



Capital Weekly



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

No. 019

Thursday, January 19, 2012

Price: \$1.00

Quit the Quibbling! Just Drop the Electricity Rates



Jeffrey Locke, CEO of BEL



John Avery, Chairman of the PUC

- Contributed

As we entered 2012, one of our government-owned public utilities had just reported healthy profits

and dividends to shareholders, while another had submitted a request for a rate review that would almost certainly lead to a reduction in rates to consumers. That is all well

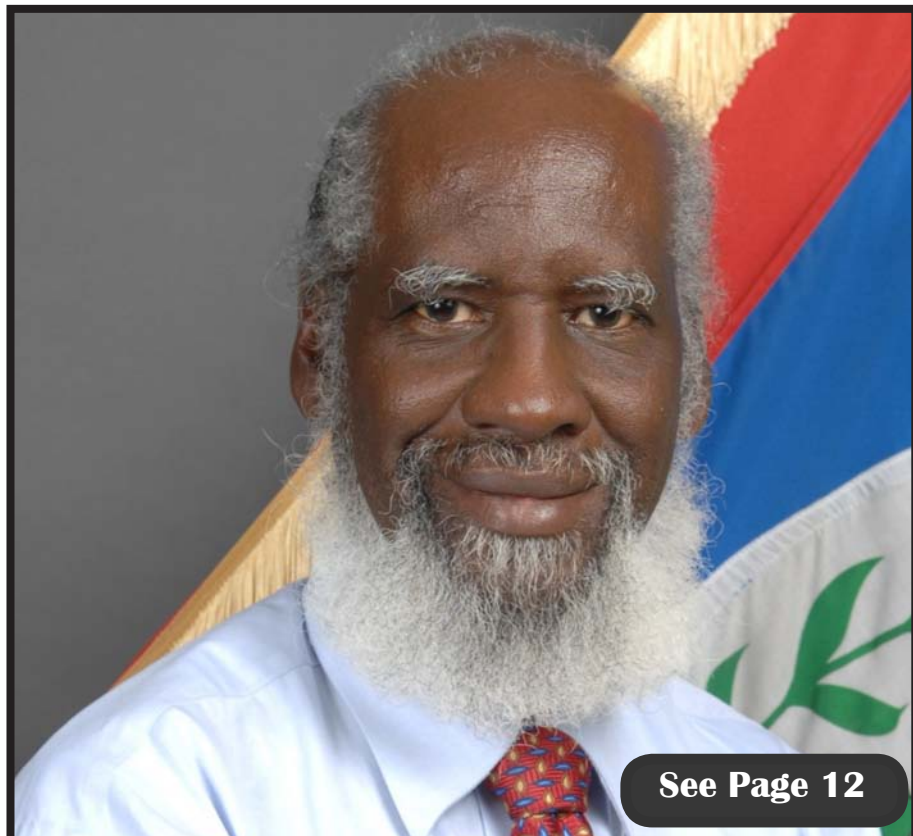
and good; and, on the face of it, Belizean consumers and minority shareholders seem to be getting some immediate, tangible benefits from Government's nationalization of public

utilities. In the long term, however, it is left to be seen whether these corporations will truly benefit the masses in a manner

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Sedi Shines the Light on PUP

Saldivar Scolds the PUP



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Hon. Wilfred 'Sedi' Elrington, Pickstock Area Representative



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Hon. John Saldivar, Belmopan Area Representative

From the Desk of the Chairman

Borrow a Page from Barrow's Book



Delroy Cuthkelvin
Chairman, Editorial Board

We sympathize with the Belize City Council over the bind in which it has consistently found itself where the garbage situation is concerned; but we believe it is the inevitable result of a failure to act decisively and resolutely in terminating the corrupt arrangements inherited from the PUP.

We had said it from the start, and we are saying it again. The garbage disposal contracts, like most other things under the last PUP administration, were conceived in corruption; and for that reason, they can never and will never be executed with honesty and efficiency.

Upon taking office in 2006, other municipal councils found themselves in similar binds, and did not hesitate to put an end to those arrangements. For them, in this regard, things have since been working out well.

