



SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

ORDER PAPER

TENTH SITTING, FIRST SESSION (2020/2021)

TWELFTH PARLIAMENT

TUESDAY JANUARY 12, 2021 AT 1:30 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 Ministerial Response of the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs to the Eighth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs, Fifth Session (2019/2020), Eleventh Parliament on an Inquiry into the Adequacy of Magistrates' Court Facilities.
(By the Attorney General)
 - (ii) The Annual Administrative Report of the InvesTT Limited for the year ended September 30, 2018.
(By the Minister of Trade and Industry)
 - (iii) The Annual Administrative Report of the National Information and Communication Technology Company Limited (iGovTT) for the period October 01, 2018 to September 30, 2019.
(By the Minister of Public Administration and Digital Transformation)
7. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES
 - (i) The Interim Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Shipping Bill, 2020, First Session (2020/2021), Twelfth Parliament.
(By Senator the Hon. Randall Mitchell)
8. URGENT QUESTIONS
9. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions for Oral Answer

***Question No. 19 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 applied by commercial banks, can the Minister indicate what measures, inclusive of the introduction of legislation, are being taken to ease the burdens being faced by these businesses?

Question No. 26 to the Minister of Finance

(By Senator Wade Mark)

As regard the waiver of the Supplemental Petroleum Tax for Heritage Petroleum Company Ltd., for a two-year period beginning July 2019, can the Minister advise as to:

- (i) the legal basis for said waiver; and
- (ii) the quantum of tax revenue foregone up to September 30, 2020?

Question No. 27 to the Minister of Trade and Industry

(By Senator Wade Mark)

Given reports that there now exists an illicit trade involving counterfeit branding, which is negatively impacting this country's revenue stream and its global trade ranking, can the Minister indicate what measures are being taken to address this situation?

Question No. 28 to the Minister of Finance

(By Senator Wade Mark)

In light of the completion of the Curepe Interchange, can the Minister indicate when will all outstanding payments be made to former property owners?

Question No. 36 to the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries

(By Senator Anil Roberts)

In light of the issue involving Paria Fuel Trading Company Limited and ES Euro Shipping SA, can the Minister indicate the following:

- (i) whether Paria Fuel Trading Company purchased gasoline/fuel from Italy in February 2020;
- (ii) whether the gasoline/fuel purchased was for domestic consumption; and
- (iii) when did Paria Fuel Trading Company receive said gasoline/fuel?

***Question No. 44 to the Minister of Finance**

(By Senator Charrise Seepersad)

In light of reports that many employers owe the National Insurance Board (NIB) approximately \$437M in national insurance contributions for their employees, and that the reported 2018 ratio of contribution arrears to income increased to 10%, thereby having a negative impact on the National Insurance Fund deficit, can the Minister advise:

- (i) what measures are being taken by the Government and the National Insurance Board to collect the contribution arrears owed by employers;
- (ii) with regard to the measures identified at (i), is any consideration being given to offering an amnesty for the payment of outstanding contributions; and
- (iii) what are the suggested time frames for said measures to be implemented?

* Question No. 19 was deferred for two weeks on 08.12.2020

* Question No. 44 was deferred for two weeks on 15.12.2020

***Question No. 46 to the Minister of Finance**

(By Senator Amrita Deonarine)

Can the Minister advise as to what progress has been made in implementing the recommendations contained in the World Bank Public Expenditure Review 2019, on reducing the inefficiencies in social protection spending in the country?

Question No. 53 to the Prime Minister

(By Senator Paul Richards)

Can the Prime Minister provide a status report of the work done by the Community Recovery Committee?

Question No. 54 to the Prime Minister

(By Senator Paul Richards)

Can the Prime Minister provide the reason(s) for the delay in the implementation of the proposed ‘Children’s Registry’ initiative?

Question No. 55 to the Minister of Social Development and Family Services

(By Senator Paul Richards)

With regard to the SEED Grant, can the Minister indicate:

- (i) how long has this programme been in operation;
- (ii) what are the criteria used to determine whether a person qualifies for said grant;
- (iii) how many persons have benefitted from this grant as at September 30, 2020;
- (iv) what is the total value of the grants issued as at September 30, 2020;
- (v) what categories of businesses have received assistance through this initiative;
- (vi) what type of training, if any, are applicants required to complete prior to receiving funding?

- 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

* Question No. 46 was deferred for two weeks on 15.12.2020

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)

Bills Second Reading:

- (i) A Bill entitled ‘An Act to amend the Evidence Act, Chap. 7:02’.
(By the Attorney General)

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

Motions:

- (i) **The debate on the following Motion which was in progress when the Senate adjourned on Tuesday November 17, 2020 will be resumed:**

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)

- (ii) **WHEREAS** the Commissions of Enquiry Act, Chap. 19:01 provides for the establishment of commissions to manage the conduct of enquiries 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)

- (iii) **WHEREAS** it is recognized that rising levels of domestic and foreign debt may negatively impact this country's socio-economic development;

AND WHEREAS it is recognized that as a result of Government's policies, the working population has been experiencing the effects of these rising debt levels;

AND WHEREAS international credit rating agencies have cautioned about Trinidad and Tobago's future borrowings, given the economic constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Government reconsider its borrowing policy in light of this country's rising Debt-to-GDP ratio and the possible negative impact of same on the country's socio-economic development;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Senate call on the Government to outline specific plans and programmes in respect of fulfilling its debt servicing obligations, in light of the economic constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

(By Senator Wade Mark)

- (iv) **WHEREAS** the Senate is asked to address amongst other things, complex legislation which necessitates focused deliberations;

AND WHEREAS the current global pandemic has impacted all aspects of life in Trinidad and Tobago, including the Parliament. As such, on August 29, 2020, the Senate agreed that the *"time limit for Speeches in Debates be limited to 30 minutes for the mover/Member wrapping-up and the first speaker on the Opposition and Independent Benches, and 20 minutes for all other speakers"*;

AND WHEREAS citizens are being encouraged to adapt to the 'new normal' while observing COVID-19 safety protocols;

AND WHEREAS the business of the Parliament should similarly adapt to the 'new normal' by allowing for the full time for Speeches in Debates;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate revert to the speaking time as set out in the Standing Orders with immediate effect.

(By Senator Wade Mark)

Brian Caesar
Clerk of the Senate (Ag.)

Senate Secretariat
Office of the Parliament
The Parliamentary Complex
The Red House
Abercromby Street
PORT OF SPAIN

January 07, 2021



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NOTICE OF URGENT QUESTIONS

The under-mentioned Question which has been accepted by the President in accordance with Standing Order 25 is hereby forwarded for the attention of the Minister concerned.

1. **TO THE MINISTER OF FINANCE**
(By Senator Wade Mark)

Given the technical challenges arising from the newly upgraded ASCYUDA System and the consequential delays leading to increased costs to business owners, can the Minister indicate how is this situation being addressed?

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January 12, 2021