

BELIZE

No. HR 26/1/11

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, 26th March 2015

10:18 AM.

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Pursuant to the Order of the House on the 13th March 2015, the House met on Thursday, 26th March 2015, in the National Assembly Chamber, Belmopan, at **10:18 AM.**

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. 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. Julius Espat (Cayo South)
 The Hon. Oscar Requena (Toledo West)
 The Hon. Ivan Ramos (Dangriga)
 The Hon. Jose Mai (Orange Walk South)
 The Hon. Ramiro Ramirez (Corozal South West)

Members Absent:

The Hon. Michael Finnegan (Mesopotamia), Minister of Housing and Urban
 Development
 The Hon. Marco Tulio Mendez (Orange Walk East)

MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.

PRAYERS by Pastor Conrad Arzu

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker made the following announcement:

“Honourable Members, please allow me to make two acknowledgements. I would like to acknowledge some students here all the way from Corozal, from the Corozal Community College, they are here to observe the budget debates and I hope we don’t disappoint them over the next two days or if just for the day that they are here today. So welcome students from Corozal Community College (CCC). Enjoy and learn. Thanks for coming.

Secondly, Honourable Members, if some of us may notice the glaring absence of our beloved colleague from Mesopotamia. I would like to take this opportunity to say to the Finnegan’s and Myvett’s family our condolences for the passing of his mother. The Minister of Housing has indicated to me today, and yesterday as well, that he would not be attending the debate, we’ll surely miss him. I ask all of you to keep him in our prayers, and to wish the family well during their time of bereavement.”

With the permission of the Honourable Speaker, The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development made the following announcement:

“Mr. Speaker, if you would allow me, simply to join you in offering condolences to the Minister of Housing, the Honourable Member for Mesopotamia. As most people in this House will know Minister Finnegan and I have been friends from our teenage years which is a long, long, long time ago. It means that I have known his mother, Ms. Esmay, for those very many years, and in fact there is another dimension to the connection. She is the grandmother of my eldest child.

I therefore, feel her death personally as well as, of course, very much so on behalf of her son, our colleague and her other children. She was a fine lady, at all strength tremendous mother, and wife, and certainly a sort of the earth

Belizeans. So I'm grateful to you for allowing me to associate myself with the condolences you expressed on behalf of the entire Chamber. Thank you."

PRESENTATION OF REPORT FROM SELECT COMMITTEE

The Honourable Chairman of the Finance and Economic Development Committee:

No. HR264/1/11 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Alba Petrocaribe Belize Energy Limited Loan Motion, 2015.

Report was ordered to lie on the Table.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL

1. Petrocaribe Loans Bill, 2015.

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

Bill for an Act to make special provisions for borrowing money from Alba Petrocaribe (Belize Energy) 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 Bill be taken forthwith.

After the debate thereon, 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 Friday, 27th March 2015, at 10:00 AM.

Question put and agreed to.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker made the following announcement:

"Honourable Members, it has been agreed that the Petrocaribe Loan 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 Bill.”

Question put and agreed to.

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

Sitting suspends at 10:37 A.M.

Sitting resumes at 10:50 A.M.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT FROM SELECT COMMITTEE

The Honourable Chairman of the Finance and Economic Development Committee:-

No. HR265/1/11 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Petrocaribe Loans Bill, 2015.

After a brief intervention by the Honourable John Briceño, report was ordered to lie on the Table.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

A. Government Business

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker made the following announcement:

“Honourable Members, the debate on the second reading of the General Revenue Appropriation (2015/2016) Bill, 2015, is about to be resumed.

Before we begin, I should like to draw Honourable Members’ attention to Standing Order No. 64, ‘Presentation and the second reading of the Appropriation Bill’, especially paragraph 5 which reads: *‘After the Motion for the second reading of the Appropriation Bill has been resumed, under paragraph 4 of this Standing Order, the debate shall be confined to the financial and economic state of the country and the general principles of Government policy and administration as indicated by the Appropriation Bill and the Estimates.’* Please

remember I have to listen to thirty-one of you.

Members are therefore asked to confine their debate within the prescribed limits of the Standing Order.