There are always legal considerations entailed in decisions to ter-

minate binding contracts and agreements, but there is no way one can afford to be intimidated by the threat of possible litigation when the righteous objective is to defend the interest of the People, especially when one is elected by the People themselves. After all, there is no court bigger than the People's Court, and no justice greater than Social Justice.

Look at the example Prime Minister Barrow has set at the level of Central Government, having acted decisively and fearlessly in the face of the biggest guns we have ever known in Belize when it comes to legal battles. The Prime Minister has, of course, acted in the best interest of Belize and the Belizean People.

There have been enormous challenges along the way, countless twists and turns, and still some daunting curves ahead, but he and his government have steadily been progressing towards the ultimate goal, which is to secure the future of our Country and People.

If our political leaders at the municipal level wish to be truly successful, they should follow the example of Honorable Dean Barrow who, by his decisive and resolute actions on behalf of the Belizean people, is quickly making a name for himself as one of the most patriotic and impacting leaders of all time, not just in Belize, but the entire region and the world.

Borrow a page from Mr. Barrow's book; and your name will go down in history as one who was not afraid to defend, against all odds, the interest of the People who elected you.

Shoman Casts Stones

She is NOT Without Sin!

Wilfred 'Sedi' Elrington, during his contribution to the debate at last Friday's House sitting (reproduced on page 12), reminded those on the Opposition side of two important quotations from the Good Book as spoken by the greatest teacher of all times, Christ himself.

One of those quotations is, "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone." (John 8:7).

The message has certainly not gotten across, as this week when the Senate convened, one of the first stones to be cast came from none other than Lisa Shoman, the same woman who, as attorney for the said corporation in question, SSB, gave up 3.34 Million of the People's money that the Court had earlier ordered the late Harry Courtenay to pay back to the SSB.

It was during the 1989 to 1993 PUP administration that Harry Courtenay, acting on behalf of Social Security, got the money to purchase shares in a hydroelectric company, BECOL. The shares were never obtained by SSB, and the Courts later ordered Courtenay to return the money to SSB.

But, shortly after the PUP returned to office in 1998, Lisa Shoman, acting as attorney for the Social Security Board, informed the Chief Justice that SSB had no desire to have the judgment enforced. It goes without saying that Shoman, thorough that single action, cost the government and people of Belize 3.34 Million.

Now she comes casting stones at employees of the very same corporation, SSB. One would have to ask, how many millions have the employees of SSB cost the government and people of Belize through their efforts to get on the housing mortgage write-off list. And even if they were successful, how much money would it have cost us? We dare say it certainly wouldn't be anything close to 3.34 Million.

We are NOT at all sug-



Lisa Shoman
Gave up SSB \$3.34 Million

gesting that where apparent wrongdoing is exposed, the UDP should not deal with it as it is doing in this and other such instances. But for those on the other side who the World and Country knows could hardly be matched, let alone outdone, by anyone, where abuse of public resources is concerned, is certainly the heights of hypocrisy.

It's precisely the kind of thing the good master cautioned us against, and which Hon. Sedi Elrington reminded us of last week.

Stop casting stones, Miss Shoman! You, of all people, especially where SSB is concerned, are certainly not without sin!

