

## **STANDING ORDERS OF THE SENATE**

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*Senate Standing Orders*

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**BELIZE:**

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STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

No.34 of 1967

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*SENATE STANDING ORDERS 1967 made under the provisions of section 17 of the  
British Honduras Constitution Ordinance 1963.*

*(Gazetted 15 July, 1967.)*

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**Title**

**1.--**These Standing Orders may be cited as the

**SENATE STANDING ORDERS, 1967.**

**Oath of Allegiance**

**2.--**(1) When the Senate first meets after a general election, the Clerk of the Senate shall, immediately following the election of a President and Vice -President, administer the oath or affirmation of

allegiance, first to the President and Vice President and then to the other Senators.

(2) At any other time, except in a case to which section 71(1) of the Belize Constitution Act, 1981, as amended, applies, the oath or affirmation shall be administered immediately after the Prayers.

(3) The oath or affirmation shall be in the form set out in item 1 or item 2, as the case may be, of Schedule 3 to the Belize Constitution Act, 1981, as amended.

### **Election of President**

**3.--**(1) At the first meeting of the Senate after a general election and before the Senate proceeds to the dispatch of any other business, or whenever it is necessary for the Senate to elect a President by reason of a vacancy in the office occurring otherwise, the Clerk shall call upon the Senate to elect a President.

(2) A Senator, having first ascertained that the Senator, or other person to be proposed, is willing to serve if elected, may, rising in his place and addressing the Clerk, propose any other Senator (not being a Minister), or any other person who is not a Member of either Chamber of the Legislature, to the Senate as President of the Senate; and if that proposal be seconded, the Clerk, if no other such Senator or person be proposed for the office, shall declare the Senator or the person so proposed and seconded to be President of the Senate.

(3) If another such Senator or person, willing to serve if elected, be proposed and seconded, the Clerk shall propose the question that the Senator who was first proposed should be the President. If that proposal be agreed to, the Senator or other person so chosen shall be President, but if the proposal be negatived, the Clerk shall propose a like question in respect of any other such Senator or person, who has been proposed and seconded, until the question is carried in favour of one of the Senators, or other persons, so proposed.

### **Election of Vice-President**

**4.--**(1) At the first meeting of the Senate after a general election and before the Senate proceeds to the despatch of any other business except the election of President, so soon as the President has been elected the Senate shall proceed to the election of one of its Senators, not being a Minister, to be Vice-President of the Senate.

(2) If the office of Vice-President falls vacant at any time before the next dissolution of the Legislature, the Senate shall, as soon as

convenient, elect another Senator not being a Minister to that office.

(3) The election of the Vice-President shall be conducted in a similar manner to the election of the President, save that the President shall preside.

### **Presiding in the Senate and in Committee**

**5.--**(1) The President, or in his absence the Vice-President, or in their absence a Senator (not being a Minister) elected by the Senate for the sitting, shall preside at the sittings of the Senate and shall act as Chairman of the Committee of the whole Senate.

(2) Save as otherwise provided in these Standing Orders, the Vice-President or other Senator presiding, shall have all the authority and power of the President when presiding or otherwise performing the functions of the President.

(3) The President or in his absence the Vice-President may, without any formal communication to the Senate or to the Committee, as the case may be, ask any Senator present (not being a Minister) to take the Chair temporarily.

(4) Whenever the unavoidable absence of the President from any day's sitting is announced by the Clerk at the Table, the Vice-President shall take the Chair and shall be invested with all the powers of the President until the President resumes.

### **Duties of the Clerk of the Senate**

**6.--**(1) The Clerk of the Senate shall keep the Minutes of Proceedings of the Senate and of Committees of the whole Senate, and shall circulate copies thereof to the Senators as early as practicable and, if possible, on the day following each sitting of the Senate.

(2) Minutes shall record the names of Senators attending, all decisions of the Senate, and details of every division held, and shall be signed by the President.

(3) In the case of divisions of the Senate or of a Committee of the



whole Senate, the Minutes shall include the numbers voting for and against the question, the names of Senators so voting, and the names (and the number) of Senators who declined to vote on the question.

(4) The Clerk shall prepare from day to day, and keep on the Table of the Senate and in the Clerk's office, an Order Book showing all business appointed for any future day, and any Notices of Questions or Motions which have been set down for a future day whether for a day named or not. The Order Book shall be open to the inspection of Senators at all reasonable hours.

(5) The Clerk shall cause to be printed and circulated to every Senator in respect of each sitting of the Senate an Order Paper setting out the business to be transacted at that sitting.

(6) The Clerk shall be responsible for the custody of the votes, records, Bills and other documents laid before the Senate, which shall be open to inspection by Senators and other persons under such arrangements as may be sanctioned by the President.

(7) It shall be the responsibility of the Clerk to provide every Select Committee of the Senate with a clerk and, if so required by the Committee, with a shorthand writer.

(8) At the end of each Session, the Clerk shall cause to be prepared and placed in the records of the Senate a bound volume containing the Minutes of Proceedings of that Session, marked with all such corrections as the President may have directed to be made therein.

(9) Where a Proclamation of the Governor General under section 83 of the Belize Constitution Act, 1981, as amended, is published in the ***Gazette***, the Clerk shall send to each Senator of the Senate a copy of the Proclamation.

(10) The Clerk shall be responsible under the President for the administration of the office and the control and discipline of the officers of the Senate subordinate to him.

### **Language**

7.--(1) The proceedings and debates of the Senate shall be in the English language.

(2) Every petition shall be in the English language.

## **Quorum**

**8.--**(1) A quorum of the Senate and of a Committee of the whole Senate, shall consist of three Senators (excluding the Senator in the Chair).

(2) If any Senator draws the attention of the President or of the Chairman in Committee of the whole Senate, to the fact that a quorum is not present, the President or Chairman, as the case may be, shall direct Senators within the precincts of the Chamber to be summoned.

(3) When the order to summon Senators has been given in the Senate, the President shall, after the expiration of ten minutes, count the Senate. If a quorum is not then present he shall adjourn the Senate without question put.

(4) When the order to summon Senators has been given in Committee of the whole Senate, the Chairman shall, after the expiration of ten minutes, count the Committee. If he ascertains that a quorum is not then present he shall leave the Chair, the Senate shall resume and the President shall count the Senate. If a quorum is then present, the Senate shall again resolve itself into Committee; but if a quorum is not present, the President shall adjourn the Senate without question put.

(5) If, from the number of Senators taking part in a division, including those Senators who declined to vote, it appears that a quorum is not present, the division shall be invalid, and the business then under consideration shall stand over until the next sitting, and the Senate or Committee shall be counted in accordance with paragraph (3) or paragraph (4) of this Standing Order.

## **Days of Meeting**

**9.--**(1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this Standing Order the Senate shall meet on Tuesdays, and every adjournment of the Senate shall be to the next Tuesday unless the Senate upon a motion moved by a Senator otherwise decides. Notice of such a motion shall not be required, and the question thereon shall be put without amendment or debate: Provided, that in every year there shall be three periods of six weeks each, the first commencing from the Saturday preceding Holy Week, the second from the first day of August, and the third from the seventeenth day of December, during which the Senate shall not meet except in pursuance of a summons issued under paragraph (3) of this Standing Order.

(2) If at any time when the Senate stands adjourned pursuant to its own order it is represented to the President by a Minister or the Senator responsible for Government Business that there is urgent necessity for the Senate to meet upon a day earlier than the day to which the Senate stands adjourned, the President may, if he is satisfied that such urgent necessity exists, direct the Clerk to summon a meeting of the Senate for such time on such day, whether Tuesday or otherwise, as the President may determine.

(3) Every direction under paragraph (2) of this Standing Order shall be in writing and shall be signed by the President and shall bear the date upon which it is given to the Clerk and shall specify the business to be transacted at such meeting.

(4) Forthwith upon receipt of any direction under paragraph (3) of this Standing Order, the Clerk shall inform every Member, as expeditiously as possible and personally if practicable, of the day and hour appointed by the President for the holding of the special meeting of the Senate and of the business to be transacted at such meeting.

(5) Except by leave of the Senate, no business otherwise than the business specified in the directive under paragraph (2) of this Standing Order shall be transacted at any special meeting of the Senate under the said paragraph.

### **Hours of Sitting**

**10.--**(1) Except as provided in these Standing Orders, every sitting of the Senate shall begin at 10:30 o'clock in the forenoon and, subject to the provisions of this Standing Order, shall end not later than 4:30 o'clock in the afternoon.

(2) The President may at any time suspend the sitting for a period stated by him, and shall in any event suspend the sitting at 12 noon and order it to be resumed at 2 o'clock.

(3) The President shall at 4:20 p.m. interrupt the business under discussion and its resumption shall be appointed for such day as the Minister in charge of arranging the business of the Senate shall direct, and if the Senate is in Committee at that time the Chairman shall leave the Chair forthwith and report to the Senate and the Committee shall be directed to sit again on such day as the said Minister shall appoint. If a division is in progress at 4:20 p.m., the proceedings shall not be

interrupted until the result of the division has been declared. Any other business, if unopposed, shall then be disposed of, and at its conclusion, or at 4:30 o'clock notwithstanding that there may be business then still under discussion, the President shall adjourn the Senate without question put, and the business not disposed of shall stand over till the next sitting.

(4) If the President or Chairman is of the opinion that the proceedings on which the Senate or Committee is engaged at 4:20 p.m. could be concluded by a short extension of time, he may defer interrupting the business until not later than 4:35 p.m. in which case the President shall not adjourn the Senate without question put until such time after 4:30 o'clock as is equivalent to the period of deferment of the interruption.

(5) If any business, when called during the times of unopposed business, is opposed, it shall be appointed for such a day as the Minister or the Senator in charge of arranging the business of the Senate shall direct. Any business which, when called during the time of unopposed business, is objected to by a Senator, or upon which, when the question is put, a division is sought, shall be treated as opposed business.

(6) If all the business appointed at a sitting is concluded before 4:30 o'clock, the President shall call upon a Minister or the Senator responsible for Government Business to move "That the Senate do now adjourn". If that question has not been agreed to at 4:30 o'clock the President shall at that hour adjourn the Senate without question put.

