SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

ORDER PAPER

THIRTY-NINTH SITTING, FIFTH SESSION (2019/2020)

ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT

THURSDAY JULY 02, 2020 AT 2:30 P.M.

1. PRAYERS

2. OATH OR AFFIRMATION

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT

4. BILLS BROUGHT FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

5. PETITIONS

6. PAPERS

(i) The Annual Administrative Report of the Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited (PLIPDECO) for the period January to December 2017. (By the Minister of Works and Transport)

(ii) The Annual Administrative Report of the Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited (PLIPDECO) for the period January to December 2018. (By the Minister of Works and Transport)

(iii) The Annual Administrative Report of the National Investment Fund Holding Company Limited (NIF) for the year ended December 31, 2018. (By the Minister of Finance)

(iv) The Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Consolidated Financial Statements of the Trinidad and Tobago Unit Trust Corporation (UTC) for the year ended December 31, 2018. (By the Minister of Finance)

(v) The Ministerial Response of the Ministry of Planning and Development to the Eighth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Land and Physical Infrastructure on an Inquiry into the effectiveness of measures in place to reduce traffic congestion on the Nation’s Roads. (By the Minister of Planning and Development)

(vi) The Ministerial Response of the Ministry of Planning and Development to the Ninth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Land and Physical Infrastructure on an Inquiry into the policies for the promotion of non-traditional methods of farming including Digital Farming Technology. (By the Minister of Planning and Development)
7. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES


(By Senator Wade Mark)


(By Senator Wade Mark)


(By Senator Wade Mark)


(By Senator Wade Mark)


(By Senator Taharqa Obika)


(By Senator Taharqa Obika)


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(By Sen. the Hon. Clarence Rambharat)

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(By Sen. the Hon. Paula Gopee-Scoon)

(By Senator Wade Mark)

(By Senator Wade Mark)

8. URGENT QUESTIONS

9. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWER APPEAR IN THE APPENDIX

Questions for Oral Answer

*Question No. 132 to the Minister of Finance
(By Senator Wade Mark)
Given the views expressed by leading economists that the Coronavirus poses a serious threat to the national economy, can the Minister advise as to what measures are being contemplated to address this potential problem?

Question No. 156 to the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries
(By Senator Wade Mark)
Can the Minister provide the Senate with a copy of the contract for the recent sale of 150,000 barrels of gasoline by the Paria Fuel Trading Company Ltd., and in particular the specified clause/provision which protects this country from any action should the gasoline be directed to any US sanctioned country?

* Question No. 132 was deferred for two weeks on 09.06.2020
Question No. 158 to the Minister of Finance
(By Senator Wade Mark)
Given the expenditure incurred by the Government in hosting CARIFESTA XIV in which over $12.3M was spent in excess of the budgeted $28.4M, as well as several financial discrepancies observed by the Auditor General, can the Minister indicate whether it is the intention of the Government to launch a forensic audit into the expenditure involved in hosting said event?

Question No. 159 to the Minister of Finance
(By Senator Wade Mark)
In light of the financial and economic challenges facing thousands of micro, small and medium sized businesses as well as the interest rates and service charges imposed by banks, can the Minister indicate what measures are being taken to ease the burdens being faced by these businesses?

10. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE ON DEFINITE MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

11. STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS OR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

12. PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

13. INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

14. MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE SENATE AND MOVED BY A MINISTER

15. PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Motions:

(i) WHEREAS it is provided by section 38(1) of the Tobacco Control Act, Chap. 30:04 (hereinafter called “the Act”) that the Minister may make Regulations prescribing requirements and standards for tobacco product constituents, including emissions of smoked products, additives and product design and specifying methods for testing and measuring compliance with the performance prescribed and generally for carrying out the purpose of this Act;

AND WHEREAS it is also provided by section 38(1) of the Act that Regulations made under that section shall be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament;

AND WHEREAS the Minister has on the 29th day of May, 2019 made the Tobacco Control (Amendment) Regulations, 2019 (hereinafter called “the Regulations”);

AND WHEREAS it is expedient that the Regulations now be affirmed;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Tobacco Control (Amendment) Regulations, 2019 be approved.
(By the Minister of Health)

(ii) WHEREAS it is provided by section 5(1) of the Land Acquisition Act, Chap. 58:01 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”) that the President may by Order, declare that land is required for a public purpose;
AND WHEREAS it is provided by section 5(2) of the Act that Parliament may by resolution approve an Order made under section 5(1);

AND WHEREAS the Land Acquisition (Requisition) Order, 2018 was made by the President under section 5(1) of the Act as Legal Notice No. 190 dated the 19th day of December, 2018;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to approve the said Order;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Land Acquisition (Requisition) Order, 2018 be approved.

