

No. HR 18/1/4

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, 30 October 1981

10:00 a.m.

-----

## Members present:

The Honourable Mr G. Price (Freetown), Prime Minister  
 The Honourable Mr V.H. Courtenay (Collet), Minister of State  
 The Honourable Mr D.L. McKoy (Stann Creek Rural), Minister of Labour, Social Services and Community Development  
 The Honourable Mr F.H. Hunter (Belize Rural North), Minister of Works  
 The Honourable Mr F.J. Marin (Corozal South), Minister of Natural Resources  
 The Honourable Mr G. Pech (Orange Walk South), Minister of Trade and Industry  
 The Honourable Mr A. Shoman (Cayo North), Minister of Health, Housing and Co-operatives  
 The Honourable Mr S. Musa (Fort George), Attorney General and Minister of Education and Sports  
 The Honourable Mr E. Briceño (Orange Walk North), Minister of Local Government and Social Security  
 The Honourable Mr S.O. Waight (Cayo South), Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works  
 The Honourable Mrs. J. Usher (Pickstock), Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health, Housing and Co-operatives  
 The Honourable Mr V. Castillo (Corozal North), Deputy Speaker  
 The Honourable Dr. T. Aranda (Dangriga)  
 The Honourable Mr P.S.W. Goldson (Albert)  
 The Honourable Mr C. Thompson (Mesopotamia)

## Absent:

The Speaker, the Honourable Mr C.B. Hyde, M.B.E. - ill  
 The Honourable Mr Louis S. Sylvestre (Belize Rural South) - Out of the Country on Government Business  
 The Honourable Mr C. Wagner (Toledo South)  
 The Honourable Mr B. Ah (Toledo North)

The Clerk announced the unavoidable absence of Mr Speaker, who was ill.

Whereupon the Deputy Speaker was asked to take the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

PRAYERS read by the Deputy Speaker.

## PAPERS

HON. V. H. COURTENAY ( Minister of State ): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table, Sessional Papers, the first of which is

/No. HR145/1/4.....

No. HR145/1/4 - Passport Ordinance (Amendment) Order 1981;  
and No. HR146/1/4 - Belize Police Force - Annual Report  
1980.

MR SPEAKER: Those Papers are ordered to lie on the  
Table.

HON. G. PECH ( Minister of Trade and Industry ):  
Mr Speaker, I rise to lay on the Table, Sessional Paper Nos.  
147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152 - Supplies (Control)(Prices)  
(Import/Export)(Amendments).

MR SPEAKER: Those Papers are ordered to lie on the  
Table.

HON. A. SHOWNAN ( Minister of Health, Housing and  
Co-operatives ): Mr Speaker, I rise to lay on the Table,  
Sessional Paper No. HR193/1/4 relating to an Agreement on  
Cooperation in the Field of Health Between the Government of  
Belize and the Government of the Republic of Costa Rica.

MR SPEAKER: That Paper is ordered to lie on the Table.

#### STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

HON. G. PRICE ( Prime Minister ): Mr Speaker, I wish  
to put on record the steps taken by the Government of Belize  
since assuming the status of Independence on the 21st of  
September to consolidate the international position of the  
new Nation of Belize. These steps include admission to the  
United Nations, Membership in the Non-aligned Movement and  
confirmation of Membership in the Commonwealth.

Within five days of Independence, Belize successfully  
secured admission to the United Nations. She did so over  
objections raised by Guatemala in both the Security Council  
and the General Assembly. These objections became all the  
more significant because they were based upon arguments by  
Guatemala that Belize was not a State in legal sense since  
Guatemala argued Belize had no territory; its territory  
belong to Guatemala according to the statement made by the  
Foreign Minister of Guatemala - not by the Foreign Minister,  
by the Ambassador of Guatemala to the United Nations.

The Security Council rejected this contention on the  
part of Guatemala, and by a unanimous vote recommended the  
admission of Belize as a legally constituted state.

