

BELIZE

No.2/1/14

SENATE

Wednesday, 13th January 2021

10:00 A.M.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

1. Prayers.

2. Oath of Allegiance or Affirmation.

3. Announcements by the President.

4. Bills brought from the House of Representatives.

1. *General Revenue Supplementary Appropriation (2020/2021) (No.5) Bill, 2021.*
2. *Public Health (Amendment) Bill, 2021.*

(Leader of Government Business and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration)

6. Paper.

- 1/1/14 - Supplementary Appropriation (No.5) Schedule for Fiscal Year 2020/2021.

(Leader of Government Business and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration)

13. Motions relating to the Business or Sitzings of the Senate.

14. Public Business.

A. GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

I MOTIONS *(For Text of Motion see Notice Papers attached)*

1. Good Governance in Belize Motion, 2021.
2. Designate New Holidays and Special Days Motion, 2021

(Leader of Government Business and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration)

II BILLS FOR SECOND READING

III COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SENATE ON MOTIONS AND BILLS

IV BILLS FOR THIRD READING

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NOTICES OF QUESTIONS AND MOTIONS

MOTIONS

1. Good Governance in Belize Motion, 2021.

WHEREAS, Standing Order 26 of the House of Representatives provides for a Motion to be moved with the permission of Madam Speaker;

AND WHEREAS, the people of this great nation deserve a better Belize, deserve good governance and deserve to once again live in a truly democratic nation where the rule of law is of paramount importance;

AND WHEREAS, all 26 duly elected members of the House of Representatives on this side of the House had covenanted to:

1. work ceaselessly to achieve the goals set out in the PLANBELIZE Manifesto of the People's United Party;
2. above all, remain faithful to the motto of the PUP – Serve the People – and not to use our offices for personal gain;
3. at all times, faithfully uphold and defend the Constitution and Laws of Belize;
4. unreservedly support plans and policies of a PUP Government that promote social, economic, and environmental justice;
5. ensure that all workers receive fair pay for their work and to implement a livable minimum wage of \$5 per hour;
6. to work to eliminate economic and social privilege and disparity among Belizeans and to protect the right of all to life, liberty, access to affordable education, universal health care, land and housing, and the right to live in peaceful communities;
7. to protect the identity, dignity and social and cultural values of Belizeans including indigenous peoples;
8. to actively promote sustainable development in Belize and to protect our natural and built environment;
9. to insist on good and transparent governance and to hold accountable those who betray the public good;
10. to defend Belize's territorial integrity and to protect Belize's interest in international fora;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House will:

1. Pass legislation to empower the Integrity Commission by appointing professional personnel on the Commission, modify its membership and provide adequate funding for the Commission to fulfill its important legal, auditing and investigative functions;
2. Implement measures to ensure that the three branches of government (i.e. the Executive, Legislative and the Judiciary) function as truly complementary but independent branches as envisaged in the Constitution; Establish sound systems and good practices for recruitment of judges, magistrates and officers of the Court with security of tenure; Ensure that there is increase in the budget for the Judiciary to ensure that the Judiciary is able to ensure that persons accused, and parties in civil matters, are given a fair trial within a reasonable period of time as mandated by the Constitution;
3. Take measures to reduce discretionary ministerial powers in order to increase administrative efficiency and eliminate, where possible, political intervention;
4. Implement a national budget planning, implementing and monitoring system to guarantee transparency of the budget, by engaging civil society, local governments and electoral divisions in the budget process, and to ensure efficient use of the national resources in the designated programs;
5. Facilitate the implementation of a government procurement process through an E-marketplace for the government, statutory bodies and state-owned organizations based on best models used by countries in the region, and ensure that the procurement of supplies, works and services must abide by strict rules in order to ensure fairness, competition and transparency; These rules will ensure that suitably qualified suppliers or contractors are chosen without bias and that the best price/quality ratio and the best price is obtained, with the full transparency appropriate to the use of public funds; The Office of the Contractor General will be strengthened by the enactment of the Public Contracts Commission to ensure full compliance with established rules and procedures in each step of the process from the call for tenders and proposals, publication, and all the procedures for establishing shortlists, evaluation, award and signing of contracts;
6. Reconstitute the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) with effective participation of social partners in the Senate so as to ensure its proper role in overseeing the sound and prudent management of public revenues and expenditures; Strengthen the capacity, allocate appropriate resources and ensure the proper functioning of the Office of the Auditor General, to conduct financial and value-for-money audits for public cost centers and accounts right after the conclusion of every financial year (Section 120, Belize Constitution) and enable and operationalize effective internal auditing systems throughout all departments of Government; Ensure that all hearings of PAC and parliamentary standing committees are public so as to ensure true transparency and accountability.
7. To ensure that we have fair and effective representation and participation, we shall provide for the independence of the Elections & Boundaries Commission to be free from political interference; Its Chairman is to be appointed in a similar fashion as the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Auditor-General, so that the Commission can be autonomous and free from government control; Implement the Constituency Development Fund to enable elected representatives to be pro-active in supporting grass-roots development initiatives in the country. Importantly, to amend the Constitution to provide a fixed date for elections and, to introduce campaign financing legislation.

8. Reform and modernize the public service by taking steps to restore the autonomy of the public service (prevent micro-management by political directorate), to enhance customer orientation and quality service delivery, and to provide innovative solutions to complex challenges of the day. Assist the Public Service Commission to re-establish integrity and impartiality in recruiting, training, evaluating and disciplining processes; Revert to appointing Permanent Secretaries, i.e. using senior career public officers as accounting officers of all Ministries; Public officers will be made to do their job, without fear or favor, punishment will be swift for incompetence and/or corruption, and penalties will be increased for acts of corruption and public authority abuses; Introduce legislation with measures to protect whistle-blowers and witnesses involved in corruption cases; We will implement e-governance where possible to increase efficiency in service and transparency.

2. Designate New Holidays and Special Days Motion, 2021.

WHEREAS, Standing Order 26 of the House of Representatives provides for a Motion to be moved with the permission of Madam Speaker;

AND WHEREAS, Belize is a free, democratic and independent nation thanks to the sacrifice and service of many people, but more particularly the Right Honourable George Price, Father of the Nation;

AND WHEREAS, we believe that it is right and proper to honour the Father of the Nation, the Right Honourable George Price, by designating his birthday, the 15th day of January, as a public and bank holiday to memorialize his sacrifice and efforts in the achievement of this great nation's independence;

AND WHEREAS, today Belize is a beautiful tapestry of peoples of diverse ethnicities and cultures;

AND WHEREAS, we wish to mark the importance of the emancipation of slaves in Belize on the 1st day of August 1834, when many of the ancestors of our fellow Belizeans of African descent were freed from their shackles who continued in their service as free persons to build what is today this great nation;

AND WHEREAS, history records that the people of Belize, including the indigenous people of Belize, were never conquered by the Spanish, and as such, we wish to celebrate their heritage and also the cultural diversity of the great people of Belize, by either removing the 12th day of October as Columbus Day and re-designating that day, and establishing a committee to do so and to review all other public and bank holidays;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. The 15th day of January shall be a public and bank holiday in honour of the late, the Right Honourable George Price, the Father of the Nation, and be celebrated as George Price Day;
2. The 1st day of August shall be a public and bank holiday to mark the importance of emancipation of the slaves in Belize and be celebrated as Emancipation Day; and
3. The 12th day of October shall no longer be celebrated as Columbus Day and is to be re-designated by a committee to be formed to review the same and all holidays.

(Leader of Government Business and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration)