



Capital Weekly

From the Heart of the Nation to the Soul of the People



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Ramon El Champion!



Hon. Ramon Witz and Prime Minister Dean Barrow mounting the steps of the National Assembly for the Budget Debate last Thursday

John versus Johnny



Hon. John Saldivar



Hon. Johnny Briceno

The Budget Debate last Thursday and Friday certainly had its fair share of contention. It opened with the usual rebuttal by the Leader of the Opposition who for the most part read a prepared statement, one which members of the government side claimed was written for him. The immediate response to his speech came from Belmopan Representative Hon. John Saldivar. The following are excerpts from Honourable Saldivar's response.

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Editorial

The Spirit of 2005



Delroy Cuthkelvin
Chairman
Editorial Board

We have been making the case for some time now that 2005 was a year not only of historic significance, but one that remains relevant to the present and future of our country; to the ongoing battle for the heart and soul of this nation whose greatest challenges are far from over; which perhaps have only just begun.

Last week, in the National Assembly, we heard from at least two parliamentarians, references to that year (2005) and the significance it holds in what is perhaps the most important struggle for Belizeans since the Battle of St. Georges Caye, no disrespect to those who took their stand against the Heads of Agreement.

“It was the scandal over the pillage of SSB, the uncollateralized millions in so-called loans to the Godfreys and so on that produced the start of the revolution that almost turned violent in sweeping them from power”, Prime Minister Dean Barrow recounted in his wrap up of the debate on Friday.

Earlier that same afternoon, backbencher, Marcel Cardona, speaking out against what he called unfair treatment towards him (Cardona) by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, remarked, *“To explain how instrumental the support of Orange Walk East was to bringing about a national change, let me indicate that for the January 2005 demonstrations at the steps of the very National Assembly building, Orange Walk East heard the call of the then leader of the Opposition and now Prime Minister, and contributed 8 bus loads of energetic, bold and determined young people whilst the Belize City constituencies were generally contributing only 1 to 2 bus loads. That was the*

level of commitment and contribution to the cause for real change which had been promised to the Belizean public.”

We note as well that on Independence Hill and inside the National Assembly last Thursday, supporters of the Opposition, though not particularly impressive in numbers, appeared more muscular in posture than they have been in a long time, and were clearly trying their best to replicate the mood and spirit of the 2005 patriotic movement. In their case, it goes without saying that they could never match the real thing for the simple reason that they are not at all genuine, and their cause is not righteous.

Another strong reminder of the spirit of 2005 came earlier this week in the person of Paul Perriott whose re-emergence at the helm of the Belize Communication Worker’s Union shocked everyone, including himself. It’s perhaps the latest confirmation of the old Creole proverb, “old fire stick noh haad fi ketch”.

The Bible, in 2 Timothy 3:5, warns us against those “having

a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.”

So righteous and worthy was the movement of 2005, everyone, including supporters of the party whose actions as a government triggered that movement, are now trying to associate themselves with it.

On the other hand, there are some who attempt to summon up the spirit of 2005, yet they seem determined to deny proven soldiers of the revolution their rightful place in that revolution.

We will not attempt to play God. Let each man (or woman) examine his (or her) own heart. That’s right where we’ll leave it for now. May the spirit of 2005 never die!

Capital Weekly

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To the Soul of the People*

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Ramon El Campion!

Prime Minister Inaugurates Water System

Wishes Witz Well



Prime Minister Dean Barrow and Hon. Ramon Witz turning on faucets in Cotton Tree at the inauguration ceremony

On Monday, the first phase of a Water Expansion Project was inaugurated in the village of Cotton Tree in Cayo South.

The guest speaker was Prime Minister Hon. Dean Barrow. That by itself was big news. But perhaps the biggest news of the day came when P.M. Barrow in his address to the gathering gave what was, by all accounts, a virtual endorsement of Witz who faces an intra party convention this coming weekend.

We'll come to that shortly, but first the intended news. The Cotton Tree Water Expansion Project which has just been completed is the first phase of a government initiative and provides a reliable supply of safe and potable water to over 2,000 residents (386 households) in three main villages along the Western Highway, namely Cotton Tree, St Mathews and Franks Eddy.

The ongoing project will connect all three communities through a 64,100 ft transmission line from the central water system in Belmopan. The pipes are being buried 3 ft underground so that it is not prone to damages by flooding, which is the only natural hazard due to creeks that cross the highway.

The water source in Belmopan

is sufficient in quantity and quality to supply all three villages. In fact, BWSL had, in the past, already established expansion points on the Western Highway strategically placed for such an endeavour.

The \$1.5 million project is being funded by the Government of Belize (\$1.0 Million) through the Commonwealth Debt Initiative (CDI) and Belize Water Services Limited (\$0.5 Million). The project is being executed by the Belize Water Services Limited (BWSL) with oversight by the Social Investment Fund. The Belmopan-Cotton Tree component is estimated at \$1.3 Million.

In his address at the inauguration Hon Ramon Witz recounted, *"I promised my people, I made a commitment that when elected I will work along with our government to ensure that this suffering and punishment comes to an end. It hasn't been an easy one. Good things don't happen overnight. But the wait has really paid off. And today, when you walk around the village of Cotton Tree which is now benefiting from the first phase of this water system, no longer do you turn your faucets and you get air, no longer do you wish that you had water in*

your homes. The imagining of the possibilities has become a reality, thanks to your UDP Government and your Prime Minister who have put their hard work in ensuring that we improve the quality of life for each and every one of you."

Prime Minister Barrow, for his part, remarked, *"I have especially to congratulate the area representative, Ramon Witz. There is always a struggle for resources among the representatives of the various constituencies in government. Naturally, the allocations are limited and so there is a competition. And I am here to tell you that Hon. Ramon Witz has been absolutely relentless in championing the cause of the people of the Cayo South Constituency, and he was particularly strong and vigorous and unyielding in insisting that we get this water system done. He wouldn't stop until eventually we were able to come up with the financing and I certainly need salute him and congratulate him."*

"I want to tell you that Hon Witz is absolutely speaking the truth when he says that much more will be forthcoming for the villages of the Cayo South Constituency. We are particularly concerned to try and improve the infrastructure in the

various villages. We know that we have to do a lot in terms of village streets and village roads, and the budget that we have just passed in the House of Representatives does contain a fair share for the Cayo South Constituency, and Honorable Witz will be ensuring that we deliver for you with respect to this most important area of the improvement of village infrastructure"

Then came the biggest news of the day as PM Barrow stated, *"I'm not going to talk any kind of internal politics, but you will forgive me for at least saying that I wish Honorable Witz the very best in the upcoming convention on Sunday. He has shown himself to be a worthy champion for Cayo South, and I have taken to referring to him as Ramon el Campion! And so the best of luck to him."*

Later that evening when asked by Channel Seven News if his comment meant that he wants Ramon Witz to win the convention, the PM said he certainly doesn't want him to lose. That's perhaps as close as one can come to a full endorsement. The UDP standard bearer convention will be held this coming Sunday in Roaring Creek.

Faber versus Fonseca

(The following is a major portion of the budget debate presentation by Collet Area Representative and Minister of Education Hon. Patrick Faber in response to Freetown Representative and former Minister of Education, Hon. Francis Fonseca)

I notice that the Leader of the Opposition has refrained from talking about the three hundred dollar subsidy, because last year he said he didn't see it yet and we had to correct him and put him to shame, since the program was already in operation for two years.

There are some 5,428 students in first and second form who received the subsidy from this government in 2009-2010. That represents 50 percent, half of all the students who are enrolled in Secondary Education across the country, helping them tremendously to pay for their high school education.

Mr Speaker, it is only this United Democratic Party Government that cares for the people of the South, and we believe strongly that the only way out of poverty for those areas is Education. And that is why we instituted that subsidy automatically for every single child in the South of this country. Every single child for the last two years of this United Democratic Party Administration who graduated from a primary school in any part of Stann Creek or Toledo received the voucher ticket of THREE HUNDRED Dollars.

So, how can you say you don't see that, Member for Freetown? Are you blind or are you simply a liar? How can you say that nothing has been done for access to high school?

And thanks to this UDP Government, there will soon be six high schools in Toledo, as we are partnering with a church; we will soon build a new high school in Pueblo Viejo as well.

Mr. Speaker, along with the Japanese last week we opened a brand new extension for San Antonio San Luis Rey R.C. Primary School. Mr Speaker, along with the oil companies, we opened computer labs in San Antonio, in Columbia, in Midway, in Barranco; in all those villages they now have computer labs. In fact, in



Hon. Patrick Faber

Barranco they probably have as many computers as children going to the School at St. Joseph RC Primary. And that's just one district.

Let's go now to Stann Creek: new buildings for Stann Creek Ecumenical Sixth Form, new buildings for the High School at Ecumenical, new buildings for Delille Academy. We turned back ANRI, Lynam, it is now a brand new, full-fledged High School, thanks to the United Democratic Party Government.

Delille Academy under the last Minister of Education received 25 dollars per student, and this administration raised it to 40 dollars per student, and that is only a temporary measure until the implementation of the secondary school finance reform initiative, another initiative

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Department of Transport advises members of the public of the following aids to traffic safety:-

- 1) Put on lights when travelling on roads at night and during early morning, late evenings and conditions of dust, mist, fog and rain.
- 2) Don't drive on the wrong side of the road
- 3) Don't overtake going up a hill or any incline
- 4) Don't over take when you cant see clearly ahead
- 5) Try to stop driving in the middle of the road
- 6) Make sure vehicle rear lights are working
- 7) Heavy equipment, houses and other oversized items cannot be transported nor can big farm tractors and other farm equipment be driven on roads after 6:00pm.

Faber versus Fonseca

Continued from page 4

which all of them on the other side of this House agreed with but did not have the guts to implement.

Gulisse, new building going up right now; Holy Ghost, new building already completed; Epworth Methodist, Dangriga, new building, Hope Creek Methodist School, new building, San Juan, new Building, United Community, New building. Independence Primary School, new building. Independence High School, new buildings. A new library in Independence.

If you come along the Hummingbird Highway, new building in Armenia; new building in St. Margaret's Village; lunch and school spaces here in Belmopan; new building at our Lady of Guadeloupe High School here in Belmopan. New building for Kushlin Ha Government School, new building for San Martin Primary School, new building for St. Ann's Anglican School, ground breaking with 25 thousand dollars grant for the Methodist High School here in Belmopan; new building for Roaring Creek Nazarene.

