

# Prime Minister Speaks Further about Cabinet Changes

16 September 2020

**September 16, 2020** – Prime Minister, Dr. the Right Honourable Keith Mitchell, has been speaking further about the newly announced changes to the make-up of Grenada's Cabinet.

The Prime Minister has consistently stated that his mid-term Cabinet reshuffles are intended to broaden the experience of Government Ministers and improve their versatility in handling the affairs of the state, while at the same time, provide an opportunity for Government to enhance its overall performance.

In a radio interview Wednesday morning, Dr. Mitchell was questioned further about the rationale for reassigning the various portfolios.

With respect to the Ministry of Finance, Dr. Mitchell explained that while it is the norm for leaders to retain responsibility for finance, it is not the first time he has assigned that portfolio to another minister.

The Prime Minister expressed full confidence in the capability of Honourable Gregory Bowen who will assume responsibility for the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, Physical Development, Public Utilities and Energy.

He said, "Minister Bowen has long demonstrated his commitment to hard work and the overall development of the country. Over the years, he has worked very closely with me on financial matters, especially those which involved highly technical issues. I am confident therefore that he understands the ministry and is quite familiar with its operations. He is also known for having a consultative approach to decision-making and this is a key characteristic of a good leader."

For the first time, the Prime Minister has added Youth Development to his portfolio. He noted that, young people in particular are significantly challenged by the impact

of the COVID-19 pandemic as it has affected their education, their socialisation which helps to build character, and their ability to participate in sports.

Dr. Mitchell said, “This is an opportunity for me to leverage some of my strengths for the benefit of the nation’s youth. There are many levels on which I can relate to the youth having worked as a professor with responsibility for imparting knowledge and as a sporting enthusiast who has played competitively for several years. In addition, having responsibility for ICT at the CARICOM level, positions me to create synergies between ICT and youth development. Working together with Minister Kate Lewis, I envision greater harmonisation of our existing youth programmes as well as the introduction of other initiatives to further propel the development of our young people.”

The appointment of Honourable Peter David as Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Lands has been labelled a demotion by some, but Dr. Mitchell said such a notion is laughable and an insult to the nation’s farmers.

He said, “Minister David is considered one of the more people-oriented ministers in this administration and it make sense to have him bring that particular strength to the agriculture sector and create a greater connection with farmers and other stakeholders.

If you have been crying out for the Government to do more for agriculture and you put someone like Minister David there who can help build the sector, how can you then say he has been demoted? Further, it is an insult to the farmers because you are saying that agriculture is not similar in rank to other ministries. That is not my concept of Government at all.”

Referring to the appointment of Senator Norland Cox as the Minister for Infrastructure Development, Transport and Implementation, Dr. Mitchell said, “Although he is not an elected representative, as a senator, he has demonstrated the maturity, communication and people skills required for the position.

He is not afraid to ask questions and that is certainly one of the strengths of a good leader – you cannot be afraid to seek support when in doubt. People in certain positions tend to believe that it is not good to seek help but only people of a certain level of maturity understand this actually strengthens them, and Minister Cox is that kind of person. I have no qualms about his ability to effectively lead the assigned ministry.”

On the separation of Hospital Services from the general Ministry of Health, Dr. Mitchell said it was critical to do so.

He explained, “One of the serious areas of weakness is that of hospital services and my fellow leaders across the Caribbean agree that it is also one of the critical issues in an election campaign.

Hospital services is essentially about the life and death of individuals and any weakness will be highlighted by the population. My opinion is that Minister Nickolas Steele needed some support because that ministry requires enormous human resources given the vast areas of responsibility.

Minister Delma Thomas has consistently demonstrated that she is a people person, compassionate and empathetic and therefore a good fit for the job that involves caring for people. I expect we will see tremendous improvement in the state of health care in the country.”

The changes in the ministerial appointments will take effect on Monday, October 5, 2020.