so forth. And so for that young child it is extremely important not only to deliver the subject material, but also through social

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services, as I've mentioned before, to deliver what they don't necessarily get at home, which is a strong sense of morality and a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong, so that must go together to help the personality to develop properly.

I want to commend the initiative of the 4th Annual Afro Caribbean Trade and Investment Forum. Trade and investment are what will take our nation out of poverty. Trading is what will lift the inner communities, businesses and people in that community out of poverty. This is an opportunity. Although it is spearheaded by the Government, it really doesn't matter who is spearheading it. The fact is that you're going to have people from the continent of Africa coming to Grenada.

I have been in contact with people from Guyana. There are business people coming from Guyana to this forum, and if business people come from Guyana and from the region to this forum and ask me about hotels and help them in that area, what about our Grenadian people? Many times, we have something right in front of us and we can't see it. We don't see the importance of it until we see how it is benefiting others. We say, "Oh gosh, I wish I had. I wish. I wish I knew. I wish..." You know?

So we don't want to have regrets, and that's why I want to mention it again, the importance of going there, to open new doors, meet people that you would have never met before, have conversations with them, and develop connections with them. It may not translate into business now, but it may translate into friendships, which, when you then visit, you will develop business initiatives and partnerships with people.

We have a problem with funding in our small island states, and in bigger countries, they have more access to funding and, in many cases, cheaper funding. We all know that 60% of the world's resources come from Africa, so I just want to reemphasise this, you know, and what the minister said with regard to this forum, and its importance for all Grenadians that want to do business or even those that just want to meet and to develop a relationship with brothers and sisters on the continent of Africa.

With regard to carnival, it concerns me, the disregard for our roadways not only when it's carnival time, but also when it's end-of-year Christmas time, when it's... Generally, we have seen people parking, blocking roads and going to a fete with disregard

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for the vehicular traffic, our emergency services and the rest of us who need to get to where we need to go.

And I say that because there is a real cost to businesses every year. Many businesses sponsor bus shelters all over the country, and every year, in addition to having to repaint their businesses, they have to spend money to, in many cases, redo signs and infrastructure because of vandalism in these same bus shelters and their businesses. So I think I would like to mention that at least the police step up their role with regard to the protection of public property, and businesses do so as well, have your cameras and so on, and to make sure that we don't have a lot of losses during that time.

Also, drunkenness and the fact that many people drive while intoxicated. It is now okay. It is one thing to consume. It's another thing to consume and endanger the lives of other people on the road. Whilst we celebrate, have a good time, and welcome our visitors, it is not okay to drive drunk, and I think the Government needs to invest in breathalyser equipment and other such equipment. I have the necessary laws to back it up, to make sure that we don't have drunk drivers on our roads and driving our buses and our children and so forth.

Finally, with regard to the safety of our nation's children. We have fetes around carnival time. We usually have a lot of fetes in pastures and open spaces, and that has been part of the culture for decades, but there is no system of vetting. So when our Minister for Education speaks about safety of children if a child goes up at a bar to buy an alcoholic drink, there is no system available for vetting the age of that child because we know that women mature faster than men, physically and some of these girls might be 15, 14 and they look 18, 19, 20 so there's no system. A lot of girls, in particular, could get caught, and then we have the Social Services have to deal with it nine months later, so I think something has to be done in that area where the people who are holding the fetes and the bartenders are held responsible. You want to make money from having this fete and that fete, you can't just sell to anybody. You have laws. So these are some of the things that come to mind based on the presentations this morning, and I just wanted to share these thoughts. I thank you.

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**Madam President:** I thank you for your very cautious and caring responses to the reports you've heard, Senator Rahaman, and I join you in all that you've said regarding the exercise of caution and responsibility both on the part of parents, business persons and the general public.

I also join you in welcoming the Africans, but we will leave that for later. Let the senatorial or ministerial reports continue with a request for the floor from the young and distinguished Senator Seville Francis. You have the floor, Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis:** Thank you, Madam President. Allow me to say a pleasant morning to all of my colleagues in this Honourable House, both on the "Opposition Side", our strangers in our midst in the gallery and even more special welcome to every one of you and thank you for being here this morning to witness the Senate debate and presentation.

Madam President, I just want to touch on a few updates that will be coming from our ministry. All things considered, I want to start off by wishing the participants or young people who will be journeying to St. Vincent to participate in the Windward Island school games. I know that they are going to do an amazing job, and they are going to make us very, very, very proud. To the coaches and the different adults accompanying them, I wish them all the best, and I thank them so much for their service and their dedication to sports development in Grenada.

In addition to that, Madam President, while we're on sports, I also want to commend the National Sports Council. They've been doing an amazing job poking their head out from where they've been, and they've been fully engaged and immersed in their obligations. This year, they have partnered with the Division of Youth in the execution of the National Holiday Recreation Programme, affectionately known as HRP-FLAME.

So as a ministry, we've engaged our young people positively over the summer vacation, and I'm happy to report that the numbers have grown from last year to this year, with over 800 participants. Parents, I am sure they're very well satisfied to know that their children are in capable hands, engaging in positive action, during the summer vacation.

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What I am most impressed about this year with our Holiday Recreation Programme, Madam President, is the fact that it incorporates the sporting aspects, so sporting discipline from a wide cross section, including basketball, swimming, and athletics. It's been a really amazing experience, and I know that the young people are really enjoying that.

On the 31st of this month, there will be the closing of the programme, unfortunately, and I'm saying unfortunately here for the participants because I know it's something that they've been enjoying, but they will have the opportunity to showcase what they've been doing for the last couple of weeks. Outside of sports, I can tell you that these young people have been engaged in amazing, amazing things that will help them to become very productive citizens. It's not just about the arts, but they've been learning candle making, they've been learning how to write calypso, they've been how to bake bread and on top of that, there's an entrepreneurial aspect of that where they've been engaged by entrepreneurs learning how to market, how to build businesses, how to do all of those different things. So it's not just a summer programme for fun, but it is one that will propel them to be productive citizens.

From last year I can report that these young people has shared with me some of the products that they've made in fact on my desk, I have hand lotions and body butters that they've shared with me and without being told that it came from them, I really thought it was something that was bought would at Bath and Body Works, for example, really amazing products.

So our young people are inspired, and they're doing really great work, and I commend our team at the Division of Youth and the Division of Sports for executing this at the highest level.

I also want to report that Carriacou and Petite Martinique have recently concluded their National Youth Elections. I know we have our National Youth Parliamentarians from Grenada, mainland, and Carriacou, which was not a part of that because of the passage of Hurricane Beryl, but I am happy to report that Ms. Kacy Boatswain has emerged victorious (**applause**) and she will be joining the National Youth Parliamentarians

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representing the beautiful sister islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. So congratulations to you, Senator Cox. Also, you now have representation in the Youth Parliament of Grenada.

Madam President, I also want to touch on the community grant fund, and that was something that was highlighted in my budget presentation. We have an allocation for access to community grant funds where our community groups, youth groups, church groups, once you belong to a community group, you have access to grant funding from our Ministry and the Division of Youth, particularly, to undertake sustainable projects within the community, and so far we've had five approved community youth groups and they have already begun in their projects.

So congratulations to those five community groups, and we are putting a call out for the other community groups to engage and to take advantage of that.

Madam President, I also wish Ms. Kerri-Ann Marrast, one of our Commonwealth Youth Council Members. She will be journeying to Namibia to participate in the Youth Consultative Dialogue and that is scheduled from the 4th to the 8th of August, as I mentioned previously in Namibia, and we wish her all the best and I know that Grenada will be represented at the highest level because she is indeed an exceptional young lady, and our future in Grenada, as it relates to leadership and women involvement, is really shooting out and I am very, very proud for that.

Madam President, I also want to inform this Honourable House that we also have two CARICOM or CSME Youth Ambassadors, and that is Mr. Kwesi Pope, who was one of the candidates for the National Youth Parliament, but he did not emerge victorious, and I. Mr. Pope and I have been to the CARICOM Secretariat, where we spent a week, there about, undertaking some training to ensure that, and I think Senator Rahaman will be very proud to know that our involvement is to help increase awareness of the opportunities that exist for trade across our region. So it's not yet completed. We still have some more training that we're undergoing for the next couple of months, but by October, we will be fully acknowledged as CSME Ambassadors for Grenada, along with other youth colleagues across the region.

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So the future looks bright for trade in Grenada. Mr. Pope and I look forward to working with you, Honourable Rahaman, to ensure that our young people understand how important it is and the opportunities that exist for them as it relates to training across our region and the free movement of goods, services and our people.

Madam President, as the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Youth, I think it will be very remiss of me not to take this opportunity to wish our young people all the very best for the carnival season, but most importantly, Madam President, to encourage them or remind us that there is life after carnival. I want us to be responsible in all of our undertakings throughout the carnival season. You can have fun, but it does not have to be one that will be at our detriment. At the end of the day, as young people, we have a country to build, we have a generation to inspire, and we want to ensure that you are in the best capacity functioning, that is, after carnival, to take our country where it needs to be. To everyone else in here, Happy Emancipation, and I wish us all the very best for the festive season. Thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Seville Francis. Thank you very much. And you're absolutely right, young people hear this call. You have a country to build and the generation to inspire. Keep yourself in good shape to do that. Senator Roderick St. Clair. De nouveau. Once again.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Madam President, and so it's good to hear these Ministerial Statements notwithstanding the call for us to finish early. Two important points I want to flag, Madam President, in Senator Francis's presentation: one, the issue with the Youth Parliament. As Parliamentarians ourselves, we have to commend her for what she has been leading, and of course, closing the gap with Carriacou is one part. But also continue to be given all the support that they need so that they can learn and set new examples and new trends for the future of this country.

It is not about us alone. It is part of succession planning. It doesn't mean that they will automatically end up in the Parliament per se because you know we have a

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competitive election, people have to go to the voting, but of course, there are also senatorial appointments on the other hand. And so, we trust that they are given all the support and that they also look at being specialist in certain areas... monitoring certain areas so that they become specialised such that maybe if they are not in the competitive part of it, they can be able to be appointed in different senatorial positions based on their various expertise that they would be able to bring forth to the table. So I say all of this so you have a whole person to move forward.

The other point I want to raise is the issue of the community grant funds. Notwithstanding statements might be made to it, it would be helpful if Senator Francis could refresh our minds on how one accesses because I think that statement you would have made would have conjured new ideas as to how we access these funds. Five groups, and I am sure we have over 50 different groups in this country that might be wondering how to apply, what's the maximum amount of funds that they can access? It might be as simple as going on a website or calling the Ministry, what might be some of the eligible areas and most of all, the issue of accountability for these funds.

Not because it's grant funds, you have to account for it. I myself at the GCNA write projects. We get grant funds, but we have to account for them with the bills, records, and everything, and reconcile all those activities that have taken place, and audit and monitor what we spend the money on, and the impact afterwards.

I raise all of this to say that I trust that this approach consists of those qualities such that persons don't feel that it is just free money given to community groups. So I know a lot of groups may not be properly registered and so on and whilst you may force that, I wouldn't at this stage be hard and fast, but once there is some level of cohesion and then you help to build because sometimes we try to do all of those other parts and we become like the World Bank and the IMF and shoot our own foot and kill the spirit of the intention, but we build them and in year one year two they become more structured such that they can access funding at other global levels where those things would be mandated. So I wanted to share and also seek some updates on that area. Thank you.

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**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator St. Clair. I think your extension of salutations and your call or reminders around accountability bring to an end the presentations. No, it does not. I see a light on request for the floor from the distinguished gentleman from Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I just stand to... just to bring a little bit of clarity for us going forward. I didn't want to stop anybody in their flight in terms of their responses to the Ministerial Statements. But just to kind of keep things in order in the sense that the Ministerial Statements really and truly ought not to be a subject of debate in the House, but it is an opportunity for Members, if you have a question or some clarification from what is presented, that should happen. But suggestions and back and forth on Ministerial Statements should not really happen based on the...

**Madam President:** Where does it say that Senator? I understand your sentiment... Proceed.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Madam President, I am saying that in the sense for us to arrest this because we can have a debate and back and forth on the Ministerial Statements while the Standing Order may be somewhat silent on it, it is something that you don't want to start a debate, but it is a great opportunity for it there is a question from the Ministerial Statements or some clarity. So I am just saying that so that people from "This Side"... Because I know the "Other Side" is agitated when Senator Roderick St. Clair puts on his light **(laughter)**, so I am just saying that for us to keep things tight. But it's a great opportunity for questions or clarification, and so that Members know that it is not a subject for debate.

**Madam President:** Senator Cox, I thank you for your recommendations on tightening. You know you come from a quadrille culture, you know, which is the African

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call and response. If there is a call, there is going to be a response. If there is a quadrille move A, there is going to be a quadrille move B, and maybe that is what you perceive, and you may be quite right, that is what is happening.

So colleagues, in the spirit of quadrille, call and response, keep it short. Questions or clarifications. You can tell I am enjoying myself because I am learning so much about what's happening in the Government sector, and it's encouraging by and large.

I want to close this section out since we spent a good, solid hour on it. Finally, welcoming the visitors to Grenada for the African Caribbean Investment and Trade Conference and wish all the visitors a happy stay and a productive conference.

And may I finally welcome back Senator the Honourable Myanna Charles. Thank you and happy. I am happy that you've returned through what has transpired, and I also want to welcome, in the gallery, King's Council Ruggles Ferguson and Madam, whose name I am not aware of. So welcome to all the legal minds joining us as we switch gears.

I did forget to say that I received a written apology from Senator André Lewis, who is out of state on business and is unable to join us. Thank you, and I have one more announcement at the end.

**Deputy Clerk (Ag.):** Item 8 – Presentation of Papers and Reports from Select Committees.

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

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to present the following Papers and Reports from Selected Committees. We've got four of them here:

1. Grenada Citizen by Investment Report to the Grenada Houses of Parliament for the reporting period 1st January, 2024 to 30th June 2024;
2. Grenada Citizen by Investment Report to the Grenada Houses of Parliament for the reporting period 1st July 2024 to 31st December 2024;

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3. National Insurance Board Annual Report for 2023 and;
4. National Insurance Board Annual Report for 2024.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Thomas. Distinguished Senators, these four Reports are laid before you. Any discussions? Hearing none, we will proceed. There is a request for the floor. Senator Roderick St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Madam President. Thank you. Thank you. I want to focus... first thing I want to say is we have to commend the different agencies for submitting or complying with the requirement of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, and of course, we urge many of the others who are not up to date to please be up to date with the information. It is part of the Governing structure.

