



SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

ORDER PAPER

THIRTEENTH SITTING, FIRST SESSION (2015/2016)

ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT

TUESDAY MARCH 22, 2016 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
7. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES
 - (i) The Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property (Amendment) Bill, 2015.
(By Senator the Hon. Franklin Khan)
8. URGENT QUESTIONS
9. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions for Oral Answer

***Question No. 21 to the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries**

(By Senator Wade Mark)

In light of the recent decision of the Board of the National Gas Company (NGC) to implement a salary, benefits and bonus freeze for 2015 and 2016, could the Minister state:

- (i) whether the consent of the Minister was obtained;

* Question No. 21 was deferred for one week on 26.01.2016 and for one week on 23.02.2016.

- (ii) whether direction was sought and received from the Chief Personnel Officer in arriving at its decision;
- (iii) whether there had been any prior consultation with the employees of the NGC Group; and
- (iv) whether the payment of bonuses for staff was budgeted by NGC in its budget for 2015 and 2016?

***Question No. 26 to the Minister of Finance**

(By Senator Wade Mark)

- A. Could the Minister of Finance inform this Senate whether persons who have maintained US dollar accounts at the commercial banks are able to fully access their accounts?
- B. If the answer to (A) is in the negative, could the Minister state what steps are being taken by the Central Bank to address this?

Question No. 27 to the Minister of Finance

(By Senator Wade Mark)

Could the Minister of Finance inform this Senate as to whether he intends to raise the pension of government pensioners in order to maintain parity with persons receiving senior citizen pensions?

Question No. 28 to the Minister of Finance

(By Senator Wade Mark)

Could the Minister of Finance tell this Senate whether he intends to issue any further specific or general directions to the Governor of the Central Bank given the shortage of US dollars on the foreign exchange market?

Question No. 29 to the Minister of Education

(By Senator Wade Mark)

Could the Minister of Education inform this Senate as to the specific steps being taken to deal with the issue of bullying in schools?

Question No. 45 to the Minister of Finance

(By Senator Wayne Sturge)

Could the Minister indicate what measures he intends to implement to arrest the steady depreciation of our currency?

Question No. 46 to the Minister of Education

(By Senator Wayne Sturge)

Could the Minister indicate what immediate steps the government intends to take to protect the nation's children, given the increased frequency of violence and gang activity among school children?

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

* Question No. 26 was deferred for one week on 23.02.2016.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Motions:

- (i) **WHEREAS** the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago is established under Chap 79:02 of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago as a body corporate with the purpose to promote monetary credit and exchange conditions that are most favourable to the development of the economy;
AND WHEREAS as the institution that manages monetary credit, exchange conditions and interest rates, Central Banks worldwide are expected to be independent of political interference;
AND WHEREAS the Bank is managed by a Board of Directors and the day to day management of the Bank is entrusted to the Governor who shall be appointed by the President for a period of five (5) years;
AND WHEREAS section 10(1) of the Central Bank Act stipulates that the Governor shall be answerable to the Board for his acts or decisions;
AND WHEREAS there has been no public disclosure by the Board of Directors or otherwise with regard to apparent reasons for the dismissal of the Governor owing to his actions or decisions;
BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate condemn the actions of the Government in its dismissal of the Governor of the Central Bank on December 24, 2015.
(By Senator Wade Mark)
- (ii) **BE IT RESOLVED** that this House take note of the escalating levels of job losses in the country since September 2015 and condemn the Government for its failure to present a clear and cogent economic policy to guide Trinidad and Tobago through these challenging economic circumstances.
(By Senator Wade Mark)
- (iii) **WHEREAS** the limitless use of technology creates avenues for its abuse and for various types of cybercrimes, including cyberbullying, which can harm our citizens;
AND WHEREAS the laws of Trinidad and Tobago have not, to date, addressed the issue of the regulation of such “cyber-activity”;
BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate call upon the Government to quickly close the gaps in our legislation in relation to penalties for the abuse and negative usage of computers, mobile devices and internet technology.”
(By Senator Melissa V. Ramkissoon)

(iv) **WHEREAS** financial and administrative autonomy of Parliament is an undisputed benchmark of a true democracy;

AND WHEREAS a Joint Select Committee established during the Tenth Parliament to consider proposals for the autonomy of Parliament reported to both Houses that parliamentary autonomy should be viewed as a recalibration of the existing relationship between the Executive and the Legislature;

AND WHEREAS the Government, in adopting the 2015 Manifesto of the People's National Movement as its official policy framework, confirmed its commitment to the principles of parliamentary autonomy;

BE IT RESOLVED that a Joint Select Committee of Parliament be established to consider and report within three (3) months on a legislative formula for parliamentary autonomy in Trinidad and Tobago.

(By Senator Wade Mark)

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Motions:

(i) **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Senate adopt the First Report of the Joint Select Committee on Government Assurances.

(By Senator Foster Cummings)

Nataki Atiba-Dilchan
Clerk of the Senate

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PORT OF SPAIN
March 16, 2016



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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 attention of the Ministers concerned

1. TO THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

(By Senator Wade Mark)

Are any steps being taken to protect the jobs of workers, given that within the last week, more than 1000 persons have been laid off as it appears that there are more lay-offs to come?

2. TO THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

(By Senator Wade Mark)

With the increase in plant closures and massive job losses, does the government intend to urgently amend the relevant pieces of legislation to give priority to the claims and benefits of workers?

3. TO THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

(Senator Khadijah Ameen)

Is the Minister aware that a parallel black market for the US dollar is mushrooming in light of the foreign exchange crisis in the country?

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