(By the Attorney General)

(iii) WHEREAS it is provided by section 5(1) of the Land Acquisition Act, Chap. 58:01 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”) that the President may by Order, declare that land is required for a public purpose;

AND WHEREAS it is provided by section 5(2) of the Act that Parliament may by resolution approve an Order made under section 5(1);

AND WHEREAS the Land Acquisition (Requisition) Order, 2019 was made by the President under section 5(1) of the Act as Legal Notice No. 34 dated the 18th day of February, 2019;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to approve the said Order;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Land Acquisition (Requisition) Order, 2019 be approved.

(By the Attorney General)

(iv) WHEREAS it is provided by section 13(1) of the Excise (General Provisions) Act, Chap. 78:50 that Parliament may from time to time, by resolution, impose Excise Duties and revoke, reduce, increase or alter any such duties and provide for exemptions therefrom;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient that a provisional Excise Duty be imposed in respect of ethyl alcohol for the use in the manufacture of hand sanitizer;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Excise Duty on ethyl alcohol to be used in the manufacture of hand sanitizers be two dollars and twenty-two cents per litre and so in proportion for any part of a litre and for any greater or lesser strength until 31st August, 2020.

(By the Minister of Finance)

Bills Second Reading:

(i) A Bill entitled, ‘An Act to repeal the Livestock and Livestock Products Board Act, Chap. 67:05’.

(By the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries)

(ii) A Bill entitled, ‘An Act to combat corruption and other wrongdoings by encouraging and facilitating disclosures of improper conduct in the public and private sector, to protect persons making those disclosures from detrimental action, to regulate the receiving, investigating or otherwise dealing with disclosures of improper conduct and to provide for other matters connected therewith’.

(By the Attorney General)

Committee Stage:

(i) The Committee Stage of the following Bill which was in progress when the Senate adjourned on Tuesday June 09, 2020 will be resumed:

A Bill entitled, ‘An Act to establish a Council for Urban and Regional Planners and to provide for the regulation of the urban and regional planning profession and other matters incidental thereto’.

(By the Attorney General)
COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Motions:

(i) **BE IT RESOLVED** that this Senate adopt the Report of the Special Select Committee established to consider and report on the Evidence (Amendment) Bill, 2019.
   
   *(By Senator the Hon. Clarence Rambharat)*

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Motions:

(i) The debate on the following Motion which was in progress when the Senate adjourned on Tuesday May 26, 2020 will be resumed:

**WHEREAS** it is the Government’s responsibility to ensure public safety and security of the citizenry;

**AND WHEREAS** thousands of citizens and businesses have been negatively affected by the high levels of crime in Trinidad and Tobago;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that this Senate condemn the Government for its failure to effectively deal with the unacceptable and serious crime situation affecting law-abiding citizens.

*(By Senator Saddam Hosein)*

(ii) The debate on the following Motion which was in progress when the Senate adjourned on Tuesday November 26, 2019 will be resumed:

**WHEREAS** in August 2019 the Government of the Republic in Trinidad and Tobago concluded a TT$580 million contract, originally estimated at TT$460 million, with the Australian shipbuilding company, Austal Ltd for the purchase of two Cape Class Patrol Boats for use by the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard;

**AND WHEREAS** there appears to be ambiguity concerning the price paid in 2019 when compared to similar vessels purchased in 2015;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that this Senate call on the Government to table, within fourteen days, the contract entered into with Austal for the procurement of the two Cape Class Patrol Boats.

*(By Senator Wade Mark)*

(iii) **WHEREAS** following a year of negotiations, the Trinidad and Tobago Housing Development Corporation (HDC) and China Gezhouba International Engineering Company Ltd (CGGC) signed a TT $485 million contract in May 2019 for the construction of 5,000 apartment units at specific sites across Trinidad and Tobago;

**AND WHEREAS** in September 2019 it was announced that the contract was cancelled;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that this Senate condemn the Government for its ineffectiveness in its negotiations with CGGC and in its failure to conduct due diligence prior to signing the contract;

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Government take the appropriate action to hold the responsible person(s) to account.