The General Assembly repudiated the argument of Guatemala  
by a vote of over 144 in favour of the admission of Belize, no  
abstentions, and only Guatemala voting against. In effect,  
therefore, Guatemala remains the only country in the world  
refusing to recognise Belize with all her territory. On the  
same day, the Friday, the 25th of September, Belize was  
admitted to the Non-aligned Movement thereby expanding its  
special status in the Movement to full membership.

Although the Commonwealth had earlier taken a decision  
that Belize became a full member of the Organization upon its  
becoming independent, Belize consolidated that position by  
being admitted on the 30th of September to the Commonwealth  
Heads of Governments Meeting in Melbourne, Australia. The  
Belize Delegation was able to ensure the participation of the  
Commonwealth should assistance be required in finding a lasting

/settlement....



settlement in accordance with the Heads of Agreement. This was achieved by an extension of the life of the Commonwealth Committee on Belize with a new mandate.

The terms of that decision is included in the Communiqué issued by the Meeting, from which I quote, with your permission, Mr Speaker ( and I quote ): "Heads of Government reviewed developments leading to the Independence of Belize. They expressed satisfaction with the role played by the British Government and welcomed its commitment to make adequate provision for the security of Belize. They commended the Commonwealth Ministerial Committee on Belize for the effective manner in which it had discharged its mandate.

Noting the continuing threat to the security of Belize in the absence of a final settlement with Guatemala, Heads of Governments reaffirmed their full support for the efforts of the Government of Belize to maintain Belize's territorial integrity and to achieve a final resolution of the outstanding issues on the basis of the Heads of Agreement signed in London on the 11th of March 1981. They requested the Secretary-General to convene the committee whenever necessary to assist the Government of Belize in finding a lasting settlement in accordance with the Heads of Agreement.

They noted the helpful attitude of the United States Government as reflected in its affirmative vote for the Belize resolution in the United Nations General Assembly in 1980 and expressed confidence that this attitude would be maintained." (unquote).

Finally, I wish to report that Belize has so far been granted observer status in the Organization of American States. By the terms of the charter of that Organization, Belize does not qualify for full membership because of the dispute between Guatemala and the United Kingdom over Belize. Government is determined, however, to pursue full membership of that Organization as soon as circumstances allow.

HON. A. SHOMAN (Minister of Health, Housing and Cooperatives): Mr Speaker, I rise to make a short statement relating to the Paper I laid on the Table this morning.

A Belizean delegation from the Ministry of Health comprising the Minister and the Chief Medical Officer, paid an official visit to Costa Rica from the 18 to 24 of October. The delegation was received by the Minister of Health of Costa Rica, Dr Carmelo Carboza, and held meetings with their heads of section of the Ministry, with the directors of the Social Security Scheme, the University and the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and also visited several institutions and programs in the health sector.

On the 23 October, an Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Health was signed by two Health Ministers. This Agreement provides, among other things -

- (1) that the Ministry of Health of Costa Rica will organise programs of technical assistance and offer professional advice in the areas required by us;
- (2) for the professional and technical training of persons nominated by our Government;

- (3) for the specialized training of Belizean doctors in areas of priority determined by us;
- (4) for scholarships in medicine, nursing and paramedical personnel;
- (5) for shortterm training and refresher courses, both in Costa Rica and in Belize; and for highly specialised medical attention to be given to Belizeans in Costa Rica where this cannot be provided at home; and also for other areas to be agreed upon in the future.

In order to carry the Agreement forward, the Ministry of Health of Belize is inviting the Costa Rican Minister of Health and his team of officials and collaboration to visit Belize in early December.

While in Costa Rica, Mr Speaker, I had occasion to speak to the Foreign Minister, Bernd Niehaus, and President Rodrigo Caraso who assured me of his Government's policy to continue to work together with the Government of Belize to promote peace, stability and democracy in Central America and to cooperate with us for the economic and social development of Belize.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### 1. International Financial Organizations Bill, 1981

HON. G. PRICE (Prime Minister): I rise to introduce a Bill for an Act to enable Belize to become a Member of the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Finance Corporation and the International Development Association.