Page 15, Madam President, and Members of the NIS Report, 2024, I wanted to make a few comments on that. I think that is under the... There is a heading for that. I think that heading is the Directors' Report. I think it is. There are a few things on that page I wanted to just spot.

**Madam President:** Please give the reference again.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Page 15

**Madam President:** Of which Report?

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** 2024 NIS Annual Report. Page 15. A few points that catch my attention specifically, there is a subheading called "Registration Activity", and it speaks in terms of the number of employers and employees that are members. Because we know the sustainability of this insurance has to do with numbers. It's a numbers game. How many numbers do we have, how many employees? How many employers are part of this, such that you can be able to get enough funds coming

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in, notwithstanding the adjustment with the age and also the contribution amount.

What was important for me in that section was the second sentence, which speaks about 636 self-employed individuals registering in 2024. I am not too sure if that 636 is part of the 1064 employers or if the 1068 new employers new that were registered in 2024 if you have to add it to the 636 that is self-employed, but either way I want to commend the individuals who would have taken on to self-register because most times you wait on your employer to register and to bring NIS benefit but the opportunity for individuals to do it themselves. Of course, particularly, in my informal sector, Agriculture, Fisheries, I keep urging persons to register, it's good for them for their wives, for their children now and in the future and for themselves. And so this 636 to me is a good number than when you look at the age of persons for employment in the county, etcetera, that is not a...

My good friend Senator Lewis might have been able to give me a percentage of the workforce and all of those things. But this seems to be a pretty good number. Although it speaks that the self-employed individuals registered in 2024 saw a 17.6% increase compared to the previous year. So that means NIS is doing a good job, and it means that people are seeing the benefit of coming on board notwithstanding the increases in the contribution, and we have to commend them, and if the trend is going that way, we trust that others will see something good in it. So this is a very important part, I think needs to be flagged.

The other part, on that same page, has to do with the section that speaks of investment, where... We know that we would have adjusted the Bill for statutory bodies such that they can invest in different portfolios, which was done some time a year or two ago, and so what we see here is that the NIS has moved strategically to find new opportunities, and as they mentioned on the same page, it is a strategic decision to get involved.

In fact, if you look at the second column on page 15, so it is directly opposite where it says registration activities on the other side. It says in that paragraph, "As part of the strategic goal, a tactical decision was made to allocate a greater portion of short-term investment to the US treasuries, US treasury bonds, and US treasury Bills..." So it is just

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in the column on the second page if you come down to that paragraph as part of the strategy.

Now this is good, but at the same time, we know what is happening within the whole global space and the US. We trust that the brokers that are used, it's a long name, so I wouldn't try to repeat it. The brokers will do justice and ensure that we don't have any challenges, because if there are challenges with short-term borrowing, then the negative impact will be very quick on us when we look at maybe 90 days or 30 days to get that return, then the return might be much less, especially with the uncertainties with the whole global economy. In the long term, you might say, "Okay, there might be recovery". I trust that our local investment committees are reviewing that.

The last comment I want to make on this is very interesting. There is a graph there, an investment portfolio, but what is important below the graph, there is some writing, and it speaks to the NIS also moving away from... Because we know that there was once upon a time, NIS was buying up lands in Grenada all over the place. It is good to have, but I guess maybe they have been advised that land price will only get this far and in real terms, not readily convert to cash if there are any challenges that they may face in terms of liquidity or free cash flow. They have moved away or they are moving away from this Real Estate land business and selling out, and maybe using these monies to do all these other investments.

But also, they are focusing a lot on lending, lending to members, so they can borrow the money and buy the land, build the house, do a business which is good, and so I smiled when I saw that, some EC\$97 million... It says here, "It also reinforces our commitment to providing competitive value-driven solutions. As of the 31st of December, the total value of loans approved amounts to EC\$97 million. How does that compare to the commercial banks? How does that compare to the credit union, and how does that compare to the "infamous GDB" is another story.

I say this that the NIS have to be commended for going into that market boldly to create new opportunities for us as citizens, but also for the insurance board itself, and they have to be commended on that, and I think that they have to be supported because

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it is for the members. All the how much thousand members of the NIS and if there is any ways to me that the regulations can be even changed and be updated to make them become more able to provide more financing for members, not non-members then I think that is commendable because to me what I am seeing here is a lot better that what we are seeing with our own GDB in terms of making cash available for our citizens. That is the page I wanted to focus on because I think that constitutes the essence of the mandate. I thank you.

**Madam President:** I thank you. I thank you for your careful reading of the Report, and through the President, we want to thank the NIS for the Report and for the work that led to the calibre of the report. And I want to recommend to you Senator St. Clair that you pay a visit to the head of NIS, the Board, the Executive Director, Mr. Cornwall and converse with him. I am sure he will be delighted to receive you and to hear of your commendations and recommendations. Thank you. All Reports are considered laid. I think I see the light of Senator Rahaman. You have the floor, Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Madam President. I will be brief. So just to add some clarity for my colleague on my left, Senator St. Clair. If you look, he mentioned... spoke about page 15, if you go down to page 22, I believe, it is of that same 2024 NIS Report, you will see the newly registered employers by parish, and you will see a wider set of information from 2020. So you see the total number of employers from 2020 was 676, then it went to 928 in 2021, bearing in mind these were COVID-19 times, so a lot of small businesses would have gone out of business, so that's not a real true reflection of 2020-2021 of the economy.

Then, in 2022, when things kick-started, you can see there were a lot more businesses that were reopened at the end of the COVID period, so that's 1553, and then you see it settled back down because competition sets in and so on. You see in 20223 it goes down to 1223 and in 2024 1068, so basically from 2022 the total amount of registered employers by parish... total amount of employers in Grenada went from 1500

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to 2024 down to 1068, so that means that there are about 500 fewer businesses operating in Grenada over the last two years.

However, when we look at the impact on NIS, we see that during the same period, if you scroll down below... If you scroll down to page 23, you see that the newly registered employees are listed by parish. You see that the figure has pretty much remained consistent. You see, in 2022, there were 3,203 employees registered with NIS, and in 2024, there are still 3,018. So, what that means is that although businesses close down, a lot of small businesses went out of business, the bulk of those people are still retained. So people have found employment in other businesses, so the amount is still pretty much the same. In 2023, it dipped to 2,671, but in 2024, it went back up to 3,018. So it means the numbers from 2022 to 2024 of employees contributing to NIS are pretty much consistent. So I just wanted to mention that difference.

In terms of investments, I see here that... I am going back to page 15 here, where my colleague Senator St. Clair was speaking from. On the Treasury side, as an investment vehicle, generally, once many of us may not agree with or like what is being done in the world in terms of wars and so on and who supports it and the countries that support it in terms of treasuries, the US Treasury has been very stable over the years in terms of investment. Japan holds the largest amount of US treasuries in the world, seconded by China. So when you see a lot of the so called trade wars you see between the US and China and tariffs, that's just to get a bigger piece of the pie, the US wants a bigger piece of the pie but that does not in any way mean that they going to abandon one another's economy because they heavily invested in one another's economy. China is the second-largest holder of US debt. So I just wanted to point that out.

So this is relatively safe, but I would like to see more investment in the Caribbean bonds rather than foreign bonds. I just want to put that out. So that's my preliminary comment on the NIS.

And in regard to the Citizenship by Investment Report, which has the Prime Minister's name, so he is responsible for that area, we see some consistency. So I was looking at the number of citizenships issued for 2023 and 2024, and we see that it is

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basically consistent, although it was projected in the Budget to dip in 2025, so we will see with the next report how that looks. So I just want to let the nation know, to clarify a few things. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you very much, Senator, and I know we're racing and there is much more for discussion in these reports. The inference that I would draw from the first set of comments you made, joined to that of Senator St. Clair, is that while the NIS is doing well, the small businesses could be at risk for their survival. And therefore, if the conference on Monday is under the theme of resilience and rejuvenation, I can't recall exactly, then that's a signal for Caribbean investors as well as investors from Africa and beyond to invest in small and medium-sized businesses in Grenada. I think that is the message that comes clearly from these financial reports that are circulating across the country, at least one of the messages. Thank you. Madam.

**Deputy Clerk (Ag):** Item 9 – Petitions.

Item 10 – Government Notices.

Item 11 – Unofficial Notices.

Item 12 – Questions.

Item 13 – Personal Explanations.

Item 14 – Motions.

Item 15 – Bills.

**Madam President:** About to get on his feet, Leader of Government's Business, Senator the Honourable Adrian Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to introduce the first reading of a Bill for an Act, shortly entitled, the Constitution (Oath of Allegiance) (Amendment) (No.1) Bill, 2025.

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**Clerk:** A Bill which seeks to amend Schedule 3 to the Constitution and Schedule 1 to the Courts Order to change the Oath of Allegiance from “His Majesty’s King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors to “Grenada” shortly entitled, Constitution (Oath of Allegiance) (Amendment) No.1 Bill, 2025.

**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.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Madam President:** Senator Adrian Thomas, I withdraw the call for the vote.

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

**Question proposed.**

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

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. And, Madam President, I am pleased to inform this Honourable House that I do have the Speaker’s certificate to proceed with this Bill.

Madam President, this Bill seeks to amend Schedule 3 of the Constitution and Schedule 1 to the Courts Order to change the Oath of Allegiance from His Majesty King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors to Grenada.

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Madam President, this Bill contains six clauses. The first clause deals with the short title and the commencement of this very important Bill. Madam President, regarding the commencement of this Bill, it is our view that the 1st day of August, 2025, will be the date for the commencement of this historic Bill.

Clause 2 deals with the interpretation, and if you read through the Bill, Madam President, you will see a clear interpretation for the terms “Oath”, “Constitution” and “Court Order”.

Most important, Madam President, is clause 3. Clause 3, Madam President, amendment of Schedule 3 to the Constitution is what it will focus on. Schedule 3 to the Constitution in the Oath of Allegiance is amended by deleting the words “His Majesty King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors and substituting therefor the word “Grenada”. Madam President, long overdue, something we have been dreaming of for many decades, and it is something that we are quite happy about, and this very historic day today to stand up and be a part of.

Madam President, the sections affected in the Constitution relate to the Governor-General taking the oath, section 20. Members of the House of Parliament taking the oath, Madam President, section 40. Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries taking the oath, section 65 and section 95 (1) deal with citizens by marriage taking the oath. Madam President, and in this particular clause, we have section 98, which deals with citizens by marriage taking the oath.

Clause 4, Madam President, deals with the amendment of Schedule 1 to the Court Order. Schedule 1 to the Court Order is amended in the Oath of Allegiance and the Affirmation of Allegiance by deleting the words “His Majesty King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors” and substituting therefore the word “Grenada”.

Another subsection in this clause, Madam President, deals with the... The Court Order is amended in the oath for due execution of office and the affirmation for due execution of the office, by deleting the words “His Majesty King Charles the Third” and substituting therefor the word “Grenada”.

We now move to Clause 5, Madam President, which deals with consequential

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amendments to every relevant written law other than in the Constitution and the Courts Order. Madam President, in this particular clause, where in any written law other than in the Constitution and the Courts Order provision is made for taking the oath, there appear in the Oath the words “His Majesty King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors”; those words shall be deleted, and there shall be substituted therefor the word ‘Grenada’.

Madam President, it goes further on to say, Where in any written law other than in the Constitution and the Courts Order provision is made for taking the oath for due execution of office there appear in such oath the words “His Majesty King Charles the Third”, those words shall be deleted, and there shall be substituted therefor the word “Grenada”.

Later on, Madam President, within the clause it says, where in any written law prescribing an oath there appear the words ‘our Sovereign Lord the King’, those words, Madam President, shall be deleted, and there shall be substituted therefor the words ‘the people of Grenada. Finally, within that clause, section 9 of the Oaths Act, Cap 217 of the 2010 Revised Laws of Grenada, is repealed.

Finally, clause 6: Transitional provisions as to the oath of allegiance. Madam President, it outlines on the expiry of 12 hours immediately following the commencement of the appointed day, the Oath of Allegiance sworn or solemnly affirmed to by any functionary prior to the appointed day shall cease to have force, and such functionary shall, within seven days immediately following the commencement of the appointed day, swear or solemnly affirm to the Oath of Allegiance which shall come into force with effect from the commencement of the appointed day—

Provided that if, for any reason, any functionary did not swear or solemnly affirm to the Oath of Allegiance within those said seven days, such functionary shall be deemed to have sworn or solemnly affirmed thereto immediately upon the expiry of those said seven days.

Madam President, this is a big step that we are about to take in Grenada, and yesterday I had the chance, Madam President, to witness, despite the little discussion that was taking place, a sense of unity within our society. Madam President, it was

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pleasant. I went to the Groovy Soca Monarch last night feeling good, and I came here this morning even feeling better, knowing that when I saw the result of the vote yesterday in the “Other Place”, it tells me that if we take our time just to think a little, we can do great things for this beautiful island of ours. The results yesterday were 14. Fourteen MPs voted in favour of the Bill, although we had 15 present initially. But, Madam President, this is good.

And this is happening, Madam President, as we prepare to commemorate Emancipation Day on August 1. It is fitting, Madam President, that we reflect on what brought about emancipation, but sometimes we present, and we are guilty of it, we present this piece of history as if life started with slavery and there was nothing before. So we start from slavery, and then we went to Independence, Emancipation.

But, Madam President, I want us to pay attention. Before slavery was introduced to this part of the world, we had peaceful inhabitants going about their business on a daily basis. So when emancipation came about, it was reinstating that peaceful life that the inhabitants of this land were enjoying and therefore, Madam President, it is important to make that point, especially when we are talking about emancipation. 1st of August 1834, I would like to look at it as reinstating the life that we had.

But, Madam President, despite we will be celebrating Emancipation Day, it is the beginning and the struggle continues. Because there is a need for us to liberate our institutions, our symbols and our civic rituals from the shadows of colonial rule. I am happy to stand here today, Madam President, and also report that in the Ministry of Culture presently, as I speak, we have a committee to deal specifically with the naming and renaming of some of our buildings, roads and streets in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. This is part of the journey, Madam President. **(Applause)** I will not hesitate to say that we also have a well-established and prepared committee to establish our National Heroes Park. I would not say where it is located because we are still discussing that, and also a monument for the Grenadian soldiers who died during the Invasion of Grenada. So we are on that road, Madam President, to continue the process of emancipation, liberating some of our institutions and to get our minds free in the true

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sense of the word.

