

BELIZE

No. 21/1/13

SENATE

Tuesday, 27th March 2018

10:12 A.M.

Pursuant to the direction of Mr. President, in writing, dated 23rd March 2018, the Senate met in the National Assembly Chamber in Belmopan on Tuesday, 27th March 2018, at 10:12 A.M.

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Members Present:

Senator, the Honourable Lee Mark Chang – President
Senator, the Honourable Godwin Hulse – Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration
Senator, the Honourable Dr. Carla Barnett – Vice-President and Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and Natural Resources
Senator, the Honourable Michael Peyrefitte – Attorney General
Senator, the Honourable Macario Coy Sr.
Senator, the Honourable Stephen Duncan
Senator, the Honourable Aldo Salazar
Senator, the Honourable Eamon Courtenay
Senator, the Honourable Valerie Woods
Senator, the Honourable Paul Thompson
Senator, the Honourable Markhelm Lizarraga
Senator, the Honourable Rev. Henry Brown – Temporary Senator
Senator, the Honourable Elena Smith
Senator, the Honourable Osmany Salas

Member Absent:

Senator, the Honourable Rev. Ashley Rocke

MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*.

PRAYERS *by Rev. Henry Brown*.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE OF A NEW SENATOR

The Clerk administered the Oath, in accordance with section 65 of the Belize Constitution, to the new Senator, the Honourable Rev. Henry Brown.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Mr. President made the following announcement:-

“Honourable Members, by letter dated 23rd March 2018, Cabinet’s recommendation has been signified to the following:

1. General Revenue Appropriation (2018/2019) Bill, 2018;

2. Central Bank of Belize (Amendment) Bill, 2018;
3. Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2018; and
4. Official Charities Fund Motion, 2018.”

BILLS BROUGHT FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration signified his willingness to take charge of the following Bills:

1. General Revenue Appropriation (2018/2019) Bill, 2018;
2. Central Bank of Belize (Amendment) Bill, 2018;
3. Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2018;
4. Immigration (Amendment) Bill, 2018;
5. Belizean Nationality (Amendment) Bill, 2018;
6. Passports (Amendment) Bill, 2018;
7. Firearms (Amendment) Bill, 2018;
8. Police (Amendment) Bill, 2018;
9. Crime Control and Criminal Justice (Amendment) Bill, 2018; and
10. Protection of Witnesses Bill, 2018.

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that the Bills be taken through all their stages forthwith.

Question put and agreed to.

PAPER

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration:-

41/1/13 - Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for Fiscal Year 2018/2019.

Paper ordered to lie on the Table.

MOTION RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE SENATE

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that, at its rising, the Senate adjourn to a date to be fixed by the President.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

A. GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

I MOTION

1. Official Charities Fund Motion, 2018.

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved:-

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this House approves the expenditure of \$2,352,589 from the Official Charities Fund as detailed in Appendix A of the Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year ending 31st March, 2019.

After the debate thereon, question was put and agreed to.

II BILLS FOR SECOND READING

1. General Revenue Appropriation (2018/2019) Bill, 2018.

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that the above-mentioned Bill be read a second time:

Bill for an Act to appropriate certain sums of money for the use of the Public Service of Belize for the financial year ending March 31, 2019.

Suspension of the debate on the General Revenue Appropriation (2018/2019) Bill, 2018.)

In accordance with Standing Order 10 (8), the Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that the proceedings on the matter on the Order Paper be entered upon and proceeded with at the sitting at any hour though opposed.

Question put and agreed to.

(Resumption and continuation of the debate on the General Revenue Appropriation (2018/2019) Bill, 2018.)

After the debate thereon, question was put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time and, pursuant to Standing Orders, was committed to a Committee of the whole Senate.

2. Central Bank of Belize (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that the above-mentioned Bill be read a second time:

Bill for an Act to amend the Central Bank of Belize Act, Chapter 262 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011; to make additional provision in relation to the entities with whom the Central Bank of Belize may engage in foreign exchange transactions; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

After the debate thereon, question was put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time and, pursuant to Standing Orders, was committed to a Committee of the whole Senate.

3. Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that the above-mentioned Bill be read a second time:

Bill for an Act to amend the Customs and Excise Duties Act, Chapter 48 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, to implement the Customs and Excise Trade Classification based on the Harmonised System of Classification Version 2017; to implement the fourth phase of reduction of duties in accordance with the Economic Partnership Agreement, to vary the rates of excise duty on certain items; to increase the scope of items subject to excise duty; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

After the debate thereon, question was put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time and, pursuant to Standing Orders, was committed to a Committee of the whole Senate.

4. Immigration (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

5. Belizean Nationality (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

6. Passports (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that the above mentioned Bills be read all together. Motion was seconded by Senator Eamon Courtenay.

