

BELIZE

No. 13/1/13

SENATE

Monday, 27th March 2017

10:00 A.M.

Pursuant to the direction of Mr. President, in writing, dated 24th March 2017, the Senate met in the National Assembly Chamber in Belmopan on Monday, 27th March 2017, at 10:00 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. Ashley Rocke
Senator, the Honourable Elena Smith
Senator, the Honourable Osmany Salas

MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*.

PRAYERS *by Rev. Ashley Rocke*.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Mr. President made the following announcement:-

“Honourable Members, by letter dated 24th March 2017, Cabinet’s recommendation has been signified to the following:

1. General Revenue Appropriation (2017/2018) Bill, 2017;
2. Central Bank of Belize (Amendment) Bill, 2017;
3. Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2017;
4. Stamp Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2017;

5. General Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill 2017;
6. Environmental Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2017;
7. Protected Areas Conservation Trust (Amendment) Bill, 2017;
8. Statutory Bodies (Development Contribution) Bill, 2017;
9. Sale of Government Shares in Belize Electricity Limited Motion, 2017;
10. Government of Belize – Amendment to Terms and Conditions of the GOB U.S. Dollar Bonds due 2038 Motion, 2017;
11. Fiscal Policy, Budget Proposals and Fiscal Strategy Statement and Reports Motion, 2017; and
12. Official Charities Fund Motion, 2017.”

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 (2017/2018) Bill, 2017;
2. Central Bank of Belize (Amendment) Bill, 2017;
3. Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2017;
4. Stamp Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2017;
5. General Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill 2017;
6. Environmental Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2017;
7. Protected Areas Conservation Trust (Amendment) Bill, 2017;
8. Statutory Bodies (Development Contribution) Bill, 2017;
9. Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017;
10. Evidence (Amendment) Bill, 2017;
11. Indictable Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2017; and
12. Parole Bill, 2017.

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.

MOTIONS 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 MOTIONS

1. Sale of Government Shares in Belize Electricity Limited Motion, 2017.

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

WHEREAS, on the 20th June 2011, the Government of Belize acquired 48,473,737 shares in Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) representing 70.2% of the issued ordinary share capital of BEL;

AND WHEREAS, one of the objects of the acquisition was to restore the control of BEL to Belizeans;

AND WHEREAS, under a 2015 Settlement Agreement with the Fortis Companies the Government of Belize (GOB) returned some 22,984,662 shares to the Fortis Companies leaving 25,489,075 shares retained by the GOB;

AND WHEREAS, the Belize Social Security Board (BSSB) separately holds some 18,580,028 share in BEL;

AND WHEREAS, the aggregate holding of shares by the GOB and BSSB together represent some 63.8% of the issued share capital of BEL;

AND WHEREAS, in fulfillment of the said objective, the Government intends to sell a portion of its shareholding in BEL amounting to

3,000,000 shares to the Belize Social Security Board at a price of BZ\$5.00 per share;

AND WHEREAS, after the proposed sale of shares the aggregate holding of shares by the GOB and BSSB would remain unchanged at 63.8% of the issued share capital of BEL;

AND WHEREAS, combined shareholding of both the GOB and the BSSB is well above the 51.0% holding required for Belizeans to have controlling interest in BEL;

AND WHEREAS, section 18(1) of the Finance and Audit (Reform) Act, Chapter 15 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, read in conjunction with section 22 (1) thereof, provides that the Government shall, before disposing of any public assets of or above the aggregate value of two million dollars, seek the comments of the Contractor General, which shall be submitted to the National Assembly, before the disposal of the assets is effected;

AND WHEREAS, the aggregate value of the intended sale of shares by the Government will be well above the threshold of two million dollars;

AND WHEREAS, the Government has, accordingly sought the comments of the Contractor General who has issued a Certificate in terms of section 18 (4) of the said Act (a copy of which is annexed hereto), confirming that the proposed sale by the Government of its shareholding in BEL would be in the national interest;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House, being satisfied that the intended sale by the Government of Belize of a portion of its shareholding in BEL amounting to 3,000,000 shares would be in the national interest, approves and confirms that the Government may dispose of its said shares in BEL as proposed above.

After the debate thereon, question put and agreed to.