And I can go across the country and show: New library in San Pablo, new library in Succotz, new library in Benque Viejo, new high school in in Cayo, Alvin Young High School in Succotz, check the record. New building in Arenal. Construction of class rooms and investment in Education gone wild!

Just as I did in taking them South, I can also take them North, and show them, village by village, town by town, what the United Democratic Party has done. But, in the interest of time, I will spare them.

I also heard him say, Mr. Speaker, that our contributions to tertiary scholarships have not been what they should. Now let me remind him where scholarships were under his watch. I will not even go back to where scholarships were

when the member for Lake Independence was Minister of Education, when five year olds were getting scholarships to the University of Belize, when they were creaming the Ministry's money. I won't go back there, Mr. Speaker, I'll spare them. But under the member for Freetown, scholarship allocations was a meagre 3 Million Dollars. Say it ain't so, Francis, Mr. Member for Freetown!

When the United Democratic Party came into office it was increased to 8.6 Million Dollars. Say it ain't so. A 5.6 Million Dollar increase in scholarships. Every single student at the University of Belize is receiving assistance from this United Democratic Party Government.

Anywhere in the world that you go, you cannot find an associate degree for 15 US dollars a credit hour, or a bachelor's degree for 45 dollars a credit hour. Every single semester, there is a Million dollar bill to the Ministry of Education to pay for those additional fees, and that is besides the 10 Million Dollars in subvention that the Government gives to the University of Belize. If you want to talk, member for Freetown, you should tell the nation about the fact that it was your administration that cut the subvention to the University of Belize from 13 Million down to 8.5 Million.

He talks about not seeing anything in the budget for teacher education. You pointed out that there was the system that had people with associates degree but no pedagogy to go along with it. But under the plan that you all had, it would have taken 20 to 25 years to train our teachers, and it would simply be unacceptable. It is the foresight of this administration, Mr Speaker, that is seeing us



Hon. Francis Fonseca

address this situation in a prompt manner, and I thank all of my colleagues on this side of the House who have given me tremendous support to put these programs in place.

I had the opportunity a few weeks ago to address the graduating class at UB where the first 117 of 860 teachers with associate degrees in some content area other than pedagogy had the opportunity to graduate; 117 teachers, making a tremendous dent in the number of untrained teachers.

Mr. Speaker, we are working on a certificate program, developed by the stakeholders in Education, to train the secondary school teachers who have a bachelors degree in some content area but no pedagogy.

What the new reform measure did, effective November 2010, Mr Speaker, is to say to all Schools, we will allocate money not by how many teachers you hire, not by the qualification of your teachers, not by the diversity of programs that you

offer at your school; we will allocate spending in secondary education, Mr Speaker, according to the students, how many students you have, how many children from poor families you make space for in your school, because the poor need and deserve more monies to be spent on them.

And those academically weak students that you take in, those with the 30's and the 40's and the 50's, if you take in those students who so many of us are quick to write off, whom the last administration in the ten years that they had to govern did not do anything to help, for whom the member for Freetown and Lake Independence and the Prime Minister did nothing—zero, zilch, nada- the students whom they threw by the wayside, under this plan for education finance reform under this Government, Mr Speaker, these students will be receiving these monies.

Again, Mr Speaker, we implore the Opposition to support us.

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Melvin versus Musa

(The following are excerpts from the presentation made by Hon. Melvin Hulse in response to former Prime Minister Said Musa during the Budget Debate)



Hon Melvin Hulse in the House last Thursday

Health Services

You talk about Health Services. I am on the ground. Let me tell you about what is happening on the ground. Because your speeches are pretty, and I don't live in that world of fancy words. I am on the ground. For the first time tenders were given out for Karl Heusner medicine and pharmaceuticals. You say we have cut down on the amount of money spent on medicine and pharmaceuticals?

For the first time in Ten years, tenders were given out for Karl Heusner, and we got the same amount of medicine, drugs for three to four million less. And we have improved the physical structure of the hospitals. You start NHI. Just for political reason, you exhaust and jeopardize the workers money at SSB, and when the working man retires he can't collect any money because social security is broke. We have not closed it down, we have made it sustainable.

Education

Member for Fort George, let me tell you something, and this is engraved in stone: Every single standard six student in the Stann Creek District, in the 23 villages of Stann Creek West, every single

one of them gets 300 dollars to go to high school, everyone of them get, across the board, everyone who graduate, male female, PUP, UDP, no P, it makes no difference, as long as you graduate from standard six, you get a voucher addressed to the school of your choice and you go to the school with it, so that nobody can thief your money. It's not done like the last administration did with Education money.

The Primary School children get assistance to go to school. The first formers get assistance to go through second form. Money is made available to help third formers and fourth formers. Ministry of Education ends up paying for three to five CXC's for every student that went to take external exams last year. UB students get assistance, I'm talking about annually; and never have before so many teachers in the Stann Creek bee at Teaching School, Teaching College getting training to be the calibre of teacher you want; that is reality."

Infrastructure & Disaster Management

"When you talk about overspending, you need to understand, you use to know

about Mitch and Iris and Chantal in which you hustle off the money and did nothing, when we talk about the sixteen disasters, massive flooding throughout the country, Ministry of Works has to go back in and repair back these farm roads, village streets, highways, putting back culverts that were broken. So, of course, you're going to see an additional expense, but if it was not for that additional expense, we would not have been able to move on with our lives out there. Because for Belize City, you in Fort George have no idea what it's like when your village street and your farm road and your highway breaks up and you can't move about. Because you don't need to, you go from home to office, office to home. Out there, we live different; we have to move all about. We have to move our products, we have to go to our farm.

"In your time, you got money from Hurricane Mitch, you all got up and said that the monies were going to be used for certain projects, including an independent additional water system for Belmopan, which you never put in. You got hit by Hurricane Dean; nothing was done the rest of your

term; we were the ones who came in and rebuilt the houses. You got Money for Iris, out of Iris money, you totally neglected Seine Bight and up until today they have not fully recovered. You gave material and special things to a few special people in Independence although they never got affected, you helped one and two in Placencia.

When you are talking about money from disasters and you talk about the monies that you claimed to have spent during your time on Hurricane shelters, well I went through 523 of the hurricane shelters throughout the length and the breath of this country, and most of them on which you put up "hurricane shelter", I had to take down the sign because the shelters were structurally unsafe. We have had to reject them, because we will not jeopardize the lives of people in a shelter that can't save them just because you put a sign there saying "Hurricane Shelter".

What we have done, we have manage to fix up some of them as this Prime Minister has made monies available, those that we can make structurally safe, and we have since been putting people in there and everybody has been safe every disaster we have since had.

And in this budget, if you look in Capital Two, you will see under Ministry of Transport, Communication and NEMO, Hurricane Preparedness, it has a code and a cost centre, there is half a Million Dollars sitting there. Every year we strengthen up shelters.

Not one dollar for the Placencia Road came from the PUP. You all were trying to get money from CDB for it, and you were talking to CDB, but CDB did not approve the loan, that money was not approved, nothing was signed, until we got in, we understood the urgency of the Placencia Road, because money was left by the last UDP administration in 1998 from the IDB; this time, because you all initiated conversation with CDB, this government, the

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Melvin versus Musa

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Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism went with CDB; CDB came in, did the quick assessment, because some of the ground work was already done, and now that we got in, CBD said ,yes, we will now have accountability. and they approved the loan.

Of course, it is because of your track record that there was not the same level of trust and confidence in your administration. Money, for example, was left by the previous UDP administration to complete the Southern Highway, and you still did not finish it, 8 Million got lost, and you had to go back and borrow again from Kuwait to do the few miles that remained. I can tell you; I was the Minister of Works at the time, so I can tell you what was left.

Money was left for the new bridge, the new crossing at Macal. You all got in and for ten years killed it, bam brig dim buff! Maybe in a good way, maybe in an offhanded bizarre way, it's a good thing, because the population has grown and the town has expanded, and now we're going to a new alignment. So, perhaps in a strange work of fate, you all blew away the money (I will not say thief) so that we have to go and borrow again for a revised and redesigned project to address the new realities. The Good Lord works in strange and mysterious ways. He use even you all to make us do good."

So, we have the Kendall Bridge which we are now building, we have finished the Placencia Road, we're putting a roundabout there right now. We've finished the Southern Highway. Middlesex Bridge is completed, totally by his government. I notice you have not tried to take credit for a nut or a bolt in that particular bridge.

And you know why we can be doing the roundabout at the Placencia Junction right now, an outstanding roundabout? Because we have savings. I know that's a strange word for you members on the other side. So let me say it slowly: S-A-V-I-N-G-S. So, we didn't have to borrow any more money. We got the road done, and we have e-x-t-r-a m-o-n-e-y.



Hon. Said Musa making light of serious matters

We are doing the roundabout and we are finishing that piece of road from the Airstrip to Placencia Point, with e-x-t-r-a m-o-n-e-y. We are working on the Hopkins, Sittee Road not because we are necessarily borrowing money, but because European Union have e-x-t-r-a m-o-n-e-y.

As we are working with the Banana Support Program, as we are do these things, because we are such a meticulous, value-for-money government (and you all don't like that because not a lot of money is circulating out there just for style), we are now able with the European Union to be building a bus terminal in Independence, to be working on the Hopkins/Sittee Road, from European money.

And it's good that we are such good managers, that we always end up with e-x-t-r-a m-o-n-e-y to do other things, because, guess what, we will never run out of things that this country needs.

Now the project has already been put together for the Mullins River Bridge.

We did not push the Jalacte Raod right away. That had been on the table from the last UDP Administration when I was Minister of Works. We were the ones who were working with the

British on that when we were doing the southern Highway. But being the patriotic people we are, we agreed back then that we would first focus on completing the paving of the Southern Highway that is within our country and our borders so that our people could benefit, then we continue to the Guatemalan border at Jalacte. That's why that's coming on stream now, because we've already completed the Southern, Highway, we don't have to worry about that, we can now grow and expand."

Today, there is not one village in the Stann Creek District that does not have electricity. None. What we are doing this coming fiscal year, and why the Prime Minister still went ahead and put in some money is because we know that villages grow and you need expansion, and as we are expanding, these people have a need and right to get water and electricity.