Madam President, this Bill, which deals with the oath of allegiance, is more than ceremonial. Madam President, to pledge allegiance to the British Monarch is to continue the legacy of imperial subordination and this, Madam President, we believe is consistent with what we are known for, our resilience, our sense of self-reliance, independence, national dignity and the sovereign will of the Grenadian people.

Today, Madam President, is over 50 years of independence and almost 200 years since the formal abolition of slavery. It is high time for this nation to assert itself. It is high time for us to take ownership.

Madam President, replacing the colonial oath with a pledge of allegiance to Grenada is one of the greatest ideals we can achieve as a nation. In 1834, while the chains were physically removed, we knew in our minds and in some of our institutions, the chains were still there, and sometimes it is a sad story to tell our children, because they will ask you the question. How can we genuinely celebrate liberation while reciting the oath to the decadence of those who once presided over our enslavement?

One of the Caribbean Historian Professor Verene A. Shepherd reminds us, emancipation is not completed until the structures of colonialism have been dismantled. And therefore, despite we are still talking about emancipation, it is a process, Madam President, and the process must continue. In Africa, they would say, "A luta continua", and therefore, we must pay attention to that.

A new oath of allegiance, Madam President, should commit every Grenadian citizen and public servant to do three things:

1. Uphold the Constitution of Grenada;
2. Serve the people with dignity; and
3. Protect the sovereignty and integrity of our nation.

Madam President, I would like to reflect also and maybe paraphrase one of our great Caribbean heroes, Marcus Garvey, when he said, "A people without the knowledge of the past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots". We know our past. We will honour it on Emancipation Day, but now we must ensure that our future is firmly rooted

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in our own soil, not in the legacy of the monarchy. As we say in Grenada, “The cow that drinks water from the same stream whole day, bound to know where it belongs”.

If you have not heard that in Grenada before, come to St. David, come to Vincennes, come to Champfleurs, come to Mt. Tranquil, come to Chile Island, and you will hear this comment. It means a lot to us. Madam President, it is time for Grenada to drink from its own stream, swear by its own name and walk boldly in the future, fully free, fully sovereign and proudly Grenadian.

Madam President, I must re-emphasise the camaraderie that this Honourable House has exhibited over the last three years. I enjoy being here, and you can see, Madam President, every Sitting, there is no long sour face inside here. We look each other in the eyes and we smile at each other. We debate, but we are able to dine together. And I believe that this process will continue, because we respect each other in this place. Many Bills we came here with, Madam President, many Bills, I have heard it from the Senators from the “Other Side”, “We support. We think it’s a good idea”, and we feel happy for that.

Those where we don’t get 100% support, we discuss it, we debate it, and the debate has not finished inside here, it continues in the corridor, it continues in the lunchroom. Even when we depart, there is no hard feelings among each other, and I think that this very Bill that we are talking about here today, Madam President, we are debating and discussing is a Bill that I believe will get 100% support in this Honourable House **(applause)** and we will show the Grenadian people that we can unite in their own interest, that we can unite in building and being the architect of a country where each one of us can be proud of.

So, Madam President, having said this, I now commend this historical Bill to this Honourable House for a meaningful discussion and debate and ultimately approval. And I wish that when I leave here today, I can say never again must we bow to foreign power or foreign sovereignty. I thank you. **(Applause)**

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**Madam President:** I thank the Leader of Government's Business for his historic presentation. The floor is open. I offer the floor to Senator Dwight Horsford.

**Sen. the Hon. Dwight Horsford:** Thank you, Madam President, and good morning to my colleagues. Madam President, I rise to be the first in the batting order on "Our Side" to say that I will gladly take an oath to Grenada. Gladly. **(Applause)** Indeed, every time we sing the national anthem, we are taking an oath to Grenada, but unlike my good friend on the "Other Side", I was not dreaming of taking an oath. I was dreaming, and I am still dreaming of the Republic of Grenada. **(Applause)**

Madam President, there is much symbolic importance in what we are undertaking here today, and I understand that there was a joint position in the "Other Place" as to how engagement with our brothers and sisters in the public was to proceed, or wider engagement, I should say, is to proceed. Some say that it is a little bit before-behind, but that is water under the bridge, really.

Now, as we take this oath in its new form, officially, I will ask us, as I try myself to do, to keep our feet planted on the ground realistically, planted on the ground. Because as we engage with a very discerning public, there would be questions that you will have to answer and quite legitimate questions. In fact, I have been encountering them from colleagues and friends, and they are respectable queries, I should say, speaking for myself.

We should keep our feet planted on the ground, notwithstanding the symbolic importance of what we are seeking to achieve here, because the reality is, precious little would be altered other than the oath. I gladly take it; no self-respecting patriot would not. But immediately after you take the oath, you take the oath for the due execution of office, and as recently as yesterday, I had to deal with a question posed to me, that right after you take an oath, "Hors, you're swearing right after to uphold, honour and preserve a Constitution with a King in it"? And for a moment, it appeared that we were going in a circle.

But, Madam President, the framers of the Constitution thought it best not to give

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us any difficulty in relation to the oath, and so I don't see much in the debate about whether there should be a referendum or not. What I do think is important, as part of the democratic process and bringing our people along with not just the idea, the imperative of Constitutional Reform, is substantial and continued engagement with them. There's no escaping that. That must be done, and in that context, I commend Doctor Alexis and the CCR for what they have been trying to do, and I hope they continue. I hope they broaden their reach, membership and discussion.

Our young people must understand first and foremost what independence means. It is insufficient, not enough, and it will go nowhere other than the excitement and the exhalation of uttering words if all we do is deploy emotional sentiments of anti-colonial petulance.

Because just as I encountered these real questions yesterday, you'll have students who often come into the gallery and visit us and say, "All right, happy we are, like I am, we're taking an oath to Grenada and the people of Grenada". But we come inside here, we look at that crown in the Mace, and the formulation for the enactment is the King's Most Excellent Majesty, and we have a crown symbol as almost as a substitute for the Coat of Arms, as the symbol of state, the embodiment of state.

Now, in my profession and with my colleagues, we would be able to wrestle with that and give some answers. But it is important to appreciate what the reality is and convince our people that all of this is not representative of you and me and us. But, Madame President, it's a process. All of these things require a constant plotting march. And so, I began by saying that I appreciate the powerful symbolism of taking the oath to Grenada, and so, hand on heart, I support taking that oath. But my friend and I don't mean to joust with, we joust a lot, but keep your feet on the ground because the character of the state hasn't changed and will not be changed by that.

It is hoped, and I hope there will be much upliftment psychologically and encouragement now, therefore, to engage in a serious Republican discussion, because I will tell you frankly, I will feel as if I have been made a fool of if after this nothing comes and I see people gleefully jumping for King's New Year Honour List and CBE and these

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things because it will be meaningless; absolutely meaningless unless we convince our people that well of authority, the power, to shape our destiny resides here with us, down in we belly, not by the King's Most Excellent Majesty.

So, Madam President, this is important indeed, but in our exuberance, temporary excitement with harsh reality that this is a work in progress, and this isn't even a baby step yet because there is a mighty hurdle to cross socially, psychologically and politically out there, because I'm not bursting any bubbles, but let me tell you.

Those people outside there aren't bothering with us and the oath inside here now. They aren't bothering with that, particularly, around this time with these festivities. People are thinking about the cost of living through the roof, crime going up, and how they are making things happen for their families and so on. They aren't seeing the importance of that. It's unfortunate, but I hope the agreed position of engagement is a real, substantive, anxious one too, and there is a determination of will to carry through with that because this to me signals a broader and a higher value that we must now seriously consider trying to reach.

And with these few remarks, I know my distinguished friend is anxious to go, I could see all his notes **(laughter)**, I offer these brief remarks to this honourable House and my colleagues and say speaking for ourselves and for myself, hand on heart, I support taking and I hope and abiding oath to Grenada. Thank you, Madam President.  
**(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Horsford. Thank you very much. Grenada Attorney General Senator Claudette Joseph, you have the floor, madam.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, it is indeed with great pleasure, pride and joy that I rise in this Honourable House to give my unreserved support to the Bill now being debated, and that, Madam President, is the Constitution (Oath of Allegiance) (Amendment) (No. 1) Bill, 2025.

And in simple terms, Madam President, this Bill, once passed, will enter into force

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on 1st August, 2025, and it will change the oath of allegiance in relation to persons who must take an oath of allegiance under section 20 of the Constitution, that's the Governor General, section 40, Members of the Houses of Parliament, section 65 Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries, section 95 (1), citizens by marriage, and section 98, also citizens by marriage, taking the oath. And, Madam President, it will also change the oath of allegiance relating to judges of the court as prescribed in Schedule 1 of the Courts Order, and also in every relevant written law other than those mentioned before, where an oath is required to be taken as prescribed by Schedule 1 to the Oaths Act, Chapter 217 of the Laws of Grenada. That change, Madame President, to all these oaths will be from His Majesty King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors, to simply Grenada and by implication, and its people. So you can read Grenada to mean Grenada and its people.

Madam President, these amendments to Schedule 3 of the Constitution might be considered a low-hanging fruit. In fact, in all of the positive responses that we have had to this proposed change, we also had comments to the effect that it took too long. Why didn't we do this before? That is a common expression we've had since discussions on these bills commenced.

So, Madam President, we are satisfied that this change enjoys broad national support, and that is why, Madam President, yesterday in the Lower House all Members, Government and Opposition, present and voting, voted in favour of the passage of the Bill. And in fairness to the one member who did not vote, he was not present when the vote was taken. That Member made his presentation and had to depart early. So, we had, Madam President, unanimous support even after a spirited debate. In the end, all Members of Parliament did what is right by our collective conscience and what is right by the people of Grenada and supported this Bill.

Madam President, there was among Members in the "Other Place" an understanding that continued public discourse will happen after the passage of this Bill, and we are committed to this. Madam President, I am prepared to start with that discourse today by explaining to our listening and viewing public, and I wish a good day

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to all of you listening on various platforms, and helping to understand why there is no deficiency or flaw in the process that has been so far undertaken to pass these Bills in this House and why there will be no error on the path of the legislature to have these Oaths of Allegiance Bills come into operation even as we engage in the public discourse that we agreed to.

Madam President, that is because our Constitution, at section 39, speaks to how that Constitution might be altered, and the provisions of section 39 mean that essentially all of the provisions of the Constitution are entrenched, meaning that they cannot be changed in the same way as an ordinary Act of Parliament can be changed. In the case of an ordinary Act of Parliament, as we all know, an amendment is made simply by tabling a Bill in the Lower House, and once a simple majority approves that Bill, it comes to this House, and once a simple majority approves it, it goes to the Governor-General for assent. When that assent occurs, it is published in the *Gazette* and becomes law.

In the case of provisions of the Constitution, those provisions that are entrenched require a majority of two-thirds of the Members of the House. So, we have 15 Members of the Lower House, so at least 10 Members of the Lower House must vote in favour of a constitutional amendment, any constitutional amendment. We had yesterday. In fact, we had all of the Members voting in favour, save one who was absent. Then it comes to this House, where a simple majority is required, and that's how a constitutional change is effected for provisions that are entrenched.

And then there are provisions that are deeply entrenched, and those provisions require, after the process that I just described happens in the Parliament, going to the people in a referendum, and in that referendum, two-thirds of the people must vote in favour, and then if that occurs, the change is effected.

The change we are proposing to this Honourable House, Madam President, is not deeply entrenched. So, for it to become law, all we need to do here today is, with a simple majority, approve the Bill before this Honourable House, and then it goes to the Governor-General for assent, and in this case, because it's a constitutional Bill, it must be a company by a Speaker's certificate when it goes to the GG for assent in accordance with

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section 39 (8) of the Constitution.

Madam President, Schedule 1 to the Constitution specifies all of the provisions of the Constitution that are deeply entrenched, meaning that they will require a referendum in order for them to be changed. The sections we are proposing to amend today, Madam President, do not appear in Schedule 1 of the Constitution, that is, sections 20, 40, 65, 95 (1) and 98 and also Schedule 1 or the first Schedule to the Courts Order. So, Madam President, a referendum is not needed for these changes to take effect.

And this was, Madam President, confirmed also in a decision of our highest court, the Privy Council, out of the jurisdiction of Belize and the name of the case is the Prime Minister of Belize and The Attorney General of Belize versus Alberto Vellos and Others. Part of what that decision said, Madam President, is that if you have a situation where a referendum is not required and it does occur, it would only be in value consultative or advisory, and where a referendum is not needed the process of amending the Constitution could proceed in the normal way, whether a referendum was held or not and regardless of the result.

And I make that point for persons out there who still, incorrectly, suggest that to make this change, we need a referendum. We say we don't, but even if a referendum is held, because it is not needed, no matter the outcome, the law passed in this House in relation to these amendments will remain valid. Madam President, despite what everyone or various people have been saying there have been only a few nameless, faceless people who have well, we don't even know if it's robotics or AI, but we've seen some written information suggesting that there is some opposition to replacing King Charles the Third, His heir and Successors with Grenada when senior officers of Government and the state take the oaths of allegiance and office. But all of the people who have shown their faces and have made comments, I have seen none so far that suggest that this is not an appropriate Bill for this Honourable House to pass, and this was not an appropriate policy position for the government to have taken.

Madam President, this is about the next step on the road to true independence and self-determination. This is about pride, national pride as a people. And for me, who

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was required to take the oath of office, I must confess that it was quite uncomfortable to do so. It was a necessary act, but, Madam President, I must say I personally, as a matter of personal pride now, I can't wait to retake the oath (**applause**) and to do so to Grenada and the people of Grenada.

So as we work, Madam President, toward celebrating Emancipation Day for the first time in our history on the right day, the 1st of August, we look forward, Madam President, to this legislation coming into operation on Emancipation Day. And, Madam President, I would submit to this Honourable House Madam President, that while indeed this step is symbolic, it is also substantive. I, too, was one of those persons who wondered why we did not do this before.