Capital Weekly

*From the Heart of the Nation
To the Soul of the People*

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Prime Minister Dean Barrow

On Lowering of Electricity Rates

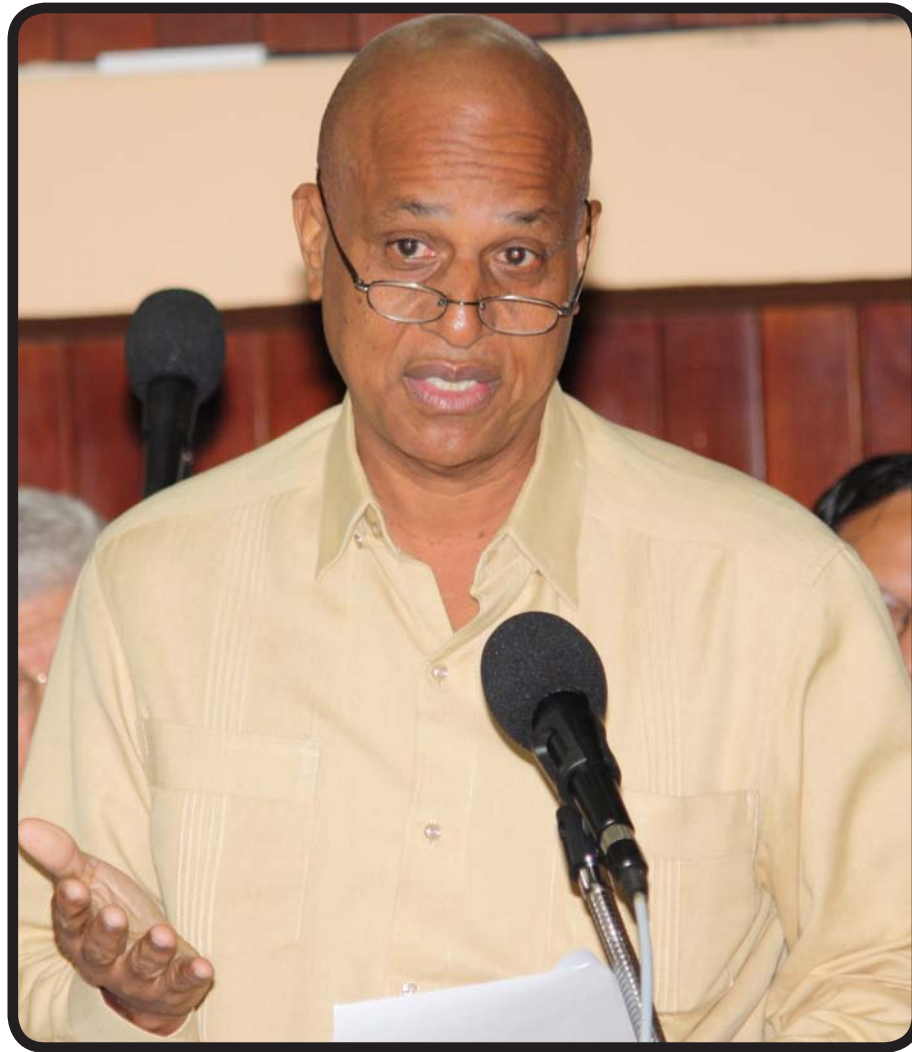
(Statement Made During House Meeting, Friday January, 13, 2012)

Yesterday, the Public Utilities Commission of Belize announced its initial decision with respect to the 2012 Full Tariff Review Proceeding. On behalf of the Government and People of Belize, I welcome that decision and greet it with applause and jubilation.

The short summary of that decision is that electricity rates will now go down by almost 3 cents per Kilowatt hour. In percentage terms, Mr. Speaker, this is a 6.14 percent reduction to consumers; and this is the greatest gift over which this administration (*Applause*), this is the greatest New Year's gift over which we are presiding. Of course, Mr. Speaker, while it is the greatest gift, it is not the only gift, as later I will be introducing the 17 Million dollar Social Security Board Mortgage Write Off Motion.

But, Mr. Speaker, this slashing of electricity bills to all consumers is an unprecedented historical achievement; if you will forgive me, the *pièce de résistance*, the jewel in the crown of Government's sparkling canopy of pro-people initiatives. Mr. Speaker, every sector of the public, of the economy, will benefit; the residential consumers, the industrial consumers, the commercial consumers; and, of course, as is always the case with an administration that is always for the people, the poorest will benefit most.

And that is because, Mr. Speaker, the PUC's decision adds over 1,000 persons to the list of those that pay only a social rate for their electricity consumption. That social rate is currently an already low 26 cents per kilowatt hour, as opposed to the average of about 40 cents per kilowatt hour that the regular residential consumer pays. But that 26 cents social rate



Prime Minister Hon. Dean Barrow

will go down further now to 24 cents. And, as I said, the number of around 7,000 or so persons that pay only the social rate will increase to 8,000 persons.