(7) On the interruption of business the Closure may be moved; and if it is so moved, or if proceedings under Standing Order No. 39 (Closure of Debate) are then in progress, the President or the Chairman shall not leave the Chair until the question consequent thereon, and on any further motion as provided for in Standing Order No. 39 (Closure of Debate) have been decided, even though the divisions on such questions continue beyond 4:30 p.m., but in the latter event, immediately the last of such questions has been decided or, if in Committee, as soon as the Chairman's report has been received, the President shall adjourn the Senate without question put.

(8) A Minister or the Senator responsible for Government Business may, without Notice, either at the time appointed in Standing Order No. 13 (Order of Business) or on the interruption of business, move "That the proceedings *on any specified business* may be entered upon and proceeded with at this day's Sitting at any hour though opposed", and any such motion shall be decided without amendment or debate. The business so

specified shall not be interrupted at 4:20 p.m., or, if already interrupted, shall be resumed, and may be entered upon at any hour though opposed. Upon the conclusion after 4:30 p.m. of all business so specified the President shall adjourn the Senate without question put.

(9) The Senate may from time to time by resolution alter, either generally or in respect of a particular sitting, the hours set forth in this Standing Order.

### **Adjournment of the Senate**

**11.--(1)** At any time after the conclusion of questions at any sitting, a Minister or in the absence of a Minister the Senator in charge of Government Business may move "That the Senate do now adjourn". Upon any such motion being made, any matter for which the Cabinet is responsible may be raised by any Senator who has obtained the right to raise a matter on the motion for the adjournment of the Senate that day and the Minister responsible for the matter raised or, in his absence, any other Senator to whom such responsibility has been delegated by the Minister, shall reply. Thereafter, if time permits, any other Senator who has obtained the right may similarly raise another matter subject to the same conditions. Any such debate shall cease at 4:30 p.m. or, with leave of the President at 4:45p.m.

(2) Upon any motion "that the Senate do now adjourn" moved by a Minister or the Senator responsible for Government Business under the preceding paragraph or paragraph (6) of Standing Order No. 10 (Hours of Sitting), any matter for which the Cabinet is responsible may be raised by any Senator who has obtained the right to do so on that day, and the Minister responsible for the matter raised or, in his absence, any other Senator to whom such responsibility has been delegated by the Minister, shall reply. Thereafter, if time permits, any other Senator who has obtained the right may similarly raise another matter subject to the same conditions. A debate on such a motion shall not be interrupted at 4:20 p.m., but shall cease at 4:30 p.m. or, with the leave of the President, at 4:45 p.m.

(3) Any Senator who wishes to raise a matter under the provisions paragraph (2) of this Standing Order at a particular sitting shall give notice of the matter in writing to the Clerk for transmission to the President not less than two days before the sitting concerned, and the Clerk shall also transmit a copy of the notice to the appropriate Minister and the Senator responsible for Government business. Subject to the giving of such notice, the right to raise a matter shall be allotted for each sitting through such

arrangements as the President may make.

### **Adjournment - Definite Matter of Urgent Public Importance**

12.--(1) No Senator other than a Minister may move the adjournment of the Senate except in accordance with the following paragraphs of this Standing Order.

(2) A Senator who wishes to ask leave to move the adjournment of the Senate for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance shall, before the commencement of the sitting, hand to the President a written notification of the matter which he wishes to discuss. The President shall refuse to allow the claim unless he is satisfied—

- (a) that the matter is definite,
- (b) that the matter is urgent,
- (c) that the matter is of public importance, and
- (d) that the matter may properly be raised on a motion for the adjournment of the Senate.

(3) If the President is so satisfied, and either -

- (a) leave of the Senate is given; or
- (b) if it is not given, at least two Senators by rising indicate that they support the request,

the motion shall stand over until such hour on the same day as the President may appoint, and at that hour any proceeding on which the Senate is engaged shall be postponed until the motion for the adjournment is disposed of, or until such motion has continued for the period of one hour, whichever is the earlier. When the debate on the motion for the adjournment has continued for a period of one hour, the motion for the adjournment shall lapse and the proceedings which were postponed shall be resumed and dealt with in accordance with the relevant Standing Orders. The Senate's ordinary hours of sitting shall be extended by a period of time equivalent to the period of time spent in respect of the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the Senate for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance.

(4) Not more than one motion for the adjournment of the Senate under this Standing Order may be allowed at one sitting.

### **Order of Business**

**13.--(1)** Unless the Senate otherwise directs, the business of each sitting day shall be transacted in the following order:-

- (1) Prayers.
- (2) Oath of Allegiance of a new Senator.
- (3) Announcements by the President.
- (4) Bills brought from the House of Representatives.
- (5) Petitions.
- (6) Papers.
- (7) Presentation of Reports from Select Committees.
- (8) Questions to Ministers.
- (9) Requests for leave to move the adjournment of the Senate on definite matters of urgent public importance.
- (10) Statements by Ministers.
- (11) Personal Explanations.
- (12) Introduction of Bills.
- (13) Motions relating to the Business or Sittings of the Senate and moved by a Minister or the Senator in charge of Government Business.
- (14) Public Business.

### **Petitions**

**14.--(1)** Every Petition intended to be presented to the Senate must conclude with a prayer setting forth the general object of the Petition.

(2) A Petition shall not be presented to the Senate unless it shall have been endorsed by the Clerk as being in accordance with the rules in regard to Petitions.

(3) The Senator presenting a Petition may state concisely the purport of the Petition.

(4) All Petitions shall be ordered to lie upon the Table without question put unless a Senator when presenting a Petition move for it to be read or printed, or referred to a Select Committee. Any such motion shall be decided forthwith without amendment or debate. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to a Petition from the promoters of a Private Bill under Standing Order 76 (Private Bills).

(5) The Senate will not receive any Petition-

(a) which is not addressed to the Senate or which is not properly and respectfully worded; or

(b) which has not at least one signature on the sheet on which the prayer of the Petition appears and which has not at least the prayer at the head of each subsequent sheet of signatures; or

(c) which, in the opinion of the President requests that provision be made for imposing or increasing or reducing or abolishing any tax, for imposing or increasing any charge on the revenues or other funds of the country or for altering any such charge otherwise than by reducing it, or for compounding or remitting any debt due to the country, unless on the recommendation or with the consent of the Cabinet, signified by a Minister or the Senator responsible for Government Business.

### **Papers**

**15.--**(1) Every Paper shall be presented by a Minister or the Senator in charge of Government business and its presentation shall be recorded in the Minutes of Proceedings.

(2) A Minister or the Senator in charge of Government business presenting a Paper may make a short explanatory statement of its contents.

(3) All Papers presented to the Senate shall be ordered to lie upon



the Table without question put, and any motion for the printing thereof as a Senate Paper shall be determined without amendment or debate.

(4) All Instruments made under the authority of any law, if required to be laid before the Senate, shall be laid on the Table of the Senate as soon as may be after being made.

### **Nature of Questions**

**16.** Questions may be put to a Minister relating to any matter, subject or Department in respect of which the Minister is charged with responsibility.

### **Notice of Questions**

**17.--(1)** A question shall not be asked without notice, unless it is of an urgent character or relates to the business of the day, and unless the Member has obtained the leave of the President to ask it.

(2) Notice of a question may be handed by a Senator to the Clerk when the Senate is sitting, or may be sent to or left at the office of the Clerk at any time during the hours prescribed for the purpose. Every such notice must be signed by the Senator giving it.

(3) A Senator who desires an oral answer to a question shall mark his notice with an asterisk and such a question shall be put down for a day to be named by the Senator being a day not earlier than five clear days after notice of the question has been given. A question not so marked may be put down for the next sitting day of the Senate and the answer, when received, shall be circulated with the Minutes of Proceedings.

### **Contents of Questions**

**18.--(1)** The right to ask a question shall be subject to the following general rules, as to the interpretation of which the President shall be the sole judge:

- (a) the proper object of a question is to obtain information on a question of fact within the official cognisance of the Minister to whom it is addressed, or to ask for official action.
- (b) a question shall not include the names of persons, or any

statements of fact, unless they be necessary to render the question intelligible.

- (c) if a question contains a statement of fact, the Senator asking it shall make himself responsible for the accuracy of the statement, and no question shall be based upon a newspaper report or upon an unofficial publication.
- (d) no Senator shall address the Senate upon any question, and a question shall not be made the pretext for a debate.
- (e) not more than one subject shall be referred to in any one question, and a question shall not be of excessive length.
- (f) A question shall not contain arguments, inferences, opinions, imputations, epithets, ironical expressions or hypothetical cases.
- (g) A question shall not be asked –
  - (i) which raises an issue already decided in the Senate, or which has been answered fully during the current Session, or to which an answer has been refused;
  - (ii) seeking information about matters which are in their nature secret;
  - (iii) regarding proceedings in a Committee which have not been placed before the Senate by a report from the Committee;
  - (iv) which deals with matters referred to a Commission of Enquiry or within the jurisdiction of the Chairman of a Select Committee;
  - (v) as to the character or conduct of any person except in his official or public capacity;
  - (vi) about any matter then pending before any Court of Justice, or which reflects on the decision of a Court of Justice;
  - (vii) reflecting on the character or conduct of any person whose conduct can only be challenged on a substantive motion under Standing Order 36 (Contents of Speeches);

- (viii) asking whether statements in the Press, or of private individuals, or unofficial bodies are accurate;
  - (ix) the answer to which can be found by reference to available official publications;
  - (x) referring discourteously to, or seeking information about, the internal affairs of any Territory within the Commonwealth or of a friendly Foreign Country;
  - (xi) dealing with the action of a Minister for which he is not responsible to the Legislature;
  - (xii) seeking, for purposes of argument, information on matters of past history; or
  - (xiii) raising questions of policy too large to be dealt with in the limits of an answer to a question.
- (h) A question shall not solicit the expression of an opinion, or the solution of an abstract legal question, or of a hypothetical proposition.

(2) If the President is of the opinion that any question of which a Senator has given notice to the Clerk infringes the provisions of any Standing Order or is in any way an abuse of the right of questioning he may direct:-

- (a) that the Senator concerned be informed that the question is out of order; or
- (b) that the question be entered in the Order Book with such alterations as he may direct.