Notice the reason why I am telling you I'm supporting the budget. Things that translate into real physical transformation of the grassroots people lives.

And you are standing up there a while ago and asking, "Where is the love?" The love is out there

with the grass-roots people. It's not with the elitist, rich people who got the money under your government and put nothing back into the economy.

The Prime Minister never once got up and said ,I am blaming the global situation; no, he said, the global environment, the reality of inflation around this world, the reality of the financial crunch every country in this world suffers, the reality of that is what makes it harder for us to get to where we want more quickly, but as he keeps saying, we're on the road to recovery. That means that, in spite of all that, we are moving forward."

So, these are the kinds of structures we are putting in place, so that when we come and we go, these things remain.

That is the problem I have had with you guys on the other side when you are the government; you don't invest in structures and put them in place, only little quick fixes, and that's not sustainable.

So, Mr Speaker, with these long-term investments that touch and improve and transform the lives of the people, the grassroot people, I completely support this budget."

Sports Update From The Ministry

With *Ismael "Miley" Garcia*



Ismael "Miley" Garcia
National Sports Coordinator
Ministry of Sports

The Honorable John Saldivar and the Ministry of Sports congratulate the Belize Cricket Team that so proudly represented Belize and came home as CHAMPIONS of the tournament.

The Ministry wishes the team well as they step up to the next level of competition.

We are happy to have been a part of this first international success that brings the spotlight to a sport that, for the most part, has been confined to the Belize River Valley Area.

This milestone achievement will hopefully give impetus to the various efforts that have been made by persons like H.E. the Governor General and others to revive this glorious sport nationally.

The Acting Executive Director of the National Sports Council, the National

Sports Administrator, yours truly, and the National Sports Director travelled to the Toledo District this past Thursday, March 24.

This visit is part of the Ministry's effort to better coordinate sporting activities with the various representatives of the District Branches of the National Sports Council and sporting organisations.

A meeting was held with the members of the local Council branch in which there was a healthy exchange of views and plans for the improvement of sports and sporting facilities in the District.

Works continue at the Marion Jones Sporting Complex and this week the Senior Management Team of the Ministry of Public Service, Governance Improvement, Election and Boundaries and Sports will visit the facility to update themselves on the works being carried out there.

A media tour will subsequently be coordinated to update the public on the scope of works that have been completed and those in progress.

House Spanish vs Kitchen Spanish



Hon. Gaspar Vega

It didn't have much to do with the substance of the debate on the budget, but a feisty exchange between rival political leaders from the north made for much drama and comic relief in the midst of a turbulent session that certainly could have used some laughter.

It all started when the PUP Leader of the Opposition and member for Orange Walk Central, Johnny Briceno, departed from the standard language of the House which is English, attempting to use an analogy in Spanish to drive home his claim that life has gotten hard under the current administration.

Party Leader Dean Barrow immediately rose on a point of order to place on record his objection to Briceno's un-parliamentary departure from the official language.

"The language of the House is English," PM Barrow told the Speaker. "I have no difficulty if the Chair will allow some latitude. I ask only that it not be too extended. What the Leader of the Opposition says, I am obliged to reply to, and so he must speak principally in English."

Being granted the latitude by the Speaker, Briceno proceeded with his analogy as follows.

"Ese presupuesto se pudiera calificar mas como una holla vacilla. Una holla sin frijoles." Intended translation: This budget can be classified as an empty pot. A pot without beans.

"En 2009, teniamos que comer tortillas con frijoles." Intended translation: In 2009, we had to eat Tortilla with beans"

"En 2010, con todo lo que habian incrementado, ya no nos alcanzaba las frijoles, y comiamamos las tortillas con mantequilla y sal." Intended translation: In 2010, the cost of everything having gone up, we could no longer afford beans, and we had to eat tortilla with only butter and salt.

"Pero hoy, con ese presupuesto



Hon. Johnny Briceno

que ha presentado el Primer Ministro para el ano 2011-2012, nos vamos tener que conformar que comer las tortillas solo con sal, ya que ni para la mantequilla nos va a alcanzar."

Intended translation: But today, with this budget presented by the Prime Minister for 2011-2012, we have to learn to eat tortilla with only salt, as we will not even be able to afford butter.

That is when Deputy Prime Minister Gaspar Vega decided he had enough of Briceno's hypocritical and poorly delivered analogy, and rose to make his feelings known.

"Mr. Speaker, yo no creo que El pronunciaba las palabras bien," Vega declared. Translation: Mr. Speaker, I think he is mis-pronouncing the words.

"Watch who is talking," Briceno responded in English. "He can't talk English and he can't talk Spanish. And what is the point of order."

Vega's response: "Estas mintiendo, eso es lo que quiero decir. Lo que quiero decir es que no somos ladrones como tu." Translation: You are lying, that is my point of order (what I want to say). My point of order (what I want to say) is that we are not thieves like you."

Briceno then complained to the Speaker that Vega had used unparliamentary language to characterize him, upon which Prime Minister Barrow rose once more to tell the Speaker that this had confirmed the very point he was making from the start, which is that if a member is allowed to speak in a language other than the official language of the House, it would be impossible for everyone in the House to determine whether or not he is in line with the rules of the House.

The more salient point, we will have to contend is this: "If a member insists on bringing Spanish to the House, please let it NOT be Kitchen Spanish!"

Drivers Beware!

Statutory Instrument (S.I.) no. 19 of 2011 was gazetted on the 12th March and is referred to as the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Tinted Windows) Regulations 2011. This new law governing the percentage of tint on the windows of motor vehicles that will be legally allowed in Belize will take effect on the 1st day of June 2011.

The need for this legislation is no doubt absolute, especially when viewed in the light of the present shooting-wave engulfing some areas in the country. Similar legislation exists in our neighbouring border country of Mexico.

The Department of Transport is taking every step possible to sensitize the General Public as to this latest regulation while giving all stake holders who may be affected enough time to make the necessary adjustments.

Section 3 of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Tinted Windows) 2011 Regulation states as follows:

3. Subject to Sub Regulation (2) and Regulation 4, no person shall use, or cause or permit another person to use, a motor vehicle on a public road if its windscreen, rear glass or any of its windows is tinted or otherwise treated, in a way that is likely to impede sight, from outside the vehicle, of a person or thing inside the vehicle.

Tint Shops and individuals who traditionally tint vehicles must ensure that you do not tint darker than the percentage stipulated by law. If so, you would be considered to have caused another person to use a motor vehicle that is in violation of this act and would be liable to pay a fine of not less than \$150.00 and not more than \$500.00.

All importers, car dealers, companies etc., must ensure that their vehicles do not have windows that are tinted beyond the prescribed levels by law. Failure to comply with this new regulation will also result in the aforementioned penalty.

A Photometer is the instrument that will be used to measure the level of tint by an "authorized officer", meaning a Transport Officer, Motor Vehicle Inspector, Traffic Warden or Police Officer appointed under Section 3 of the Act.

If a driver or an owner of a motor vehicle is found with tint on the windshield or window of their vehicle that is not in accordance with the law, a written notice shall be issued, giving that person 10 days to remove the tint. Failure to comply with the written notice will result, on summary conviction, to a fine of \$500.00.

This new and revised legislation is the first of a number of other Statutory Instruments which will be signed into law with the view of amending existing, antiquated regulations governing Motor Vehicle and Road Traffic.



For sure a vehicle with more than the prescribed limit of tint



PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

PUBLIC NOTICE

PROPOSAL TO GRANT A LICENCE TO CONSOLIDATED WATER BELIZE LIMITED (CWBL)

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION (PUC; the Commission) hereby serves NOTICE this day, March 17, 2011, pursuant to Section 15(4) of the Water Industry Act, that it proposes to grant a licence to Consolidated Water Belize Limited (CWB), authorizing it to purify, store and supply water to Belize Water Services Limited (BWS) for the purpose of enabling a supply by BWS to the public on Ambergris Caye, Belize.

Proposed Terms and Conditions of Licence

The proposed licence shall authorize CWB to furnish exclusively to BWS a supply of potable water of up to an average 450,000 US gallons per day on Ambergris Caye, subject to any potable water supply quality standards established by the Ministry of Health or which may be contained in the proposed licence or any agreement between CWB and BWS, as approved by the Commission.

The proposed term of the licence shall be 15 years, commencing with the effective date of the licence (being the date that the proposed licence is granted).

Representations or Objections

Interested persons (those who may be affected by the granting of the proposed licence) may make representations or objections to the proposal to grant the licence.

The deadline for making representations or objections is April 18, 2011.

Representations and objections in writing may be sent to the Public Utilities Commission, P.O. Box 300, 41 Gabourel Lane, Belize City; or emailed to info@puc.bz.

Issued by the Public Utilities Commission on March 17, 2011

Witz Waxes

**The Following is the full text of the presentation made by
Hon. Ramon Witz during last week's Budget Debate**



Ramon Witz in the House last Thursday

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by acknowledging all those constituents from Cayo South present here today who not only support their Area Representative, but who also have high respect for, and a lot of confidence in our very own Prime Minister, Hon. Dean Barrow.

As I sat here listening to the member of Orange Walk Central, it's upsetting, it is nauseating, it is sickening, to listen to his rhetoric. He claimed that in the ten years that they were in office, that they spent so much money all over this country, but I can say to this nation on behalf of my people of Cayo South, that the People's United Party ten years in Government, forgot the people of Cayo South. They totally abandoned Cayo South. And that is why Mr Speaker, the people of Cayo South saw the need for a change in 2008, and are going to remain strong and steady with the change that they have made.

Mr. Speaker, the punishment has been hard, the suffering has been for too long. The recovery and reconstruction of Cayo South is not an easy one. It is one that has been made for giants. And the giant is in the person of our Prime Minister along with their Area Representative who today are working hard and tirelessly to bring betterment to my people of Cayo South. Mr. Speaker, the member for Orange Walk Central said that they spent over a hundred million dollars in roads and streets. Today we are struggling to upkeep the maintenance of all streets in Cayo South. We are working hard, a lot has been done, much more needs to be done, and it will be done.