Thereafter the Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that the Bills be read a second time:

Bill for an Act to amend the Immigration Act, Chapter 156 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, to provide, as a companion measure to amendments to the Belizean Nationality Act, Chapter 161, and the Passports Act, Chapter 164, for the bifurcation of functions related to immigration and nationality services, to regularize the use of the term used to describe the head

of the government department responsible for immigration; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

 Bill for an Act to amend the Belizean Nationality Act, Chapter 161 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, to provide, as a companion measure to amendments to the Immigration Act, Chapter 156, and the Passports Act, Chapter 164, for the bifurcation of functions related to nationality and immigration services; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

 Bill for an Act to amend the Passports Act, Chapter 164 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, to provide, as a companion measure to amendments to the Immigration Act, Chapter 156, and the Belizean Nationality Act, Chapter 161, for the bifurcation of functions related to nationality and immigration services; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

After the debate thereon, question was put and agreed to.

Bills accordingly read a second time and, pursuant to Standing Orders, were committed to a Committee of the whole Senate.

7. Firearms (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that the above-mentioned Bill be read a second time:

Bill for an Act to amend the Firearms Act, Chapter 143 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011; to establish a framework for an heirloom firearm licence; to provide for facilitating the deposit of a firearm for safe keeping in a police station; to provide for new and updated fines and fees; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

After the debate thereon, question was put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time and, pursuant to Standing Orders, was committed to a Committee of the whole Senate.

8. Police (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that the above-mentioned Bill be read a second time:

Bill for an Act to amend the Police Act, Chapter 138 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011; to bring the Police Act into conformity with the Public Service Regulations and to strengthen disciplinary control of persons holding or acting in offices in the

security services; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

After the debate thereon, question was put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time and, pursuant to Standing Orders, was committed to a Committee of the whole Senate.

9. Crime Control and Criminal Justice (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that the above-mentioned Bill be read a second time:

Bill for an Act to amend the Crime Control and Criminal Justice Act, Chapter 102 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011; to make provision for better maintenance of public safety and order through discouraging membership of criminal gangs and the disruption and suppression of criminal gang activity; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

After the debate thereon, question put, and a division was requested by Senator Osmany Salas.

The Senators voted as follows:

Senator Godwin Hulse	-	Aye
Senator Dr. Carla Barnett	-	Aye
Senator Michael Peyrefitte	-	Aye
Senator Macario Coy Sr.	-	Aye
Senator Stephen Duncan	-	Aye
Senator Aldo Salazar	-	Aye
Senator Eamon Courtenay	-	No
Senator Valerie Woods	-	No
Senator Paul Thompson	-	No
Senator Markhelm Lizarraga	-	Aye
Senator Rev. Henry Brown	-	Aye
Senator Elena Smith	-	Abstained
Senator Osmany Salas	-	No

Thereon, the result was that eight (8) Senators voted “Aye”, four (4) Senators voted “No” and one (1) Senator abstained.

Bill accordingly read a second time and, pursuant to Standing Orders, was committed to a Committee of the whole Senate.

10. Protection of Witnesses Bill, 2018.

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that the above-mentioned Bill be read a second time:

Bill for an Act to provide for the protection of witnesses in criminal proceedings, by enhancing the ability of a witness to give testimony in a judicial proceedings and to cooperate with law

enforcement authorities; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

After the debate thereon, question was put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time and, pursuant to Standing Orders, was committed to a Committee of the whole Senate.

III COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SENATE ON BILLS

In accordance with Standing Order 54, the Senate, without question put, resolved itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to examine and consider the Bills that were read a second time.

(In the Committee of the whole Senate)

MR. PRESIDENT in the Chair.

1. General Revenue Appropriation (2018/2019) Bill, 2018.

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Schedule agreed to.

2. Central Bank of Belize (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

3. Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

4. Immigration (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

Clauses 1 to 11 agreed to.

5. Belizean Nationality (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

Clauses 1 to 8 agreed to.

6. Passports (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

7. Firearms (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 to 14 agreed to.

8. Police (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 to 19 agreed to.

9. Crime Control and Criminal Justice (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 to 4 agreed to.

10. Protection of Witnesses Bill, 2018.

Clauses 1 to 37 agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2 agreed to.

Bills to be reported back to the Senate without amendment.

IV REPORTING AND THIRD READING OF BILLS

1. General Revenue Appropriation (2018/2019) Bill, 2018;

2. Central Bank of Belize (Amendment) Bill, 2018;

3. Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2018;

4. Immigration (Amendment) Bill, 2018;

5. Belizean Nationality (Amendment) Bill, 2018;

6. Passports (Amendment) Bill, 2018;

7. Firearms (Amendment) Bill, 2018;

8. Police (Amendment) Bill, 2018;

**9. Crime Control and Criminal Justice (Amendment) Bill, 2018;
and**

10. Protection of Witnesses Bill, 2018.

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration reported that the Committee of the whole Senate has considered the above-mentioned Bills, clauses by clauses, and has agreed upon them without amendment.

Whereupon the Senator moved that the Bills be read a third time.

Question was put and agreed to.

Bills were read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration moved that the Senate be adjourned.

The Senate adjourned at 9:55 P.M. to a date to be fixed by the President.

PRESIDENT

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