### **Manner of Asking and Answering Questions**

**19.--**(1) At the time appointed for the oral asking and answering of questions under Standing Order No. 13 (Order of Business), the President shall call in turn upon each Senator in whose name a question stands upon the Order Paper, in the order in which the questions are printed, or in any such other order as the President may on any particular occasion

determine. Each Senator so called shall rise in his place and ask the question by reference to its number on the Order Paper, and the Minister questioned shall give his reply.

(2) After the answer to a question has been given, supplementary questions may, at the discretion of the President, be put for the purpose of elucidating the answer given orally, but the President may refuse any such question which in his opinion introduces matters not relative to the original question, or which infringes any of the provisions of Standing Order No. 18 (Contents of Questions), and may in that case direct that such question be not reported in the Official Report.

(3) When all the questions for which an oral answer is required have been called, the President, if time permits, shall call again any question which has not been asked by reason of the absence of the Senator in whose name it stands; in which case another Senator may, if deputed by the absent Senator, on his behalf either ask the question or request its postponement. The President shall also call again any question which has not been answered by reason of the absence of the Minister to whom it is addressed.

(4) A Minister may decline to answer a question, if the publication of the answer would in his opinion be contrary to the public interest.

(5) Not more than three questions requiring an oral answer shall appear on the Order Paper in the name of the same Senator for the same day, and any question in excess of this number shall not be called by the President but shall be answered as provided in paragraph (7) of this Standing Order, save that no postponement shall be allowed.

(6) No question shall be asked later than forty-five minutes after the opening of the sitting, except any question which the President has allowed to be asked without notice under paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 16 (Notice of Questions).

(7) In any case where, forty-five minutes after the opening of the sitting of the Senate, a question has not received an oral answer, it shall be answered in writing by the Minister to whom the question was addressed, and copies of the answer shall be sent immediately after that hour to the Clerk of the Senate, who shall send a copy to the Senator in whose name the question stood upon the Order Paper and shall cause the answer to be circulated with the Minutes of Proceedings, unless, at any time earlier than

forty-five minutes after the opening of the sitting, a Senator having a question on the Order Paper but whose name has not yet been called by the President, signifies to the Clerk at the Table his desire to postpone the question to a subsequent sitting or to withdraw it.

### **Personal Explanations**

**20.** With the leave of the President and by the indulgence of the Senate, a Senator may make a personal explanation of not more than ten minutes duration at the time appointed under Standing Order No. 13 (Order of Business) although there is no question before the Senate; but no controversial matter may be brought forward nor any debate arise upon the explanation.

### **Arrangement of Public Business**

**21.--(1)** Public Business shall consist of Motions and Public Bills.

(2) Subject to the provisions of these Standing Orders, Government Business shall have precedence on every day.

(3) Government Business shall consist of Motions proposed to be made and Bills sponsored by Ministers, and shall be set down in such order as the Government think fit.

(4) Private Senators' business shall be set down on the Order Paper for a particular day in the order in which it was entered in the Order Book for that day, and business so entered shall take precedence over any business postponed from the previous day.

### **Public Money**

**22.** Except on the recommendation or with the consent of the Cabinet, to be signified by a Minister and recorded in the Minutes of Proceedings, the Senate shall not -

(a) proceed with any Bill (including any amendment to a Bill) which, in the opinion of the President, makes provision for

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- (i) imposing or increasing or reducing or abolishing any tax;
  - (ii) imposing or increasing any charge on the revenue or other funds of the country or for altering any such charge otherwise than by reducing it;
  - (iii) compounding or remitting any debt due to the country;
- (b) proceed upon any motion (including any amendment to a motion) the effect of which, in the opinion of the President, would be to make provision for any of the purposes aforesaid; or
  - (c) receive any petition which, in the opinion of the President, requests that provision be made for any of the purposes aforesaid.

### **Notice of Motions or Amendments**

**23.--**(1) Where under any Standing Order notice of motion or of an amendment is required, such notice shall be given in writing, signed by the Senator and addressed to the Clerk of the Senate; such notice shall be handed to the Clerk, or sent to, or left at, the Clerk's office during the hours prescribed for the purpose.

(2) If the President is of the opinion that any notice of motion which has been received by the Clerk infringes the provisions of any Standing Order or is in any other way out of order, he may direct—

- (a) that the Senator concerned be informed that the notice of motion is out of order, or
- (b) that the notice of motion be entered in the Order Book with such alterations as he may direct.

(3) Not more than three notices of motion in the name of the same Senator may be entered on the Order Paper of any sitting. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to a Senator who is a minister.

(4) Copies of motions and amendments sent to the Clerk shall be

circulated by him to Senators, whether or not they be matters of which notice is required, and, in the case of amendments to Bills, shall be arranged, so far as may be, in the order in which they will be proposed.

### **Period of Notice**

**24.--**(1) Except with the consent of the President, notice of a Government motion shall not be placed upon the Order Paper of any sitting earlier than the day following the day on which the notice was given to the Clerk.

(2) Except as provided in Standing Order No. 75 (Reports from Select Committees), a notice of a private Senator's motion shall not be entered in the Order Book, or placed upon the Order Paper, for a day earlier than four clear days from the day on which the notice was given to the Clerk.

### **Exemption from Notice**

**25.** Unless the Standing Orders otherwise provide, notice shall be given of any motion which it is proposed to make, with the exception of the following:--

- (a) a motion for the amendment of any motion;
- (b) a motion for the adjournment of the Senate or of a debate;
- (c) a motion for the election of a temporary presiding officer under paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 5 (Presiding in the Senate and in Committee);
- (d) a motion for the suspension of Standing Orders put with the leave of the President;
- (e) a motion for the withdrawal of strangers;
- (f) a motion that the Senate resolve itself into Committee;
- (g) a motion made in Committee of the whole Senate;
- (h) a motion for the suspension of a Senator;
- (i) a motion that a petition be read, printed or referred to a

Select Committee;

- (j) a motion for the printing of a paper under paragraph (3) of Standing Order No. 15 (Papers);
- (k) a motion relating to a matter of privilege;
- (l) a motion arising out of any item of business made immediately after that item is disposed of and before the next item is entered upon;
- (m) a motion to recommit a Bill under paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 57 (Recommittal of Bills reported from Committee of the whole Senate);
- (n) a motion in respect of which notice has been dispensed with under Standing Order No. 26 (Dispensing with Notice);
- (o) a motion for the withdrawal of a Bill under Standing Order No. 61 (Withdrawal of Bills);
- (p) a motion that the Report of a Select Committee be referred to a Committee of the whole Senate, or a motion that such Report be printed as a Senate Paper.

### **Dispensing with Notice**

**26.** Notice shall not be dispensed with in the case of a motion or in respect of any proceedings for which notice is required, except with the consent of the President and the assent of the majority of the Senators present at the time.

### **Privilege Motions**

**27.--(1)** A motion directly concerning the privileges of the Senate shall take precedence of all other public business.

(2) A Senator who wishes to raise a matter which he believes to affect the privileges of the Senate shall do so as soon as possible after the matter comes to his attention. Such Member shall inform the President of his wish, stating the facts to which he wishes to draw attention, at least one hour before the commencement of the sitting at which he wishes to raise



the matter.

(3) When a Senator is called by the President to raise a matter of privilege he shall briefly state the facts to which he wishes to draw the attention of the Senate and the grounds on which he believes that those facts affect the privileges of the Senate.

(4) The President shall then state whether, in his opinion, the matter may or may not affect the privileges of the Senate; provided that if he deems it necessary he may defer his decision until the next sitting of the Senate.

(5) If the opinion of the President is that the matter raised may affect the privileges of the Senate a Member may without notice move a motion based on that matter of privilege and the motion shall be debated forthwith.

(6) If during a sitting of the Senate a matter suddenly arises which appears to involve the privileges of the Senate and which calls for the immediate intervention of the Senate, the proceedings may be interrupted, save during the progress of a division, by a motion based on such matter.

(7) No Senator moving a motion under this Standing Order may speak for more than fifteen minutes.

### **Moving of Motions**

**28.--**(1) On a motion made and when necessary seconded, the President shall propose the question to the Senate, and after debate (if any), shall then put the question for the decision of the Senate.

(2) If a motion embodies two or more separate propositions, the propositions may be proposed by the President as separate questions.

(3) If a Senator desires to vary the terms of a motion standing in his name, he may do so by giving an amended notice of motion, provided that such amendment does not, in the opinion of the President, materially alter any principle embodied in the original motion or the scope thereof. Such amended notice of motion shall run from the time at which the original notice of motion was given.

### **Seconding of Motions and Amendments**

**29.--**(1) In the Senate the question upon a motion or amendment shall not be proposed by the President unless such motion or amendment has been seconded: provided that Government Business shall not require seconding.

(2) In Committee a seconder shall not be required.

### **Motions not Moved or Seconded**

**30.--**(1) If a Senator other than a Minister does not, when called, move a motion or amendment which stands in his name such motion or amendment shall be removed from the Order Paper unless deferred by leave of the Senate or moved by another Senator duly authorised by that Senator; but Government Business may be moved by any Minister.

(2) No question shall be proposed upon a motion or amendment, which under these Standing Orders is required to be seconded, if it is not so seconded.

### **Withdrawal of Motions**

**31.--**(1) A motion may be withdrawn, at the request of the mover, after it has been moved, by leave of the Senate or Committee, before the question is fully put thereon, provided there is no dissentient voice.

(2) a motion so withdrawn may not be moved again during the same Session.

(3) If an amendment has been proposed to a motion, the original motion cannot be withdrawn until the amendment has been disposed of.

### **Amendments to Motions - How Moved and Put**

**32.--**(1) When any motion is under consideration in the Senate or in a Committee thereof, an amendment may be proposed to the motion if it is relevant thereto.

(2) An amendment may be proposed to any such amendment if it is relevant thereto.

(3) An amendment to a motion may be moved and seconded at any time after the question upon the motion has been proposed by the President or Chairman, and before it has been put by the President or Chairman at the conclusion of the debate upon the motion. When all amendments have been disposed of the President shall then put the question on the original motion or the motion as amended as the case may require.