I am proud to say that on Monday, this coming Monday, the first phase of the Cotton Tree, St. Matthews, Franks Eddy Water System will be inaugurated by our very own Prime Minister. After ten years of those villages having

been without water, this UDP Government came to office and heard the cry of the people, we made a commitment, and we have accomplished that commitment.

Electricity: there has been much electricity expansion, and there will be more. In fact, this budget which is a budget for the poor, a budget for the people, caters for those who have been without electricity and without water, and we are determined to satisfy the needs of our people.

I sat listening to the Leader of the Opposition who will not be the leader of his party for very long, unlike this leader of Cayo South who will be there for as long as my people keep me there.

They over there should be ashamed of themselves, ashamed to come here and speak in such a way as if they care for the poor. As I watched the news and saw the suffering in Japan, as that tsunami just took over the land and destroyed houses and property and lives, I could not help making a comparison between that tsunami and the People's United Party which for ten years destroyed this country and the lives of our people.

They are fond of saying that there is no plan. This government has a plan and this government has been working that plan. And the plan that we have is a responsible plan. It is a plan of the people, for the people and by the people. It's unlike their plan that they were executing during the ten years of their administration. Theirs was a plan for the rich. It was a plan of the few. It was a plan under which only a few got everything, while the masses kept suffering.

We can never forget the DFC fiasco. We can never forget the 30 Million loan given away in one day to the Novelos. The people of Belize can never forget Jeffrey Prosser. We can never forget all those bloated contracts

like Mahogany Heights. Who is paying for all those? It is the people of Belize.

Thank goodness, today the poor are getting more. Much more people are getting land, and much more will be getting soon. Mr. Speaker, land has been made available, and land will continue to be made available to those who need to build their houses and to do farming and agriculture. We will not be giving away land to the rich and mighty who already have more than they need. Land is available for the poor. Land is available for those with the need and the desire to work.

Today they have a lot to say, Mr. Speaker, but the soon to be removed Leader of the Opposition should know that the people of Cayo South and the people of Belize will never ever forget what they have done to us. We will never ever forget the punishment, the pain that we endured from 1998 to 2008. And we can safely say, Mr Speaker, that the government in office today will continue to be on this side of the House and they will continue to be on that side of the aisle for a long time. They made us punish. Now it is their turn to punish on that side.

We will continue with the reconstruction of this country in the aftermath of the PUP tsunami, and the people of this country are now beginning to feel the goodness of this UDP administration, and together we will continue to bring betterment to each and every individual in this country. Every man, woman and child will be able to feel the goodness of this government and the goodness of this budget.

Mr. Speaker, a lot needs to be done, and we're working towards that. And to those who are claiming that we have not been working in Cayo South, the testimony is right here in

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Witz Waxes

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the galleries, a clear testimony that we are working hard for our people.

Come who may, and come who may be sent, the people of Cayo South are the rulers of Cayo South. All of us together will bring victory with your's truly; we will be bringing back Cayo South with the UDP to this Honourable House come 2013.

I want to thank my people of Cayo South for their overwhelming support; for being patient and understanding, and come April 3, we will be back, and Ramon Witz will be your UDP candidate in the next general election.

We cannot stop progress, and progress will continue. And with the massive and overwhelming support of the Prime Minister, we are going to deliver much more. Mr Speaker, I wish to also make mention that in this new budget,

funds are being made available for a water expansion project for Camalote. The people in a section of Camalote have been punishing for too long without water, and they will be getting water through this budget. The School in Teakettle will also be a beneficiary of this budget with an expansion of classrooms and buildings for their school this coming year.

Mr. Speaker I also wish to acknowledge and thank on behalf of the people of Cayo South, our own Minister of Lands, the member from Orange Walk North (Hon. Gaspar Vega Gaspar) for the support that he has given Cayo South; for the many leases that we have granted to people, and the many that are in the pipeline right now. To all those who have not yet received a residential lot, those are coming very soon.

This is testimony, Mr Speaker that the work has been happening, the work continues, and the work

will go on. Sometimes it's difficult to immediately please everyone. But, we're pushing onward and we will eventually deliver for each and every individual in Cayo South.

I want to also thank the Prime Minister for making funds available for single parents from Cayo South who will be benefitting from a special package in the new fiscal year. We want to thank the Prime Minister for all the resources, in every aspect, he has made available for the people of Cayo South.

Mr, Speaker as this country slowly but steadily recovers from the global recession, we will be able to make more and more financial resources available for the improvement of the lives of every man, woman and child in Cayo South and the rest of the country.

Mr, Speaker, I wish to thank the many Belizeans who have demonstrated their trust and

confidence in this government. I also wish to acknowledge my family. I wish to acknowledge my daughters (I happen to be a single parent) for their patience and understanding of the work that I have to execute for all the people of Cayo South.

We will continue to work and deliver for all our supporters here today, for our thousands of supporters listening out there and for all the people of Cayo South.

I end by stating my full support for this budget. The people here today, and the rest of them in Cayo South, fully endorse this budget that the Prime Minister has put together for us.

And to my people in Cayo South I say, I am happy and honoured to be your champion and look forward to continue being your Champion.

God Bless my people of Cayo South; God Bless Belize. Thank you, Mr, Speaker!



BELMOPAN INTOXICATING LIQUOR LICENSING BOARD

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Belmopan Intoxicating Liquor Licensing Board hereby gives notice to the general public that the Second Quarterly Meeting will be held on Thursday, 14th April, 2011 at the Belmopan Civic Center commencing at 9:00 a.m.

All Applicants for liquor Licenses for the National Agriculture Show are requested to be present at this meeting for discussion of their applications.

All holders are reminded that all premises must be fully inspected and newspaper publications are done.

Clerk

Belmopan Trade Licensing Board

Sedi Steady

The Following is a portion of the presentation made by the Hon. Wilfred “Sedi” Elrington during Last Friday’s Budget Debate



Hon. Wilfred Elrington

Whereas the problems that now face our country are undoubtedly the case of violence, the case of unemployment, the case of homelessness, the case of desperation, it is not the natural course of history that caused that. That was caused largely because the early founding fathers of the

country never intended to develop us as a nation and as a people.

And for that reason when you look at the history of the country you will find that at no time did the People’s United Party put into place an education program that could make us independent, reliant and self sufficient.

The history of the People’s United Party is one where they encouraged (and in those early days it was basically the ladies in the market square that were the bulwark of the strength of the PUP) they encouraged handouts, and they did nothing in a constructive way to provide for the education and caring of our people. In truth, from the time I know myself, our education system has been in the hands of the denominations; Baptist, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventist, Roman Catholic, the Anglican. And so the entire resources of the nation which was

needed to develop our people was never put into the people.

Belize is perhaps one of the richest countries in the world, one of the richest. It has so many natural resources, when you think about the sea, when you think about the forest, when you think about the climate, when you think about the natural resources; we have petroleum, and the suggestion is that we have asphalt, you have gold, you have silver. When you think about the forest, when you think about the wonderful ruins that we have, the only thing that is poor in Belize are the people. But it is not true that all the people are poor.

As a matter of fact when you go to some places in Belize, for example, if you go to the constituency of my friend from San Pedro, you will think that you are in Europe. The place is so beautiful and developed, some

parts of San Pedro, and when you go to the Spanish Lookout Area it is so beautiful, and when you go to Blue Creek Area, it is so beautiful. Where do we find the poverty, the depredation and the crime? In the communities which are inhabited by the Mestizo Belizean, the Mayan Belizean, the Afro Belizean and the Garinagu Belizean.

These native populations have from the time of our history been neglected and deprived. We started out largely as slaves or indentured servants, then we existed under colonialism, and now we find ourselves here today.

This is all relevant, because the UDP, from the very first time that it came into office, has been trying to rectify that situation. And I remember very distinctly that in 1993, the second UDP administration, the government

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BELIZE WATER SERVICES LTD. PRESS RELEASE

BWS celebrates 10 Years of Successful Operations

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY 10th Anniversary, Belize Water Services! March 23rd 2011 marks a milestone achievement, as BWS celebrates its 10th year of promoting the values and benefits of having potable water in the communities we serve. On March 23, 2001, BWS was vested with the assets and liabilities of the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA).

Over the past 10 years and three structural ownership changes, BWS has worked to ensure that our valued customers receive better service and access to high quality potable water at affordable rates. We are proud to say that BWS has been credited as being the most efficient water utility in the Caribbean, and we are happy to be able to assist with making life better for Belizeans on a day to day basis.

BWS, recognizing that employees are our biggest asset and the importance of having a satisfied work force and fair work practices, has improved employee relations through our negotiated collective agreements, certainly an area of importance. We congratulate all our employees for their efforts, especially those who have been with the Company through the success of these last 10 years.

BWS also takes this opportunity to give recognition to our customers and our community. We are offering a special raffle promotion to our customers to be drawn on March 31. We continue to contribute as a responsible corporate citizen. BWS has supported and partnered with the Diabetes Association, Cancer Society, Kidney Association of Belize, Belize National Sports Council, Hand in Hand Ministries, Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital and supported community efforts such as the development and adoption of parks and educational and recreational pursuits. These are just a few of the many programs for which we have provided financial support and other resources.

To help celebrate this milestone, BWS management would like to highlight the importance of potable water since over 1.5 billion people in the world do not have access to this clean and safe commodity. As a country and community, let’s conserve our water and be responsible. Remember, Water is life!

Belize Water Services... delivering Water and More For Customer Services Call :
0-800-CALL-BWS (0-800-225-5297)

To Report Leaks Call: 0-800-BWS –LEAK (0-800-297-5325)

For more information visit our website : <http://www.bws.bz>

BWS

MARCH 31st 2011

WIN BWS 10th Anniversary Raffle

5 Consolation Prizes

1st 32" Flat screen TV

2nd Washing Machine

3rd Notebook

WIN WIN WIN WIN WIN WIN

***Certain restrictions applies**

Pay your bill by due date and receive a ticket for the raffle

Customer Queries call 0-800-CALL-BWS
(0-800-225-5297)

www.bws.bz

Sedi Steady

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proposed to make education free.

As a matter of fact, education was one of the main pillars which was put forward by the UDP manifesto at that time.

And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the People's United Party did everything in their power to convince the Belizean people that education was bad for them and that free education was bad. It became such a difficult situation for the party, really, to try to get it implemented that we were only able to introduce some aspects of it.