2. Government of Belize – Amendment to Terms and Conditions of the GOB U.S. Dollar Bonds due 2038, Motion, 2017.

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

WHEREAS, the Government of Belize is currently engaged in an exercise to amend the Terms and Conditions of the Government of Belize U.S. Dollar Bonds Due 2038, herein after referred to as (the “Securities”), with a view to achieving a sustainable debt position;

AND WHEREAS, the proposed key amendments include the following:

Proposed Amendments

If the Proposed Amendments become effective, the following modifications will be made to the terms of the Securities.

1. Designation

Original Terms

Paragraph 1 of the Terms and Conditions of the Securities currently designates the Securities as:

“U.S. Dollar Bonds Due 2038.”

Amended Terms

As amended, that designation would read:

“U.S. Dollar Bonds Due 2034.”

2. Modification to the Interest Rate

Original Terms

The interest rate chart appearing on the Face of the Security (the text of which is duplicated in the Form of the Security on page A-3 of the Indenture) currently reads:

From (<u>and including</u>):	To (<u>but excluding</u>):	Interest Rate (<u>per annum</u>)
March 20, 2013	August 20, 2017	5.000%
August 20, 2017	February 20, 2038	6.767%

Amended Terms

As amended, this interest rate chart would read:

From (<u>and including</u>):	To (<u>but excluding</u>):	Interest Rate (<u>per annum</u>)
March 20, 2013	February 20, 2017	5.000%
February 20, 2017	February 20, 2034	4.9375%

3. Amortization Schedule

Original Terms

Paragraph 2 of the Terms and Conditions of the Securities currently reads:

2. Amortization. The outstanding principal amount of the Securities shall be repaid pro rata in 38 equal, semi-annual installments commencing August 20, 2019 and ending on the Maturity Date. New Bonds shall not be redeemable prior to the Maturity Date; provided that installments will increase in amount following a Principal Reinstatement Date.

Amended Terms

As amended, Paragraph 2 would read:

2. Amortization. The outstanding principal amount of the Securities shall be repaid pro rata in five equal, annual installments commencing on February 20, 2030 and ending on the Maturity Date. The Issuer may redeem the Notes in whole or in part at any time or from time to time by paying the then outstanding principal amount of the Notes plus accrued and unpaid interest.

4. Modification to Maturity Date

Original Terms

The “Maturity Date” appearing on the face of the Securities (the text of which is duplicated in the Form of Security on Page A-3 of the Indenture) is currently February 20, 2038.

Amended Terms

As amended, the “Maturity Date” of the Securities would be February 20, 2034.

5. **Modification to Payments**

Paragraph 3 of the Terms and Conditions of the Securities would be supplemented to include a new subparagraph (f), which would read:

- (f) In the event that Belize fails to achieve a primary surplus equal to at least 2.0% of GDP in any of the fiscal years 2018/19, 2019/20 or 2020/21, then commencing on the first Interest Payment Date in the subsequent fiscal year, and lasting for 12 months thereafter, interest on the Securities shall be paid quarterly commencing on November 20 of that fiscal year (and not semi-annually).

6. **Mandatory Liability Management**

Paragraph 16 of the Terms and Conditions of the Securities would be supplemented to include a new subparagraph (b), which would read:

- (b) Belize will apply an amount equivalent to 25% of the gross proceeds in excess of U.S. \$50 million of each incurrence of Specified Debt contracted by Belize after March 2, 2017, to repurchase in the open market, redeem, or otherwise reduce the outstanding principal amount of the Securities. “**Specified Debt**” means Public Debt and each net new Debt lent or arranged by private sector international financial institutions, in each case (i) denominated in a currency other than the currency of Belize and (ii) having a tenor of at least five years.

AND WHEREAS, as part of the restructuring process the GOB is prepared to give certain undertaking regarding Belize’s fiscal adjustment program as set out in detail below:

Other Undertakings and Amendments

1. Amendments numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 above will automatically be reversed (and the original terms of the Securities automatically reinstated) on September 30, 2017 unless the Trustee shall have received, on or prior to that date, a certification signed by the Financial Secretary of Belize confirming that the National Assembly of Belize has enacted a public sector budget for fiscal year 2017/18 that includes fiscal measures projected to produce a fiscal consolidation for that fiscal year equal to 3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (in comparison with the Government's fiscal performance for the fiscal year that commenced on April 1, 2016). The Trustee shall be entitled to rely for all purposes on the accuracy of such a certification.