(4) **(a)** On every amendment the question to be proposed shall be "That this amendment be made".

**(b)** When two or more amendments are proposed to be moved to the same motion, the President shall call upon the movers in the order in which their amendments relate to the text of the motion, or in case of doubt, in such order as he shall decide.

(5) **(a)** Any amendment to an amendment which a Senator wishes to propose may be moved and seconded at any time after the question upon the original amendment has been proposed, and before it has been put at the conclusion of the debate on the original amendment.

**(b)** An amendment to an amendment shall be disposed of in the same way as an amendment to a motion, the question to be proposed being "That this amendment to the amendment be made".

**(c)** When every such amendment to an amendment has been disposed of, the President shall, as the case may require, either put the question upon the original amendment or shall put the question upon the original amendment as amended.

(6) Any amendment, whether in the Senate or in Committee of the whole Senate, shall be put into writing by the mover and delivered to the Clerk before the question is proposed thereon.

(7) When the question upon an amendment to a motion has been proposed by the President or Chairman an earlier part of the motion may not be amended unless the amendment under discussion is withdrawn.

(8) Any amendment may, by leave of the President, be withdrawn at the request of the mover before the question is fully put thereon,

provided that there is no dissentient voice.

(9) An amendment shall not raise any question which, by these Standing Orders, can only be raised by a substantive motion after notice.

### **Time and Manner of Speaking**

**33.--**(1) A Senator desiring to speak shall rise in his place and if called upon shall address his observations to the President or Chairman. No Senator shall speak unless called by the President or Chairman.

(2) If two or more Senators rise at the same time, the President or Chairman shall call upon the Senator who first catches his eye.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5) of this Standing Order, no Senator shall speak more than once on any question except:-

- (a) when the Senate is in Committee; or
- (b) explanation as prescribed in paragraph (4) of this Standing Order; or
- (c) to a point of order, as provided in Standing Order No. 35 (Interruptions);
- (d) in the case of the mover of a substantive motion or the Senator in charge of a Bill in reply.

Provided that any Senator may, without prejudice to his right to speak at a later period of the debate, second a motion or amendment by rising in his place and stating merely that it is his intention to second the motion or amendment.

(4) A Senator who has spoken on a question may again be heard to offer explanations of some material part of his speech which he alleges has been misunderstood or misrepresented, but he shall not introduce new matter.

(5) A Senator who has spoken may speak again when a new question has been proposed by the President or Chairman, such as a proposed amendment or a motion for the adjournment of the debate.

(6) Except with the leave of the President, a Senator shall not read

his speech but he may read extracts from written or printed papers or books in support of his argument and may refresh his memory by reference to notes.

(7) No Senator may speak on any question after it has been put to the vote by the President or Chairman.

### **Right of Reply**

**34.--**(1) The mover of a motion may reply after all the other Senators present have had an opportunity of addressing the Senate and before the question is put, and after such reply no other Senator may speak, except as provided in paragraph (2) of this Order.

(2) A Minister may conclude a debate on any motion which is critical of the Government, or reflects adversely on or is calculated to bring discredit upon the Government or an Officer thereof.

### **Interruptions**

**35.** A Senator shall not interrupt another Senator except -

- (a) by rising to a point of order, whereupon the Senator speaking shall resume his seat and the Senator interrupting shall simply direct attention to the point which he desires to bring to notice and submit it to the President or Chairman for decision; or
- (b) to elucidate some matter raised by that Senator in the course of his speech, provided that the Senator speaking is willing to give way and resumes his seat and that the Senator wishing to interrupt is called by the Chair;
- (c) by rising to claim closure under Standing Order No. 39 (Closure of Debate).

### **Contents of Speeches**

**36.--**(1) Subject to the provisions of these Standing Orders, debate upon any motion, Bill or amendment shall be relevant to such motion, Bill or amendment, and a Senator shall confine his observations to the subjects under discussion.

(2) Reference shall not be made to any matter on which a judicial decision is pending, in such a way as might, in the opinion of the Chair, prejudice the interests of parties thereto.

(3) It shall be out of order to attempt to revive in any debate a matter or reconsider any specific question (other than a matter or question relating to a Bill which has been recommitted or returned with any amendment by the other Chamber) upon which the Senate has come to a conclusion during the current Session, except upon a substantive motion for rescission which motion shall not be brought sooner than six months after the date on which the Senate reached its decision.

(4) It shall be out of order to use offensive or insulting language about members of either Chamber.

(5) No Senator shall impute improper motives to any other Member of either Chamber.

(6) Ministers shall be referred to by the title of their appointment and other Senators by name.

(7) Her Majesty's name or the Governor General's name shall not be used to influence the Senate.

(8) The conduct of Her Majesty, Members of the Royal Family, the Governor General, Members of the Senate or the House of Representatives, or of Judges or other persons engaged in the administration of justice shall not be raised except upon a substantive motion moved for the purpose; and in any amendment, question to a Minister, or debate on a motion dealing with any other subject any reference to the conduct of any such person as aforesaid shall be out of order.

### **Scope of Debate**

**37.--**(1) When an amendment proposes to leave out words and to add or insert other words in their place, debate upon the question "That this amendment be made" may relate to both the words proposed to be left out and those proposed to be added or inserted.

(2) On an amendment proposing only to leave out words or to add or insert words, debate shall be confined to the omission, addition or insertion of such words respectively.

(3) Where during the course of a debate a motion is made *(a)* for the adjournment of the debate or of the Senate, or *(b)* in Committee that the Chairman do report progress or do leave the Chair, unless it appears to the Chair that that motion is an abuse of the rules of the Senate or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the question on the motion for the adjournment as aforesaid shall be put forthwith without amendment or debate; and a Senator who has moved or seconded such a motion shall not be entitled to move or second any similar motion during the same debate; but this paragraph shall not be construed as restricting the customary right of the Minister in charge of arranging the business of the Senate to move the adjournment of the Senate on the conclusion of the business of the day.

### **Anticipation**

**38.--**(1) It shall be out of order to anticipate a Bill by discussion upon a motion dealing with the subject matter of that Bill.

(2) It shall be out of order to anticipate a Bill or a notice of motion by discussion upon an amendment, or a motion for the adjournment of the Senate.

(3) In determining whether discussion is out of order on the grounds of anticipation, regard shall be had by the Chair to the probability of the matter anticipated being brought before the Senate within a reasonable time.

### **Closure of Debate**

**39.--**(1) After a question has been proposed any Senator may at any time during the course of debate rise in his place and claim to move "That the question be now put" and unless it appears to the Chair that that motion is an abuse of the rules of the Senate or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the question "That the question be now put" shall be put forthwith. No debate on that motion shall be allowed, and if the motion is carried, the debate then before the Senate shall cease and the question before the Senate shall be put forthwith.

(2) When the motion "That the question be now put" has been carried, and the question consequent thereon has been decided, any Senator may claim that any other question already proposed from the Chair be now put and if the assent of the Chair is given every such question shall be put forthwith and decided without amendment or debate.

(3) A motion under this Standing Order shall not be decided in the affirmative if it appears on a division that less than three Senators voted in the majority in support of the motion.

### **Rules for Senators not Speaking**

40. A Senator present in the Senate during a debate -
- (a) shall enter or leave the Senate with decorum;
  - (b) shall maintain silence while another Senator is speaking, and shall not interrupt, except in accordance with these Standing Orders; and
  - (c) shall otherwise conduct himself in a fit and proper manner.

### **Time Limit of Speeches**

41.--(1) the mover of an original motion shall be limited in the duration of his speech in presenting his motion to seventy-five minutes.

(2) Subject to the preceding paragraph of this Standing Order, a Senator shall not be entitled to address the Senate or a Committee of the whole Senate for more than forty-five minutes on any subject: Provided that the Senate or the Committee may by motion made and carried without amendment or debate, extend once only the time limited by this Standing Order for such period not exceeding thirty minutes as may be agreed to by the Senate.

(3) The ruling of the President, or the Chairman, as the case may be, as to the time taken by any Senator, shall be final.

### **Responsibility for Order in the Senate and in Committee**

42. The President in the Senate and the Chairman in Committee shall be responsible for the observance of the rules of order in the Senate and Committee respectively, and their decision upon any point of order shall not be open to appeal and shall not be reviewed by the Senate except upon a substantive motion made after notice.



### **President to be heard in Silence**

**43.** When the President, or Chairman, rises during a Debate any Senator then speaking or wishing to speak shall immediately resume his seat, and the Senate, or the Committee, shall be silent.

### **Order in the Senate and in Committee**

**44.--(1)** The President or the Chairman, after having called the attention of the Senate, or of the Committee, to the conduct of a Senator who persists in irrelevance, or tedious repetition either of his own arguments or of the arguments used by other Senators in debate, may direct him to discontinue his speech and to resume his seat.

(2) Any Senator may, after the President or Chairman, as the case may be, has under paragraph (1) of this Standing Order once called the attention of the Senate or Committee to the conduct of a Senator who persists in irrelevance or tedious repetition of his own arguments or of the arguments used by other Senators in the debate, move that the Senator be no longer heard and such motion shall be put forthwith without amendment or debate.

(3) The President or the Chairman shall order any Senator to withdraw immediately from the Senate during the remainder of the day's sitting and may direct such steps to be taken, as are required, to enforce such order -

- (a) where the conduct of such Senator is grossly disorderly; or
- (b) where such Senator has used objectionable, abusive, insulting or offensive words or language or unparliamentary expressions, and, on being called to order, has refused to withdraw such words or language or expressions, and has not offered an apology for the use thereof to the satisfaction of the Senate.

(4) If an order under paragraph (3) of this Standing Order be not complied with at once, or if, on any occasion, the President or the Chairman considers that his powers under that paragraph are inadequate, he may name such Senator in pursuance of paragraph (5) or paragraph (6) of this Standing Order.

