

BELIZE

No. HR 29/1/11

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, 15th September 2015

10:14 A.M.

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Pursuant to the directions of Mr. Speaker on the 11th September 2015, the House met on Tuesday, 15th September 2015, in the National Assembly Chamber, Belmopan, at 10:14 A.M.

Members Present:

The Hon. Michael Peyrefitte, Speaker
The Hon. Dean O. Barrow (Queen's Square), Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
The Hon. Gaspar Vega (Orange Walk North), Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Natural Resources and Agriculture
The Hon. Erwin R. Contreras (Cayo West), Minister of Trade, Investment Promotion, Private Sector Development and Consumer Protection
The Hon. Michael Finnegan (Mesopotamia), Minister of Housing and Urban Development
The Hon. Patrick J. Faber (Collet), Minister of Education, Youth and Sports
The Hon. Manuel Heredia Jr. (Belize Rural South), Minister of Tourism and Culture
The Hon. Anthony Martinez (Port Loyola), Minister of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation
The Hon. John Saldivar (Belmopan), Minister of National Security
The Hon. Wilfred P. Elrington (Pickstock), Attorney General and Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Hon. Pablo S. Marin (Corozal Bay), Minister of Health
The Hon. Rene Montero (Cayo Central), Minister of Works and Transport
The Hon. Edmond G. Castro (Belize Rural North), Minister of State in the Ministry of Works and Transport, Deputy Speaker
The Hon. Santino Castillo (Caribbean Shores), Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
The Hon. Hugo Patt (Corozal North), Minister of State in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture
The Hon. Herman Longsworth (Albert), Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
The Hon. Mark King (Lake Independence), Minister of State in the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation
The Hon. Dr. Omar Figueroa (Cayo North), Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister
The Hon. Elvin Penner (Cayo North East)
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. Dolores Balderamos Garcia (Belize Rural Central)
 The Hon. Rodwell Ferguson (Stann Creek West)
 The Hon. Oscar Requena (Toledo West)
 The Hon. Jose Mai (Orange Walk South)
 The Hon. Ramiro Ramirez (Corozal South West)

Members Absent:

The Hon. Frank Mena (Dangriga), Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security
 The Hon. Julius Espat (Cayo South)
 The Hon. Marco Tulio Mendez (Orange Walk East)

MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.

PRAYERS by Pastor Conrad Arzu.

PAPER

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development moved:

No. HR276A/1/11 - Supplementary Appropriation (No.3)
 Schedule for Fiscal Year 2015/2016.

Sessional Paper No. 276A/1/11 was referred to the Committee of Supply for examination, consideration and report.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEE

The Honourable Chairman of the Finance and Economic Development Committee:

No. HR277/1/11 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Write-Off (No.3) Motion, 2015.

No. HR278/1/11 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Write-Off (No.4) Motion, 2015.

No. HR279/1/11 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Write-Off (No.5) Motion, 2015.

No. HR280/1/11 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Write-Off (No.6) Motion,

2015.

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| No. HR281/1/11 | - | Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Write-Off (No.7) Motion, 2015. |
| No. HR282/1/11 | - | Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Write-Off (No.8) Motion, 2015. |
| No. HR283/1/11 | - | Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Write-Off (No.9) Motion, 2015. |
| No. HR284/1/11 | - | Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Write-Off (No.10) Motion, 2015. |
| No. HR285/1/11 | - | Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2015. |

Reports were ordered to lie on the Table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker made the following announcement:

“Honourable Members, with the consent of the House, I propose to vary the order of the Sitting today to allow the Introduction of Bills at item 12 on the order paper to be taken after the Committee of Supply at item 14. This is to allow the introduction of the General Revenue Supplementary Appropriation (2015/2016) (No.3) Bill, 2015, which, according to Standing Orders 71 of the House, cannot be introduced until the proposals have been approved by the Committee of Supply and agreed to by the House.

I therefore propose that the House resolve into a Committee of Supply under item “Government Business”.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

A. Government Business

I COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Pursuant to Standing Order, the House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply and the Speaker ordered the withdrawal of strangers from the galleries.

MR. SPEAKER left the Chair.

[In the Committee]

The Chairman in the Chair.