I would like to remind Honourable Members of other parts of Standing Orders, specifically Standing Order No. 42 (b), which states that an Honourable Member shall maintain silence while another Member is speaking, and shall not interrupt, except in accordance with these Standing Orders. Honourable Members are fully aware of the need for the Chair to voice this at this moment in time.

I would also like to remind visitors in the Galleries that they must preserve silence and must conduct themselves in a fit and proper manner during a Sitting.

We now have the resumption of the debate on the General Revenue Appropriation (2015/2016) Bill, 2015.”

(Resumption of the debate on the General Revenue Appropriation (2015/2016) Bill, 2015.)

(Suspension of the debate on the General Revenue Appropriation (2015/2016) Bill, 2015.)

In accordance with Standing Order 12 (8), the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance 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 of the debate on the General Revenue Appropriation (2015/2016) Bill, 2015.)

During the course of the day, Mr. Speaker, announced that the Sitting scheduled for 27/3/15 will commenced at 9:00 A.M. instead of 10:00 A.M. as agreed earlier.

Meeting suspended at 5:55 PM to Friday, 27th March 2015, at 9:00 AM.

Friday, 27th March 2015

8:55 AM.

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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. 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. 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 Hon. John Briceño (Orange Walk Central)
- The Hon. Michael Espat (Toledo East)
- The Hon. Dolores Balderamos Garcia (Belize Rural Central)
- The Hon. Florencio Marin Jr. (Corozal South East)
- The Hon. Rodwell Ferguson (Stann Creek West)
- The Hon. Julius Espat (Cayo South)
- The Hon. Oscar Requena (Toledo West)
- The Hon. Ivan Ramos (Dangriga)
- The Hon. Jose Mai (Orange Walk South)
- The Hon. Ramiro Ramirez (Corozal South West)

Members Absent:

- The Hon. Michael Finnegan (Mesopotamia), Minister of Housing and Urban Development
- The Hon. John Saldivar (Belmopan), Minister of National Security
- The Rt. Hon. Said Musa (Fort George)
- The Hon. Marco Tulio Mendez (Orange Walk East)

MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.

PRAYERS by Pastor Conrad Arzu

Sitting resumed at 8:55 AM.

(Resumption of the debate on the General Revenue Appropriation (2015/2016) Bill, 2015.)

(Suspension of the debate on the General Revenue Appropriation (2015/2016) Bill, 2015.)

In accordance with Standing Order 12 (8), the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance 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 of the debate on the General Revenue Appropriation (2015/2016) Bill, 2015.)

After debate thereon, question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and pursuant to Standing Orders, committed to a Committee of Supply.

I COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

The House suspended.

[In the Committee]

The Honourable Dean Barrow (Minister of Finance and Economic Development) in the Chair.

1. General Revenue Appropriation (2015/2016) Bill, 2015.

Schedule agreed to as follows:

HEAD OF EXPENDITURE

RECURRENT		(PART		PROPOSED
2015/2016		1)		ESTIMATES
				BZ
11017-11021	11	Office	of the Governor-General	
416,700				
12017-12138	12	Judiciary		8,910,558
13017-13048	13	Legislation	and	
2,596,335				

14017-14148, 17048	14	Ministry of Public Service and Elections Boundaries	14,022,377
15017-15021 2,294,836	15	Director of Public Prosecutions	
16017-16028 2,351,200	16	Auditor	General
17017, 25021, 31048	17	Office of the Prime Minister	
		5,388,548	
18017-18465 32017 241,541,904	18	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	
19017-19288, 114,401,112 30241	19	Ministry of Health	
20017-20169 31017-31031	20	Attorney General's Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs	21,616,503
21017-21786 234,344,353	21	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	
25051-25081			
28017-22131, 23178-23338	22	Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development	6,902,272
22017-22086 22121, 22158 23017-23166 23348, 23358 23378, 26711	23	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture	15,778,189
24017, 28048 32028	24	Ministry of Trade, Investment Promotion, Private Sector Development and Consumer Protection	4,491,904
14058, 25017 5,582,175	25	Ministry of Tourism and Culture	
27017-27161, 14,745,294 27181-27231, 30451	27	Ministries of Human Development and Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation	
26088-29017, 18,678,188 29198-33157 33228	29	Ministry of Works and Transport	
30021-30498, 130,897,286 33021	30	Ministry of Nationality Security	
33017, 33051	33	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	1,682,061
17028, 18448, 24,551,595 26031, 33091- 33146, 30258- 30446, 34048- 34081, 35017, 35037	35	Ministry of Labour, Local Government, Rural Development, National Emergency Management Immigration and Nationality	
23308, 36017 2,323,417	37	Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology	