(5) If a Senator disregards the authority of the Chair, or abuses the rules of the Senate by persistently and willfully obstructing the business of the Senate or otherwise, the President shall direct the attention of the Senate thereto, mentioning by name the Senator concerned. The President shall then call upon a Minister, and if no Minister be present any other Senator to move “That Mr. .... be suspended from the service of the Senate”, and the President shall forthwith put the question, no seconder being required and no amendment, adjournment or debate being allowed.

(6) If the offence specified in paragraph (5) of this Standing Order has been committed in a Committee of the whole Senate, the Chairman shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the Committee and, as soon as the Senate has resumed, shall report the circumstances to the Senate, whereupon the procedure provided for in the preceding paragraph shall be followed.

(7) If a Senator is suspended under any provisions of this Standing Order, his suspension shall continue until it is terminated by resolution of the Senate or, if no such resolution is come to, until the end of the Session.

(8) Not more than one Senator shall be named at the same time, unless several Senators present together have jointly disregarded the authority of the Chair.

(9) A Senator who is ordered to withdraw under the provisions of paragraph (3) of this Standing Order, or who is suspended under the provisions of paragraphs (5) to (7) of this Order, shall forthwith leave the Senate and its precincts. A Senator who is suspended shall not be entitled to attend any sitting of the Senate, or enter the Senate or its precincts, until the termination of his suspension.

(10) If any Senator, who has been ordered to withdraw or who has been suspended under this Standing Order, refuses at any time to obey the direction of the President to withdraw from the Senate and its precincts, the President shall call the attention of the Senate to the fact that recourse to force is necessary in order to compel obedience to his direction, and the Senator named by him as having so refused to obey his direction shall thereupon without further question be suspended from the service of the Senate during the remainder of the Session.

(11) If resort to force is necessary, the President may suspend the sitting during the removal of the Senator and invoke the assistance of any

police officer in ejecting the offending Senator and such officer shall, for the purposes of this Order, be deemed to be an officer of the Senate.

(12) A Senator, who is directed to withdraw or who is suspended under this Standing Order, shall not be entitled to attend the sitting from which he was directed to withdraw or in a case of suspension to attend any sitting or enter the precincts of the Senate until the termination of his suspension.

(13) In the case of grave disorder arising in the Senate, the President may, if he thinks it necessary to do so, adjourn the Senate without question put, or suspend the sitting for a time to be named by him.

(14) Any remuneration to which a Senator is entitled as a Senator shall cease for the period of his suspension.

(15) Nothing in this Standing Order shall be taken to deprive the Senate of the power of proceeding against any Senator according to any resolution of the Senate.

### **Decision of Questions**

**45.--**(1) Save as otherwise provided in section 73 of the Belize Constitution Act, 1981, as amended, or in these Standing Orders all questions proposed for decision in the Senate or in any Committee shall be determined by a majority of the votes of those present and voting.

(2) Where the President is not a Senator, he shall have neither an original vote nor a casting vote, and if upon any question before the Senate the votes are equally divided, the motion shall be declared lost.

(3) The President, if a Senator, or any other Senator presiding in the absence of the President, shall have an original vote but not a casting vote.

### **Collection of Voices**

**46.--**(1) At the conclusion of a debate upon any question the President or Chairman shall put that question for the decision of the

Senate, and shall collect the voices of the Ayes and of the Noes, after which no further debate may take place upon that question.

(2) The result shall be declared by the President or Chairman stating, "I think the Ayes have it" or "I think the Noes have it" as the case may be, but any Senator may challenge the opinion of the Chair by claiming a division.

### **Division**

**47.--**(1) In a division the Clerk shall call each Senator's name separately and such Senator shall indicate how he desires to vote. The Clerk shall thereupon record the vote accordingly.

(2) Every Senator present, unless he expressly says that he declines to vote, shall record his vote either for the Ayes or the Noes.

(3) The Clerk shall announce the number of Senators who have voted for, and of those who voted against, the proposal, and the number of Senators who declined to vote. Subject to the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order No.45 (Decision of Questions), the President or other Senator presiding, or the Chairman in Committee of the whole Senate shall then, subject to paragraph (5) of Standing Order No. 8 (Quorum), declare the result of the division.

(4) The Clerk shall enter on the Minutes of Proceedings the record of each Senator's vote, and shall add a statement of the number and the names of all the Senators present who declined to vote.

(5) If a Senator states that he voted in error or that his vote has been counted wrongly, he may claim to have his vote altered provided that such claim is made as soon as the Clerk has announced the numbers and before the Chair has declared the result of the division. Upon such claim being made the President, or Chairman, at his sole discretion, shall either direct the Clerk to alter that Senator's vote or direct that a fresh division be held.

### **Procedure on Bills -- Introduction and First Reading of Bills**

**48.--**(1) Subject to the provisions of paragraph (4) of this Standing

Order any Senator may move for leave to introduce a Bill on which he has given notice.

(2) Subject to the provisions of paragraph (4) of this Standing Order, a Bill may be presented to the Senate on behalf of the Government after notice without an order of the Senate for its introduction.

(3) A notice of the presentation of a Bill on behalf of the Government may be entered on the Order Paper for the following day on which it was received by the Clerk of the Senate.

(4) A Bill, whether presented in pursuance of an order of the Senate after leave given or without such order, shall be handed to the Clerk by the Senator who gave notice of the Bill. The Clerk shall read aloud the title of the Bill, which, without question put, shall be recorded in the Minutes of Proceedings as having been read a first time and ordered to be printed and published in the *Gazette*.

(5) Copies of the Bill, as printed and published in the *Gazette*, shall be made available to every Senator.

(6) When a Bill has been brought from the House of Representatives and a Senator has signified to the Clerk of the Senate his willingness to take charge of the Bill, that Bill shall be recorded in the Minutes of Proceedings as having been read a first time and ordered to be printed and circulated, and shall be put down for second reading on a day to be named by the Senator in charge of the Bill.

### **Appointment of Days for Stages of Bill**

**49.--**(1) Subject to the provisions of this Standing Order, the Senator in charge of a Bill may, at the conclusion of the proceedings on any stage of the Bill, either name a day to be appointed for the next stage of the Bill or move that the next stage be taken forthwith.

(2) An interval of not less than five days must elapse between the first and second reading of a Bill, unless the Senate, on motion made and question put, agree to proceed with the Bill at an earlier date or forthwith.

(3) Subject to paragraph (2) of this Order, no Bill shall be read a second time until it has been printed and circulated to Senators.

### **Form of Bills**

**50.--**(1) The Clerk shall be responsible for preparing each Bill for the printer from the draft handed in to him by the Senator in Charge of the Bill, and shall satisfy himself -

- (a) that the Bill is divided into successive clauses numbered consecutively;
- (b) that the Bill has in the margin a short summary of each clause;
- (c) that the provisions of the Bill do not appear to go beyond its title.

(2) A Bill may be accompanied by a short explanatory statement of its contents.

### **Second Reading of Bills**

**51.--**(1) On the second reading of a Bill a debate may arise covering the general merits and principles of the Bill.

(2) To the question "That the Bill be now read a second time" an amendment may be proposed to leave out the word "now" and add at the end of the question "upon this day six months", or an amendment may be moved to leave out all the words after the word "that" in order to add words stating the object and motive on which the opposition to the Bill is based, but such words must be strictly relevant to the general merits and principles of the Bill and may not deal with its details.

### **Committal of Bill**

**52.--**(1) When a Bill has been read a second time it shall stand committed to a Committee of the whole Senate, unless the Senate, on motion made commits it to a Select Committee. Such motion shall not require notice and must be made immediately after the Bill has been read a second time, and the question thereon shall be put without amendment or debate and may, though opposed, be decided after 4:20 p.m. The said motion may be proposed by any Senator.

(2) When a Bill has been committed to a Select Committee, no further proceedings shall be taken thereon until the Select Committee has presented its report to the Senate.

## **Functions of Committees on Bills**

**53.--**(1) Any Committee to which a Bill is committed shall not discuss the general merits and principles of the Bill but only its details.

(2) Any such Committee shall have power to make such amendments therein as the Committee shall think fit, provided that the amendments, including new clauses and new schedules, are relevant to the subject matter of the Bill; but if any such amendments are not within the title of the Bill, the Committee shall amend the title accordingly, and shall report the same specially to the Senate.

## **Procedure in Committee of the Whole Senate on a Bill**

**54.--**(1) On the order being read for a Committee of the whole Senate on a Bill, the President shall leave the Chair without question put.

(2) The Chairman in Committee of the whole Senate shall call the number of each clause in succession. If no amendment is proposed thereto, or when all proposed amendments have been disposed of, he shall propose the question "That the clause (or the clause as amended) stand part of the Bill" and, when all Senators who wish to speak thereon have spoken, he shall put that question to the Committee for its decision.

(3) Any proposed amendments of which notice has not been given shall be handed to the Chairman in writing.

(4) The following provisions shall apply to amendments relating to Bills:

- (a) An amendment must be relevant to the subject matter of the Bill, and to the subject matter of the clause to which it relates.
- (b) An amendment must not be inconsistent with any clause already agreed to or with any previous decision of the Committee.
- (c) An amendment must not be such as to make the clause which it proposes to amend, unintelligible or ungrammatical.
- (d) If an amendment refers to, or is not intelligible without a

subsequent amendment or schedule, notice of the subsequent amendment or schedule must be given before or when the first amendment is moved so as to make the series of amendments intelligible as a whole.

- (e) In order to save time and repetition of arguments, the Chairman may allow a single discussion to cover a series of interdependent amendments.
- (f) The Chairman may refuse to allow an amendment to be moved, which is, in his opinion, frivolous or meaningless.
- (g) The Chairman may at any time during the discussion of a proposed amendment withdraw it from the consideration of the Committee if, in his opinion, the discussion has shown that the amendment violates the provisions of this Standing Order.

(5) The provisions of paragraph (4) and (5) of Standing Order No. 32 (Amendments to Motions--How moved and Put) shall apply to the discussion of amendments to Bills, with the substitution, where appropriate, of the word "clause" for the word "motion" or the word "question", and of the word "Chairman" for the word "President" and the word "Committee" for the word "Senate" throughout.

(6) A clause may be postponed, unless a decision has already been taken upon an amendment thereto. Postponed clauses shall be considered after the remaining clauses of the Bill have been considered and before new clauses are brought up.