Mr Speaker, Belize must take full advantage of the opportunities offered by its independence. We must consolidate traditional sources of capital finance. We must ensure continuity and we must open new avenues for financing private and public sector projects. Membership of major international financial institutions is essential.

As a first step and to carry out a decision of the National Assembly, it is proposed that Belize seeks membership of the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, more commonly known as the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation and the International Development Association.

Bill read a First Time and ordered to be printed.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this Bill is referred to the Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee for examination, consideration and report.

##### 2. Defence (Amendment) Bill, 1981

HON. V. H. CURTENVY (Minister of State ): Mr Speaker, I beg to introduce for its First Reading a Bill for an Act

/to.....



to amend the Defence Ordinance 1977 (No. 8 of 1977) to give effect to the changes made necessary by the Belize Constitution and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Bill read a First Time and ordered to be printed.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this Bill is referred to the Internal Affairs and Labour Committee for examination, consideration and report.

3. Belizean Nationality Bill, 1981

HON. V.H. COURTESEY (Minister of State): Mr Speaker, I beg to move the First Reading of a Bill for an Act to make provision for citizenship of Belize and for matters connected therewith.

Bill read a First Time and ordered to be printed.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this Bill is referred to the Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee for examination, consideration and report.

4. Labour (Amendment) Bill, 1981

HON. D.L. HICKOY (Minister of Social Services, Labour and Community Development): Mr Speaker, I rise to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Labour Ordinance No. 15 of 1959.

This amendment deals specifically with the matter of payment of severance pay in respect of periods not covered by social security benefits, whether severance pay arises under the Labour Ordinance or under a collective agreement or a contract of service.

This Honourable House will recall, Mr Speaker, that the Social Security Ordinance No. 6 of 1979 came into force on 1 June, 1981. On that date, Section 189 of the Labour Ordinance made Section 178 Clause (1) of the said Labour Ordinance null and void in relation to any worker whose employer is contributing to the Social Security Scheme. It is precisely for this reason, Mr Speaker, that this amendment is brought about to ensure that our Belizean workers are not deprived of their benefits once earned.

Bill read a First Time and ordered to be printed.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this Bill is referred to the Internal Affairs and Labour Committee for examination, consideration and report.

5. Wildlife Protection Bill, 1981

HON. F.J. MAREN (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr Speaker, I rise to introduce a Bill for an Act to provide for the conservation, restoration and development of wildlife, for the regulation of its use and for all other matters connected therewith.

Bill read a First Time and ordered to be printed.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this Bill is referred to the Economic Development Committee for examination, consideration and report.

6. National Parks System Bill, 1961

HON. F.J. MARIN ( Minister of Natural Resources ) :  
Mr Speaker, I rise to introduce a Bill for an Act to provide for the preservation and protection of highly important natural and cultural features, for the regulation of the scientific, educational and recreational use of the same and for all other matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Bill read a First Time and ordered to be printed.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this Bill is referred to the Health, Education and Welfare Committee for examination, consideration and report.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

HON. G. PRICE (Prime Minister): I move that the House at its rising today, adjourns to Friday, November 14 at ten o'clock forenoon.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Question is that the House at its rising today, adjourns to Friday, November 14 at ten o'clock forenoon.

All those in favour, kindly say aye; those against, kindly say no. I think the eyes have it.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

3. Private Members Business

Introduction of Bills

HON. F.J. MARIN ( Minister of Natural Resources ) :  
Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Member for Corozal North, I rise to introduce a Bill for an Act to provide for the Incorporation of the Iglesia Evangelica El Calvario (Belize).

Bill read a First Time, to be read a Second Time next Sitting.

ADJOURNMENT

HON. G. PRICE ( Prime Minister ) : I move that the House do now adjourn, to Friday, November 14.

HON. P.S.M. GOLDSMITH ( Albert ) : Mr Speaker, I would like to put in a plea with the Government to undertake a rescue mission as far as the streets of Belize City are concerned.

