

# **BELIZE**

**No. HR1/1/12**

## **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015

10:00 AM.

Pursuant to a Proclamation of His Excellency the Governor-General, dated the 12<sup>th</sup> day of November 2015, appointing the date for the holding of a Session of the Legislature, the House met at 10:00 in the forenoon at the Grounds of the National Assembly Building, Belmopan.

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The House being met, and, it being the first day of the Meeting of the House of Representatives, Mr. Eddie Webster, Clerk to the National Assembly, read the Proclamation issued by His Excellency the Governor-General on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2015.

“**WHEREAS**, section 83 of the Belize Constitution provides, *inter alia*, that there shall be a session of the National Assembly at least once in every year, and that such session shall be held at such place within Belize and shall begin at such time as the Governor-General shall appoint by proclamation published in the *Gazette*;

**AND WHEREAS**, the said section 83 further provides that the first sitting of each House after the National Assembly has at any time been prorogued or dissolved shall begin at the same time;

**AND WHEREAS**, the National Assembly was dissolved with effect from **28<sup>th</sup> September 2015**, and a general election of the Members of the House of Representatives was held on the **4<sup>th</sup> November 2015**;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, Colville Norbert Young**, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, **Governor-General**, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me by the abovementioned provisions of the Constitution, **do hereby proclaim** that a session of the National Assembly shall be held **in front of the National Assembly Building, Belmopan, on Friday, the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015**; and that the first sitting of the House of Representatives and of the Senate will be held at the said venue commencing at **10:00 o'clock in the forenoon**.

**GIVEN** under my hand and the Public Seal of Belize this **12<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2015.**”

**ELECTION OF SPEAKER**

In accordance with Standing Order 3, the Clerk called on the Members to elect a Speaker.

Honourable Dean O. Barrow, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Public Service, Energy and Public Utilities, proposed that Honourable Michael Peyrefitte be Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Honourable Gaspar Vega, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development seconded the proposal.

There being no other nomination, Honourable Michael Peyrefitte was declared Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The Clerk left to fetch the Speaker-elect.

The Speaker-elect preceded by the Mace-Bearer and accompanied by the Sponsor on his right and the Seconder on his left, followed by the Clerk, proceeded to the Dais.

The Speaker made the following announcement:

“Honourable Members of the House of Representatives, having been informed that I am the object of choice of this Honourable House for the high and responsible office of Speaker, it is with grateful thanks that I humbly submit myself to the will of this Honourable House, whose servant I now am.”

MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.

### **ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER**

The Speaker called upon the Honourable House to elect a Deputy Speaker.

Honourable Dean O. Barrow, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Public Service, Energy and Public Utilities, proposed Honourable Edmond Castro to be Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Honourable Gaspar Vega, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development, I seconded the proposal.

### **OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Clerk called upon the Honourable Mr. Speaker and Deputy Speaker to take the Oath and then to other Members of the House.

Thereupon Mr. Speaker, first alone, took and subscribed the Oath.

The Deputy Speaker also took and subscribed the Oath.

The Clerk administered the Oath of Allegiance to the rest of the following Members individually:

**Members Present:**

The Hon. Dean O. Barrow (Queen's Square) Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Public Service, Energy and Public Utilities

The Hon. Gaspar Vega (Orange Walk North), Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development

The Hon. Erwin R. Contreras (Cayo West), Minister of Economic Development, Petroleum, Investment, Trade and Commerce

The Hon. Patrick J. Faber (Collet), Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports

The Hon. John Saldivar (Belmopan), Minister of National Security

The Hon. Michael Finnegan (Mesopotamia), Minister of Housing and Urban Development

The Hon. Manuel Heredia Jr. (Belize Rural South), Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation

The Hon. Anthony Martinez (Port Loyola), Minister of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation

The Hon. Rene Montero (Cayo Central), Minister of Works, Transport and NEMO

The Hon. Wilfred P. Elrington (Pickstock), Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Hon. Pablo S. Marin (Corozal Bay), Minister of Health