“It is a price that is willingly paid by this Government, a government that is indubitably, inarguably, and as a matter of conviction, belief, philosophy and our very Heart and our very Soul, Always for the People”

Now, Mr. Speaker, this decision which offers such dramatic relief to the people of this Country would, under the law, as it stood, normally not take effect until August, but the Minister of Public Utilities has already signed a statutory instrument (and it was just laid on the table before the House just a while ago); that statutory instrument brings the new rates into force on the first day of February, 2012. So that as of from next month's light bill, Mr. Speaker, every person in this country will realize this huge savings and have money to spend, in some cases to splurge, as a result of the action of this United Democratic Party Government. (*Applause*)

For, Mr. Speaker, the Country will remember that none of this would have been possible were it not for the bold history-making decision of the UDP

Government to nationalize BEL.

It is the case, Mr. Speaker, that the former owners of BEL were never going to give us any reduction. In fact, they tied us up in Court and got injunctions to block any possibility of lower rates. And not only were they not ever going to take our light bills down; in fact, and to the contrary, they were determined and demanded to actually increase our rates, and in a major punitive way, as all the World knows, they actually threatened,

and were prepared to cut off our power supply and plunge the nation into darkness, if we did not knuckle under to their blackmail.

But the United Democratic Party braved local and international wrath, to do the courageous thing; the nationalistic thing; the right thing. Today is therefore the sweetest possible consummation and vindication of Belizean courage, of a signal Belizean brave-heart, historical watershed (*Applause*). Mr. Speaker, the spirit of the Baymen lives and is triumphantly reincarnated in a United Democratic Party that is *Always for the People*.

Mr. Speaker, in real terms, the 6.14 percent reduction in electricity rates is about 12 Million dollars in annual savings to the consumer. That is new money now in disposable income to help with personal spending and economic regeneration, and I say it is one hell of a stimulus package.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the details, no one will miss the fact that the only bill that doesn't go down is what, in an otherwise across the board the reduction, is government's bill for street lighting. We, the Government of Belize, will continue to pay at a whopping 55 cents per kilowatt hour. (It's almost 600 dollars per year for one lamp).

But that is what is necessary to offset the rock-bottom social rate to those 8,000 poor Belizeans, and it is a price that is willingly paid by this Government, a government that is indubitably, inarguably, and as a matter of conviction, belief, philosophy and our very heart and our very soul, *Always for the People*.

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Saldivar Scolds PUP Leaders

“You Cannot Recycle Corruption!”

Mr. Speaker, I really have to say that I sense a hint of jealousy (*applause*), jealousy on the part of the former Prime Minister, that when he was the Prime Minister all he could preside over was corruption, corruption, corruption; and we now have a Prime Minister that takes care of the people (*applause*)!

I don't understand the gall of this man; he has to have serious gall to come here and tell us that we must not beat our chests because we are helping the poor people; when he came to this Honorable House a few weeks ago and beat *his* chest to tell us that we have to pay back Ashcroft the money that *he* gave to him. So it looks to me, Mr. Speaker, that when he gives away the Belizean people's money to rich people he should beat his chest, but we should not beat our chests when we help the people of this Country (*applause*).

They're talking about the money that we're spending on the People. Let us remember that it was his former leader who said, “Bring back the money (*applause*)!” And, in fact, he didn't only say, bring back the money, he said bring back the millions (*applause*); bring back the millions that you made while your party was in power (*applause*). Well, we are using the Belizean taxpayers' money to help the poor people of this nation, not to benefit Michael Ashcroft.

And you see, he said earlier, why don't we remember, and he wants to bring back the audit and these other things that we spoke about earlier. He is the one that should remember, you know, Mr. Speaker; he is the one that should remember that he, in one day, approved a \$30 Million loan for the Novelos. That is what he should remember.

And, as I have said on many occasions in this Honorable House, he might not remem-



Hon. John Saldivar

ber, but the people will not forget.

What he should remember is how many times they sold and bought back BTL; and when they sold BTL they sold it for less, and when they bought it back, they bought it for more. Three times they did that. And he should remember which law firm was benefitted each time these transactions took place. Imagine the gall of this member for Fort George to want to come

Remember Mahogany Heights. Let's remember 87 Million that went down the drain at Mahogany Heights. I like, Mr. Speaker, when the members on the other side get up and try to play these games, because it gives us the opportunity to expose what *they* were in the ten years that they ran this country between 1998 and 2008.