Dominica, for example, on attaining Independence, went straight to being a republic and went straight, of course, swearing allegiance to Dominica. The way our Constitution is set up, while we can effect this change without the need for a referendum, we can't do so in relation to becoming a republic. The relevant section of the Constitution in relation to becoming a republic, changing our Head of State, as I read it, requires us to have a referendum.

Interestingly, on the two occasions we tried, that issue was not put to the people. That was not one of the issues on the ballot paper. So, we've never asked our people, although, all of the reports in constitution reform attempts going back to 1985 with Justice Liverpool and Carol Bristol, the Liverpool Commission, professor Simeon McIntosh and then the later Commission in 2016, suggest that the people of Grenada wanted, generally, to do away with the monarch, either as head of our state or in swearing allegiance. All of those suggested that, because we all know what the monarch represents.

History shows that the royal family itself had links to slavery in the West and profited from slavery. History shows that the Bank of England actually owned estates in Grenada. In fact, we wrote them with the assistance of Doctor Alexis. Again, Doctor Alexis is a national gem. (**Applause**) With the assistance of Doctor Alexis, last year, we wrote to the Governor of the Bank of England in relation to reparations for enslaved people who were held on two estates on this very island. I don't think I ever saw a

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response from the Governor of the Bank of England, and that in itself tells us the regard in which our former colonisers still hold us.

As we move step by step, little by little, to delink and decouple altogether, I would implore all Members of this Honourable House to vote in favour of this Bill. And I will go as far as saying, not to do so, would be quite an undignified thing and raise questions about self-worth, how we feel about ourselves as people. So, as the elected Members in the Lower House did yesterday, I urge all of us to support this Bill and take advantage, show how deeply we feel about this by complying, and ensuring that we comply with the provisions of section 6 of the Bill once it becomes law. And that section deals with transitional provisions as to the oath of allegiance.

It says, "On the expiry of 12 hours immediately following the commencement of the appointed day", and that day in the Bill is the 1st of August, "the Oath of Allegiance sworn or solemnly affirmed to by any functionary prior to the appointed day shall cease to have force, and such functionary shall, within seven days immediately following the commencement of the appointed day swear or solemnly affirm the Oath of Allegiance which shall come into force at the commencement day".

So, I trust that we all will take the opportunity, not many of us in the whole scheme of things, I pointed out, the people, we should expect for the citizens, of course, might take them a little longer, we should endeavour to retake our oaths doing so swearing or affirming our allegiance to Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique and its people.

And of course, there is a proviso there, "That if, for any reason, any functionary did not swear or solemnly affirm the Oath of Allegiance within those seven days, such functionary shall be deemed to have sworn or solemnly affirmed thereto immediately upon the expiry of those days". So, there is an automatic presumption that you had taken the Oath of Allegiance to Grenada, if you did not actually do so within the seven day period.

So, Madam President, I think this is quite a historic occasion and I am happy to be part of the legislature that has made this history, and I was thinking, I might be too young to recall, but in my short life, I would say, I do not ever recall there being an occasion in the Lower House, where all members supported a Bill; apart from the occasions where,

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of course, the same political party enjoyed all the seats in the House. I'm saying, in my recollection is that I don't recall where there's an Opposition and Government coming from different political parties, all voting for a Bill. I may be wrong; that's just my recollection.

I take this opportunity, Madam President, to thank the members of the citizens for constitutional reform, whose initiative it was to bring this suggestion to the Prime Minister and me as Attorney General, and of course, it was my responsibility to sell it to the rest of my Cabinet colleagues. It wasn't too hard to do, to sell it. And so, I see some of the members here. Doctor Francis Alexis, thank you very much. Doc, thank you. Mr. Ruggles Ferguson. I see Miss Andrews. Yes? Mr. Layne. There's another lady there, hi... And all of... You know there's Doctor Wendy Crawford-Grenade. You know... It's what? Lady Anande Trotman-Joseph.

So, it's a wide cross-section of good citizens, good and conscious citizens that comprise the citizens for constitutional reform, and we look forward to continuing to work with you as we bring meaningful and substantial changes to our people. Changes that will lift us in terms of morale, dignity, self-pride, and self-worth are important. National pride is important. So, we would like to place on record our thanks.

And even more so after we got the submission from the committee and we were trying to get the legislation drafted and we were taking a little too long and I reached out to one of the members of the committee and I said to them, "Look, we working on this, but because of our other workload it's taking a little longer than we anticipated, so could you help, actually help us with drafting the Bills"? And, of course, they obliged, because of course, I know the quality of the people, headed by Doctor Alexis, on the committee.

And so they also not just presented the idea, but assisted us with drafting the Bills that we are debating today. We've had several conversations and consultations over a period of over a year. So this is not last-minute off the cuff. We went through the legislation, made all the different changes, and so on. So, it was also a good and pleasurable thing working with this group, Madam President, to bring this first constitutional change that will come into force for our people.

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So again, as a proud Grenadian, I commend this change in our constitution to this Honourable House and commit to continuing with the public engagement and public education that the Members of the Lower House agreed to yesterday, but that will not affect the coming into operation of the Bill. I thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank you, Madam Senator, with pleasure, pride and joy for your words. I thank you for the first lesson to the public, and I thank you for the reminder. I was thinking when we reconvene in September, following our August recess, that we could retake our oath because I think the sentiments you've expressed are probably widely shared. Let's see. However, there is another opportunity. It's an opportunity on the 1st of August, I would ask the Chair of the Board of the Grenada Celebrations Committee, Mr. Christopher De Riggs, and the Executive Director, Livingston Nelson, to see if it is possible to make space available for taking the oath at that midnight hour celebration of Emancipation. My ulterior motive, apart from retaking the oath, is to get all of you to come up to St. Andrew. I thank you, Senator. There are no requests for the floor, and so I offer the floor... Leader of the Government's Business, are you?

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Madam President, I realise this is not a West Indies guy. The ball is not so bad. It's a friendly wicket. **(Laughter)** I don't understand. It's a very friendly wicket, Senator Quinc. Everybody... Yes. I know I may have a little body to take the ball, but there is no bad ball. I mean, it's a softball—wind ball cricket.

So I would start, Madam President. I take this to opportunity make my contribution towards this Bill, Constitution (Oath of Allegiance) (Amendment) (No. 1) Bill, 2025, which seeks to amend Schedule 3 of the Constitution and Schedule 1 to the Courts Order to change the oath of allegiance from His Majesty King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors to read that we are taking this oath of allegiance to Grenada. So, this is a discussion.

I must say that officially, about a month ago, I engaged in a two or three-hour discussion with Doctor Alexis, Attorney Ewart Layne, and Brother Ruggles Ferguson, who

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was on the connection, but he was not able to join us properly, of course, Senator Rahaman and my good friend Senator Lewis, who is unavoidably absent today. I know that he would have loved to be present to speak extensively on this important matter that he was involved in before.

In that meeting, and it is important that I say this, we have presented essentially several of the discourses that the Leader of Government's Business and the Attorney General presented. Of course, we had a lot of questions, and, of course, there are a lot of answers. My good friend Doctor Alexis, whom I have known way back when, was very good at his responses, and, of course, some responses he said, "Well, let Brother Layne answer them because they were a little bit too hard for him to answer". And I understood his modesty in that.

But what was important for us in that discussion, and for me in particular, were two things. I was trying to get it from the notes; somehow it's there, but I'm not seeing it. Two things. One of the main things was, so what? What, at the end of the day, is this change going to create? He passed that answer to Brother Layne to answer, and Brother Layne said, "You know, my wife asked me the same question." It was good that he was able to say that, notwithstanding the "exuberance"—to take a word from my good friend before me, Senator Horsford. So what? And as I sit here and reflect, I know the Leader of Government's Business spoke about the change, the change, and the change.

I knew when schools were called "Bernadette Bailey". I knew when schools call "Jeremiah Richardson", and I know many more and many others can call. I knew when the Constitution did not exist, so I guess there were no oaths and allegiances.

I say this to say, Madam President, sometimes we have to check our history. I wasn't good at it, but of course, these are things that I recall and stand corrected. So we have been there, and the question is, what has changed?

What has changed is time, people, and circumstances. I say this to say that in the context of laws, in particular, notwithstanding, you may not need the referendum, as I humbly suggested to Doctor Alexis, and then he asked me for some numbers to contact different people, but I was sort of busy with my schedule, we need to take this to the

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broader community. I think we all agree with that.

Notwithstanding, the direction, because at the end of the day, while this may affect, in the immediate, 100 or 200 people, there are several up this country who are equally eligible to fit any of the positions that are so affected by any of the sections referred to, will be covered and will be impacted by this Bill.

So the issue of public education, in its true sense, is not a difficult thing. We have done consultations sometimes in one week for very serious issues, and this is a serious issue. This is not a simple issue, and so I think, and I was astonished to learn that for over a year now, this thing has been discussed, you know. So there were several opportunities, I don't know what the consultative record is, which is a good practice for legislation, establishing Bills and so on. There is a consultative record. It will be good to know outside of the Government itself, outside of us, and I know outside of the Opposition, which I know were also contacted and discussed with from a discussion with Doctor Alexis and his team, who are these other people? Conference of churches, community groups, principals, schools, parents, PTA? ... A lot of groups in the country.

Maybe there was... So, I'm just asking, because if it wasn't said, it doesn't mean that it didn't take place, because it's a good practice of consultation, then it goes to the issue of impact. So what? They say, well, you know, you will feel liberated, we will feel better, we will feel...

So, it's like, you know, some people depend on the clothes they wear, depend on their hairstyle, they feel different. Some days they feel more bouncy, some days they take a new style and do a new part, the new top, so you feel new. The question is, how with this change in this world... I think it was Senator Horsford who said, "You know, our national anthem in Grenada, how has that changed us, and will this part change us"? The question is, who is changing, who is really taking these oaths? Not the average citizen in the community, on the blocks, in the rum shop, in the church, in the school, or at home. This oath is for a specific group of persons.

So by and large... So, if you listened, the Governor-General, Parliamentarians, all of these people. So by and largely, it's speaking about, maybe about, maybe less than

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5% of the population immediately is affected by this change we are speaking about. By and large, the rest of the population doesn't affect them unless they come into that realm. So, maybe the issue of not having it be a referendum might be part of that consideration, understandable, so, maybe, so and maybe...

That is why, maybe, there is no need to have this broad consultant because it's just a few people it's really affected. I don't know. I'm just looking at the logic on that. We're not saying whether it is a bad thing. We're not saying it's bad. We're just looking at process because sometimes, you may say, well, I learnt, as a little boy, it's not what you do, but it's how you do it. I could come here and say, "Man, give me the glasses", or I could come here and say, "Can I have my glasses back, please"? It has two different effects. It has two different results and different buy-ins.

Of course, Madam President, on the issue of buy-in, interestingly, as I was sharing with my good friend Senator Rahaman, CAP. 217, which is the oath of allegiance. It's a whole group. Everybody has to take different oaths. Everybody. Whether it's jurors, witnesses, the Governor-General, everybody, the Oaths Act 217 is maybe even more important than the adjustments we are looking at, because the Oaths Act speaks about how to take an oath, and the issue of perjury. So what this is here is not the issue now, but how you say it and if you don't say it.

So, for example, the Attorney General mentioned that she was wondering about whether she had to take the oath, and so she realised she had to take it. Well, all of us. Well, I just realised that myself as I do my research, and I learned that clause 8 of this Chapter 217 says, Madam President, "Penalty or refusal or neglect to take oath..." Because, you know, once you have laws and regulations, you must have penalties, consequences, etcetera. It says, "If any person bound by this Act..." That's the Oaths Act, which all these different sections 20, etcetera, that we are referring to, are connected to... "If any person bound by this Act to take the oath of allegiance of the official oath or both, refuses or neglects to take it when duly tendered..." Meaning when it's read. "... he or she shall, if he or she has already entered on his or her office, vacate it..." Meaning to leave. "... or if he or she has not entered, shall be disqualified from entering on it, but

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no person shall be compelled, in respect of the same appointment to an office, to take the oath or oaths more than once”.

So, this brings into question two issues. The first issue is, as we say sometimes, if you want to be in the dance, you have to pay to be in the dance. Paying is to take the oath, and what it says further, which is important, is that, “No person shall be compelled, in respect of the same appointment to an office, to take the oath or oaths more than once”.

So, the question arises whether or not we can all “re-oath”, if we want to use that word, as is considered in some circles. The same office and “re-oathing”. Of course, one may argue, but it's not the king and the queen anymore; it's to Grenada, it's a different oath, which brings a new question to us. Is it the same oath? And so, I think we have to pay this CAP. 217, some due consideration.

Notwithstanding that, Madam President, I don't like to refer to AI as a place of good information. But you know, they say times have changed, and AI is it, and AI is what it will be. So, according to AI, if I may quote AI, when I did my search on allegiance, because that was a debate for me. It was vague.

Doctor Alexis, what really is allegiance? And his response back then, and I know he's in the crowd, and I know he cannot say anything, so we could discuss afterwards, but I am not going to lie. He said, “You know, from all his readings, he really saw an official definition, per se”, and I accepted that. But in the long and short, his conclusion was... Because this is important. We keep speaking about the oath, but the real issue is the allegiance. Is it allegiance to Grenada? Its allegiance to a dog or a cat, the king, or the queen. That is the most important thing. What are you paying, or is it to the God of Lord? What is this allegiance to? An allegiance in his words to me, and to us who were sitting there at the meeting, was to follow, to honour, to abide, uphold the laws and regulations, etcetera, of your country; to be a law-abiding citizen in the long and short. That's what it means. So what it means is that we who are taking this oath...

**Madam President:** Senator.

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**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Madam President.

**Madam President:** Thank you for your attention. According to section 41 of our Standing Orders, “A Senator present in the Senate during a debate shall not read books, newspapers, letters or other documents save such as relate to the business before the Senate”. It was written before the period of AI, and what I would like to, therefore, advice you is to be exactly precise in quoting AI. Quote when your citation begins and indicate when it ends, please do. Thank you.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Yes, Madam President. I haven't gotten to that part because there are two issues, Madam President. I'm trying to show the convergence of views, meaning that, in a former meeting, the definition that was put forward to us at the time, and, of course, in the context of allegiance, what AI is saying. So I didn't quote the AI first. I quoted chronologically what was said at the meeting, and now I am going towards the AI, which says, “An oath of allegiance is a formal declaration of loyalty and commitment to a specific country or its governing body, often sworn by a new citizen or those entering public office. It signifies the pledge to uphold the law, defend the Constitution and support the nation”. And of course, it had other things, it spoke about...