Secondary schools were given some assistance, students from secondary schools, students from the first year Sixth Form were given some assistance. But the entire intention and the desire was in fact for us to try to give them free education. It was also not possible to give them free education immediately because when we got into power, and that was in the 1993 election, when we got into power, Mr. speaker, the government was completely broke.

The PUP government within four years of getting Independence, the PUP administration had broken the country so that debts were piled up locally and debts were piled up abroad. And so the government found itself much the same like it is today, where there was not enough money to in fact pay for all the things that the government wanted to do at the time.

But the first promise was to provide free education for all Belizeans including secondary school, UCB and vocational and technical schools. Well I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that free education has been provided from 1958-59 in places like Barbados, in places like Trinidad, and in places like Singapore, and other places for their people.

So free education is nothing unusual. With a country as rich as Belize, everybody should have been able to get free education. But the People's United Party has not had any interest in giving us free education. What they prefer to do is to pay for us when we are in jail, so that there is no complaint, there is never ever any suggestion or complaint that in fact there is not enough money to pay for the inmates in the prison. No matter how many of us go into the prison, there is no complaint about that. But is it not much cheaper, Mr. Speaker, for us to pay for us to be educated, pay for us to be productive, to pay for us to be self-reliant rather than to pay for us when we have committed offenses, hurt people, harm people, maim people, kill people, and have to be put into jail?

So it is evident that today the problems that we are faced with in terms of violence stem, firstly, from the neglect and the abandonment of our people over the years by the People's United Party, the complete neglect and abandonment in terms of our education.

And, secondly, and most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it also stems, from the fact that whenever the United Democratic Party takes office it's because the country is broke.

It can never be forgotten that we are today saddled with a debt of about TWO BILLION dollars and valuable monies that could be spent to educate our people, millions of dollars that could be spent to provide free education for every single Belizean, has got to be spent to pay off debts and loans that the People's United Party incurred, and nobody seems to know what has happened with the monies.

So that this budget is not a budget in isolation. When the member for Fort George seems to suggest that we are not in fact implementing all the things that we should have implemented, and that we did not fully implement all the promises that we promised last budget session, it is not because the government does not want to do it, it is because the People's United Party has made it impossible for us to do it by virtue of the fact that they borrowed so much, in such great excess, and squandered it. Nobody knows what has happened to it.

And it cannot be forgotten and must not be forgotten that, in fact, even the members of his own party sought to revolt on two occasions. You remember the G7? They sought to revolt on two occasions because they thought that they were wasting and misusing government's assets during the time of their tenure in office.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is not only that the PUPs have never ever charted an education program that could take us out of poverty and propel us to wealth and first world status in 30 years as was done in Singapore, but it is also that the People's United Party in a sinister move got rid of the Belize Technical College which provided all our technical people and which was responsible for educating most of our present lawyers and professionals in engineering, they close that down; they closed down the School of Agriculture; they closed down the School of Nursing, so that when you go to a hospital now you can hardly find any young Belizean in the school of nursing; and they close down the Belize Teachers College. But all those institutions, Mr. Speaker, were

subsidized by the government and were educating Belizeans to become self-sufficient and independent. And all those people now who went to those institutions have good jobs and are doing very, very well indeed.

And, in the early days, the fee at the Belize Technical College was extremely low; it was about \$30 for the entire term. So, by getting rid of places like Lynam College, by getting rid of the School of Agriculture, by getting rid of Technical College, by getting rid of the Teacher's College, by getting rid of the Nursing School, it prevented the majority of our young people from being able to get a job.

So now those young people have no a job, are walking on the street and in fact have to be begging and robbing with arms.

It is not that those people are not intelligent. They are exceedingly intelligent, they are very smart. They just have not ever been given a chance.

It is my view that it is no accident that, in fact, the People's United Party took those measures to close down those schools so that the people could not in fact be properly educated. And I will tell you, when you look at the history, Mr. Speaker, there was not a time when the People's United Party said publicly or privately as far as I know that they are preparing Belizeans to take over ownership and control of our economy.

From the earliest of days they sought to look for foreign investors to come in and invest without even preparing us to be able to work for those people. And when those people came in, in fact, there was always a negotiation at home here to give us less salary than those people were prepared to give us.

So we had people like Salada coming in, in the Citrus Industry. We had people coming down to take out the pine resin down south, and the like. Those were companies that were attracted to Belize. They did not stay long, they did not pay well. There was no need to educate and train any Belizean in those areas. So the people out there in the rural areas have not been educated and trained, even up to this day.

Belize lends itself so easily to education. It would not have been difficult for our government to in fact take a serious look at the Credit Unions and Cooperatives and strengthen them, because those institutions have proven to be good to the country over the years. But there was no effort made at any time, as far as I am aware, to strengthen the membership. There was no effort made at any time, as far as I am aware, to help the fishermen;

to enhance their standard of living and to improve themselves. There was no effort at any time made in any serious way to help the farmers, so that today we have very minimal staff that the Ministry of Agriculture is trying to work with, and trying to rebuild. Compare that with what was done in places like Brazil where they went all out into agriculture and agricultural research and development, and now Brazil is one of the most prosperous countries in the world.

We have a very small population; we have much more resources than we need. We have discovered oil. The suggestion was that oil was in the country for a long, long, long time, but no Belizean was sent to train in the petroleum industry. No Belizean was ever sent to be trained. We were not advised. So that what is now happening is that no matter how much oil we find, unless Belizeans are trained in that industry, we are not going to benefit from it, in much the same way in which we are not benefiting that much from the Tourism Industry, because we have not made sustained effort.

While, Mr. Speaker, the Development Finance Corporation was started by the People's United Party, the truth is that they treated it so badly over the years, that by 2008 it was completely and totally broke. They made loans that were reckless and irresponsible, and even the IDB in their report, Towards a Sustainable and Efficient State, states very clearly that the loans were in fact irresponsible and were tainted with corruption. That was what led to the destruction of the DFC.

Those corrupt activities are affecting us in every aspect of our lives today. It affects our education system. It affects our capacity to invest. When we have to be paying back millions of dollars every year on rents and profits and the like, it prevents us from having those monies necessary to get into business. So that all the People's United Party henchmen, all those big people (and we all know who they are, Mr. Pena, Mr. Espat, Mr. Novelos, even some of the major names which I don't want to call) almost every single senior functionary of the People's United Party is flat broke.

Even some of them who were doctors, some of them who called themselves consultants. They have all become flat broke. All the companies that you hear are being repossessed by the banks and the likes, were people who were beneficiaries of the loans from the banks at the time when the PUP was in their excess. Now the chickens have come home to roost and those people are losing their assets.

Barrow Blesses Briceno

(The Following is the full text of Prime Minister Dean Barrow's presentation wrapping up the Budget Debate last Friday)

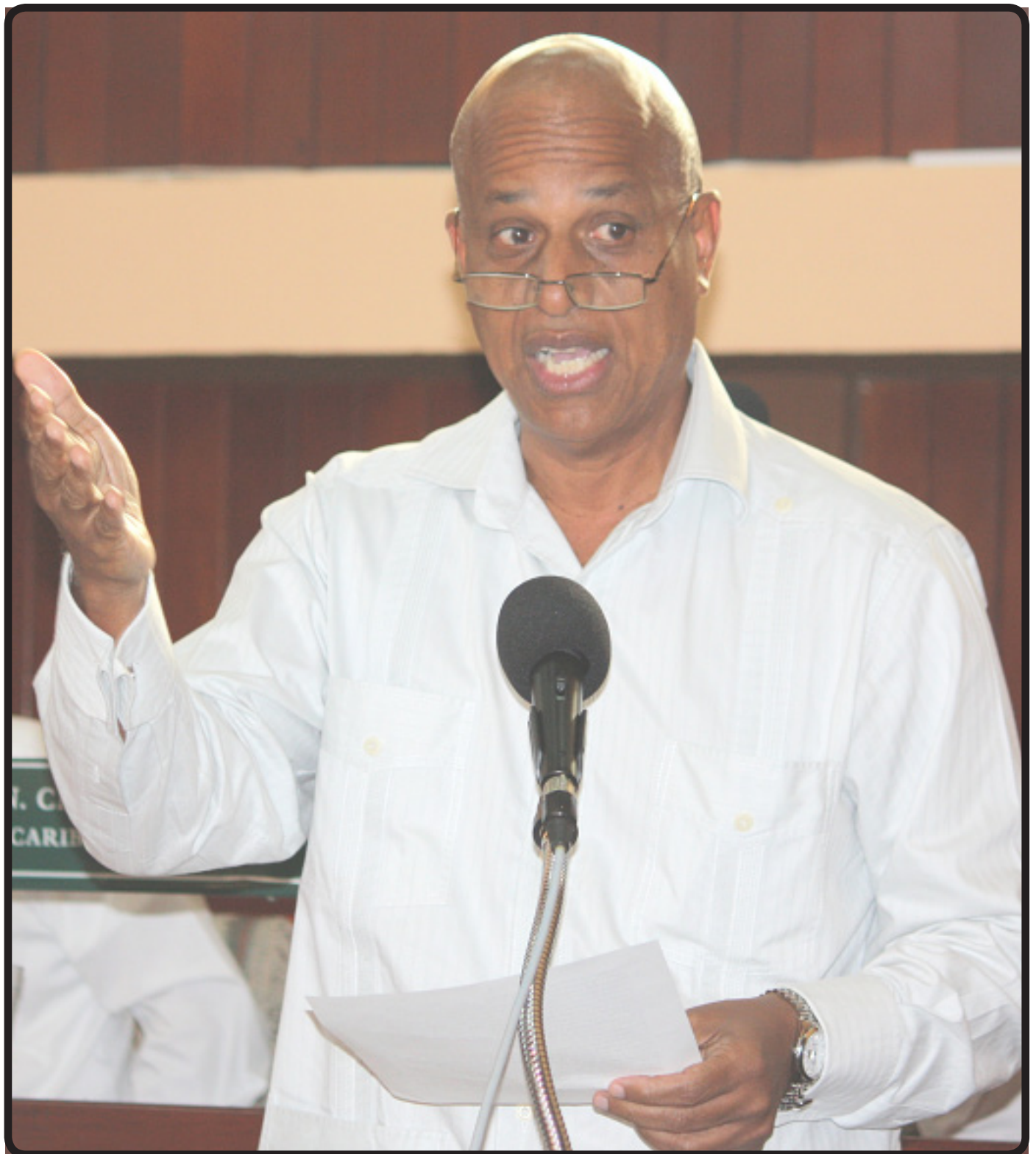
Let me start by saying, Mr Speaker, that my colleagues on this side of the House, both ministers and area representatives, I think, did an excellent job. They showcased the work of the government generally and, of course, in their own constituencies. But they also, I thought, were outstanding in taking apart the windbags and false witnesses on the other side, especially the Leader of the Opposition and that whited sepulchre from Fort George.