2. On or before the effective date of the Proposed Amendments, the Prime Minister of Belize shall issue a Statutory Instrument, in accordance with Section 23(3) of the Finance and Audit (Reform) Act (No. 12 of 2005), committing (w) to propose to the National Assembly annual budgets that are projected to result in a primary surplus in each of fiscal years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 equal to at least 2.00% of GDP, (x) to cooperate with the International Monetary Fund in its preparation of annual Article IV consultation reports for Belize and immediately after completion of the consultation to approve posting of the associated staff reports on the International Monetary Fund's website, (y) to publish each year, at the time it is presented to the National Assembly, the Fiscal Strategy Statement referred to in Part 3 of Statutory Instrument No. 95 of 2010 captioned *Fiscal Transparency and Responsibility Regulations, 2010*, and (z) to publish at the prescribed intervals the Fiscal Outlook and Mid-year Review Report referred to in Part 4 of Statutory Instrument No. 95 of 2010 captioned *Fiscal Transparency and Responsibility Regulations, 2010*.

Prior to the effective date of the Proposed Amendments, the Financial Secretary of Belize shall deliver a certification to the Trustee certifying that such Statutory Instrument has been issued. Belize will covenant to maintain the Statutory Instrument in full force and effect without modification until at least six months after the end of fiscal year 2020/21. In the event that Belize fails to achieve a primary surplus equal to at least 2.0% of GDP in any of the fiscal years 2018/19, 2019/20 or 2020/21, Belize shall, as soon as practicable but in any event not later than 90 days after the end of the fiscal year in question, submit to the National Assembly a reasonably detailed report explaining the reasons why the target was missed and, in addition, request that the International Monetary Fund send a technical assistance mission to Belize for the purposes of (i) determining the reason(s) why the primary surplus target was not reached in the prior fiscal year and (ii) recommending measures to restore Belize to the path of achieving primary surpluses equal to at least 2.0% of GDP through fiscal year 2020/21. Belize shall request that the IMF technical assistance mission undertaking this assessment summarize its findings and recommendations in writing and Belize shall publish that memorandum promptly after receipt from the IMF mission.

3. In the event that the Requisite Consents are received on or prior to the Expiration Time and not validly revoked and the conditions to the Consent Solicitation are satisfied or waived, all Holders will be paid a consent fee of \$2.50 in cash per \$1,000 principal amount of Securities (the “**Consent Fee**”). The Consent Fee will be paid pursuant to the procedures described herein and under the heading “The Consent Solicitation—Consent Fee” in the Statement. **If the Proposed Amendments become effective, all Holders, including those who do not deliver their consent prior to the Expiration Time, will be bound by the Proposed Amendments.** In the event that the Consent Solicitation is terminated or otherwise not completed, the Consent Fee will not be paid or become payable to any Holders of the Securities and the Proposed Amendments will not become effective.

4. As a condition to the effectiveness of the Proposed Amendments, Belize shall pay (i) to the Trustee, the full amount of the coupon due on the Securities on February 20, 2017, (ii) to the Holders’ Committee, the amount of U.S.\$2,785,000 in full settlement of Belize’s obligation to pay or reimburse fees and expenses of the Holders’ Committee, (iii) to the Information and Tabulation Agent, the Consent Fee and (iv) to the Trustee, all of its outstanding fees and expenses (including, but not limited to, attorneys’ fees and expenses). The Financial Secretary of Belize shall certify in writing to the Trustee, prior to the time of effectiveness of the Proposed Amendments, that all such payments have been made.

AND WHEREAS, under the provisions of section 7 (2) of the Finance and Audit (Reform) Act, Chapter 15 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, the Government of Belize is required to obtain the prior authorization of the National Assembly, by way of a Resolution, for the proposed amendments of terms and conditions of the Securities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House, being satisfied that it would be in the interest of Belize so to do, approves and confirms the proposed amendments to the Terms and Conditions of the Securities as set out above and also approves and confirms the giving of the related undertakings also set out above in this Motion.

After the debate thereon, question put and agreed to.