1. Supplementary Appropriation (No.3) Schedule for Fiscal Year 2015/2016.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development moved:

That the Committee approves the proposals set out in Sessional Paper No. HR276A/1/11 referred to the Committee of Supply.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman left the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.

II MOTIONS

1. Supplementary Appropriation (No.3) Schedule for Fiscal Year 2015/2016 Motion, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development moved:

THAT the Committee of Supply has met and approved the proposals set out in the Sessional Paper No. HR276A/1/11 - Supplementary Appropriation (No.3) Schedule for Fiscal Year 2015/2016, and that the Honourable House agree with the proposals approved by the Committee of Supply.

Question put and agreed to.

2. Write-off (No.3) Motion, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, with the permission of the Speaker not repeat the recitals, moved:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House approve

the write-off of \$60,000.00 as a loss to the Government of Belize.

Question put and agreed to.

3. Write-off (No.4) Motion, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, with the permission of the Speaker not repeat the recitals, moved:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House approve the write-off of \$25,000.00 as a loss to the Government of Belize.

Question put and agreed to.

4. Write-off (No.5) Motion, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, with the permission of the Speaker not repeat the recitals, moved:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House approve the write-off of \$29,977.16 as a loss to the Government of Belize.

Question put and agreed to.

5. Write-off (No.6) Motion, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, with the permission of the Speaker not repeat the recitals, moved:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this House approve the write-off of \$5,771.00 as a loss to the Government of Belize.

Question put and agreed to.

6. Write-off (No.7) Motion, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, with the permission of the Speaker not repeat the recitals, moved:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this House approve the write-off of \$19,687.50 as a loss to the Government of Belize.

Question put and agreed to.

7. Write-off (No.8) Motion, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, with the permission of the Speaker not repeat the recitals, moved:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this House approve the write-off of \$7,634.90 as a loss to the Government of Belize.

Question put and agreed to.

8. Write-off (No.9) Motion, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, with the permission of the Speaker not repeat the recitals, moved:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this House approve the write-off of \$9,465.00 as a loss to the Government of Belize.

Question put and agreed to.

9. Write-off (No.10) Motion, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, with the permission of the Speaker not repeat the recitals, moved:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this House approve the write-off of \$9,300.00 as a loss to the Government of Belize.

Question put and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

1. General Revenue Appropriation (2015/2016) (No.3) Bill, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development introduced the above-mentioned Bill:

Bill for an Act to appropriate further sums of money for the use of the Public Service of Belize for the financial year ending thirty-first day of March, two thousand and sixteen.

Cabinet's recommendation signified by the Minister.

Bill read a first time and a second time.

2. Bank Undertaking (FirstCaribbean International Bank

(Barbados) Limited Belize Branch) Vesting Bill, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development introduced the above-mentioned Bill:

Bill for an Act to provide for the vesting in Heritage Bank Ltd. of the business in Belize of FirstCaribbean International Bank (Barbados) Limited; and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Cabinet's recommendation signified by the Minister.

Bill read a first time and ordered to be printed, and pursuant to Standing Orders, referred to the Finance and Economic Development Committee for examination, consideration and report.

3. Telecommunications Acquisition (Settlement) Bill, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development moved:

Bill for an Act to facilitate the implementation of the terms of a deed of settlement and compromise between the Government, Dunkeld International Investment Ltd, British Caribbean Bank Limited and The Trustees of the BTL Employees Trust arising from the acquisition by the Government, in the public interest, of shares in Belize Telemedia Limited and rights under certain loans and security arrangements made by The British Caribbean Bank Limited; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Cabinet's recommendation signified by the Minister.

Bill read a first time and ordered to be printed, and pursuant to Standing Orders, referred to the Finance and Economic Development Committee for examination, consideration and report.

In accordance with Standing Orders 49(1), the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development moved that the next stages of the Telecommunications Acquisition (Settlement) Bill, 2015, as well as the Bank Undertaking (FirstCaribbean International Bank (Barbados) Limited Belize Branch) Vesting Bill, 2015, be taken forthwith.

Question put and agreed to.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

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

Question put and agreed to.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker made the following announcement:

“Honourable Members, it has been agreed that the Bank Undertaking (FirstCaribbean International Bank (Barbados) Limited Belize Branch) Vesting Bill, 2015, and the Telecommunications Acquisition (Settlement) Bill, 2015, pass this day.