/I....



I think the situation of the streets, Mr Speaker, has reached the proportions of an emergency, and it calls for emergency action. The streets of Belize City, I think, it will be readily agreed on an objective basis, have never been as bad as they are at this moment. Just take a few examples entering the City: the road by the Cometary, the extension of the Central American Boulevard, Dolphin Street, Fairweather Street, Dean Street, and a number of other streets. On the Northside of the City; such streets as Hopp Street are unpassable.

I think, Mr Speaker, that it is clear that in the interest of the residents of Belize City, and indeed of the whole Country, that the Government should intervene. And I would go so far as to say that perhaps this matter of the streets of Belize City, is a matter which has reached such a stage that all sides involved should come together and try to evolve some programme which will once and for all put the streets on a usable basis. I think the Opposition would be very happy to join with the Government and the City Council in a dialogue for the involving of a programme for the streets of Belize City. I think it has reached a stage where it cannot be handled merely on a partisan basis. It's an emergency, and should be dealt with as such.

HON. G. PRICE ( Prime Minister ): Mr Speaker, the Opposition did not mention the recent weather condition.

Yes, some streets are bad, but I would dare say that some streets are better than they were two years ago. And work is going on. But we do welcome his offer of cooperation so that we can improve and speed up what is going on now when the weather holds up and the sun comes out again and the ground is dry.

( a p p l a u s e )

HON. T. ARANDA ( Leader of the Opposition ): Mr Speaker, for the records, I think the Opposition has to make it clear that the Heads of Agreement as a solution for the Anglo-Guatemalan problem are very very objectionable to the Opposition. We have gone through some pretty bad experiences when the Heads were introduced. We continue requesting that adequate solution be found to the problem alright, but not as the Heads of Agreement as a base.

We, therefore, reiterate to the Government and to the international world that the Opposition of Belize and all those bodies that supported the Opposition on that issue give consideration again to the Heads of Agreement as a solution because it has, in fact, split Belize on this basic issue. And it remains objectionable to the Opposition as a solution to the problem between Great Britain and Guatemala.

HON. G. PRICE ( Prime Minister ): To note the statement made by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

However, I would also like to add, Mr Speaker, that it was encouraging to note the unity and the joy that pervaded throughout the Country of Belize in the Independence celebrations.

The Heads of Agreement stand and are in force. We have made known, publicly, our understanding of the Heads of Agreement. Our understanding is that all these Heads in no

/s/uy.....

way prejudice the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Belize. And on these principles we continue to stand.

I would like to point out to the Honourable Members across the aisle, that they must not forget that the Heads of Agreement do involve the United Kingdom. So that even after Independence, there is a residual important obligation of the United Kingdom to help Belize find a solution to which it did not create. Any other solution that may be pursued may run the danger of excluding one of the two principal parties to the problem.

Belize's number one priority in its foreign policy is to help find a solution to the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute, which we did not cause; but which, it could be described constitutionally, an Independent State did inherit. But in no way that dispenses or excludes, eliminates the obligation of the United Kingdom, which only recently was reasserted by His Excellency the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to Belize that the United Kingdom stands by those Heads of Agreement and is involved in endeavouring to find a solution to the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute.

On our part, in all public statements at the United Nations, at the Commonwealth; in Melbourne, Australia, in Belize, we have made the statement that we want friendship, we hold out the hand of friendship to Guatemala and we want to find a solution to the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute without prejudice to principles of - I keep on repeating them because they are important - sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We are doing everything possible at the moment to resume the work of the Joint Commission to find such a solution and we do appeal to the Leader of the Opposition and his party to try and understand the international implication and the importance of the Heads of Agreement as a possible means; in fact, I would say at this moment, the only means, that are seen as an instrument to try and solve the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute.

( a p p l a u s e )

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the House now stands adjourn.

Adjourned at 10:30 a.m. to Friday, 14 November 1981.

-----