3. Fiscal Policy, Budget Proposals and Fiscal Strategy Statement and Reports Motion, 2017.

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

WHEREAS, the Government of Belize is committed to placing the payment terms of its external commercial public debt securities on a full sustainable basis;

AND WHEREAS, a key element of this commitment, is the execution by Belize of a robust, multi-year fiscal adjustment program;

AND WHEREAS, in support of its fiscal adjustment program, the Government of Belize has given certain undertakings to the holders of its external commercial public debt securities, including commitments to do the following:

- a) Make proposals to the National Assembly of annual budgets that are projected to result in a primary surplus in each of the fiscal years 2018/19, 2019/20, and 2020/21 equal to at least 2.00% of Gross Domestic Product;
- b) Cooperate with the International Monetary Fund in its preparation of annual Article IV consultation reports for Belize and immediately after completion of the consultation the Ministry of Finance shall approve posting of the associated staff reports on the International Monetary Fund's website;
- c) Publish each year, at the time it is presented to the National Assembly, the Fiscal Strategy Statement referred to in Part 3 of the Statutory Instrument No. 95 of 2010, captioned *Fiscal Transparency and Responsibility Regulations, 2010*;
- d) Publish at the prescribed intervals the Fiscal Outlook and Mid-year Review Report referred to in Part 4 of Statutory Instrument No. 95 of 2010 captioned *Fiscal Transparency and Responsibility Regulations, 2010*;

AND WHEREAS, to give further assurances to its creditors, Government is prepared to covenant that such undertakings will remain in full force and effect without modification until at least six months after the end of the fiscal year 2020/21;

AND WHEREAS, such undertakings have been developed and codified in the proposed new Order entitled "**FISCAL POLICY, BUDGET PROPOSALS, AND FISCAL STRATEGY STATEMENT AND REPORTS ORDER, 2017**", a copy of which is annexed hereto;

AND WHEREAS, section 23 (4) of the Finance and Audit (Reform) Act, Chapter 15 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, provides that all orders made by the Minister under subsection (3) shall be subject to affirmative resolution of the National Assembly;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House, being satisfied that the said "**FISCAL POLICY, BUDGET PROPOSALS, AND FISCAL STRATEGY STATEMENT AND REPORTS ORDER, 2017**", will substantially support its multi-year fiscal adjustment program, approves and affirms the Order annexed thereto and further covenants that these Orders will remain in full force and effect without modification until at least six months after the end of the fiscal year 2020/2021.

After the debate thereon, question put and agreed to.

4. Official Charities Fund Motion, 2017.

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 2018.

Question put and agreed to.

5. Establishment of the National Assembly Staff Committee Motion, 2017.

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

WHEREAS, section 3 (1) of the National Assembly Staff Act (No. 1 of 2000) establishes a National Assembly Staff Committee, consisting of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, or in his absence the Deputy Speaker; three members of the House of Representatives; the President of the Senate and one member of the Senate nominated by the Senate; and one member of the staff of the National Assembly or one other person who is not a member of staff of the National Assembly nominated by the staff of the National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS, section 3 (1) (c) of the National Assembly Staff Act (No. 1 of 2000) provides that the President of the Senate and one other member of the Senate nominated by the Senate;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Senate nominate the Honourable Senator Michael Peyrefitte to be a member of the National Assembly Staff Committee.

Motion was referred to the Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee for examination, consideration and report.

PAPERS

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

- | | | |
|---------|---|---|
| 26/1/13 | - | Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for Fiscal Year 2017/2018. |
| 27/1/13 | - | The Sixteenth Annual Report of the Ombudsman of Belize for the Year ending 2016. |
| 28/1/13 | - | Fiscal Policy, Budget Proposals, and Fiscal Strategy Statement and Reports Order, 2017. |
| 29/1/13 | - | Belize Rural Finance Programme -Audited Financial Report – April 1, 2016 to September 30, 2016. |
| 30/1/13 | - | The Social Investment Fund of Belize - Financial Statements for the years ended March |

31, 2016 and 2015 and Independent Auditors' Report.

Papers were ordered to lie on the Table.

II BILLS FOR SECOND READING

1. General Revenue Appropriation (2017/2018) Bill, 2017.

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, 2018.

(Suspension of the debate on the General Revenue Appropriation (2017/2018) Bill, 2017.)

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 (2017/2018) Bill, 2017.)

Question was put, and a division was requested by Senator Eamon Courtenay.

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	-	No	
Senator Rev. Ashley Rocke	-	Aye	
Senator Elena Smith	-	No	
Senator Osmany Salas	-	No	

Thereon, the result was that seven (7) Senators voted "Aye" and six (6) Senators voted "No".

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, 2017.**

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 Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, to raise the limit of the amount of Treasury Notes or securities that may be held by the Bank at any one time; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

After the debate thereon, question 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, 2017.**

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 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 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. **Stamp Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**

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 Stamp Duties Act, Chapter 64 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, to vary the rate of stamp duty applied to foreign exchange permits; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Question put and agreed to.

