



**ORDER OF BUSINESS
OF THE
SENATE OF JAMAICA**

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2013

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PUBLIC BUSINESS

**PRESENTATION OF BILLS
WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE SENATE FIRST OBTAINED**

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Notice
of second
reading
given on
15.03.2013

1. The Minister of Justice - To move -

BE IT RESOLVED that the Report of the Joint Select Committee on its deliberations on the Bill shortly entitled "*The Committal Proceedings Act, 2012*", which was laid on the Table of the Senate on the 15th day of March, 2013, be adopted.

Notice
of second
reading
given on
22.03.2013

2. The Minister of Justice to move that a Bill entitled "*AN ACT to Repeal the Defamation Act and the Libel and Slander Act and make new provision relating to the tort of defamation; and for connected matters*" be now read a second time.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

NOTICE GIVEN ON FRIDAY, 29TH JUNE, 2012

1. Senator Knight - To move -

[No. 1]

BE IT RESOLVED that the Report of the Standing Orders Committee of the Senate on its deliberations on a Private Members' Motion regarding lunch break during sittings of the Senate, which was laid on the Table of the Senate on the 29th day of June, 2012, be approved;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the recommendations contained in the draft report be adopted and the draft amendments, having been accepted by the Standing Orders Committee, be approved, notwithstanding Standing Order 84:

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the amendments be incorporated in the Standing Orders.

NOTICE GIVEN ON FRIDAY, 7TH DECEMBER, 2012

2. Senator Arthur Williams - To move -

[No. 2]

WHEREAS the National Steering Committee on Digital Switchover has recommended a 2015 deadline for switch-off of analogue television transmission signals and the start of a full digital national television infrastructure;

AND WHEREAS it was announced by the Minister without Portfolio with responsibility for Information that the Cabinet of Jamaica would be asked to declare 2015 as the transition year to digital switchover;

AND WHEREAS the Media Association of Jamaica has stated that it was not a party to the deadline set by the National Steering Committee and was not in agreement with the time frame;

AND WHEREAS it is important to the television service providers as well as the consuming public for there to be general agreement on the way forward in respect of Digital Switchover;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate recommend to the Government that the National Steering Committee on Digital Switchover be expanded to include representatives of television service providers and cable service providers, the Consumer Affairs Commission, the Media Association of Jamaica, civil society and the Parliamentary Opposition;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a definitive timetable for Digital Switchover be proposed by the National Steering Committee to Cabinet, as a matter of urgency, and that the timetable approved by Cabinet be communicated to the public thereafter.

NOTICE GIVEN ON FRIDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY, 2013

3. Senator Johnson Smith - To move -

[No. 3]

WHEREAS over the past 12 months an unprecedented number of pregnant women have been killed in Jamaica;

AND WHEREAS over the past 12 years more than 1600 children have been killed in Jamaica and many have been the victims of sexual offences;

AND WHEREAS the incidence and barbarity of attacks against women and children continue to increase;

AND WHEREAS improved crime-solving methods will increase the number of convictions, but will not address the matter of deterrence or victims' sense of justice:

BE IT RESOLVED that a Joint Select Committee be convened to consider amendments to the *Offences against the Person Act*, the *Sexual Offences Act* and the *Child Care and Protection Act*, with a view specifically to re-defining or augmenting, as appropriate, offences and punishments to be applied to:

- (i) the murder of pregnant women;
- (ii) the murder of children;
- (iii) sexual offences against children;
- (iv) the abduction of children; and
- (v) such other violent crimes perpetrated against women, children and the elderly, as may be deemed by the Committee to be relevant to such a review.

NOTICE GIVEN ON FRIDAY 22ND FEBRUARY, 2013

4. Senator Johnson Smith - To move -

[No. 4]

WHEREAS it is indisputable that education is most often necessary for personal economic mobility, and an educated population is fundamental to our nation's development;

AND WHEREAS the number of unemployed women in Jamaica is almost twice the number of unemployed men and this has been the case for many years;

AND WHEREAS for more than 10 years, almost 20% of live births in Jamaica have been to adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19;

AND WHEREAS empirical data show that, without intervention, girls who get pregnant are less likely to fulfil their academic and economic potential and that of their children, and this inures to their individual detriment as well as to the overall detriment of national development;

AND WHEREAS section 31 of the regulations to the *Education Act* compels the expulsion from school of adolescents girls who become pregnant, but does not mandate their re-admission to the formal education system;

AND WHEREAS the *Education Act* provides for no consequence for the male involved in the pregnancy, which is in itself discriminatory on the basis of gender and accordingly contravenes the principles of non-discrimination set out in section 13 of the *Constitution of Jamaica*:

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Senate call upon the Government to amend section 31 of the regulations to the *Education Act* in such terms as will ensure that every Jamaican girl, regardless of circumstances, is entitled to completion of her formal education at the secondary level.

5. Senator Dr. Tufton - To move -

[No. 5]

WHEREAS the Government of Jamaica has reached a forty-eight month staff level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF);

AND WHEREAS the Government has to conclude a number of prior actions before the final approval of the IMF Board, including a national debt exchange, a tax package of over \$15 Billion and public sector wage and spending restraint;

AND WHEREAS these measures will lead to a contraction in economic activities with a likely adverse impact on job creation and growth;

AND WHEREAS a critical component of Government-strategy is to stimulate investments for job creation and economic expansion, while reducing public spending and paying down on the national debt:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate recommend to the Government the need to give priority to, and to set out in a document, a growth strategy for the Jamaican economy which should include identifying critical sectors for high impact job, creating growth and timelines on reducing bureaucracy to improve efficiencies in transaction time and costs of investments;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate recommend to the Government that it give a quarterly update to the country on the results of the targeted interventions of the growth strategy.