and Public Utilities

TOTAL RECURRENT (PART 1)		873,516,809
CAPITAL II (PART 11)		PROPOSED ESTIMATES 2015/2016
BZ		
11	Office of the Governor-General	
15,137		
12	Judiciary	
87,576		
13	Legislature	10,500
14	Ministry of Public Service and Elections and Boundaries	215,700
15	Director of Public Prosecutions	52,100
16	Auditor General	26,002
17	Office of the Prime Minister	169,000
18	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	36,192,687
19.	Ministry of Health	4,444,440
20.	Attorney's General's Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs	355,000
21	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	4,717,249
22	Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development	961,024
23	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture	13,979,156
24.	Ministry of Trade, Investment Promotion, Private Sector Development and Consumer Protection	665,450
25	Ministry of Tourism and Culture	851,021
27	Ministry of Human Development & Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation	9,788,794
29	Ministry of Works and Transport	20,215,000
30	Ministry of National Security	
2,077,228		
33	Ministry of Housing & Urban Development	612,000
35	Ministry of Labour, Local Government and Rural Development, National Emergency Management and Nationality	1,569,200
37	Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology and Public Utilities	780,910

TOTAL CAPITAL II (PART II)		97,785,174
CAPITAL III (PART 111)		PROPOSED ESTIMATES 2015/2016
		BZ
12	Judiciary	
	150,000	
18	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	
	21,692,108	
19.	Ministry of Health	1,291,761
20	Attorney General's Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
	1,400,000	
21	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	
	1,500,000	
22	Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development	
	4,400,000	
23.	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural Resources and Agriculture	18,298,259
25	Ministry of Tourism and Culture and Civil Aviation	1,700,000
27	Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation	
	2,760,820	
29	Ministry of Works and Transport	40,600,000
37	Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology and Public Utilities	575,000
TOTAL CAPITAL III (PART 111)		94,367,948
CAPITAL TRANSFERS AND NET LENDING (PART IV)		
		BZ
18	Ministry of Finance	
	<u>2,595,677</u>	
TOTAL CAPITAL TRANSFER AND NET LENDING (PART IV)		<u>2,595,677</u>
AMORTIZATION (PART V)		
18	Ministry of Finance	
	<u>85,975,936</u>	
TOTAL AMORTIZATION (PART V)		<u>85,975,936</u>
GRAND TOTAL		1,154,241,544

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Bill to be reported back to the House without amendment.

2. Official Charities Fund Motion, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development 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 2016.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman left the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.

**REPORT AND THIRD READING OF GENERAL REVENUE
APPROPRIATION (2015/2016) BILL, 2015**

1. General Revenue Appropriation (2015/2016) Bill, 2015.

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development reported that the Committee of Supply had 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.

II MOTIONS

1. Alba Petrocaribe Belize Energy Limited Loan Motion, 2015.

(referred 13th March 2015)

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House, being satisfied that the loan proceeds from APBEL, on the terms and conditions set out above, would greatly assist the GOB in achieving the aforesaid purposes, confirms and validates the borrowing by the GOB from APBEL of the total sum of US\$28,776,243.39 during the period

September 2014 to February 2015.

Question put and agreed to.

2. Official Charities Fund Motion, 2015.

(referred 13th March 2015)

The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development 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 2016.

Question put and agreed to.

III BILL FOR SECOND READING

1. Petrocaribe Loans 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 make special provisions for borrowing money from Alba Petrocaribe (Belize Energy) Limited; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

After 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 BILL

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

[In the Committee]

The Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

1. Petrocaribe Loans Bill, 2015.

The Preamble as well as Clauses 1 to 6 agreed to.

Bill to be reported back to the House without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.

V BILL FOR THIRD READING

1. Petrocaribe Loans 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 7:28 PM. to a date to be fixed by the Speaker.

Speaker.

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