*(By Senator Wade Mark)*
(iv) **WHEREAS** section 6(2) of the Education Act Chap. 39:01 provides that the Ministry of Education should provide special schools suitable to the requirements of students with physical and learning disabilities;

**AND WHEREAS** the Ministry has not provided students with disabilities, additional learning needs and/or challenging behaviours with the requisite support networks, and equal opportunities needed to achieve their full potential;

**AND WHEREAS** the lack of adequate funding, policies and specialist staff is reflected in the poor performance of students;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that this Senate call on the Government to commit to the allocation of adequate funding, reform of the appropriate legislation and revision of policies designed to ensure that all children with special needs are provided with equal educational opportunities to other students;

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Ministry of Education immediately initiate and implement a comprehensive strategy to assist all children with disabilities, additional learning needs and/or challenging behaviours.

(By Senator Paul Richards)

(v) **WHEREAS** the Criminal Justice System continues to be faced with inefficiencies notwithstanding the numerous legislative measures taken by the Government;

**AND WHEREAS** citizens continue to be adversely affected by the slow pace of the Criminal Justice System;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that this Senate condemns the Government for its inability to adequately address the said inefficiencies in the Criminal Justice System in Trinidad and Tobago.

(By Senator Sean Sobers)

(vi) **WHEREAS** citizens nationwide are consistently plagued by flooding;

**AND WHEREAS** under this administration the country has suffered the worst flooding in decades;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that this Senate condemn the Government for its failure to take action including infrastructure maintenance and development in a manner to prevent perennial flooding.

(By Senator Saddam Hosein)

(vii) **WHEREAS** it is the responsibility of the Government to address economic activity, economic diversification, skills acquisition, planning and industrial growth in every major sector of the economy;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Senate take note of the Government’s failure to address issues of job creation and high levels of retrenchment in Trinidad and Tobago.

(By Senator Taharqa Obika)

(viii) **WHEREAS** the Government in adopting the 2015 Manifesto of the People’s National Movement as its official policy framework confirmed its commitment to establishing an Economic Development Board, budgetary reform for Parliament, housing reform, establishment of new business clusters and broad economic stability with investor confidence;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Senate take note of the Government’s failure to deliver on these key promises over the last four (4) years.

(By Senator Taharqa Obika)
WHEREAS the Government has announced that sixteen thousand Venezuelan immigrants have registered for temporary residence status in Trinidad and Tobago;

AND WHEREAS the Government has not put in place adequate infrastructure and appropriate systems to facilitate access by the Venezuelan immigrants to essential humanitarian services such as temporary housing, health and education;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate call on the Government to establish and outline appropriate measures to assist registered Venezuelan immigrants in accessing essential humanitarian services.

(By Senator Sean Sobers)

WHEREAS the four (4) constitutionally entrenched Service Commissions namely the Public Service Commission, the Police Service Commission, the Teaching Service Commission and the Judicial and Legal Service Commission have been charged with the responsibility for the appointment, promotion, transfer and discipline within the Public Service;

AND WHEREAS the Service Commissions were also established to insulate persons holding or acting in public office from political influence, patronage and discrimination;

AND WHEREAS reported deficiencies within these Service Commissions have negatively impacted the Public Service including the extended delay within the systems of appointment, promotion and disciplinary control of public officials;

AND WHEREAS no definitive action has been taken by Governments to restructure the systems and operations of Service Commissions to better regulate the functions of the Public Service and improve service delivery to citizens;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Senate call on the Government to review the Trinidad and Tobago Constitution and the enshrined Service Commissions and to table in Parliament, within a reasonable time, a clear plan for the update of the Constitution and reform of the Commissions.

(By Senator Anthony Vieira)

WHEREAS the Commissions of Enquiry Act, Chap. 19:01 provides for the establishment of commissions to manage the conduct of enquires into public officers, departments and matters of public welfare;

AND WHEREAS Commissions of Enquiry are recognized as an important tool for social investigation in contemporary society, an effective mechanism for delivering truth, justice and social or organizational reform, and a device for inquiring into and ameliorating matters of public concern;

AND WHEREAS successive Government administrations have failed to adequately address public concerns which have arisen from time to time on whether the Commissions of Enquiry in Trinidad and Tobago have been effectively and efficiently carrying out their mandate;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Senate call on the Government to review the Commissions of Enquiry Act, Chap. 19:01 and the public inquiry process in Trinidad and Tobago.

(By Senator Anthony Vieira)