SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

ORDER PAPER

SEVENTEENTH SITTING, FIRST SESSION (2020/2021)
TWELFTH PARLIAMENT
TUESDAY MARCH 16, 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
      (By the Attorney General)
5. PETITIONS
6. PAPERS
7. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES
8. URGENT QUESTIONS
9. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWER APPEAR IN THE APPENDIX

Questions for Oral Answer

Question No. 77 to the Minister of Works and Transport
(By Senator Wade Mark)
In light of the joint statement issued by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and three other air transport bodies that countries should open their borders and utilize agreed biosafety protocols, can the Minister indicate when will this country’s borders be re-opened consistent with the IATA’s recommendation?

Question No. 78 to the Minister of Finance
(By Senator Wade Mark)
Having regard to the upgraded ASYCUDA System at the Customs and Excise Division, Ministry of Finance, can the Minister advise as to the following:
   (i) when did installation of the upgraded system commence;
   (ii) when was the upgraded system commissioned;
(iii) have Customs Officers, Customs Brokers and Customs Clerks been trained in how to use the system; and
(iv) if the answer to (ii) is in the affirmative, when was said training conducted?

**Question No. 79 to the Minister of Finance**  
(By Senator Wade Mark)  
Can the Minister indicate;
(i) the reason(s) why the 2019 and 2020 National Insurance Board reports have not been tabled in Parliament; and
(ii) the date(s) by which said reports will be presented for laying?

*Question No. 83 to the Minister of National Security*  
(By Senator Paul Richards)  
With regard to the return of individuals to this country since the closure of the Nation’s borders, can the Minister inform the Senate of the following as at February 05, 2021:
(i) the number of T&T citizens repatriated; and
(ii) the number of persons with resident status that were permitted to return?

**Question No. 96 to the Minister of Works and Transport**  
(By Senator Paul Richards)  
With regard to public transportation in Trinidad and Tobago, as at February 15, 2021, can the Minister indicate:
(i) what is the total number of persons on a daily and weekly basis who use public transportation;  
(ii) what percentage of the commuting public is serviced by the PTSC; and
(iii) what has been the trend in percentage, over the past five years, of the commuting public that is serviced by the PTSC?

**Question No. 97 to the Minister of Works and Transport**  
(By Senator Paul Richards)  
As regard the operation of taxi and maxi taxi transport vehicles in Trinidad and Tobago, as at February 15, 2021, can the Minister indicate:
(i) how many registered maxi taxis are in operation;
(ii) what percentage of the commuting public is serviced by maxi taxis;  
(iii) how many registered ‘H’ taxis are in operation; and
(iv) what percentage of the commuting public is serviced by ‘H’ taxis?

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

* Question No. 83 was deferred for two weeks on 02.03.2021
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Motions:

WHEREAS it is provided by section 4 of the Quarantine Act, Chap. 28:05 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”) that the Minister of Health may make Regulations, with respect to the whole or any part of Trinidad and Tobago, including the ports and coastal waters thereof, for preventing;

(a) danger to public health from ships or aircraft or persons or things therein, arriving at any place; and

(b) the spread of infection by means of any ship or aircraft about to leave any place, or by means of any person or thing;

AND WHEREAS it is provided by the said section 4 of the Act, that Regulations made under this section shall be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament;

AND WHEREAS the Minister has on the 4th day of February, 2021 made the Quarantine (Maritime) (Amendment) Regulations, 2021 (hereinafter called “the Regulations”);

AND WHEREAS the Regulations were laid in the House of Representatives on the 5th day of February, 2021;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to approve the Regulations;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Quarantine (Maritime) (Amendment) Regulations, 2021 be approved.