The Hon. Hugo Patt (Corozal North), Minister of Labour, Local Government and Rural Development

The Hon. Edmond G. Castro (Belize Rural North), Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and NEMO

The Hon. Dr. Omar Figueroa (Cayo North), Minister of State in the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development

The Hon. Frank Mena (Dangriga), Minister of State in the Ministry of Public Service, Energy and Public Utilities

The Hon. Beverly Castillo (Belize Rural Central), Minister of State in the Ministry of Immigration

The Hon. Tracy Taegar-Panton (Albert), Minister of State in the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Commerce

The Hon. Elodio Aragon Jr. (Orange Walk East), Minister of State in the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports

The Hon. Dr. Angel Campos (Corozal South West), Minister of State in the Ministry of Health

The Hon. Francis Fonseca (Freetown), Leader of the Opposition

The Rt. Hon. Said Musa (Fort George)

The Hon. John Briceño (Orange Walk Central)

The Hon. Florencio Marin Jr. (Corozal South East)

The Hon. Michael Espat (Toledo East)

The Hon. Julius Espat (Cayo South)

The Hon. Cordel Hyde (Lake Independence)

The Hon. Rodwell Ferguson (Stann Creek West)

The Hon. Oscar Requena (Toledo West)

The Hon. Jose Mai (Orange Walk South)

The Hon. Kareem Musa (Caribbean Shores)

The Hon. Orlando Habet (Cayo North East)

MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.

PRAYERS by Bishop Roosevelt Papouloute.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

Mr. Speaker announced that His Excellency the Governor-General was invited to attend the House in order to deliver the Government Speech and ascertained the will of the House that His Excellency should be admitted when he sought entry into the House and that the President and Members of the Senate should be invited to the House to hear the Government Speech.

The Clerk, having been directed, invited the President and Members of the Senate to come to the House and be seated.

### **ARRIVAL OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL**

Following His Excellency the Governor-General's arrival, he was escorted to the Dais by the Speaker, the President and the Clerk.

Mr. Speaker left the Chair and accompanied by the President of the Senate conducted His Excellency the Governor-General to the Dais.

The Honourable Prime Minister handed the Government Speech to the Governor-General.

His Excellency delivered the Government Speech.

His Excellency returned the Government Speech to the Honourable Prime Minister and left escorted by the Speaker, the President and the Clerk.

MR. SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**HON. D. O. BARROW (Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Public Service, Energy and Public Utilities) made the following statement:**

“Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I begin by congratulating you on your re-election as Speaker of the House of Representatives. We look forward to your continued sound, sober, and sometimes stern guidance which, of course, is always liabled by your tremendous sense of humor. And I want to share with Members, our distinguished guests, the audience, that that sense of humor was on fine display this morning. When we all went to escort the Speaker to his Chair, he suggested that we carry him. (Applause)

Mr. President of the Senate, Members of the House of Representatives and Senators, my Lord President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Manuel Sosa and Mrs. Sosa, my Lord Chief Justice Kenneth Benjamin and Mrs. Benjamin, other Justices of the Court of Appeal, I see Mr. Justice Samuel Lungole Awich, other Justices of the Supreme Court, my Lords the Bishop or the Auxiliary Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese, Bishop Glancy, Bishop Papouloute of the Methodist Church, and special salute to Pastor Howell Longsworth and his wife Pastor Gladys Longsworth, Pastor Longsworth, is of course, the Acting President of the Belize Evangelical Association of Churches, Your Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corp, distinguished guests, my fellow citizens. This is the day that the Lord has

made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Applause)

One of the reasons we can be particularly glad is that I see we have among us the first and two-time United Democratic Party Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Sir Manuel Esquivel, (Applause) and his wife, Lady Kathy Esquivel. (Applause) And, indeed, Members, Senators, ladies and gentlemen, there is much to rejoice in, much to be glad for because today, this day, each of us, every single citizen, can celebrate as never before our proudest inheritance, our Belizean democracy. (Applause) It is a democracy, as I am sure Madam Attorney General, it gives me great pleasure to be able to say that, it is a democracy, as I am sure Madam Attorney General will agree, is an inextinguishable lineage, that can be traced in an almost unbroken trajectory through thousands of years. It is a democracy that extends from the community councils of the ancient Maya to the public meetings of the Baymen, to the Courthouse Plaza mobilization of the nationalists. And it is a democracy that once again finds highest expression in this 8<sup>th</sup> Post-Independence Inaugural National Assembly session, a session that in so very many ways and for so very many reasons represents a particularly fine chapter of our electoral history.