(7) Any proposed new clause shall be considered after the clauses of the Bill have been disposed of and before consideration of any schedule to the Bill: Provided that a new clause proposed in substitution for a clause which has been disagreed to may be considered immediately after such disagreement.

(8) On the title of any new clause being read by the Clerk, the clause shall be deemed to have been read a first time. The question shall then be proposed "That the clause be read a second time"; if this is agreed to, amendments may then be proposed to the new clause. The final question to be proposed shall be "That the clause (or the clause as



amended) be added to the Bill”.

(9) Schedules shall be disposed of in the same way as clauses, and any proposed new schedules shall be considered after the schedules to the Bill have been disposed of, and shall be treated in the same manner as a new clause.

(10) When every clause and schedule and proposed new clause or schedule has been dealt with, the preamble, if there is one, shall be considered and the question put “That the preamble to the Bill be approved”. No amendment to the preamble shall be considered which is not made necessary by a previous amendment to the Bill.

(11) If any amendment to the title of the Bill is made necessary by an amendment to the Bill, it shall be made at the conclusion of the proceedings detailed above, but no question shall be put that the title (as amended) stand part of the Bill; nor shall any question be put upon the enacting formula.

(12) At the conclusion of the proceedings in Committee on a Bill, the Chairman shall put the question “That the Bill (or the Bill as amended) be reported to the Senate”, which question shall be decided without amendment or debate.

(13) If any Senator, before the conclusion of proceedings on a Bill, moves to report progress and such motion is carried, or if the proceedings in a Committee of the whole Senate have not been finished at the moment of interruption, the Chairman shall leave the Chair of the Committee and the Senator in charge of the Bill shall report progress to the Senate and ask leave to sit again, and name a day for the resumption of the proceedings.

(14) A committee having met to consider a Bill shall proceed with its consideration, except that during the proceedings on a Bill the Senator in charge of the Bill may, subject to the discretion of the Chairman, move a motion “That the Committee do not proceed further with the Bill”. If the motion is carried, the Committee shall then report the Bill to the Senate as so far amended or without amendment as the case may be, and make a special report explaining its proceedings on the Bill, and the special report and the Bill shall be ordered to lie upon the Table without question put.

### **Procedure in Select Committee on a Bill**

**55.** A Select Committee on a Bill shall be subject to Standing

Orders No. 72 (Procedure in Select Committees) and Nos. 45 (Decision of Questions), 46 (Collection of Voices) and 47 (Divisions) but, before reporting the Bill to the Senate, it shall go through the Bill as provided in Standing Order No. 54 (Procedure in Committee of the whole Senate on a Bill).

### **Procedure on Reporting of Bills from Committee of the Whole Senate**

**56.--**(1) So soon as a Committee of the whole Senate has agreed that a Bill be reported the Chairman shall leave the Chair of the Committee and the Senate shall resume, and the Senator in charge of the Bill shall report it to the Senate.

(2) Subject to these Standing Orders, when a Bill has been reported from a Committee of the whole Senate, it shall be ordered to be read a third time.

### **Recommittal of Bills Reported from Committee of the Whole Senate**

**57.--**(1) If any Senator desires to delete or amend any provision contained in a Bill as reported from a Committee of the whole Senate or to introduce any new provision therein, he may, at any time before a Senator rises to move the third reading of the Bill, move that the Bill be recommitted either wholly or in respect only of some particular part or parts of the Bill or some proposed new clause or new schedule. No notice of such motion shall be required, the question shall be put without amendment or debate and, if the motion is agreed to, the Bill shall stand so recommitted. The Senate may then, upon motion made, resolve itself into Committee to consider the business so recommitted either forthwith or upon a later date.

(2) When the whole Bill has been recommitted, the Committee shall go through the Bill as provided in Standing Order No. 54 (Procedure in Committee of the whole Senate on a Bill).

(3) When the Bill has been recommitted in respect only of some particular part or parts or of some proposed new clause or new schedule, the Committee shall consider only the matter so recommitted and any amendment which may be moved thereto.

(4) At the conclusion of the proceedings in Committee on a Bill recommitted under the provisions of this Standing Order, the Chairman shall put the question "That the Bill (or the Bill as amended on recommittal) be reported to the Senate" which question shall be decided without amendment or debate. So soon as the Bill has been reported, the Senator in charge of the Bill may either name a future day for the third reading of the Bill or move that it be read a third time forthwith.

### **Procedure on Bills Reported from Select Committee**

**58.--**(1) When a Bill has been reported from a Select Committee, the Senate may proceed to consider the Bill as reported from the Select Committee upon a motion "That the report of the Select Committee on ..... Bill be adopted", moved under paragraph (9) of Standing Order No. 75 (Reports from Select Committees). If no amendment is proposed to such motion, the question on the motion shall be decided forthwith without debate.

(2) If that motion is agreed to without amendment, the Senate may proceed to the third reading of the Bill as reported from the Select Committee.

(3) Upon a motion to adopt the report of the Select Committee on a Bill, any Senator may propose an amendment to add, at the end of the motion, the words "subject to the recommittal of the Bill (either wholly or in respect only of some particular part or parts of the Bill or of some proposed new clause or new schedule) to a Committee of the whole Senate", and if that motion is agreed to with such an amendment, the Bill shall stand so recommitted and immediately thereafter the Senate may then resolve itself into a Committee to consider the business so recommitted.

(4) A Committee of the whole Senate upon a Bill recommitted under the provisions of this Standing Order shall proceed in accordance with paragraph (2) or paragraph (3) of Standing Order No. 56 (Recommittal of Bills reported from Committee of the whole Senate), and the conclusion of its proceedings and the remaining proceedings on the Bill shall be subject to paragraph (4) of that order.

### **Third Reading**

**59.--**(1) On the third reading of a Bill no amendments may be proposed to the question “That the Bill be now read a third time and passed” and the question shall be put without debate.

(2) Corrections of errors or oversights may be made by the President before the question for the third reading of the Bill is put from the Chair.

(3) When a Bill originated in the Senate has been read the third time, a printed copy of it, signed by the Clerk and endorsed by the President, shall be forwarded by the Clerk of the Senate to the Clerk of the House of Representative, together with a message informing the House that the Bill has been passed by the Senate and desiring the concurrence of the House of Representatives.

(4) When a Bill which originated in the House of Representatives has been read a third time and passed by the Senate without amendment, the Clerk of the Senate shall return the Bill to the House of Representatives, together with a message “That the Senate has agreed to the..... Bill without amendment”.

(5) When a Bill which originated in the House of Representative has been read a Third Time and passed by the Senate with amendment or amendments, the Clerk of the Senate shall cause the said amendment or amendments made to the Bill by the Senate to be entered in the original copy of the Bill received from the House of Representatives which copy, signed by the Clerk endorsed by the President, shall then be returned to the House of Representatives, with a message desiring the concurrence of the House of Representatives, in the amendment or amendments made by the Senate.

### **Procedure on House of Representative Amendments**

**60.--**(1) When a Bill is returned from the House of Representatives with amendments, the consideration of such amendments may with the consent of the President be entered upon forthwith, or may be put down for such future day as the Senator in charge of the Bill shall appoint.

(2) Upon a motion being made “That the House of Representatives amendments to the ..... Bill be now considered”, an amendment

may be proposed to that question, to leave out the word “now”, and add at the end of the question “upon this day six months” or some other date.

(3) When the Senate proceeds to the consideration of the House of Representative amendments, each amendment shall be read by the Clerk and may be agreed to, or agreed to with amendment, or disagreed to. Upon any such amendment being disagreed to an amendment may be made to the Bill in *lieu* thereof, but no amendment may be proposed to a House of Representatives amendment save an amendment strictly relevant thereto nor may an amendment be moved to the Bill, unless the amendment be relevant to or consequent upon either the acceptance or rejection of a House of Representatives amendment.

(4) When the Senate has concluded the consideration of the House of Representatives amendments -

- (a) if such amendments have been agreed to, the bill shall be returned to the House of Representatives with a message informing the House “That the Senate has agreed to the amendments to the..... Bill.”
- (b) if such amendments have been amended, the Bill as amended, endorsed by the President, shall be returned to the House of Representatives together with a message informing the House that the Senate has passed the Bill with amendments to which they desire the concurrence of the House.
- (c) if such amendments have been disagreed to, the Bill shall be returned to the House of Representatives with a message informing the House “That the Senate has disagreed to the House of Representatives amendments to the .. .....Bill”.

(5) When the Senate has disagreed to a House of Representatives amendment, if the House of Representatives return the Bill with a message that it insists upon the amendment the Senate may either -

- (a) agree to the said amendment, in which case the provisions of paragraph (4) **(a)** of this Standing Order shall apply; or
- (b) amend such amendments in which case the provisions of

paragraph (4) *(b)* of this Standing Order shall apply; or

- (c) postpone the consideration of the House of Representatives amendment for six months; or
- (d) order the withdrawal of the Bill.

### **Withdrawal of Bills**

**61.** A Bill may be withdrawn by leave of the Senate (or, as the case may be, of the Committee) either -

- (a) before the commencement of Public Business; or
- (b) when any stage of the Bill is reached in the Order of Business, if before the question is fully put, the mover so requests and there is no dissentient voice.

### **Bills containing substantially the same provisions**

**62.** Once the second reading of any Bill has been agreed to or negatived, no question shall be proposed during the same Session for the second reading of any other Bill containing substantially the same provisions.

### **Money Bills**

**63.** When a Money Bill, as defined in section **78** of the Belize Constitution Act 1981, as amended, has been read a second time, it shall stand committed to a Committee of the whole Senate unless on motion made, of which no notice shall be required, the Senate decides that the Bill shall not be so committed, whereupon the President shall forthwith put the question that the Bill be now read a third time and that question shall be decided without amendment or debate.

### **Sessional Select Committees**

**64.--(1)** There shall be the following Sessional Select Committees-

- (a) The Standing Orders Committee;
- (b) The House Committee;
- (c) The Committee of Privileges;
- (d) The Regulations Committee.
- (e) Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee

(2) Members of the Sessional Select Committees shall be appointed by the President as soon as may be after the beginning of each Session.