As you are well aware, under Standing Order No. 74, all proposed Legislation, Messages, Petitions, Motions and other matters relating to the subject mentioned under the title of each Standing Committee shall be referred by the House to such Committee for examination, consideration and report to the House.

The only logical way for this to be done, other than by suspension of Standing Orders, is for me to suspend the Sitting to enable the Finance and Economic Development Committee to examine, consider and report to the House on the Bills.”

Question put and agreed to.

The Sitting was therefore suspended until the Finance and Economic Development Committee concluded its business.

The Meeting suspended at 10:50 A.M.

The Meeting resumed at 11:16 A.M.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEE

The Honourable Chairman of the Finance and Economic Development Committee:

No. HR286/1/11 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Bank Undertaking (FirstCaribbean International Bank (Barbados) Limited Belize Branch) Vesting Bill, 2015.

No. HR287/1/11 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Telecommunications Acquisition (Settlement) Bill, 2015.

Reports were ordered to lie on the Table.

III **BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

1. **Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2015.**

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development 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 2000-2003, to introduce the third stage of reduction of customs duties in regards to the Economic Partnership Agreement between CARIFORUM and the European Union; 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, committed to a Committee of the whole House.

2. **Bank Undertaking (FirstCaribbean International Bank (Barbados) Limited Belize Branch) Vesting Bill, 2015.**

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development moved that the above-mentioned Bill be read a second time:

Bill for an Act to provide for the vesting in Heritage Bank Ltd. of the business in Belize of FirstCaribbean International Bank (Barbados) Limited; and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

(Suspension of the debate on the Bank Undertaking (FirstCaribbean International Bank (Barbados) Limited Belize Branch) Vesting Bill, 2015)

In accordance with Standing Order 12 (8), the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development 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 Bank Undertaking (FirstCaribbean International Bank (Barbados) Limited Belize Branch) Vesting Bill, 2015)

After the debate thereon, question put and agreed to.

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

3. **Telecommunications Acquisition (Settlement) Bill, 2015.**

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic

Development moved that the above-mentioned Bill be read a second time:

Bill for an Act to facilitate the implementation of the terms of a deed of settlement and compromise between the Government, Dunkeld International Investment Ltd, British Caribbean Bank Limited and The Trustees of the BTL Employees Trust arising from the acquisition by the Government, in the public interest, of shares in Belize Telemedia Limited and rights under certain loans and security arrangements made by The British Caribbean Bank Limited; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, be read a second time.

After the debate thereon, question put and agreed to.

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

IV COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE ON BILLS

Pursuant to Standing Orders, the House, without question put, resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Bills that were read a second time and Mr. Speaker left the chair.

[In the Committee]

The Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

1. Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2015.

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Bill to be reported back to the House without amendment.

2. Bank Undertaking (FirstCaribbean International Bank (Barbados) Limited Belize Branch) Vesting Bill, 2015.

Clauses 1 to 6 agreed to.

Schedule agreed to.

Bill to be reported back to the House without amendment.

3. Telecommunications Acquisition (Settlement) Bill, 2015.

Clauses 1 to 8 agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2 agreed to.

Bill to be reported back to the House without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.

V BILLS FOR THIRD READING

1. General Revenue Supplementary Appropriation (2015/2016) (No.3) Bill, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development moved that the General Revenue Supplementary Appropriation (2015/2016) (No.3) Bill, 2015, be now read a third time.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

2. Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development reported that the Committee of the whole House has gone through the Bill, clause by clause, and directed him to report same without amendment.

Whereupon the Prime Minister moved that the Bill be read a third time.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

3. Bank Undertaking (First Caribbean International Bank (Barbados) Limited Belize Branch) Vesting Bill, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development reported that the Committee of the whole House has gone through the Bill, clause by clause, and directed him to report same without amendment.

Whereupon the Prime Minister moved that the Bill be read a third time.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

4. Telecommunications Acquisition (Settlement) Bill, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development reported that the Committee of the whole House has gone through the Bill, clause by clause, and directed him to report same without amendment.

Whereupon the Prime Minister moved that the Bill be read a third time.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development moved that the House be adjourned.

Question put and agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3:05 P.M. to a date to be fixed by the Speaker.

Speaker.

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