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

5. **General Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill 2017.**

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 General Sales Tax Act, Chapter 63 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, to vary the rate of the General Sales Tax charged on the supply of electricity to consumers; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

After the debate thereon, question put and agreed to.

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

6. **Environmental Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**

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 Environmental Tax Act, Chapter 64:01 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, to vary the rate of environmental tax charged, levied and collected on goods imported into Belize; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

After the debate thereon, question put and agreed to.

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

7. **Protected Areas Conservation Trust (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**

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 Protected Areas Conservation Trust Act, Chapter 218 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, to introduce a development fee, which, subject to specified exceptions, is to be, collected from every non-Belizean departing from any air border, administered with support from the Protected Areas Conservation Trust, and payable into the Consolidated Revenue Fund; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

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

The Senators voted as follows:

Senator Godwin Hulse	-	Aye	Senator Dr. Carla Barnett
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	-	No
Senator Rev. Ashley Rocke	-	No
Senator Elena Smith	-	No
Senator Osmany Salas	-	No

Thereon, the result was that six (6) Senators voted “Aye” and seven (7) Senators voted “No”.

Therefore, the Bill was not approved.

8. **Statutory Bodies (Development Contribution) Bill, 2017.**

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 make provision, in furtherance of national development, for specified statutory bodies to be required to transfer to the Consolidated Revenue Fund, on a periodic basis, a fixed percentage of their revenue; and for purposes connected therewith or incidental thereto.

After the debate thereon, question 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. **Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**

10. **Evidence (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**

11. **Indictable Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**

12. **Parole Bill, 2017.**

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 a second time:

Bill for an Act to amend the Criminal Code, Chapter 101 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, to make provision for, among other things, the specification of a minimum term of years, which an offender sentenced to life imprisonment for murder shall serve before the offender can become eligible to be released on parole, incorporating the option of summary trial for the offences of arson and escape; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Bill for an Act to amend the Evidence Act, Chapter 95 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, to provide for oral evidence to be taken by live video link or other electronic

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

Bill for an Act to amend the Indictable Procedure Act, Chapter 96 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, to make new provision in relation to prescribed minimum sentences of imprisonment, having regard to, among other things, companion amendments to the Criminal Code in relation to sentencing for persons under 18 who are convicted of murder; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Bill for an Act to provide for the enshrinement in substantive law of the parole regime, the eligibility for the consideration of parole in relation to persons serving life sentence for murder, the modification of the composition of the Parole Board, the introduction of new offences in relation to activities unduly affecting the operations of the Parole Board; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, be read a second time.

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.

III COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SENATE ON MOTION AND BILLS

In accordance with Standing Order 68A, the Senate, without question put, resolved itself into the Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee, a Committee of the whole Senate, to consider the Motion referred to it and, thereafter, in accordance with Standing Order 54, into the Committee of the whole Senate to examine and consider the Bills that were read a second time.

(In the Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee)

MR. PRESIDENT in the Chair.

1. **Establishment of the National Assembly Staff Committee Motion, 2017.**

Motion in its entirety agreed to.

Motion to be reported back to the Senate for adoption without amendment.

(In the Committee of the whole Senate)

MR. PRESIDENT in the Chair.

1. General Revenue Appropriation (2017/2018) Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Schedule agreed to.

2. Central Bank of Belize (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

3. Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

4. Stamp Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

5. General Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill 2017.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

6. Environmental Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

7. Statutory Bodies (Development Contribution) Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

8. Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 to 4 agreed to.

9. Evidence (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

10. Indictable Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

11. Parole Bill, 2017.

Clauses 1 to 15 agreed to.

Schedule agreed to.

Bills to be reported back to the Senate without amendment.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

A. GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

IV MOTION

(Adoption of Motion)

1. **Establishment of the National Assembly Staff Committee Motion, 2017.**

The Leader of Government Business and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration reported that the Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee met and considered the above-captioned Motion and has agreed for it to be adopted without amendment.

Question put and agreed to.

V REPORTING AND THIRD READING OF BILLS

1. **General Revenue Appropriation (2017/2018) Bill, 2017.**
2. **Central Bank of Belize (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**
3. **Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**
4. **Stamp Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**
5. **General Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**
6. **Environmental Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**
7. **Statutory Bodies (Development Contribution) Bill, 2017.**
8. **Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**

9. **Evidence (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**
10. **Indictable Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2017.**
11. **Parole Bill, 2017.**

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 put and agreed to.

Bills 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 9:25 P.M. to a date to be fixed by the President.

PRESIDENT

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