My job, Mr Speaker, is therefore made much easier as a result. But I must still further rehearse some of the more important points, and I crave the indulgence of the House.

Before I turn to the substance of the reply, I must make an observation of what I thought was a most astonishing and consequential development, and that is the absence yesterday of the two deputy leaders of the opposition. This must be the first time in recorded memory that a leader of the opposition in Belize gives his official response in the House to the national budget and is boycotted, for all the world to see, by his deputies. For, Mr Speaker, that is exactly what it was, a boycott of the leader of the opposition by his own most senior people in Parliament.

Now we all know that the two gentlemen from Albert and Lake I are conscientious. Their willingness, therefore, to shirk their duty to the house, to the nation and in fact to their constituents, just to make a point shows the utter contempt in which they hold the Leader of the Opposition.

The Godfrey Smith articles and the full page ads week after week in the Amandala from other sections of the PUP show that the deputy leaders are not alone in their disgust for the member from Orange Walk Central. The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that he is widely disparaged, in fact reviled in the PUP. So here are questions for you Mr Leader of the Opposition. How can you want to lead the nation when you can't even lead your own party? When will you man up and show that you can take charge



Prime Minister Hon. Dean Barrow Wrapping up the Budget Debate last Friday

and show that you can impose discipline instead of continuing to be this arch compromiser, this lily-livered weakling, afraid of your own shadow.

Now his friend, the NEMO Minister tells him not to worry. He says to the leader of the Opposition, I have your back. Well, the NEMO Minister is not the only one on this side of the House who feels that way you know, Mr Speaker. None of us over here wants to see the Leader of the Opposition lose his position, and you know why? Because he as the leader of opposition is the greatest electoral asset that the UDP has. His leadership of the Opposition is absolutely all we need to guarantee our second term. That is how hapless and hopeless he is.

Well, I am afraid, Mr. Speaker,

it won't be that easy; we will have to work for it, for his days are numbered. He talks about the electorate wanting us to go, but there is no evidence of that. On the contrary, according at least to the municipal and village council election results. What there is evidence of, copious and abundant, is that the PUP want *him* to go.

You know, Mr Speaker, he reminds me of the legend of a christian martyr. This christian martyr is the patron of the city of Paris. The story was that after he was beheaded, he continued to go about cradling his own cranium.

Well, assuredly, the Leader of the Opposition is no saint. But politically he is certainly a decapitated corpse walking around carrying his own head in his hands. But Mr Speaker, let me turn to the

substance such as there was, of the Leader of the Opposition's Speech. And I use the word, "speech" advisedly, for as usual somebody wrote it for him.

And in fairness, the change from last year's speechwriter to this year's did produce some improvement. Indeed, there were even rhetorical attempts to scale the heights with references and quotations aplenty and not all of them trite and hackneyed. Of course, his mispronunciations of classical names would be seen by purists as unforgivable, but I am not one to quibble.

I did take some offence, though, at his presuming to instruct me. Now, Mr. Speaker, there are many people in this life that can instruct me, but the Leader of the Opposition is

Continued on page 16



PUBLIC UTILITIES
COMMISSION

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



PUBLIC UTILITIES
COMMISSION

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) invites expressions of interest from suitably qualified and motivated candidates in respect of the following employment opportunities:

1. Consumer Affairs/Public Relations Officer

Duties and Responsibilities:

The **Consumer Affairs/Public Relations Officer** is responsible for assisting the PUC in the regulation of licensees for all utility sectors particularly with respect to matters directly affecting consumers, including the handling of complaints, and to manage the public relations and public education functions of the PUC. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- a) Direct supervision of assigned staff
- b) Assist in the development and implementation of Byelaws, Regulations, Orders and methodologies or processes for handling of complaints against licensees in all utility sectors
- c) Planning and logistical control of public proceedings or meetings
- d) Assist, as appropriate, in the determination and setting of tariffs, rates, fees and charges in rate review proceedings or filings
- e) Assist in the collection and analysis of comments received from Interested Persons and the general public where required
- f) Assist in the maintenance and operation of the PUC Website
- g) Assist in the development of codes of practice for licensees and monitoring of licensees for compliance to such codes
- h) Assist in the Preparation of annual budgets and reports
- i) Other relevant duties and responsibilities that may be assigned from time to time

Qualifications:

The successful candidate shall possess:

- a) Minimum of a Bachelor of Science Degree in Communications, Public Relations or related field
- b) At least five (5) years' experience in a relevant position
- c) Outstanding interpersonal, planning, motivational and organizational skills
- d) Unwavering interest and commitment to the purpose, duties and responsibilities of the PUC

2. Director – Telecommunications Sector

Duties and Responsibilities:

The **Director – Telecommunications Sector** is responsible for assisting the PUC in the regulation of the telecommunications sector in respect of the services provided by licensees and public utility providers. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- a) Direct supervision of assigned staff
- b) Assist in the development and implementation of Byelaws, Regulations and Orders in respect of service quality and reliability standards
- c) Assist in the development and implementation of Byelaws, Regulations and Orders in respect of general administration of the telecommunications sector
- d) Assist in the development and implementation of short- and long-term objectives for the telecommunications sector
- e) Assist in the processing of applications for licenses, permits and authorizations
- f) Monitoring of licensees for compliance to licence conditions and relevant Acts, Byelaws, Regulations, Orders, Decisions and standards
- g) Supervise or conduct relevant studies in relation to current and forecast trends in demand and supply of telecommunications services
- h) Assist in supervising and conducting rate filings, approvals and determination
- i) Assist in the Preparation of annual budgets and reports
- j) Represent the PUC in international organizations, forums, conferences, workshops and working groups from time to time
- k) Other relevant duties and responsibilities that may be assigned from time to time

Qualifications:

The successful candidate shall possess:

- a) Minimum of a Bachelor of Science Degree in Telecommunications Engineering, Computer Science or related field
- b) At least five (5) years' experience in a relevant position
- c) Outstanding interpersonal, planning, motivational and organizational skills
- d) Unwavering interest and commitment to the purpose, duties and responsibilities of the PUC

Benefits

The base salary for both positions will be based on personal qualifications and experience, within the salary scales of BZ\$36,000.00 to BZ\$75,000.00 per annum for the position of **Consumer Affairs/Public Relations Officer** and BZ\$50,000.00 to BZ\$90,000.00 per annum for the position of **Director – Telecommunications Sector**.

Successful candidates will be entitled to an annual gratuity of 20% of base salary and to twenty (20) working days vacation annually.

Successful candidates will also be entitled to participate in all benefit plans, if any, provided by the PUC to its employees generally, including its ongoing training program.

Applications

The deadline for applications is 5:00 PM on April 19, 2011.

Completed applications along with two letters of reference should be sent to:

Employment Opportunities
Public Utilities Commission
41 Gabourel Lane

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not one of them; for the only expertise of his that I concede is his knowledge of how to divert monies paid for public lands so that they end up in ministerial pockets instead of in the consolidated fund; and that is the kind of skill I have no wish to acquire.

So, Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition began by talking about NHI, a theme later to be echoed by his predecessor (perhaps successor).

Error, Mr Speaker, grave error, for while they did implement NHI, the record shows they did so with no attention to financial sustainability. They robbed social security to try to pay for it. And by the end of their term, the professionals over there were threatening to revolt if they did not stop their plunder. Social Security, of course, has still not recovered and the viability issues that now plague the scheme have as much to do with that particular abuse as of the more naked kind of giving away millions to their friends, such as Glenn Godfrey.

Of course, PUP being PUP, they also used NHI as a feeding trough, for the award of bloated supply and service contracts to family and friends. Did someone say Billy? Did someone say Cardo Martinez? Indeed, Mr Speaker, the additional rollout that they boast about, that was promised merely as an election gimmick in late 2007, early 2008, would have cost 30 Million Dollars, that was 30 Million Dollars that they did not have and could not get.

It was in fact an empty ploy, and seen by all the international agencies as such. Indeed, as part of a policy-based loan that they were negotiating with the IDB, they had to promise, they had to commit to the IDB that they would formally abandon that unrealizable fool's gold so-called NHI rollout.

What has happened now, though, is that the UDP has completely redesigned the NHI in a realistic and sustainable way. Implementation is now being phased so that it can take place properly, if incrementally, as revenues increase naturally and without any contributory hike by rate payers.

Then, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition criticized the slow implementation of pro-poor projects. There is some validity to that, but these

are new, highly innovative programs that they had neither the conscience nor the ability to design. We have been very careful to work with our public officers and technicians in a deliberate fashion to ensure utter transparency, utter fair play and utter effectiveness.

And don't tell me about yesterday; tell me about today, because the fact is every one of these initiatives is now up and running, benefitting those that need it most in a novel, measurable and dramatic fashion.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition talked about Tourism and Aquaculture and jobs and construction and manufacturing. The plain fact is that he can't get away from what is, in the circumstances, an amazing 2.5 percent Growth rate in our Economy last year. Coming hard on the heels of the global recession, this was an accomplishment that loomed even larger, because it was the best growth

rate in the entire Caribbean Region. Tourism was up and continues to be up. I was just talking to the Minister of Tourism, and this is shaping up to be the best Tourist season we have had in years and years and years.

He talks about aquaculture? Aquaculture is on the rebound, and in consequence of our infrastructure, our stimulus package in terms of infrastructure that's worth hundreds of Millions of dollars, jobs are being created all over this country.