**Madam President:** End of quote.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** End of quote, yes. So I wanted to... But it has another line. If I were to close it properly, Madam President, it says, “In republics the oath is typically sworn to the country and its Constitution, while in constitutional monarchies it might be sworn to a monarch”. I think that is very important. End of quote. This brings us into a new realm. I heard the world republic mentioned earlier, but I would not go there right now. I would go to that point.

So I'm saying that brought clarity in the discussion, in that consultation as to what

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I am committing to, and to me, it's clear. As citizens, we should be committed to our country, to our laws, to what guides us, and to upholding them. So, Doctor Alexis was on point.

However, Madam President, interestingly, Al went on to say in that same quote, "Normally, in a republic, your allegiance is to a country". So the question arises, as my good friend Senator Rahaman and I were quipping earlier, the word "Grenada", if you look at the writing of the Bill, it says, "Why not the name 'Grenada', because 'Grenada' is a country". And so the question is, what really is Grenada, in the context of this allegiance and in the context of a republic and a non-republic? These are the valid questions to be raised based on the process, process, process, process. The road to being a republic.

I heard my good friend, the Leader of the Government's Business, say, "Well, it's the first step. It's a process". I heard my good friend Senator Dwight Horsford say, "Keep your foot down". Well, I'm trying to figure that out, but still, he wants to see a republic? But I guess he figured a republic must come, and, of course, we know that is a higher order that involves, as our AG said, a referendum. So the question arises, to what degree, it is my understanding, this allegiance is like an indoctrination. It's a belief, right, that would take time to reach that maximum, and would we ever reach a maximum if the maximum really is republic, to really transform that allegiance to Grenada?

So, Grenada, you want to stretch to reach it, but you are not there yet, and so the question could arise. How soon will we get to Grenada? That's the question, because the allegiance really and truly is not to Grenada. It is for Grenada because we have not gotten there yet. I have not gotten there. It is an allegiance for; I want to achieve, because we are not there yet, and so the question arises, so I would have expected to hear Madam President, what are the plans for us getting there? How soon do we plan to get there? What is the cost implication? Because we have done referendums before so we have some general framework as to how we can get there.

Of course, as was said by our learned Attorney General, Dominica got there, but Dominica got there according to the learned Doctor Alexis, in our meeting, because, after, well, I guess that's why he is well paid too, spending whole night looking for that word and

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I can't remember the exact word, but there were two words in the Constitution that they were able to, I wouldn't say it's a loophole, so two words that was established in the Constitution that gave them that window and I'll call it that window to be able to transform into a republic without having to go to a referendum. That was the cue on how they were able to do it.

We don't have that luxury, and I will say yet, because you never know someone may just find those words, and then we ask the question, well, and these questions are not questions we alone may ask. These are questions that people are asking, as Senator Horsford said, depending on where you go. If you're in certain places, certain discussions will happen. In other places, you may never even hear those discussions, and the question arises, well, do you think the monarch will be upset? Do you think they will be angry if we move away or if we make this change, or if we take down this symbol, would they be angry? I mean, it's a genuine concern, and his words were, well, I don't think so.

In Barbados, in fact, I think the King came down or Prince Charles, one of them... I don't think he was King at the time. He came down to Barbados when that happened, and so that was another important point because there are persons who are outside especially the elderly persons who have made that whole connection and I wouldn't say dependence but that relationship and love with the United Kingdom and the monarchy that it gives them some comfort, you know, through the years because they have seen the good, the bad, and the ugly. What would happen? And his words were no problem.

And so with that, though, whilst they may not have a problem, how do we treat mentally that, I would not say independence, but the minus of these persons, especially the elderly persons who were around during those times, how would they feel?

That's another type of education that needs to take place. What is the social impact of that? You might be amazed that 20 years down the road, social scientists do a study and realise the impact of that move and say, "Maybe we didn't do it correctly". So I think this is something that needs to be considered in that whole discourse.

And then the other thing, Madam President, that I think we have to look at in all of this is, and we may not know, what benefits... Let us not fool ourselves. Let us not fool

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ourselves. What benefits? Notwithstanding how many estates, how many slaves, how many things have happened 40, 50 years ago, which we're still trying to get repatriation and compensation for, but in the now, last 20, 30 years... What benefits has the relationship with the monarch brought to this country? We could say none. We could say none quickly, but have we done a proper assessment? It can be direct, and it can be indirect

I think this is important, because sometimes you do certain things and you never know how it was happening all the time, only to realise when you make the move, because you never know what was happening behind the scenes. I am just saying. These are things otherwise we find ourselves... That is why when you do critical analysis, especially when you're making changes, those things that look simple, we leave them alone and we say, "Man, it's easy, man, just do this".

So I don't want us to miss that opportunity that we might be happy now, 10 years from now, we may have to be here, five years from now, we may not be here, and we sit on the sidelines and say, "You know, we really made an error in that, you know". Don't worry, man, the bills could be amended. We will fix that.

And then, how, as Senator Horsford said, the framing, the enactment of the laws, and so on. How do we feel? How do we feel? How would we feel, Madam President? If you go to the same Chapter 217, it speaks of... I'm trying to find it. Right. It speaks of... Clause 16. Offence of... I think that is different. It speaks of wilfully making an untrue declaration. I don't think I can find it right now, but what I'm saying actually is that we're making the oath... Well, we realise that we may not be able to make another oath, so that's the first thing, unless we change the Oaths Act.

And then the other thing is, are we sitting and watching this, or are we going to take a Motion to remove those representations of the monarch over your head? The Mace? The crosses? When does it move? Because I really shouldn't be coming here after the first and seeing this up there. I would be traumatised that we act differently. I will be. We're speaking about the Governor-General would have to change her oath, yet still we're having this. Sergeant-at-Arms, I know you cannot take part in the discussion.

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We may not even need a Mace because, or the Mace might be different, maybe it might be nutmeg and a cocoa or some other thing like that, but you know that's a joke.

But what I'm saying is that I want us, outside of this, to understand that we need to look at those things deeper because the same public could turn around and say to us, "We are jokers". This morning, one of my friends called. He said, "But, tell me how you could then go back and have all of these things after you do this"? I say, "Boy, when I get down there, I will figure this out by the end of the day, because these are real questions that the public would have on us".

At this stage, Madam President, I think that I have shed sufficient light on the concerns. The issues may not be 100%, but they are sufficient to add to the discussion. We are saying that it's a good direction. It's a good direction, but we want Grenada, not that Grenada. We want the real Grenada that belongs to us, without any shackles, without any paintings, without any ornaments around it. We want our real Grenada.

And of course, I heard the issue about MBE and all of those things. I trust that there will be none coming up from now on, and our real heroes that should be honoured according to our Heroes Bill and all of those things, locally, we start putting names to those things, because they exist. They exist. Is there a committee to rename streets and buildings? Where is the committee to appoint our heroes? Where?

Sometimes we major in what we want to major in, and this is a clarion call that we don't have to wait. So, are we going to await the King's birthday, or whose birthday are we waiting on, or is it that we are awaiting our Independence Day?

So we had to be clear, otherwise we can all say yes, we support, but we'll be living a lie, and the good work that was done by our noble friends, and I'm sure it's done free of cost, yes... I heard yes. I know it's BS, it will bring us into disrepute.

And I will say, last thing. I think that we need to commend the team, which I said earlier, but I think that the team need to expand itself as you mentioned, maybe bringing even some of the students on internships and so on, involved, to keep that think tank going, and let us look at many other areas that we think that we can look at, and maybe if I knew we were working on that I could have send the Crop Compensation there a long

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time, Senator Adrian Thomas, you might have gotten it a long time ago.

So, at this stage, Madam President, I close my remarks and endorse the direction proposed with those sentiments, as so expressed. Thank you.

**Madam President:** I thank the distinguished Senator for his prolific discourse on the theory of change management because that's what you're talking about—how do we, what do we, you know, it involves politics, culture, process. So, thank you for your contribution.

Ladies and gentlemen, it's half an hour past the noon hour, and I trust there are several speakers yet to come, and an additional Bill. Ought we to break and have lunch within the hour? I know some people also have religious commitments that should commence now, so let me consult with you to say that we should break immediately and resume in 45 minutes. I see some sentiments to the contrary. Break immediately and resume within 40 minutes. Is that possible? Agreed. Thank you.

**Senate adjourned for lunch at 12:24 p.m.**

**Senate resumed at 1:32 p.m.**

**Madam President:** We thank all those who have helped us lunch. Thank you very much, and we pray for those who have prayed. We resume. Senator Seville Francis, you have the floor, madam.

**Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis:** Thank you, Madam President. I hope that we all had a very delicious lunch, we enjoyed, our bodies are nourished, and our ethnic challenges will not kick in at this point, but we will continue to be very attentive to the presentation.

Madam President, it gives me great joy, or I should say the greatest joy, to be standing here today to witness this historic moment, and I think it's even more important for me to know that I'm standing on the right side of history, Madam President. Madam

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President, as much as we are debating a very simple amendment, in my opinion, I want us to be mindful that, as simple as this change may be, it involves removing a few words to 1 powerful word. I want us to remember that it carries very, very deep national meaning, Madam President.

Yes, Madam President, this Bill proposes a change in words, but more importantly, I see this amendment as a change in mindset. I see it as a change or shift rather in our national identity and in a very forward vision for Grenada, and I know and I want to thank Honourable Claudette Joseph for the way she articulately broke down the Bill, Madam President and the amendment. And by doing so, a huge portion of my presentation has been removed, so that's a plus. Right. But, Madam President, for what it's worth, I am just going to re-emphasise because I know we had a break, so there may be persons who did not listen to the first half of the presentation before lunch. So I'll just summarise that specific area because I know that these were burning questions, and I've engaged with all young people via social media, some who are fortunate enough to have the opportunity to call me so that we can dialogue on this issue.

There are some burning questions, and they specifically relate to the referendum. Wasn't this part of the referendum? Don't we need, or would we need, a referendum for something of that nature? And so I feel like I owe it to the young people to just quickly touch on that, and to say to them that not every constitutional amendment requires a referendum.

The law is clear, Madam President, that only certainly entrenched provisions and those provisions are listed in section 39 (5) and Schedule 2 of the Constitution require the vote of the people. The Bill deals with Schedule 3, which does not fall under those entrenched provisions. In fact, this specific Bill amends sections 20, 40, 65, 95 and 98, and they are not on the exemption list. That means that we, as Parliamentarians acting with a two-thirds majority, have the power to pass this change. No referendum is legally required. So, to our young people, in a nutshell, that's what it is saying.

The question also being asked is, why should we change our Oath of Allegiance? Why should we make those amendments? And it's a very fair question because, Madam

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President, if I were not sitting in this Honourable House, I would have those same questions as well. Some of the questions also asked what difference it would make. What I want us to understand, Madam President, is sometimes the small axe cuts down bigger trees, so as much as it seems simple, the effect that the amendment will have will be great, Madam President, and we cannot take this for granted.

You see, our Constitution... I have one simple answer to the question. What difference would it make? Why are we doing this? I would say, Madam President, because our Constitution, our oath and our national values must speak the same language, Madam President, or else we are one, either confused or we are confusing, and I don't think we want to be aligned with either of those adjectives.

Madam President, we stand each morning and we recite, "I pledge allegiance to my flag and the country for which it stands..." Madam President, almost every day I wear this pin in a very signal spot, and every day I put this pin on, Madam President, it's not just for decoration, it's not just as a piece of jewellery for clothing, but, Madam President, it is very significant to me, especially when I'm representing my country outside. I want people to ask me where this country is. Which country are you representing? Because Madam President, for me, I am proud to always say that I represent Grenada.

I recall in the year 2023, I represented Grenada in Malaysia at a conference and also a flag-bearing ceremony, and I recall, I'm saying this and my eyes are filled with tears again reliving the moment, when I had to carry that flag walking through over 50 different countries and walking alongside those other flags. I looked at how beautiful and symbolic our flag is, and I stood on that on the stage as our National Anthem played, and the tears bathed in my eyes, Madam President, and that must mean something, that must mean something.

To me, changing the Oath of Allegiance to say boldly and proudly that I pledge allegiance to my country, that is something that I want to wake up every morning and remember that I am pledging allegiance to something significant, Madam President.

So I want us to see that this is beyond just changing words. Madam President, our children sing with pride in school every day at assembly or before classes start, "Hail

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Grenada, land of ours...” Madam President, but in this very Chamber, when we assumed office, we went contrary, Madam President.

So we have our children saying, “Hail Grenada, land of ours...” and our pledge being bearing allegiance to a flag of our country, but in this very Chamber, Madam President, we're going contrary to that. We're saying to our children that while you're pledging allegiance to Grenada, we are pledging and taking an Oath of Allegiance to serve His Majesty King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors. Madam President, that is not alignment. Madam President, that is not a common language, that is not who we are, Madam President. We are Grenadians. Madam President, this Bill seeks to bring that alignment so that our oath reflects the country we love, serve and belong to, Grenada.

Madam President, we are not alone in this journey, and I think when we speak of CARICOM and one Caribbean community, those are some of the things that we ought to be fighting for when we think of CARICOM. Barbados has done it. Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana they've done it. They now swear allegiance to their country, not the monarchy. It is time for us to join our Caribbean neighbours, Madam President, in this quiet but powerful act of sovereignty. Then we can say, Madam President, that we are indeed one Caribbean community. Don't you think so? Some might ask, wasn't this part or wasn't that attempt made in the last referendum?

Madam President, most times when we have events and our caterers provide us with the delicacies, one of the things I realised is that the pig in the blanket is almost always on the menu list. That is where we have the bacon wrapped around the plantain or the bacon wrapped around the hot dog. So, Madam President, when you bite into that, you're not just biting a hot dog or a plantain or bacon. You're biting all three at the same time, and that is a very simple analogy as to how this question is being proposed regarding this amendment that we're attempting... Or will be passing, and I'm being very optimistic here.

You see, Madam President, in 2016, the Oath of Allegiance was part of the broader CCJ Referendum Bill, but that effort bundled several reforms together and was rejected

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in its entirety. But, Madam President, when you eat that pig in the blanket it doesn't necessarily mean that you did not want the bacon, but it was part of that meal, so too, Madam President, it does not necessarily mean that the rejection was for that specific part of that bundled reform, but unfortunately, because it fell under that then the entire thing appeared to have been rejected and if my memory serves when you know, when we were going through the referendum process, you did not have the opportunity to pick and choose what you were voting yes or no against in this regard.