### **Standing Orders Committees**

**65.--**(1) The Standing Orders Committee shall have the duty of considering from time to time and reporting on all such matters relating to Standing Orders as may be referred to it by the Senate.

(2) The President shall be a Member, and the Chairman, of the Standing Orders Committee.

(3) The Standing Orders Committee shall consist of four Members inclusive of the Chairman.

### **House Committee**

**66.--**(1) (a) The House Committee shall consider, and advise the President upon, all matters relating to the remuneration and allowances, and the comfort and convenience of Senators.

(b) Employment of officers and other persons by the Senate.

(2) The President shall be a Member, and the Chairman, of the House Committee.

(3) The House Committee shall consist of four Members inclusive of the Chairman.

(4) The said Committee shall from time to time report its minutes of proceedings to the Senate.

### **Committee of Privileges**

**67.--**(1) There shall be referred to the Committee of Privileges any matter which appears to affect the powers or privileges of the Senate, and it shall be the duty of the Committee to consider any matter so referred and to report thereon to the Senate.

(2) The President shall be a Member, and the Chairman, of the Committee of Privileges.

(3) The Committee of Privileges shall consist of four Members inclusive of the Chairman.

### **Regulations Committee**

**68.--**(1) The Regulations Committee shall have the duty of considering all such regulations (as defined by the Interpretation Act for the time being in force) as under the authority of any law are to be laid before the Senate, and to bring to the special attention of the Senate, any regulation or draft –

- (a) which involves the expenditure of public moneys or imposes or fixes fees for licences or for services;
- (b) which cannot be challenged in the Courts on the ground that it is ultra vires, or is only temporarily so challengeable;
- (c) the making of which appears to constitute an unusual or unexpected use of the powers conferred by the Law under which it was made.
- (d) which purports to have retroactive effect although the law under which it was made does not in terms give the Minister such a power;
- (e) the publication or the laying before the Senate of which, appears to have been unduly delayed;
- (f) in respect of which there has been unjustifiable delay in notifying the President that the instrument had come into operation before it was laid before the Senate; or
- (g) the purport or form of which appears to require elucidation.



(2) The Regulations Committee shall not consider or report on the merits or policy of any regulations.

(3) The Regulations Committee shall consist of four Members inclusive of the Chairman.

### **Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee**

**68A (1)** The Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee shall be a Committee of the Whole Senate and shall have the duty of considering any of the following constitutional and foreign affairs measures, namely –

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- (a) any Bill to alter any provision of Part II of the Constitution in accordance with subsection (5A) of section 69 of the Constitution (added by the Belize Constitution (Fourth Amendment) Act (No. 39 of 2001)
- (b) whether the Senate should authorize the ratification of any treaty by the Government of Belize, including any treaty for the final settlement of the territorial dispute between Belize and the Republic of Guatemala;
- (c) whether there should be established in Belize any new military base of operations for any foreign military forces after the 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2002;
- (d) whether the Senate should approve the appointment of any person as an Ambassador, High Commissioner, the Chief Justice, a Justice of the Supreme Court, a Justice of the Court of Appeal, the Contractor General or the Ombudsman.

(2) The Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee shall consist of all the members of the Senate, and the President of the Senate shall be the Chairman of the Committee.

(3) The powers and functions of the Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee under this Order shall be exercised through a Resolution supported by a simple majority of all the Senators.

### **Special Select Committees**

**69.--**(1) A Select Committee other than a Standing Committee shall be known as a Special Select Committee. It shall be appointed by order of the Senate which shall specify the terms of reference of the Committee and shall consist of such and so many Senators as may be directed by order of the Senate and, in the absence of such direction, shall consist of such Senators as may be chosen by the President.

(2) The quorum of a Special Select Committee shall be such as shall be specified in the order of the Senate or, in the absence of such Order, by the President.

### **Constitution and Chairmen of Select Committees**

**70.--**(1) Every Select Committee shall be so constituted as to ensure, so far as is possible, that the balance of parties in the Senate is reflected in the Committee.

(2) Where a Member of a Select Committee dies or for any other reason his seat becomes vacant, then, subject to the preceding paragraph, the President shall appoint another Senator in his place.

(3) Except as is otherwise provided by these Standing Orders or by special direction of the Senate, a Select Committee shall elect a Chairman from among its Members.

### **Joint Select Committees**

**71.--**(1) The Senate may for the purposes of any Select Committee appoint not more than six Members to sit with Members of the House of Representatives as a Joint Select Committee.

(2) The quorum of a Joint Select Committee shall be such as the Committee may decide.

(3) Except as is otherwise provided by these Standing Orders or by special direction of the Senate, a Joint Select Committee shall elect its Chairman from among its Members.

(4) A Joint Select Committee may be appointed at the request of either House with the approval of the other House.

### **Procedure in Select Committees**

**72.--**(1) Except as otherwise provided in Standing Orders No. 64 to

No. 68 inclusive (Sessional Standing Committees), this Standing Order shall apply to all Select Committees.

(2) If the Chairman is unable to be present at any meeting, the Committee shall elect another Chairman whose tenure of office shall be for the day of his election.

(3) Unless the Senate otherwise directs the Standing Orders Committee and the House Committee shall not have, but every other Select Committee shall have, power to send for persons, papers and records.

(4) A Select Committee shall not have power to delegate any of its functions to its Chairman, or any other Senator.

(5) Unless the Senate otherwise directs, three Senators shall be the quorum. In ascertaining whether there is a quorum present, the Senator in the Chair shall not be excluded.

(6) The deliberations of a Select Committee shall be confined to the matter referred to it by the Senate and any extension or limitation thereof made by the Senate, and, in the case of a Select Committee on a Bill, to the Bill committed to it and relative amendments.

(7) Where, by resolution of the Senate or under these Standing Orders, the President or a Minister is Chairman of a Select Committee, the President or the Minister shall appoint the time and place for the holding of the first meeting of the Committee. In all other cases, the first meeting of a Select Committee shall be summoned by the President and the first business to be transacted thereat shall be the Election of a Chairman of the Committee: if at such meeting a Chairman is not elected, the President shall appoint a Member of the Committee to be the Chairman.

(8) Subsequent meetings shall be held at such time and place as the Select Committee may determine; provided that, if the Committee fail to do so, the Chairman shall, in consultation with the Clerk of the Senate, appoint such time and place.

(9) Subject to any order of the Senate or resolution of the Committee, the sitting of a Select Committee shall be held in private.

(10) Except by leave of the Senate no Select Committee may sit while the Senate is sitting, but a Select Committee may sit at any time when the Senate is adjourned or the sitting of the Senate is suspended.

(11) When it is intended to examine any witness, the Senator requiring such witnesses shall deliver to the Clerk of the Committee the name, residence and occupation of any witness he desires to examine.

(12) If the Committee desires to summon any witness, the Chairman shall supply the name, residence and occupation of every such witness to the Clerk of the Senate at least seven days before his evidence is required. The Clerk shall then, subject to the directions of the President, summon every such witness on behalf of the Senate.

(13) The evidence of every witness shall be taken down verbatim and sent in proof to the witness. The witness shall be at liberty, within fourteen days from that on which the Clerk sent out the proof, to suggest corrections due to inaccurate reporting, and the evidence shall be printed with such of the corrections as may be approved by the Chairman.

(14) The Committee may at its discretion refuse to hear any irrelevant evidence or any recalcitrant witness.

*(15)(a)* Any Member of a Select Committee may bring up a report for its consideration, and all such reports shall be entered in full upon the minutes of proceedings of the Committee. When all the reports have been brought up, the Chairman shall propose the reports in order until one is accepted as a basis for discussion, beginning with his own report and proceeding with the remainder in the order in which they were brought up. The question to be proposed by the Chairman on any report shall be "That the Chairman's (Or Mr. .... 's) report be read a second time paragraph by paragraph". When this question has been agreed to, it shall not be proposed on any further reports, but any portions thereof may be offered as amendments to the report under consideration, if they are relevant to it.

*(b)* The Committee shall then proceed to go through the report paragraph by paragraph and paragraphs (1) to (7) of Standing Order No. 54 (Procedure in Committee of the whole Senate on a Bill) shall apply to such consideration as if the report were a Bill and the paragraphs thereof the clauses of the Bill.

*(c)* Upon the conclusion of the consideration of the report paragraph by paragraph and when all proposed new

paragraphs have been considered, the Chairman shall put the question that this report be the report of the Committee to the Senate.

### **Divisions in Select Committee**

**73.--**(1) Every division in a Select Committee shall be taken by the Clerk to the Committee asking each Member of the Committee separately how he desires to vote and recording the votes accordingly.

(2) In taking the division, the names of all Members of the Committee present shall be called in alphabetical order.

(3) When a division is claimed in a Select Committee every member of the Committee present shall, unless he expressly states that he declines to vote, record his vote either for Ayes or Noes. The Clerk to the Committee shall enter in the Minutes of the proceedings the record of each Member's vote and shall add a statement of the names of Members who declined to vote.

(4) As soon as the Clerk has collected the votes he shall state the number of Members voting for the Ayes and Noes respectively and the Chairman shall then declare the result of the division. The Chairman shall not have an original vote but in the event of an equality of votes he shall give a casting vote.

(5) If a Member of the Committee states that he voted in error or that his vote has been wrongly counted he may claim to have his vote altered, provided that such request is made as soon as the Clerk has announced the numbers and before the Chairman has declared the result of the division.

### **Premature Publication of Evidence**

**74.--**(1) The proceedings of, and the evidence taken before, any Select Committee and any documents presented to and decisions of, such a Committee shall not be published by any Member thereof or by any other person, before the Committee has presented its Report to the Senate.

### **Reports from Select Committees**

**75.--**(1) Every Select Committee shall, before the end of the

Session in which it was appointed, make a report to the Senate upon the matters referred to it; but where a Select Committee finds itself unable to conclude its investigations before the end of the Session, it may so report to the Senate.

(2) A report of a Select Committee may contain the opinions and observations of the Committee, and may be accompanied by the Minutes of evidence taken before the Committee.

(3) A Select Committee may make a special report relating to its powers, functions and proceedings on any matters that it thinks fit to bring to the notice of the Senate.