(By the Minister of Health)

Bills Second Reading:

(i) The debate on the Second Reading on the following Bill which was in progress when the Senate adjourned on Tuesday March 09, 2021 will be resumed:
A Bill entitled, ‘An Act to make provision for the maintenance of public safety and order through discouraging membership of criminal gangs and the suppression of criminal gang activity and for other related matters’.
(By the Attorney General)

(By the Attorney General)

(By the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries)

(By the Minister of Labour)

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

Motions:

(i) The debate on the following Motion which was in progress when the Senate adjourned on Tuesday February 23, 2021 will be resumed:

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)

(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 because 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 statistics on violent crimes against women and girls have been widely reported by the TTPS from late 2020 to present;

AND WHEREAS said reports have garnered nationwide focus and given rise to several accounts of similar experiences by women, whose cases have not been followed-up and solved by Police;

AND WHEREAS the public has consistently called for the passage of legislation and improvements to the service delivery of public agencies in relation to, *inter alia*, non-lethal weapons,
transportation and judicial process, to support the protection of women and girls against violent crimes;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that this Senate call on the Government to critically assess the deficiencies in the current systems to deal with the incidence of violent crimes against women and girls;

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Government present to the Parliament, within three (3) months, a legislative agenda and policy implementation plan to more effectively address the rising incidence of violence against women and girls.

(By Senator Paul Richards)

(v) **WHEREAS** availability of foreign exchange is important for investment and competitiveness in the private sector and a shortage of foreign exchange can hamper prospects for diversification and economic recovery aspired to in the fiscal strategy outlined in Budget 2020/2021;

**AND WHEREAS** the revenue received from foreign energy companies has been on the decline since 2015 and is now exacerbated by the negative socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic;

**AND WHEREAS** it is recognised that micro, small and medium-sized businesses and the wider population continue to experience the negative effects of decreasing levels of foreign exchange in Trinidad and Tobago;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that this Senate call on the Government to table, within three (3) months, a comprehensive strategy to address the negative socio-economic impacts being experienced by micro, small and medium sized businesses and the wider public owing to ongoing shortages in foreign exchange in this country.

(By Senator Amrita Deonarine)
ORDER PAPER – TUESDAY MARCH 16, 2021

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWER

Question No. 92 to the Attorney General
(By Senator Wade Mark)
As regard the British company known as Edmonds Marshall McMohan (EMM), can the Attorney General provide the Senate with the following information:
(i) the date on which the company was contracted by the Government and/or the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service;
(ii) the sum paid thus far to the company; and
(iii) the amount owed to the company?
(Answer due by 20.03.2021)

Question No. 114 to the Minister of Finance
(By Senator Wade Mark)
Having regard to contractors who have been paid through financial institutions involved in factoring services during the period 2016 to 2020, can the Minister provide the following:
(i) the names of each financial institution employing the factoring services method;
(ii) the respective debt incurred by each financial institution; and
(iii) a detailed breakdown of the amount of outstanding Government debt owed to the various contractors?
(Answer due by 06.04.2021)

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

March 11, 2021
SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
SEVENTEENTH SITTING, FIRST SESSION (2020/2021)
TWELFTH PARLIAMENT
TUESDAY MARCH 16, 2021 AT 1:30 P.M.

NOTICE OF URGENT QUESTIONS

The under-mentioned Questions which have been accepted by the President in accordance with Standing Order 25 are hereby forwarded for the attentions of the Ministers concerned.

1. **TO THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND AND FISHERIES**
   (By Senator Wade Mark)
   In light of recent reports that the rice industry is on the verge of collapse, can the Minister indicate what measures are being taken to prevent such collapse?

2. **TO THE MINISTER OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**
   (By Senator Wade Mark)
   In light of the sudden decision of the Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA) to immediately close the Macqueripe Beach facility, can the Minister give the reasons for said decision?

3. **TO THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND AND FISHERIES**
   (By Senator Wade Mark)
   In light of the heavy rains and consequent flooding which affected farmers in the Penal area, can the Minister indicate what steps, if any, will be taken to compensate the farmers for losses suffered?

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March 16, 2021