So, Madam President, I want us to realise that this is different, this is focused, this is not dependent on external courts or the court system, and this is all about our national identity, Madam President. Let me be clear. Challenging or changing the oath does not infringe upon any of our fundamental rights, and that is most important to me, at least.

It doesn't touch our freedom of consciousness or conscience. It does not touch our freedom for religion or any rights protected under Chapter 1 of the Constitution. There's a saying, Madam President, "The journey of 100 miles begins with a single step". Madam President, this is a step, a small but bold step. A bold step towards maturity, towards sovereignty and towards, as Senator St. Clair alluded to, probably republicanism, not my words, his, Madam President, but at least it's a step in the right direction. I know the Honourable Member asked, but why can't we just go full republicanism? Madam President, I'm sure when the member got up this morning, he did not snap his fingers and appear in the Senate Sitting. It was a process, and so too, everything takes time.

Madam President, we may not become a republic today, but why can't we prepare the ground for generations who will come? Madam President, I believe that we have a mandate as this era of leaders to leave the country better than we found it. I believe that we owe it to the next generation to prepare the ground for what is to come. Madam President, we are here today, and we have the privilege, and I would consider it a privilege to be amending or to even have the oath of allegiance, but, Madam President, there are people who fought so that we can even have an allegiance to pledge to, Madam President, and we cannot take these things for granted.

I am saying this to say that we have a responsibility and an obligation, in my

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opinion, to prepare that groundwork for our future generations, Madam President. Madam President, I also wish to honour those who fought before us; the men and women who made independence possible, who made all of this possible, Madam President, who dreamed that one day Grenadians would not have to swear loyalty to a foreign crown, but could stand tall and pledge allegiance to our land.

On a more personal note, Madam President, when I was sworn in as a Senator, I took that Oath to His Majesty King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors; my lips said one thing, Madam President, but I can assure you, that day, in that moment, my heart said another, because deep down I knew I pledged allegiance to Grenada, although it meant pledging allegiance to King Charles the Third, Madam President.

So today, I rise to say that I am so proud to be on the right side of history and I look forward, Madam President, with a lot of hope that one day I can sit on my rocking chair in Grenada; grand-child in my arms, great grand-child in my arms, but by the rate I am going it might be child, in my arms and say that I was there. I was part of the generation of leaders who chose Grenada. I want to say to my grandchild, Madam President, that I was part of a group of leaders that declared our loyalty with one voice, not to a monarch, but to a nation that raised us, fed us, and gave us a future, Madam President.

So today, I encourage my colleagues not to vote with our minds. Let us not vote just because, but I want us to vote as our National Anthem states, "With our heads, our hearts, and our hands in unity to reach our destiny", Madam President, and, Madam President, that destiny is the destiny before us; that destiny is Grenada. Thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you. Thank you, Senator. I have visions of you sitting, rocking, and reminiscing. **(Laughter)** Hard to imagine... But... **(Laughter)** Hard to imagine you old, that's all I mean. **(Laughter)** Senator Rahaman, Business Representative in the Senate of Grenada, you have the floor, sir.

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**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Thank you. So, Madam President, I must confess that when I took my oath, after doing so, I asked God Almighty for forgiveness. **(Laughter) (Applause)** That's the truth. That's the truth, because like many of us, it is something that we had to do because the law required it, and so even though this is a symbolic change, and all of the apparatus still remains intact, this symbolism is very important. Symbolism is the start.

Madam President, you don't win a football match by scoring all goals at once; one goal at a time. Many times in a game, when you score the first goal, it is a catalyst. It provides the zeal for you to win the game, so that is how I look at this. I look at this as significant. It boggles my mind that it took us 50 years of democracy to do it, and I thank God that we have the likes of Doctor Francis Alexis and his CCR team that could help guide us, sit with us, explain, take our questions, and provide clarity on this issue.

So, for me to give my allegiance to Grenada, it is a no-brainer. It is something that I know I do not have to ask for forgiveness after **(laughter)**, and I feel comfortable in doing it. As a matter of fact, there is a part under the amendments, point three, where it says, "Where in any written law prescribing an oath there appear the words 'our Sovereign Lord the King', those words shall be deleted, and there shall be substituted therefor the words 'the people of Grenada'..." It really took us so long to do that? And imagine, "our Sovereign Lord the King" this is offensive to me on many levels.

One, true sovereignty belongs to the most high, not man. So when we speak about the sovereignty of the state, I refer to it as state sovereignty; that we have supreme authority over the state, but true sovereignty belongs to God Almighty. **(Applause)** And so, definitely not a Sovereign Lord. It does not matter which King or earthly man. So, for me, I am very, very happy to see those words being changed.

Madam President, you know, we have had to struggle to remove the oppression of slavery and colonialism; but that stain is still very much present, the stain of these things is still very much present on us. There was one very well-known artiste who sang, "Emancipate yourself from mental slavery". So physical freedom is not sufficient. Mental, and might I add today, financial freedom is also very important, and that is where things

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like trade and so on come in, these things are critical. You cannot be truly independent if you do not have financial independence and mental independence, freedom and clarity of speech and thought. If you do not have those ideals, then you cannot be truly free.

Madam President, with these few thoughts, I wish to say that I wholeheartedly accept and support the proposed amendment in changing our Oath of Allegiance... I no longer wish to repeat from what it was... **(Laughter)** to Grenada, and the people of Grenada. I thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator Rahaman for not repeating... **(Laughter)** Your contribution, thank you, sir. A request for the floor from the distinguished Senator Gloria Thomas-Samuel. You have the floor, madam.

**Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. Pleasant, good afternoon to all present, and all who are listening. I rise today in full support of the Bill and Act to amend the Oath of Allegiance, sworn by our public officials, our leaders, and our servants of state.

Let me be clear, this is not a Bill to erase our history, but to align our loyalty with our reality. **(Applause)** What is our reality? Grenada is an independent nation. This is our reality. We have been since 1974, yet to this day when someone is sworn into office, whether a Parliamentarian or a judge, they pledge allegiance not to the people of Grenada, not to the Constitution, not to the ideas we fought beside to uphold every day, but to the crown, to a monarch who resides thousands of miles away, who does not vote here, does not serve here, and has no hand in shaping our future. That is not just symbolic. It is outdated and wrong.

Madam President, this Bill proposes that all oaths of allegiance in Grenada be amended to swear loyalty first and only to Grenada, our country, our Constitution, our people. This change recognises the sovereignty we already possess. It reinforces the principle that leadership is a commitment to serve Grenadians, not a foreign figurehead. Some will say, "What harm does that old oath do?" I asked instead, "What good does it

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still serve"? **(Applause)**

Our young people deserve a political system rooted in national pride. Our democracy should be grounded in the authority of our people, not colonial echoes. If we want to build confidence in our institutions, then those institutions must reflect who we are, not who we were told to be.

Madam President, this is not about disrespecting the monarchy. It is about respecting Grenada more. It's about ensuring that the words we speak in our most solemn moments of service actually match the country we are serving. So, let us make it plain. When someone takes an office in Grenada, let their oath be, "I swear Allegiance to Grenada". No confusion, no foreign symbol, just us, just the truth. Let us move forward, not backward. Let us speak with one voice, Grenada first, Grenada only.

Madam President, today, as I stand firmly in favour of the Motion, that allegiance should be pledged to Grenada, not to the British Monarchy. I do so with a strong sense of pride and commitment. This is not just a symbolic gesture. It is a matter of national dignity, democratic principle and self-respect. Let us begin with the most fundamental point.

National sovereignty—Grenada is an independent country. We govern ourselves, we elect our leaders, and we define our path forward. So why should we continue to pledge allegiance to a monarch who lives thousands of miles away and plays no active role in our governance? Allegiance should reflect who we are loyal to, and that must be Grenada.

Madam President, we cannot ignore our colonial past. The monarchy is not a neutral symbol. It represents an era of domination, where the Grenadian people were not free. Continuing to swear Allegiance to the British Crown is not just outdated, it is disrespectful **(applause)** to the generations who struggled for our independence. It keeps us mentally tied to a system that no longer owns us. Allegiance to Grenada, however, honours our freedom and our future.

Madam President, democracy matters. The monarchy is inherited power. Grenada, by contrast, is a democracy built on the principles that power comes from the

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people, pledging to the monarchy undermines that principle. Why should citizens of a free country, swear loyalty to a royal figure that does not elect or represent the voice?

Madam President, let us talk about national pride. Allegiance to Grenada builds unity. It teaches our youths to be proud of their home, the culture, and their people. It is a pledge to build something here, not to look back to a past empire, but to move forward as one people.

Now, some may argue that the monarchy is just a symbol, a tradition, but symbols matter. Rituals like pledging allegiance carry deep meaning. When we continue to pledge to the crown, we are saying something about where we place our loyalty, and it is time that loyalty reflects the reality. We are Grenadians and we are proud of it.

Finally, this is about the next generation. Do we want our children to grow up swearing loyalty to a foreign monarch, or to their own flag, land, or people? The answer is clear. Pledging allegiance to Grenada is not just right. It is necessary for our identity, dignity, and democracy. I urge us all to support this motion as it is being presented. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator Thomas, for your powerful convictions conveyed in your presentation. Thank you very much. I offer the floor to another woman with powerful convictions, Senator Myanna Charles. You have the floor, Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Myanna Charles:** Good morning, Madam President, and... **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** Good afternoon. Wow. I am very tardy in truth. **(Laughter)** That lunch is still taking hold.

Good afternoon, Madam President, and thank you for your warm welcome back remarks. I truly appreciate it. I also want to greet everyone here this afternoon in this Honourable House, and I do promise, Madam President, I am looking at the tardiness of my colleagues, my remarks will be brief, and I will stick to that. Madam President, I rise today to make my contributions to the Constitution (Oath of Allegiance) (Amendment) (No. 1) Bill, with a profound sense of responsibility and deep respect for the significance

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of this moment.

I want to begin by paying tribute to our brothers and sisters, those who came before us and boldly charted the way toward independence, and those in later years, who sought to deepen our democracy by supporting constitutional reform through the referendum process, in other words, with our people having a say. Today, we stand on their shoulders, and we are proud to continue on that journey.

Madam President, I would like to join with my learned colleague—he is not here at the moment, Senator Dwight Horsford—in supporting this Bill, as I, too, will happily take an Oath to Grenada. I raise no objection to the proposed amendment, which replaces the Oath of Allegiance to the King of England with an Oath of Allegiance to Grenada. This is an important step, and I know that my colleagues in this Honourable House can agree with me when I say this is indeed an important step. For many Grenadians, including myself, this change carries a deep symbolic meaning, but symbolism alone is not enough.

Moments of national significance demand shared ownership. It is in this spirit that I must, and respectfully so, express concern about the lack of meaningful public engagement surrounding the process from the beginning, especially after learning that the process started about a year ago.

You know, as I sat there and reflected on the contributions of my colleagues, who went before me, a question crossed my mind. You know, how do we, on one hand, declare this a national moment, a moment, in other words, of nationalism, while on the other hand, we sort of exclude the nation? How does that work?

And, I also want to make the point. I am not a lawyer by any means, and I don't profess to be, but I want to make the point that there are legal scholars over there that differ in opinion on whether a referendum is technically required, and the genuine presence of this grey area ought to have given us some degree of pause. When there is uncertainty, in my humble view, we must always err on the side of caution, but also on the side of inclusion, not merely out of legal necessity, but rather out of democratic respect in that regard.

Madam President, I will make the point that what we are doing today is more than

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changing a few words in the oath, and I totally agree with that. Because today, in this Honourable House, we are also shaping how future generations understand duty, identity and allegiance. This cannot be a decision that feels handed down to the people. It must be one that is shaped with them in the centre, unfortunately, that has not yet been done, and this is a call, I believe, to deepen democracy, and it requires more than just representation. It demands participation from the very people we serve, and it still remains my humble view that our people should have been invited into the process, not as observers, but as contributors from the beginning.

In other words, our people should have had a say in the process from the very beginning. You know, I would have really loved to see that. Such a significant moment is worthy of celebration across every parish in Grenada, and in fact, every Grenadian home in the diaspora. But as my colleague highlighted earlier, that is not the case on the ground today, at least from where I stand, as many are not even aware of the Bill, its significance and how it impacts them. Why is that so?

In my closing, Madam President, let me restate my possession. I wholeheartedly support allegiance to Grenada, but I also support the rights of the Grenadian people to have a meaningful role in contributing to this process. I do believe that it is very important. With that being said, and my final remark, I do support the decision that was taken by the Lower House for public education and dialogue, and I really do hope to see that materialised. Thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator Brianna Charles. Thank you very much, and of course, again, welcome back. Is the light on for Senator Quinc Britton? No... **(Inaudible comment by a Senator)** The light is on for the representative of the great region of Grenada, otherwise known as Carriacou and Petite Martinique, Senator Norland Cox. Senator, you have the floor.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, when you make that kind of introduction, it means that I am going back up with

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a little more accolades. **(Laughter)** So, I welcome that, and of course, we do have the opportunity of the Hansard to go back. **(Laughter)**

**Madam President:** Yes, sir. You are from the region...

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Yes. **(Laughter)**

**Madam President:** ... and this is the Parliament, not the campaign. **(Laughter)**

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Madam President, let me just say, it is always a pleasure to be given an opportunity, to converse on important matters like we are doing today, and I want to start first by opening as my colleague, Senator Horsford did, that I have, and I am willing to continue today and onwards, to pledge allegiance to Grenada, Carriacou, and Petite Martinique,. That has always been my stand. I came here, took an oath, forgot what I read, and went back to the business of the people.

So, I think it is basically the same for most persons, who had an opportunity to be part of this process. So, Madam President, we clearly understand where we are, how we feel about our country, and of course, as Senator Seville Francis said, even before today, you know, she shed tears when she saw our flag. So it is deeply rooted, how we feel about our country is deeply rooted in us, and so what we are doing today is a process to just put a little icing on the cake, to some extent, but to make sure we formalise that sentiment that we have, and to have it inscribed in writing.