(4) **(a)** The Chairman of a Select Committee shall prepare a draft report and submit it for the consideration of the Committee; but alternative drafts may be submitted for consideration by any other Members at the request of the Chairman.

**(b)** the report finally to be adopted shall be such as is agreed to, with amendments (if any), by all the Members of the Select Committee or, failing unanimous agreement, then such as is agreed to by a majority of the Members.

**(c)** Any Member dissenting from the report of a majority of the Committee may put in a concise written statement of his reasons for such dissent, and such statement shall be appended to the report; or, if he so desires, he may submit a minority report.

(5) The report of a Select Committee including any minority report shall be presented to the Senate by the Chairman or other Member deputed by the Committee, and shall be ordered to be laid on the Table, and be printed, without question put.

(6) The minutes of proceedings of a Select Committee shall record

—

(a) the names of the Members present each day of the sitting of the Committee;

(b) the names of the witnesses examined;

(c) in the event of a division taking place, the question proposed, the names of the proposer and the respective votes

thereon of the Members present and the names of the Members (if any) who declined to vote.

The minutes of the proceedings of a Select Committee shall be printed with the report of the Committee, unless the House otherwise direct, and the Clerk shall preserve the original thereof as part of the records of the Senate.

(7) The Report of a Select Committee may be taken into consideration by the Senate on a motion "That the Report of the Select Committee on..... be adopted". Such a motion may be moved by any Senator after one clear day's notice.

### **Private Bills**

**76.--**(1) Every Bill, not being a Government measure, intended to affect or benefit some particular person, association or corporate body (in this Standing Order called a "Private Bill") shall contain a clause saving the rights of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Heirs and Successors, all bodies politic and corporate, and all others except such as are mentioned in the Bill and those claiming by, from, or under, them, and may be introduced into the Senate under the provisions of this Standing Order.

(2) Any Bill, not being a Government measure, which in the opinion of the President appears to affect directly private rights or property may be introduced into the Senate as a Private Bill under the provisions of this Standing Order.

(3) A Private Bill shall be introduced by a Senator, only -

*(a)* on petition from the promoters stating the objects of and reasons for the Bill, and

*(b)* after notice of the Bill has been given -

*(i)* by not less than three successive publications of the Bill in the *Gazette*, and

*(ii)* by three successive publications in a newspaper circulating in the Country of a notice containing a statement of the objects of and the reasons for the Bill.

(4) The petition shall be presented by being lodged with the Clerk,

and shall be read at the first ordinary sitting of the Senate after it is so lodged, and thereupon the President shall put the question that the promoters be allowed to proceed.

(5) Subject to paragraph (6) of this Standing Order, when leave to proceed has been granted, the promoters shall, within the next ensuing three months after such leave has been granted, lodge with the Clerk of the Senate—

- (a) two copies of the Bill;
- (b) a certificate under the hand of the Accountant General certifying that the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars (or such less sum as the Accountant General may in writing approve), to meet the expenses of printing, has been deposited with the Accountant General;
- (c) a bond duly executed by two sufficient persons obliging them to pay on demand to the Clerk any excess over the deposited sum, required for such expenses.

(6) The Clerk shall cause the Bill lodged with him to be printed as early as possible, and, at the first ordinary sitting of the Senate after the printing is completed, the President, if he is satisfied that the notices required by paragraph (3) of this Standing Order have been given, shall put the question that the Bill, be read a first time upon which no discussion shall be allowed. After he Bill is read a first time, it shall stand upon the Order Paper for the second reading at the next ordinary sitting of the Senate.

(7) Upon the day ordered for second reading, the President shall, unless the Senate otherwise orders, put the question that the Bill be read a second time.

(8) After the Bill has been read a second time, it shall stand referred to a Special Select Committee to be chosen by the President. The President shall appoint the Chairman of the Committee.

- (9)(a) Every Special Select Committee on such a Bill shall require proof of the facts and other allegations set forth in the Bill as showing that it is expedient that the Bill should be passed, and may take such oral or other evidence as it may think requisite; and thereafter, if the Special Select Committee finds that the said facts and allegations are not proved, it shall report to the Senate accordingly, and



thereupon no further proceedings shall be taken with reference to the Bill unless the Senate makes a special order to the contrary.

- (b) If the Special Select Committee finds that the said facts and allegations have been proved, the Committee shall consider the several clauses of the Bill and may strike out clauses, add new clauses, and make any other amendments which it shall deem necessary, and in respect of such new clauses and other amendments, shall describe their purport in a Special Report to the Senate. No new clauses or amendments shall be allowed in such a Bill which are foreign to the objects of and reasons for the Bill or which are beyond its scope.

(10) No person, other than a Senator shall be heard in opposition to any Private Bill, unless he has previously lodged a petition with the Clerk showing the nature of his objections to the Bill, and stating whether his objections extend to the whole or some part of the preamble (if any), or to the clauses of the said Bill, and praying that he may be heard by himself or his Counsel against the Bill.

(11) Subject to the provisions of this Standing Order, all petitions against a Bill, where such petitions contain a prayer that the petitioners be heard by themselves or Counsel, shall stand referred to the Special Select Committee, and the Committee shall hear all such opposers who appear to have a locus standi.

(12) When it is intended to examine any witnesses before the Special Select Committee, the provisions of paragraphs (11) and (12) of Standing Order 72 (Procedure in Select Committees) shall apply.

(13) The Special Select Committee shall examine the Bill and make such amendments thereto as it thinks proper, and shall report to the Senate that it has examined the Bill, and (if the fact be so) made amendments thereto, and shall make to the Senate such recommendations, if any, as it thinks fit.

(14) After the report of the Special Select Committee has been presented to and adopted by the Senate in accordance with Standing Order No. 58 the President shall put the question, without amendment or debate, that the Bill be read a third time.

(15) As soon as practicable after any Private Bill is passed, rejected, dropped or abandoned, the Clerk of the Senate shall make out an account showing, according to the scale prescribed or approved by the Minister, the expenses of printing, and shall transmit the same, signed by him, to the Accountant General who thereupon shall, if the amount of the account is less than two hundred and fifty dollars, transfer such amount from the deposited sum of two hundred and fifty dollars to the general revenue of this Country, and pay the balance to the depositors, their executors or administrators.

(16) If the account for the expenses of printing exceeds two hundred and fifty dollars the Accountant General shall transfer the whole of the deposited sum to the credit of the general revenue of this Country, and the Attorney General shall, in the event of the promoters failing to pay the Accountant General the balance, take proceedings to enforce payment of such balance.

### **Miscellaneous**

#### **Absence of Members**

77.--(1) Any Senator who is prevented from attending a meeting of the Senate shall acquaint the Clerk as early as possible of his inability to attend.

(2) If, without the leave of the President obtained in writing before the end of the last of the sittings referred to in this paragraph, any Senator is absent from the Senate for more than ten consecutive sittings occurring during the same Session, such Senator shall vacate his seat in the Senate under section 64 (2) (*a*) of the Belize Constitution Act, 1981, as amended.

#### **Employment of Members in Professional Capacity**

78. No Senator shall appear before the Senate or any Committee thereof as Counsel or Solicitor for any party or in any capacity for which he is to receive a fee or reward.

#### **Report of Debates**

79.--(1) An official report of the proceedings, and of all speeches made, in the Senate shall be prepared under the supervision of the Clerk of the Senate, acting under such instructions as the President from time to time may give.

(2) The report shall be published in such form as the President may

direct, and a copy thereof shall be sent to each Senator as soon as practicable.

### **Strangers**

**80.--**(1) Strangers may be present in the Chamber of the Senate in the places set apart for them, under such rules as the President may make from time to time for that purpose.

(2) If, at any sitting of the Senate, any Senator shall move that strangers withdraw, the President shall forthwith put the question "That strangers do withdraw" without permitting any debate or amendment.

(3) The President may, whenever he thinks fit, order the withdrawal of strangers from any part of the Chamber and its precincts, and may order the doors of the Chamber to be closed.

(4) Strangers must preserve silence, and must conduct themselves in a fit and proper manner during a Sitting.

(5) Strangers must withdraw from the Chamber and its precincts when called upon by the President to do so.

### **Press**

**81.--**(1) The President may grant a general permission to the representatives of any journal or newspaper or other medium of public information to attend the sittings of the Senate, under such rules as he may make from time to time for that purpose.

(2) If such rules are contravened, such permission may be revoked.

### **Amendment of Standing Orders**

**82.--**(1) Unless the President shall otherwise direct, not less than twelve days' notice of a motion to amend the Standing Orders shall be given, and the notice shall be accompanied by a draft of the proposed amendments.

(2) The motion shall be set down for the earliest convenient sitting after the expiration of the notice.

(3) When the motion is reached, the mover shall move the motion, and after it has, if necessary, been seconded, the motion shall be referred forthwith, without any question being put thereon, to the Standing Orders

Committee, and no further proceedings shall be taken on any such motion until the Committee has reported thereon.

### **Suspension of Standing Orders**

**83.--**(1) Any one or more of these Standing Orders may, after notice or with the leave of the President, be suspended on a motion made by a Senator at any sitting.

(2) A motion under this Standing Order shall be decided without amendment or debate.

### **General Authority of the President**

**84.--**(1) The President shall have power to regulate the conduct of business in all matters not provided for in these Standing Orders.

(2) The decision in all cases for which these Standing Orders do not provide, shall lie within the discretion of the President, and shall not be open to challenge.

(3) The President shall be responsible for the management and general administration of the Chamber.

### **Absence of the President**

**85.** During any period where the President is absent on account of illness or is for any other reason unable to perform the functions of his office, these functions shall be assumed and performed by the Vice-president, until such time as the President resumes his office.

### **Interpretation**

**86.** In these Standing Orders "Clerk of the Senate" or "Clerk of the House of Representatives" mean the person appointed under section 67 of the Belize Constitution Act, 1981, as amended, and includes the person deputed to act for him.

**MADE** by the Senate this 20th day of June, 1967, under the provisions of section 17 of the British Honduras Constitution Ordinance, 1963.

**E. W. FRANCIS**

*President.*