NOTICE GIVEN ON FRIDAY, 1ST MARCH, 2013

6. Senator Montague - To move --

[No. 6]

WHEREAS Parish Councils have the responsibility for the care of the indigent, including their housing needs;

AND WHEREAS no funds have yet been provided in their Budgets for this item;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Supervision, in its last report, estimates that it will cost approximately 70 million dollars to repair, replace and improve the indigent housing stock to acceptable standards:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate recommend to the Government that in the Budget for 2013/1014 there be an adequate provision for indigent housing, equal to its provision for social housing, whether from the Community Development Fund or from the National Housing Trust surplus of funds.

NOTICE GIVEN ON FRIDAY, 8TH MARCH, 2013

7. Senator Dr. Tufton - To move -

[No. 7]

WHEREAS Jamaica has a debt that is currently over \$1.7 trillion or 140 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a deficit of over 6.5 percent;

AND WHEREAS the proposed agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) proposes a programme of debt containing over the next seven years to 2020 of 95 percent of GDP;

AND WHEREAS this programme contains a range of measures substantially focussed on containing public expenditure and institutional reforms to promote efficiencies and growth;

AND WHEREAS Jamaica, like the rest of the Caribbean, is negatively impacted by external shocks from both natural and man-made causes;

AND WHEREAS Jamaica is unlikely to meet the targets for debt reduction and deficit containment with the IMF if external shocks are not sufficiently planned for:

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Senate, in support of reducing the country's debt, call on the Government to articulate a clear policy and strategy to respond to anticipated external shocks, particularly, but not confined, to natural disasters;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government put in place and outline a strategy for annual budgetary allocation to deal with anticipated external shocks.

8. Senator Montague - To move -

[No. 8]

WHEREAS Parish Councils have responsibility for the provision and maintenance of municipal and rural markets, as well as infirmaries and golden age homes;

AND WHEREAS over the years these markets, infirmaries and homes have become very costly to operate, as a result of many factors;

AND WHEREAS one of the largest costs in their operations has been the cost of energy, which is estimated to be some 40 percent of the cost of operations;

AND WHEREAS these markets, infirmaries and homes are vital to communities across the country, but, due to the economic challenges facing the nation at this time, it is feared that their operations might be adversely affected:

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Senate recommend to the Government that it use the Equalization Fund in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development to continue the programme of installing alternate energy systems in markets and infirmaries;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Infirmary and Golden Age Homes Farming Programme be continued;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the successful Trelawny energy system and the St. Thomas and St. Mary Farm Programmes, the latter of which was undertaken jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), to be used as models in carrying out these initiatives.

NOTICE GIVEN ON FRIDAY, 15TH MARCH, 2013

9. Senator Montague - To move -

[No. 9]

WHEREAS the Honourable Minister of Finance has announced an increase of approximately 160% in the property tax rates from 0.7% to 2% of the unimproved value of land, on all plots valued over \$1m, to become effective on April 1, 2013;

AND WHEREAS the National Land Agency has announced that land valuation rates will be increased effective September 1, 2013, and these increased rates will be used to calculate property taxes, effectively occasioning two increases in one year to taxpayers;

AND WHEREAS pensioners, Government workers, minimum wage earners and other fixed income persons will find one increase difficult, let alone two increases in one Financial Year, which will be burdensome, if not cruel and callous;

AND WHEREAS the systems of relief for property taxes to the poor and vulnerable are cumbersome and extremely bureaucratic;

AND WHEREAS the announced increased property taxes and values were not accompanied by measures to increased compliance and the new taxes are only being applied to those who pay:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate recommend to the Government that the effective date of implementation of increased property taxes be stayed until the new valuation rates are announced, at which time the Government must remain flexible to reduce the rates of the property taxes, if the increase in values are too steep;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a simple, accountable and transparent system of relief be put in place to bring relief to pensioners, minimum wage earners, Government workers, the poor and vulnerable;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government continue the programme for increased compliance, started by the last administration, that saw an increase in compliance from 39% to 50%, over a three year period;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government continue the previous administration's programme to extend garbage collection and street lighting, services paid for by property taxes, to more communities, especially in rural areas and housing schemes.

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

08.06.2012

1. Standing Orders Committee to consider and report on Private Members' Motion No. 4 of 2012, as amended, regarding a comprehensive review of the Standing Orders, brought by Senator Arthur Williams.

14.12.2012

2. Special Select Committee to sit jointly with a similar committee appointed by the House of Representatives to consider and report on a Private Bill entitled "AN ACT to Amend the Baptist Mid-Missions in Jamaica (Incorporated) Act so as to change the name of the Act; and for connected matters."

3. Special Select Committee to sit jointly with a similar committee appointed by the House of Representatives to consider and report on a Private Bill entitled "AN ACT to Amend the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World of Jamaica (Incorporation and Vesting) Law."

4. Special Select Committee to sit jointly with a similar committee appointed by the House of Representatives to consider and report on a Private Bill entitled "AN ACT for the incorporation of the Mustard Seed Missionaries and the vesting of property in the body so incorporated."

5. Special Select Committee to sit jointly with a similar committee appointed by the House of Representatives to consider and report on a Private Bill entitled "AN ACT for the incorporation of The International Missionary Society Seventh-Day Adventist Church Reform Movement Jamaican Field and the vesting of property in the body so incorporated."

18.01.2013

6. Joint Select Committee to sit jointly with a similar committee appointed by the House of Representatives to consider and report on the operations of the *Cybercrimes Act*, relative to the review of the legislation in accordance with the provisions of the Act.