Madam President, I want to say that the sentiments echoed by my dear colleague, Senator Charles, I, too, feel strongly about those sentiments, and how the presentation somewhat mimics what I had in my mind, what I wanted to say, so I now have to find a few things to reshape.

I really want to give some strong recognition to how it started, where it all started, and there is one common word that has been echoed throughout the debate over the last two days, and that word is "history". That word is "history". It is very important for us to

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pay attention to that word. The words history and " historic, have been said over and over. I am seeing this in the context, Madam President, of the lesson, the lesson, what this history has taught us. I think that has not been stated, and I think we are missing a very important lesson in history.

And if I should go back, I should probably go back to the whole history of Emancipation. It is recorded that several attempts were made by previous persons, previous fighters, to emancipate us from slavery, and they failed. The question is, why? And we always have to ask ourselves why? Why did it take us so long to get to Emancipation? Why did it take us so long to get where we are today? And there is a lesson in that that we need to pay attention to.

And I am saying this on the backdrop, that Doctor Alexis and his team must be given credit for where we are **(applause)**, because, while we were sleeping, and in some case, the Leader of Government's Business was partying **(laughter)**, they were actually working **(laughter)**, and trying to find a resolution, going through the Constitution with a fine tooth comb to see where they can find somewhere that they can get some softening, something, because we've tried with two referendums where we had seven items on the first referendum in 2016.

Just to correct my dear colleague Senator Seville, while there were seven items, you could have voted on each individual separately, so they were not really bundled together. You could have voted no for some and yes for some. So, I think that was one of the things that I just wanted to clear up.

Our second attempt was just the CCJ alone. And going back to history, a lot of the comments evolve as to why we didn't vote for the CCJ centred around trust and some of it was centred around competency, whether or not we were competent to have that final court as ours or whether or not we trust our people to make the right decisions when certain matters come before them, and so persons who voted, opted to stay where we are. I am saying this, as I said, a lesson. There is a lesson in this that we have to pay attention to.

There are a lot of comments made about who we pledge allegiance to over the

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past 50 years, but in recent time and Senator Rahaman said in recent time, Madam President, we have sat here in this House over the past decade and we have seen Bills, harmonised Bills coming from a certain location, not necessarily who we pledge allegiance to, or who is dictating and directing how our society should look at things and view things. So I am saying again, we have to pay attention. History. There is a serious lesson about the whole course of slavery, and where we are, and we have to pay attention, and hence the reason why the Opposition has made a call about inclusion of the general public. And it is not anything to derail or to delay us getting to this passage of this Bill. Because you can clearly say that where we are today is because it came from the public, because Doctor Alexis is not a Member of Government. He is not in Government, so the work and suggestions actually came from outside of the confines of the executive space, but we have a responsibility to embrace suggestions that can be good policies for our people and hence the reason why we are here today.

But the lesson, Madam President, is that attempts were made to have a referendum in a bigger way to have more meaningful changes to our Constitution. A lot of it was met, for want of a better word, with some educational sabotage. Some of it personal, some of it ignorance and some of it fear, with fear because the changes that we're making, everything is going to happen, everything is going to be different. And I believe, Madam President, that has robbed us of an opportunity to really make a serious dent in getting to that place where you want to be.

And so I'm saying this to say because there may be persons here who have shared a different view in terms of whether or not those amendments to the Constitution, when we had the referendum, it was needed or necessary and may have voted no and may have encouraged people to vote no. But the lesson is that we are still where we are, and they may come today, and even persons outside may strongly support changing the oath, but there were clearly opportunities for us to do that before. The question is why? Why do we allow ourselves?

Oftentimes, we allow ourselves to be swayed or distracted by not paying attention to what is important to us. I think that is a lesson that we have to take away from this that

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there are always going to be fights for what is right, and one of the things that I'm proud of this Opposition is that we have been consistent on this matter, whether in Government or outside of Government, Madam President.

And it is clear that we cannot or we may not get any significant change in our Constitution without the support of all political parties. It is clear that this must be done from a national standpoint. That is the only way we can achieve this, and so I think the lesson from where we are, why we are where we are, is what we have to pay attention to, and the question is how we are going to fix that going forward. And I think one of the smartest ways, and probably one of the most strategic ways, is to ensure you get public buy-in, so when it goes out to them, they know why we are bringing this to them, they know why they support it or do not support it, because we have clearly engaged them and educated them in the process. I think we just have to be very careful. The whole euphoria of emancipation, slavery, but if we do not pay attention to the lesson, if we do not learn from the whole process, I think we are going to be here for a very, very long time, Madam President.

So I want to really underscore that. That is one of the things that I really wanted to underscore, because it is somewhat unfair sometimes for the persons who are not as learned as we are not to give them an opportunity to understand, and then we ask them to say yay or nay for it. I think that is something that we have to be very, very mindful of.

I know that Senator Joseph, the Attorney General, made a statement about a person's self-worth, and I understand. I don't think she meant it in any harsh way. I understand the context in which she made it because this is about your country, but sometimes if we, from where we sit, do not do what we have to, for them to understand why this is important, then we have failed ourselves and we have failed them.

Madam President, so with these few words, I really want to indicate that we have been resolute in how we feel about this amendment. However, it is very, very important for that public engagement to commence, to be sustained, and if so be it from our engagements, there well might be a possibility for other things to be added and for us to have another go at a referendum with something more substantive, and that can only

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come if we have that engagement with the public. And that is my firm belief, and that is my firm standard we should. These matters are too important for it to just be navigated within the parliamentary space because what will happen is that you wouldn't get the buy-in, and people wouldn't understand. You won't sell it to them. We have to sell it.

So, Madam President, I want to commend all involved. I say that Doctor Alexis and his team... I have them as the legal battalion for our Constitution reform process. They have been part and parcel for the past decade or more involved in trying to find a way for us to reshape our destiny from a constitutional standpoint, and I just want to commend them for that and to commend all involved in the process and to say, Madam President, it's always a pleasure to have an opportunity to be here to deliberate. Thank you, colleagues. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Cox. Thank you very much for the reminder of drawing the lessons of history, whatever they are; the methodology of drawing lessons from history is a good reminder. Thank you, and the floor has been requested by Senator Quinc Britton, and as you take the floor, I ask Senator Cox to come to the Chair.

**Sergeant-at-Arms:** Deputy President, in the Chair.

**Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox):** Senator Britton, you have the floor.

**Sen. the Hon. Quinc Britton:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy President, and good afternoon to my colleagues, those who are sitting in the Chamber. I, too, join in giving my unwavering support to the Bill as presented by the Leader of Government's Business, and I don't have to repeat many of the sentiments expressed earlier in support of the Bill. However, Mr. Deputy President, I, too, feel a sense of deep pride and joy that we are able to stand on this side of history and collectively make some amendments to the Constitution.

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I listened to you very carefully, in your deliberation, exercising words of caution whilst going about constitutional reform, and you also made mention of the “Constitution battalions”, Doctor Francis Alexis and the CCR team and I, too, would like to join in commending them on the tremendous work that they've been doing.

And sometimes I think we have a responsibility as well to educate the populace as to what it is that we are doing, and in that same note, what it is that we are doing here today. And as proposed or recommended by the “Constitutional battalions”, does not require a referendum to do that. What it requires is a two-thirds majority of votes in both Houses, which we are doing right now. So we have a responsibility to the citizens of our tri-island state to let them know what it is and why we are doing what we are doing.

And I, too, just want to join with my colleague Senator Francis when she mentioned the referendum, and just a point of correction to you. At the Referendum in 2016, it was... And a lot of the times... And I get you when you said that exercising the word of caution because our people did not understand fully what it is, they felt that it was... they were ambushed in a sense because there were widespread consultations. However, the consultations that happened, some of the recommendations that were made by the people because I attended some of the consultations, were not what was there in the clauses within those Bills that we were asking to vote yay or nay for. So, I felt there was too much ambiguity within those Bills that I couldn't support those Bills in their current construct.

Just let me say, for example, there was a question being asked about the term limits of the Prime Ministers. The recommendation that was made by the people was two, just like how we have it in the United States, but then when you saw the clauses which it entails, it showed serving for not more than three consecutive terms. So it meant that if I am the leader or I am elected as Prime Minister and I serve for two consecutive terms and I lose the election, I can come back again and serve again for two more or three more, to disqualify me from serving again, and that is not what the people wanted. What they were asking for was two terms, two consecutive terms, just like you have in the United States, and you move on. That's what it was.

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That is why I would proudly say that I did not support because of that reason and so too was the general public of Grenada. So we understand that when it comes to constitutional reform that we must educate our people and not just try to shove something down their throat, and clearly that is not what we are doing here.

The change that we seek to effect, it affects us Members of Government and Parliamentary Secretaries etcetera. It affects us, and we will publicly join together in letting our constituents or our people know this is what the change is really meant to.

So on that note, Mr. Deputy President, I would like to join with all the sentiments expressed in supporting this Bill that has been put before the Honourable House. I can see from the comments or the support we have been getting that we have the majority, if not all the support, from the “Other Side. So thank you very much. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox):** Thank you very much, Senator Britton. Senator David Andrew, you have the floor.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy President. This Bill is too significant for me not to add my voice in support. So, as much as all of my colleagues have supported, even on “This Side” and on the “Other Side”, history must record me as standing to give support to this Bill.

Today is a proud day for Grenada, Mr. Deputy President. Today is a historic day for Grenada as we bring to this Honourable House, this Constitution (Oath of Allegiance) (Amendment) Bill, 2025. A Bill that seeks to amend Schedule 3 of the Constitution and Schedule 1 of the Courts Order to change the Oath of Allegiance from “His Majesty King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors” to “Grenada”.

I want to put on record my appreciation to the outstanding work an effort of the Citizens for Constitutional Reform (CCR), led by Doctor Alexis and his team or led by Doctor Alexis. I am not a lawyer, Mr. Deputy President, but having listened to the meticulous and profound arguments in the presentation by Doctor Francis Alexis, Mr. Ruggles Ferguson and the members of his entire team, any doubts about the

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constitutionality of this move, this presentation of this Bill and the need for a referendum were laid to rest. Thank you, Doctor Alexis. Thank you, Mr. Ruggles Ferguson. Thank you, Mr. Layne. Thank you, the members of the CCR.

I appreciate deeply, Mr. Deputy President, the historical context in which we received the Constitution coming from associate statehood coming to independence with the same major players; colonial players and powers being in play, and so I understand the context in which we received the oath and why it could have been aligned the way it did, and why it contained the lines that we are seeking to remove today.

But I believe as leaders and policy makers, we have allowed our people to live in a level of national hypocrisy for the better part of the last 50 years. Mr. Deputy President, I say that because we teach our people, we teach our children, we have them say, "Hail Grenada, Land of Ours, we Pledge ourselves to Thee", in our anthem. In our pledge, we teach them to say, "I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the country for which it stands". We teach them that from way down, yet when these same people, and I've heard that sentiment expressed, but I want to express it in my own way, when these same people elect us as public officers and officials into office, we turn around and pledge allegiance to another power. Now that's confusing. That's hypocrisy. It's a 50-year-old hypocrisy.

This Bill seeks to begin to lift our people in some measure out of this hypocrisy, and we acknowledge that there is much more to be done. I mean, we can talk about all the emblems, we can talk about all the other things, but this is one step. So we're not saying that because there's more to be done, let's cancel this. No.

Mr. Deputy President, I hear a lot said about consultation and truth be told, when I hear that, I wonder sometimes if there's not a degree of mockery being made of our people. From a psychological point of view, every human being likes to be consulted. It brings a feeling of importance. It brings a feeling that you matter. It brings a feeling that somebody is concerned about what is likely to matter to you, and hopefully it's taken on board. You see, for me, consultations must be meaningful. If my name is being spelt wrongly, you're sure you're bound to consult me to fix it?

We have been teaching the children allegiance to Grenada since they were small,

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yet we are doing something erroneous here. In my mind, I'm not sure I see what the need for consultation here is in this particular matter. I could appreciate when things are likely to affect people, like in some of the entrenched provisions, if you are going to interfere with their freedoms, if you are going to interfere with the access to things that the Constitution allows for, consideration is a must. Is it necessary there? Maybe not, but it has to make sense, and it has to be genuine.

But, of course, we appeal to people when we say we want to consult with them because we make them think, but history should show us that there are several instances where consultations took place and nothing happened that reflected what the people said they wanted. History would show us that there are several instances where the people were crying out, "Pay the salaries", and we wouldn't pay them. The churches said it. The conference said it. We consulted everybody, and we said, "Let's do this. Let's pay", and it still wouldn't be done, and then we talked about consultation.

So if we're not prepared to make the consultations meaningful, where we will take, and I'm sure the people have been speaking, this process has rightly said by the Leader of Opposition Business on the "Other Side" a while ago, started out of the Citizens for Constitutional Reform and they consulted and the people every other person you pass, they want this, you know, every other person I have interacted with, they want this. So I'm not sure you know what the consultation you're talking about plenty, but, of course, the education and an opportunity to let people know that there is more to come, this is a step heading in the direction and what we need to put in place to continue this journey is something that we need to explore.

Mr. Deputy President, for me, this is a no-brainer. This move is a no-brainer. There is no better time than now to fix an error. There is no better time than now to correct a wrong. Now is the time. This makes me remember in 1986, when there were many atrocities happening in some of the African nations, a highly studied started group, a cast of regional calypsonians came together, people like; Kitchener, Sparrow, Swallow, Stalin, Beckett, Poser, David Rudder, Brigo, Scrunter and several others and did a song called "Calypso for Africa" to raise funds to assist with the things happening there to bring

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assistance, and the chorus says, “Now is the time”.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say **(the Senator proceeded in a melodious tone)** “Now is the time to work in unity, now is the time to change hypocrisy, now is the time”. I think that was the melody of the song, so I tried to sing it without... I didn't have a keyboard to play the notes, so I tried to sing it. So now is the time. There is no better time than now.

Mr. Deputy President, for the interest of persons in our communities, probably in Telescope or probably in Café, in Marquis who probably could hear us bantering this language, I just want to speak a little bit. The oath of allegiance is a formal promise, swearing loyalty to a country or its constitution or in some cases a monarch. This happens as was alluded to earlier when some public official takes office or some public officer takes office.

In some countries, may I add, taking an oath of allegiance requires us to denounce other loyalties or loyalties to other countries. I want to say this again. In some jurisdictions, taking an oath of allegiance means we have to denounce loyalties to other countries and other crowns. In our case, prior to this being passed, we had to actually take loyalty to another crown, to another country, a monarch.

Regardless of the wording, Mr. Deputy President, and the wording of oaths across the region, across the world could be different. The core idea is the same as an oath generally. It is a declaration of faithfulness and duty, and today in this Honourable House, we declare that we will no longer take an oath or do any such thing that declares to any other power, any other person, any other nation other than Grenada. This is what this Bill is about, and it begs our support.

Grenada is not alone because several other Caribbean nations have updated their oaths of allegiance to reflect loyalty to their own country rather than to the British Monarchy, and some of them have been mentioned, and some have started as early as their independence and others have moved in like fashion, like Grenada, to that place, so we are not alone. Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica and Barbados have all moved to republican status. And yes, I have heard a lot of the arguments coming out for that,

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but we know quite well that requires a full referendum, but we are moving with low-hanging fruit that we can harvest that does not require that.

But even in countries like Jamaica, in 2002, Jamaica amended its oath of allegiance to pledge allegiance to Jamaica rather than to the monarch. No referendum was held, and the change is still in effect. St. Vincent and the Grenadines did likewise in 2015 when the oath of allegiance was changed, and they now swear allegiance to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, its Constitution and its people.

Grenada is heading in that direction. Our country's bold leadership, Mr. Deputy President, will allow Grenada to join our neighbouring territories in moving closer to emancipation, national identity and sovereignty. I have absolutely no reservations, Mr. Deputy President. Unequivocally, I support this Bill, and I can't wait to have my oath taken again to re-swear my allegiance.

In fact, I'll tell you the truth, I heard many little stories of how people took their oaths. I'll tell you my little story. The only part of the oath I took that I was intentional about is the last part, and if you go back to when it was said, there is an intonation I used at the very last part, "So help me God". I did that because in that very intonation I am calling on the most high for his help, not as I swore, but for this "so help me God". You can go back and listen to that particular intonation there, and I was very intentional about that.

And so I am saying all this to say, this Bill has my full support, and I look forward to re-taking it and pledging allegiance to Grenada. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox):** Leader of Government's Business.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy President. **(Laughter)** Mr. Deputy President, it gives me great pleasure to, after the presentation of such an important Bill, to stand up and wrap up the session knowing fully

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well that we have 100% support in the Senate, and I think that deserves a good table knock. **(Applause)**

Mr. Deputy President, I really and truly want to express my gratitude for all the contributions that have been made on “Both Sides” of the House. Before I take my seat, I also want to say a heartfelt thank you to Doctor Francis Alexis, KC and his team for doing such a fantastic job.

Mr. Deputy President, what has happened here in Grenada? We are talking about the oath of allegiance, but the activities that have taken place whereby a civil organisation, a community group outside of the executive, as you mentioned...

**Sergeant-at-Arms:** Madam President, in the Chair.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you. Madam President, what has taken place in Grenada is very significant, and we must take note of it because the confidence that the CCR could have placed in themselves to confront this Administration, to confront the Opposition party, and most of all it was brought to my attention that they have even consulted the National Youth Parliamentarians in Grenada, to get their views on the matter, and without fear, they came to this Administration.

I have stood in this Honourable House already and made the point, the important point of collaborating, having dialogue. Sometimes it's necessary. I foresee that Doctor Alexis and his team could have called the representative from the farmers organisation and the “Other Side” and have him sit in their office and have a discussion and then formulate a Bill and bring it to this House here and maybe the obvious thing that would have happened, everybody would have been in awe, what's happening, where this come from? And maybe in the twinkle of an eye, shut down and voted down, and that would have been it.

What this organisation has done, Madam President, is to do the right thing. They have done their homework. They met with the necessary organisations, and there is still room for more consultation, which will take place in the form of educating the public.

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Madam President, this is a good demonstration of what this Administration stands for, and I hope that it's an inspiration whereby other civil organisations and other groups within our society can do likewise where necessary. We are willing, our arms are open to our society to deal with any matter that would advance this beautiful piece of land we call home. And so, Madam President, as a nation, we have to be forever grateful to Doctor Alexis and his team, and I say thank you, thank you, thank you.

Madam President, I want our citizens, at home and abroad, to really take this matter seriously and take it as a first step in moving forward. And sometimes we are afraid to start, we don't believe in ourselves, but when we start, it is important that we continue. And I agree with Senator Horsford, this must not be the beginning and the end. It must be the first step in our journey, in our road to independence, emancipation, and liberation. Madam President, I rest my case, and I look forward to the approval of this very important Bill. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Leader of Government's Business, and thank you, Senator Cox. Honourable Members, I believe all our speakers have now expressed themselves.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Constitution (Oath of Allegiance) (Amendment) (No. 1) Bill, 2025.

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

**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.**

**House in Committee.**

**House resumed.**

**Madam President:** The Senate is resumed. I have the honour to report that the Bill was considered in the Committee of the whole, and without amendment, it was passed. Leader of Government's Business.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

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

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

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

**Madam President:** Honourable Members, the procedure we wish to follow is division, vote by vote. We have some absences. Senate Claudette Joseph.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, if I may, it's not necessary. What we need here is a simple majority. But if Madam President wants to do a division...

**(Inaudible comment by Senators)** But we don't need a division.

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**Madam President:** Thank you. This requires only a simple majority? I think we have taken the vote, but for the purpose of history, we will take the vote again. We've had the third reading.

**Madam President:** The Leader of Government's Business wants it?

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I was just concerned that the other Members—it would have been a little unfair for them. Had they known, we would have been taking the vote in this manner... So I... Based on what the AG has raised, Madam President, I think it would have been nice if they had known that they would have made an effort to remain so that their votes could be recorded.

**Madam President:** ... and therefore?

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** And therefore I understand why the AG was making the point that a simple majority will carry, and this will be good for the people and fair to the others who are absent.

**Madam President:** That was my understanding, and in which case, Clerk, we will not take a division. Clerk, we will not take a division. If there are any persons on the Opposition and Independent Side of the room who would like to have a division, we will so entertain. I hear from Senator St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Madam President. I concur with the sentiments of the Attorney General. Meaning, it's a simple majority, and the Leader of Government's Business comments regarding the issue of persons not knowing that it is the situation.

The decision is clear where it is, and the records and the Hansard will explain the situation. For example, our good friend Senator Lewis is not here, of course, unavoidably

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absent from the country. Where will he vote? Well, I think we all know, so we cannot vote by proxy and all of those things. If we meet the minimum standard, we are trying to “embellish” the results; the results are very clear where it is, and more than clear, I think, in the sentiments that were expressed during the speaking. People were very clear. Of course, you could vote differently, and of course, it’s a matter of where the majority lies...

**Madam President:** Thank you.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** ... so it’s good that you don’t have to break the tie if anything... **(Laughter)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator St. Clair, for your observation, and it concurs with my own, that during the debates until now, we have had unanimous concurrence. The fact that we have a number, or at least two Members of the Opposition, have left, and one Independent Senator is absent. As you say in fairness to them, and given the sentiments expressed all day, it appears to me that the Leader of Government’s Business seems to be concurring that there is no need for an individual vote. It is, as has been said by many Senators, a happy moment, and I would therefore like to believe that we have voted. If we have not, I will call for the vote. For the purpose of history, I would read the section and call for the vote. Here goes.

**Question put and agreed to.**

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

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Constitution (Oath of Allegiance) (Amendment) (No. 1) Bill, 2025.

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

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**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to introduce the first reading of a Bill for an Act, shortly entitled, Constitution (Oath of Allegiance) (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2025.

**Clerk:** A Bill which seeks to amend Schedule 3 to the Constitution and Schedule 1 to the Courts Order to change the Oath of Allegiance from “His Majesty King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors” to “Grenada”, shortly entitled, Constitution (Oath of Allegiance) (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2025.

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

**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.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

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

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Constitution (Oath of Allegiance) (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2025.

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

**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.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Senate in Committee.**

**Senate resumed.**

**Madam President:** Distinguished Senators, I have the honour to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole Senate and passed without amendment. Leader of Government's Business.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

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

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

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

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Constitution (Oath of Allegiance)

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(Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2025.

**Deputy Clerk (Ag.):** Item 16...

**Madam President:** Before, perhaps a little clarification. Thank you, Deputy Clerk. For clarification, we've just passed these two bills. The first and the second Bill effectively do the same thing or accomplish the same outcome. The deletion of the words "His Majesty King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors" in relation to the oath of allegiance is now substituted by the word "Grenada". **(Applause)**

In the first Bill, it refers to five categories of oath takers: the Governor-General, Members of the Houses of Parliament, Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries, citizens by marriage taking the oath and another category or reference to citizens by marriage taking the oath. All those categories are covered in the first Bill, which was extensively debated.

Now, the second Bill was also passed, and it is exactly the same except it refers to three categories of oath takers: the Acting Governor-General taking an oath, the Supervisor of Elections taking an oath and Members of the Public Service Commission taking an oath, and the reason for these two Bills is in fact that they are referred to differently in the Constitution. Congratulations Senate. **(Applause)**

**Deputy Clerk (Ag.):** Item 16 – Public Business.

Item 17 – Adjournment.

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

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg that this Honourable House would be adjourned *sine die*.

**Question proposed.**

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**Madam President:** Your bags are packed and the floor is open. **(Laughter)**  
Honourable Senator St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Madam President. It would be remiss of me to represent public business and not speak in public business, while we would have achieved Government's Business. It's two different things. We must not confuse these things. We have achieved the Government's Business and we will speak on the Public Business. Thank you, Madam President.

It is just two points. I want to address this first, and I know this has been in the news and all of those things. The issue with the road up in Mt. Felix, I think it is up in the Clozier area, that we know is a major issue for not just the community, but of course, our farmers in the area. It's a big issue. I've been watching this for a while, and I was only up to Tuesday, and I know the Government is taking different steps, but I want to lend my voice to the matter to say to the Government that we need to keep pushing on and have that resolved.

But not only that, but it's a warning to us that we need to look at our whole road infrastructure. I have been calling for us to look at our farm roads because sometimes those farm roads become very critical roads that, if we maintain them properly, can rescue us in situations like this one. In fact, I think this might even be almost the case, if we had one of those roads being maintained over the years, we would have had at least some resolution.

From the GCNA standpoint, I want to say that we have acted in such a manner as of this week to use the community centre in Clozier in discussion with the farmers themselves to facilitate the purchase and so on, so that it alleviates the pain of them having their 10 pounds, 5 pounds to get to Gouyave or to get to Grenville. But it's beyond the nutmeg farmers. There are many other farmers plying their trade up in that area, which is a major issue, and so I want us to just push on with that. I look at it as a very difficult assignment there, a very difficult assignment, but we have to get the right people, do the right geological studies, etcetera, on the matter.

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**Adjournment**

The other matter, Madam President, is of interest. In fact, it's funny because what I may have had to say, I may still say it in a certain way because I was sent a video., You know everything is on social media these days, with the sargassum and some boats and some guys with nets working on the long wall, today, this morning, regarding the sargassum factor in the Soubise area.

It has been a serious issue. I know there have been several social media releases on the matter. I have done my personal investigation. I am aware of the Japanese involvement through questions through the Senate here, both in the past administration and current administration, as to the support the Japanese have given to fight the sargassum issue, and somehow we have not really done justice to the aid that we would have received in terms of proper implementation and execution of those resources.

My understanding is that Solid Waste Authority seems to be the operator or orchestrator for this and I urge them through this medium to really do what is necessary because at the same time what it does whilst the Government is the Government and all of these are statutory bodies, it also makes it look like the Government is not doing anything, but really and truly they need to do their work too. And at the same time, the Government needs to ensure that they are doing its work. They all have to work collaboratively, and they need to get up and get going, because you cannot have this boat sitting down, you cannot have all those things sitting... and it's a bad thing. We have to do better than that, and that is the whole issue of our allegiance to Grenada. We have to do better than that. Thank you, Madam President.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator St. Clair. Any other? Hearing none, let me thank all of you distinguished Senators for your patience and contributions today, both on Government Business and on Public Business. Thank you for the preparation, the delivery and the hope and expectation that are contained in your contributions, your statements.

On your behalf, I want to thank all those who are associated with the conduct and accomplishments of the Government's Business including our legal volunteers led by

*Sitting of the Senate  
held at Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's  
on Friday 25th July, 2025*

**Adjournment**

King's Council, Francis Alexis and next to him, today, Ewart Layne, otherwise known as "Headache", across the nation, and in his absence, we thank King's Council Ruggles Ferguson and the many women in the Chamber of the Attorney General who labour in drafting Bills. Thanks to the CCR Citizens for Constitutional Reform in its entirety. Thanks to all who have made this possible.

We are one nation, one people and through the debate and its outcome, we are travelling in one direction, in the same direction of travel toward the ownership and expansion of our national sovereignty as a vibrant, dynamic national tapestry, both of our history, but of our present and future. So we are going forward, as we always have, despite the ups and downs. We are going forward as one people, one nation, one liberated Grenada. Congratulations, Senate. And may I wish you a Happy 1st Emancipation Day on Emancipation Day. Happy 1st Emancipation Day. Happy August 1st. We look forward to the meaningful celebration of that.

And may I just make two short announcements before I take the vote for adjournment? Senators, you are needed for an urgent and immediate meeting of the Parliamentary Conservation Caucus on Tuesday. You will be receiving notices for that and others. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** Yes, next Tuesday there'll be a meeting of the ACTIF, and I'm proposing it because it's so urgent, and you will hear more. I'm proposing we meet over lunch. Do not give away your Tuesday lunch; it belongs to the Conservation Caucus. **(Laughter)**

And secondly, and perhaps more urgently, the Grenada Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, which is smaller in number of persons, must meet before we go to the Parliamentary Conference in Barbados, and so I'm putting the Senate on notice that again, we will be calling a meeting ASAP. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)**

Short of that, Honourable Members, staff, police officers, caterers, drivers, cleaners, ICT persons, visitors to the gallery, including our dear student from Georgetown University who sat through the whole day, thank you all for being present, for contributing, and for making our work possible.

***Sitting of the Senate  
held at Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's  
on Friday 25th July, 2025***

***Adjournment***

**Question put and agreed to.**

**The Sitting of the Senate adjourned *sine die* at 3:32 p.m.**

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