Compare our growth rate, Mr Speaker, with the One Percent anaemic growth in the last year of the PUP, and before that when the Economy did see robust growth it was in a period of extended and very strong global output; yet it was in that same period that the PUP took Poverty in this country from 33 percent to 44 percent. It was in that same period that they saddled us with the Super Bond;

it was in that same period that they bankrupted the DFC. It was in that same period that they crippled SSB. It was in that same period that they ran government's finances into the ground. But it was also in that same period that every PUP minister and crony got filthy rich by lining their pockets with taxpayers money.

When the Leader of the Opposition talks about the investment climate and our supposed hostility to certain foreign personalities, he is of course merely being the Ashcroft-owned jellyfish we all know him to be. But we say again, we will fight to recover national dignity and to rid Belize of all the secret, illegal and outrageous agreements that the PUP made with that "lord" in whose tight embrace the Leader of the Opposition is so blissfully,

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Belmopan City Council Incentive Package 2011/2012

As of January 1, 2011, Property Owners in the City of Belmopan are eligible to participate in the following discount package:

- **25% Discount for full payment of 2011/12 Property fees made ON or BEFORE January 31, 2011.**
- **20% Discount for full payment of 2011/12 Property Fees between February 1 and February 15, 2011.**
- **15% Discount for full payment of 2011/12 Property Fees between February 16 and February 28, 2011.**
- **10% Discount for full payment of 2011/2012 Property Fees between March 1 and March 31, 2011**
- **5% Discount for full payment of 2011/12 Property Fees between April 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011.**

N.B. Senior Citizens (65 yrs or older) are eligible for an additional 5% discount for properties on which they reside.

***For more information visit your Belmopan City Council Offices at 36/38 Trinity Bld., Belmopan
Or call: 822-2271, 822-2319 or 802-3679***

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if shamefully locked. There is nothing at all “SMART” about betraying your very Belizeanness for the very few dollars “the lord” has condescended to bestow on you.

Then, all his talk about lack of access to credit and higher interest rates is so much claptrap (nonsense). We gave 2.5 Million Dollars to the DFC (he wants to know what the figure was, and we said it earlier) just for small business development, and half a Million Dollars to the Youth Business Trust. We gave 6 Million US Dollars by way of the Belize Rural Financing Access to Credit Program. And Commercial Banks lending rates are lower now than any time under the PUP. And it’s just that I want, and insist that they can be lower still, and that is what we’re working towards.

Compare the fact of the UDP’s revival of the DFC, our interventions now to continue to capitalize the DFC, compare that with the bankruptcy of the DFC and of course the small farmers bank that the PUP presided over.

Mr Speaker, I noted that the Leader of the Opposition was loud, very, very loud during his presentation; a case, I suppose, of noise to cover emptiness; a case of heat but no light. But he really went low when he resorted to outright lies in, for example, talking about the government’s removal of the GST from fuel. He said that this would increase government’s tax-take, which makes him either a fool or a nave, either a dunce or a liar.

We produced the tables on the last occasion. And let me repeat, Mr. Speaker, the new price, if we had left on the GST, for Premium would have been \$11.69 a gallon. For Regular it would have been \$11.39; for Kerosene \$9.43; and for Diesel \$10.81. Because we (GOB) took off the GST and replaced it with a lower import duty, the price now for Premium, instead of that \$11.69 is \$11.40 per gallon, a saving of 29 cents. For Regular, instead of \$11.39 it’s \$11.12 per gallon. For Kerosene, instead of \$9.43 its 48.27, a saving of \$1.16; and for Diesel, it is \$10.48 instead of the \$10.81 that it would have

been if we had left on the GST, a savings of 33 cents.

And, staying with oil, Mr. Speaker, his lies continued, but this time mixed in with hypocrisy. He said that we were given the advice when we were negotiating the windfall tax by commonwealth experts and experts from Trinidad, and that we refused to follow the advice and argue for a higher windfall tax. Well, that is absolutely untrue. But, how can the Leader of the Opposition talk about windfall tax at all. He and his administration put on NO windfall tax at all.

When they introduced the tax regime after oil was found by BNE, they had the opportunity to provide for a windfall tax. They didn’t do so. In fact, I recollect that when they introduced the Bill for the 40 percent or so income tax, when it went to the Senate, the Leader of the Opposition’s chief crony, Eamon Courtenay, refused to approve the Bill because he said that common sense and the interest of the Belizean people dictated a windfall tax. The PUP slapped him down, put him in his place, brought back the bill to the House, and passed it without providing for a windfall tax. And he will criticize the level at which we put in a windfall tax?

The fact is we put in a windfall tax which is now paying dividends for the people of this country, and the proceeds of which I have promised, in excess of what we budgeted for, will be used to help to subsidize the cost of the fuel prices to the consumers of this country. What the Leader of the Opposition should talk about is why, since the Government of Belize is sacrificing, giving up revenue to try to keep the prices as low as it possibly can, why doesn’t he, who owns several gas stations, and who is profiting from the dealer margins, why doesn’t he bring the dealers to talk to us about the ways in which we can lower *their* margins so that *they* too can try to help the Belizean people?

We took off the GST because the GST is charged as a percentage of the acquisition cost, so every time the acquisition cost goes up, the GST goes up. That is the same thing with the dealer margin. It is a

percentage of the acquisition cost, so every time the acquisition cost goes up, the dealer margin goes up. Mr Leader of the Opposition, start to think about giving back some of your fat profits to the Belizean consumer if you really care about the welfare of the country.

A few more points to be done with him, Mr. Speaker. He talked about Super-bondage and tried to get out of it. I won’t flog a dead horse. The entire country, the entire world knows of the terrible straight jacket into which we’ve been placed by their super-bondage. And as the Minister for NEMO pointed out, not a penny from the super-bondage was used to assist with hurricane reconstruction or any kind of post-disaster relief. It was wasted on so-called capital projects that served to feather bed for conies of the PUP and for the ministers themselves.

Capital spending, generally, he talked about. They misused that. They used to reclassify recurrent as capital to try to get away from the tighter controls exercised by the public officers and Audit over recurrent. They put it as project spending, so that, again, they could get away with all the hanky-panky that they became so absolutely infamous for.

When he talked about trading insecurities, that of course, was the greatest giveaway that somebody wrote the speech for him. You know, one of the gentlemen who worked with me suggested that when the Leader of the Opposition was going to school, the only class he liked was recess. So I don’t know how he will know anything now about trading insecurities. But anyway, Mr. Speaker, I watched him. But he was shooting off and he was throwing words and getting into name calling. I thought to myself, that wasn’t helping his cause. Everybody appreciates, in the cut and thrust of debate, the elegant put down, the deft insertion of the political stiletto, but this kind of clumsy, blatant name-calling did his lost cause no good.

In terms of his references, let me tell him about a Latin phrase which, if he had bothered to try to read a little more widely, he would have been familiar with. It’s called,

tu quo qui. What it means is that, to say, well you do it so I will do it, has never been a good response. So I will refrain from (and I’m not being mean nor vulgar) wrestling with a pig, because, you know the expression, never wrestle with a pig, because you both get dirty, but the pig likes it; so you can’t win.

I must say, though, Mr. Speaker, that ultimately it did strike me that he, the Leader of the Opposition is no different from his predecessor, that they are both un-regenerates; they are both, in terms of their larcenous tendencies, totally unreconstructed, and neither is fit to be entrusted with any aspect of the nation’s patrimony.

Let me be as charitable as I can, leaving him with some kind of praise for something; and that would have to be for the way his endless sessions with his voice coach and relentless practicing in front of the mirror, have actually paid off. Gentlemen, didn’t you notice? There was timber in his delivery, a degree of resonance; even, dare I say, an approximation, however different, of a basso profundo (deep base pitch). Mr, Speaker, I see it as an advance, and lest it be said that I am ungenerous, I acknowledge him for it.

Now let me turn, Mr. Speaker, to the harlequin from Fort George, and I begin by borrowing some words, though not the sense in which he used them, from Shakespeare’s Hamlet. What a piece of work is this man. In his histrionics, his false signifying, his adoption of a moral pose, he gives every indication of taking himself seriously. He has swallowed whole, and not even burped, the stupendous incongruity of his lecturing people on the need for honesty.

This from the man who wrote the book on fraud and deception; whose immorality is a case study in pathology; whose secret accommodation agreements and settlement deeds serially betrayed Belize; who was viceroy over an imperium of corruption that utterly undermined our state, our polity, our Democracy. The saga of his cleptocracy lives on in infamy.

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Barrow Blesses Briceno

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It is something we will never forget. But yet he comes to this House to preachify, acting for all the world as if his slate has been wiped clean.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, he has even taken to quoting the Bible. But I want to recollect for him a passage from the Merchant of Venice, and I quote: Mark you this, Basanio, the Devil can cite scripture for his purpose. Oh what a goodly outside falsehood hath, but an evil soul producing holy witness is like a villain with a smiling cheek. And so that political harlot, that emperor of official rot, that street walker of the dark side, paints his face now, turns himself out in new clothes and offers his wares again to the Belizean people.

Well, as Ernest Hemmingway once put it, every whore finds his vocation.

One more thing, Mr Speaker, before I begin to demolish the points on the budget he tried to make. This man attempted to compare himself to me. Now if he had been talking about knowledge or learning or intellect, I would not have been so immodest as to object, but when it comes to integrity, I cry foul on this satan correcting sin, and it has nothing to do with immodesty, but everything to do with unvarnished fact; and that fact is, Mr Speaker, that integrity simply is something I have and that the member for Fort George doesn't.

So, he said, Mr Speaker, that the cost of living rose cruelly last year, and that is just not true. As the independent statistical institute of Belize confirmed, the cost for food and beverage and household goods and maintenance declined by an average of 3 percent and One Percent respectively. And this was, of course, due to this activist government always protecting the poor and the middle class, having zero rated and relieved from import duty the largest basket of consumer goods in history.

The member for Fort George also talked about the help he has to give to suffering constituents. What he did not say was that this government gives him over 7 thousand dollars every month just for that purpose; the same government that also, in an act that passes all understanding, allowed him to be the first to get Fort George's share of the Venezuela Housing money that he diverted from the people of Belize, and which we had to recover,

and the same government that has tried to recover the Gabourel Lane Building paid for with public funds that he diverted to some sham organization run, he says, by his sister.

He tired to criticize Tourism growth, but as I said, this is now the highest it has been for years. And, of course, the growth includes the cruise sector.