Now you have heard the Governor General's speech on behalf of the Government. In the aftermath of the general elections, it is His Excellency who summarizes our outlook and sets out our overview of the way ahead. I can thus afford to be mercifully brief in my own statement and cover just a few essential things.

I first and foremost offer thanks to the citizens of Belize, the ultimate custodians of this cherished democratic legacy. (Applause) Of course, those that voted last Wednesday in yet another completely free, fair and peaceful plebiscite constitute the front line of the ranks to whom we are indebted. (Applause) But, indeed, we owe gratitude to all who live here, to every man, woman and child residing in this land, making up this wonderfully organic jewel of a place we call home. I am sure then that I talk for each Member of the House, each Senator, for the Clerk, and Mr. Speaker, and the Honourable President, when I say to all Belizeans, simply and sincerely, thank you, *gracias, seremein, bantioc, botic*. (Applause)

I next must congratulate the hundreds of selfless and dedicated public servants that ran the process from start to finish and demonstrated to the international observers what we have always known: Belizean officials are past masters at operating to perfection the logistics and modalities of a general election. (Applause)

I, of course, salute all the candidates that worked so hard and sacrificed so much. And I hope that those that weren't elected can come to feel that just participating in their country's highest democratic exercise is honour enough, (Applause) that this is the one competition about which that hoary old saying, normally uttered only as a sop to bruised egos, can contain a ring of truth, that there really is a sense in which everyone that took part is a winner. (Applause)

Now, as critical as all elections are, and this election was, what happens after the election matters just as much as what happens at the election.

The party banners are being lowered and the poster colours of red and blue and green will soon fade. And as we put away the paraphernalia of one 'P', it is time to embrace that other 'P', the 'P' we should value most, the 'P' that stands for

the ‘people.’

On Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> November, there was a vote for action. All of us, red and blue, were elected to look after the interests of our constituents, not our own. And, as we focus on the future, these are the questions we must ask ourselves:

Into what conditions are our children being born? How are they to be nurtured in their early years? Will they have access to the best schools and the best teachers?

What jobs and pay will their parents receive? Are their communities getting safer and more productive? Will their grandparents retire with dignity and respect? And will these children inherit a nation of patriots ready to sacrifice all in the defense of national sovereignty?

For this new National Assembly there can only be one way to answer. We must ensure and we must guarantee the progress and the commitment and the advances and the improvements that the circumstances of our people and the needs of our beloved Belize press so urgently upon us.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is in that context that my Cabinet and I embark now on what must be a grand, revitalized enterprise of uplift, engagement and construction. And we do so at every level of our community, every sector of our society.

There is no ambiguity about our mandate, no imbalance nationally or regionally in the support for our refreshed covenant with the people. Thus, recharged and reinvigorated, we shall move forward with our plans and programs to raise livelihoods, expand education and health, build national infrastructure. We shall empower the young and honour the old. We shall grow the economy and increase business. We shall husband the nation’s wealth and steward its resources. Above all we shall conduct the operation of Government with integrity as we search for that spot in the affairs of this country where honesty and equality and truth and justice finally prevail. (Applause)

Let no one or let nothing hold us back, and God bless Belize!” (Applause)

### **MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE**

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Public Service, Energy and Public Utilities moved that at its rising today, the House adjourn to a date to be fixed by the Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Public Service, Energy and Public Utilities moved that the House do now adjourn.

Question put and agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11:20 AM. to a date to be fixed by the Speaker.

**Speaker.**

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