And I say to him and the Leader of the Opposition that I will walk any road and go anywhere and meet anyone in an effort to serve the cruise or any tourism stake holders. I am not puffed up with that rich man pride that they, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Fort George have both acquired as a result of their plutocracy and ill-gotten gains.

The BATSUB downsizing in Belize is, of course, a consequence of the deep spending cuts of the UK Government. That underscores the point that not even the rich countries have been immune from the ravages of recession. And it also underscores how well Belize has done in comparison even to the developed world.

Now, the member for Fort George replicated the Leader of the Opposition's misguided ranting on NHI, and I have already done with that, though I never thought I'd see the day when Said would have to ape the man for whom he has no respect. How hath the mighty, but justifiably, fallen!

And one more thing on Health Care: the UDP has wasted no millions of dollars on sweet heart deals for private investors that couldn't make Universal Hospital work, and whose bailout provoked riots at the foot of the National Assembly. And we've certainly not presided over the pharmaceutical supplies hustle that saw Brother Billy's high prices dominate KMHM and Ministry of Health purchases to the detriment of the taxpayers.

In another astonishing bit of effrontery, the member for Fort George dared to raise the issue of foreclosures now under the DFC. But, Mr Speaker, when, because of their outrageous 30 Million dollar in one day giveaway to such as the Novelos, the DFC became bankrupt, all the corporation was doing thereafter was to collect debts and foreclose on poor people. That was its sole reason for being. Compare that with its 25 Million Dollar revival now for lending to the poor. Compare

that, and you will see, Mr Speaker, why the member for Fort George should always employ a strategic silence when it comes to the DFC. In other words, he should keep his lying mouth shut.

Then, for the member to go on about social security is simply another demonstration of his scabrous, tough skin. It was the scandal over the pillage of SSB, the uncollateralized millions in so-called loans to the Godfreys and so on that produced the start of the revolution that almost turned violent in sweeping them from power.

Now SSB is properly run, and the investment in Telemedia is to earn dividends that can help ensure a return to viability. Not like the 10 Million it was forced to give for shares in a Michael Ashcroft so-called employees' trust that is another fraud on the workers.

I can very quickly now deal with the few non-points of his that remain, he talked about the census exercise that government has undertaken and tried to make out that we used it as a way to hire our party supporters. But one of the first persons employed as a Belize City manager under the program was a certain Leno Joe Usher. And of the many things you might want to call her, Mr. Speaker, UDP is not one of them.

The SIB, the Statistical Institute of Belize, also hired as one of their first picks, Mario Castellanos, a former PUP minister and their last Cayo Central candidate. Also, Steve Latchman, former PUP Belize City Mayor and Mesopotamia standard bearer.

Can there be any greater proof of the difference between us and them, Mr Speaker? Stop bringing your guilt transfer; stop bringing your sin transfer to this House, Mr. Member for Fort George.

In going on about crime and violence, which we admittedly yet don't have under control, but which no government has worked harder to stem, the recidivist member for Fort George just could not help returning to his lying ways. And this time it was really a whopper. He said there was 326 murders last year, when the number was actually 129. The man actually lies on the dead!

And he talks about us inflating budget figures? He forgets that it was that PUP, Said Musa, Ralph

Fonseca budget that caused the IMF to officially declare that it was a bogus budget in which the administration had deliberately overestimated revenue and deliberately underestimated expenditure.

Finally, Mr Speaker, there was the criticism of the delay in the World Bank Municipal Drainage Project. Well, the project *is* being implemented in the component, is being executed in the component having to do with improvement in administration and capacity for the pilot project towns, and the actual infrastructure works will commence later in this calendar year.

But in talking about the World Bank, the member should have remembered to point out that under his administration the World Bank had cut off Belize. No project financing could be had from the bank, no money of any sort, because of the corruption of the Said Musa Administration. That was the reason given in black and white by the bank for its disengagement from the country.

It was this UDP Government, on the basis of its now proven record of honesty that was, after the delay necessary to establish the bona fide nature of the new government, able to access once more concessionary loans from the World Bank for help with our stimulus package and development agenda.

Let me close right there, Mr Speaker, for it is symbolic to end on a note dealing with the municipalities. That World Bank Project and the millions of dollars from our own resources in this budget that we are making available for our cities and towns is what will help to take us through to the next great victory in March of 2012 in the City Council and Town Council Elections.

And that victory will springboard us straight into the 2013 General Election Second-Term Triumph. That victory, that triumph is premised on the fact that we are delivering for the people of this country, a people in whom we have implicit faith, and for whom we will continue to work day after day in a way and with a drive never before witnessed in our beloved Belize!

Thank You!

John Versus Johnny

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It's like Godfrey Smith said, the member for Orange Walk Central as the leader of the PUP is the most weak and fumbling leader that the PUP has ever seen, and today Mr. Speaker, we got a good taste of that from his reading of the speech that was prepared for him. Three years now as leader of the opposition and he can still not talk without reading.

In his budget for last year, our Prime Minister, Hon. Dean Oliver Barrow, declared that fiscal year 2010-2011, the fiscal year that is now ending, would have been the most difficult year of our five year term. This declaration last year was not good news for the people, it was not what they wanted to hear, but it was the honest truth. And it served to signal the open, honest and transparent manner in which this Dean Barrow administration would operate and is operating. This signal, Mr Speaker, was important because if as a nation we are to lift ourselves out of the third world category then we must all understand where we are, where we want to go and the sacrifices that must be made in order to get us there."

So as the Prime Minister has said, Mr. Speaker, that difficult year is behind us. Last year we took some tough decisions, some that were not very popular, but some which we felt were necessary to stabilize our finances and put our economy back on a sustainable growth path. Today, as a result of those decisions, we can celebrate growth, the highest in the region, Mr, Speaker.

Put it in context of 2007, the last full year of the People's United Party when they barely managed 1.5 percent growth. And we are comforted to know, Mr. Speaker, that we are on a recovery path that is sustainable; sustainable Mr. Speaker, because of the wise and prudent policies of this United Democratic Party Government. Sustainable, Mr. Speaker, because ours is not a government of bloated contracts, not a government of sweet heart deals; sustainable, Mr Speaker, because ours is a government of honesty, accountability and transparency. What we cannot afford, Mr. Speaker, is to have another PUP government come in and erode the gains that we have made under the UDP. What we cannot



Hon. Emil Arguelles, Speaker of the House

have is a return to the recklessness and thievery of the People's United Party."

We are now less than two years away from the next general election; and as we celebrate growth and sustained recovery, this is as good a time as any to signal from now to the Belizean people that there should be no turning back. No return, Mr Speaker, to the old ways of the PUP; no return to corruption; no return to bloated contracts. Let us stay the course with the UDP

With our finances stabilized, and our economy growing slowly but steadily, we can even more than before focus on vanquishing poverty and bringing progress and prosperity to our people.

This year's budget, Mr Speaker, redoubles our fight against poverty and social degradation with programs such as the expansion of the food pantry program to the north side of Belize City and to the Cayo district, the establishment of a countrywide child-care subsidy program for working families, the application of the conditional cash transfer program across the entirety of this country, increase in the level of funding for NHI in the Southern districts, further investments in regional hospitals and poly clinics, continuance of the recently established dialysis treatment program, full funding for the Restore Belize Program which provides resources for community action and participation to combat crime.

On the infrastructure side, Mr. Speaker, we continue to build and build and build. After finishing the Placencia Highway, and the final stretch of the Southern Highway

(Golden Stream to Big Falls), and many sugar roads in the north, we are now poised to construct the Dump to Jalacte Road and the Kendal Bridge in the South, and back in the North, the Progreso Road and even more improvement to roads in the Sugar Belt. (Orange Walk, San Lazaro, Blue Creek).

7 of the 9 municipalities, Mr. Speaker, will receive a major face lift with the Municipal Infrastructure Project. Yet, with all this, this morning we had to come here to hear the Leader of the Opposition refer to our budget as an empty budget.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition ended his presentation by promising what the next PUP government will do. I don't know when that next PUP government will come but, Mr. Speaker, the truth of it is that they had TEN round years to do everything that he was talking about this morning.

So hypocritical are some of the things that the leader of the opposition has mentioned, Mr. Speaker, I wonder how he has the face of brass to come into this house to talk about them.

How will they come into this House to talk about Petroleum (oil), to talk about BNE, to talk about windfall tax when they are the ones that signed the agreement with BNE, when he was the one that signed the agreement; he was the one that signed the agreement with BNE to give away our petroleum.

And now, all of a sudden, he knows that BNE could have been profitable at 35 dollars per barrel. When he was signing the contract he said all kinds of things about, oh, we have to give them time to recover their

money because they have invested and are not making a lot of money.

All of a sudden now he comes to this House and tries to tell us that BNE could have survived on 35 dollars per barrel. And then, not just to come here and try to scold us, but to come here and promise the Belizean people that if and when he ever gets back into power, he will do anything different than what he did for ten years; it is strange, it is very surprising."

Then he talks about "litigious" stance. In other words, he is vex with us because we are fighting in the courts to get monies that they gave away to PUP cronies; that's what he means when he uses those big terms which he can't even pronounce.

He is mad at us for going after the Venezuelan money, mad at us for getting back 20 Million dollars which his government, his then leader, who will soon be his leader again, gave away to Ashcroft to pay for the Universal Private Hospital, monies that were given to us by the Venezuelan Government. And he is mad at us, he says we are going to court too much to get back monies hat they gave away.

We are going to court to fight against the accommodation agreement, which if it stands, would have seen the Belizean government having to pay Michael Ashcroft and BTL, when he still owned it, would have seen the Belizean people having to pay him if he did not make 15 percent profit from BTL.

Having restored the confidence of the international financial community in our government, now being able to get 83 Million dollars in grants and loans on concessionary terms from these institutions that did not want to lend a penny to the PUP Government, he is mad at us for borrowing money.

They borrowed 1.5 Billion, and we borrow 83 Million at concessionary rates, you're talking about 4 percent, maybe 5 percent rate; they borrow at 15 sometimes 20 percent, when you compound it, and they are going to look at us and try to make the masses think that that we did something wrong by borrowing 83 Million dollars.

I'm being merciful in saying to him, at the very least, read his speech before he comes here, so that he sees what they're setting him up to say, because those same people who are writing his speeches are setting him up for defeat.

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