And, as I have said to them, one of the reasons that

“You can't bring back the same people who ran this Country into the ground, you can't bring back the same corrupt people to run this Country and feel that the people of this Country are going to vote you back into power.”

and talk about corruption!

What the PUP do when they discover corruption? They cover it, and they hide it, and pretend that nothing is happening. And this Government (and I will repeat it, and we have repeated it on many occasions), no government can completely stomp out corruption. But it's what you do when you discover it that is important; and this Government has the record of dealing with it every time it rears its ugly head (*applause*).

Talk about remember?

they are going to take a licking again at the polls is that you cannot recycle corruption (*applause*). You can't bring back the same people who ran this Country into the ground, you can't bring back the same corrupt people to run this Country and feel that the people of this Country are going to vote you back into power (*applause*).

I thought it was the Leader of the Opposition, but perhaps it was the former Prime Minister; he said, ask the recipients if they would prefer

jobs to the write-off. I have to wonder, where is he living? Let him go and ask any of the 781 people who are getting write-offs, and ask them if they are not happy.

In fact, I heard one of them say, first time she ever get anything from a government, whether RED or BLUE. She is happy! Almost touched the roof when she heard that we wrote off the loan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I won't be much longer, except to say that these people, really, have—how Honorable Finnegan would say it—*more nerves than ten bad teeth*, to get up here and want to criticize a government that has now established the record of being *always for the people!*

Mr. Speaker, I will close by saying that sometimes we have to be honest with ourselves. For ten long years, after 1998, we here in the United Democratic Party had to live down VAT and Retrenchment. We had to carry that each time we visited people's homes, and they reminded us about VAT and Retrenchment; and they reminded us about the Christmas that we had retrenchment.

Well, I believe that with what this government has done in the last four years, and what we have done in this last Christmas and New Year's Season alone, we have now lived down, we have now moved beyond VAT and Retrenchment, and have established ourselves now as the party for the People (*applause*)!

It is now, Mr. Speaker, going to be left to those who take over from that bunch over there (because, I tell you, they're not seeing Government until all of them are gone), it is going to be left up to the young PUP's; it is going to be left to the new PUPs (I don't know where they're going to get them from) to live down the ten years of corruption under the People's United Party under the leadership at that time, of Said Musa (*Applause!*)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Housing, SSB, Heritage Bank

DFC will be Next, says PM Barrow

Mr. Speaker, in moving this motion—and I do so with great pleasure in view of the tremendous relief it represents for almost a thousand Belizean families—I wish to make some clarifications.

Mr. Speaker, I had said publicly, both on WAVE Radio and on KREM's WUB Show, that when I negotiated with SBB to buy these mortgages in order to write them off for Belizean homeowners, I did so on the basis that the people to be covered are those that had originally borrowed 50 thousand dollars and below. I was given a list of such persons current as of September 30, 2011. That was the list that formed the basis of the contract that I subsequently, on behalf of Government and the Ministry of Finance, concluded with the Social Security Board. That list contained 781 names.

However, the current acting CEO of SSB double checked that list for me yesterday in order to finalize it for today's House Meeting, and she did some disaggregation. Of course a copy of that list has been deposited with the House for all members to examine and extract if they wish; totally transparent, totally open, totally above board. But, the acting CEO has pointed out that, as a consequence of her review, it is confirmed that the vast majority of the persons on that list, in fact, 94.5 percent, did in fact borrow originally at 50 thousand or less. But the remaining 5.5 percent had loans at the start in excess of 50 thousand; not greatly in excess, but still above what had been my negotiating threshold.

Of course, the Government of Belize has already paid for all the loans whose principal balances were at September 30, 2011 (and, of course, continue to be now) all below 50 Thousand dollars. I therefore proceed to place all those names before the House, and all of them will benefit from the write-off.

I should make one thing clear. The list, as I said, that was given to me as of September 30, 2011, no name has come off; no name has been added. There was a great brouhaha about goings on among staff at SSB. Let me make absolutely clear, and again members on the others side will be able to look at the original September 30, 2011 list to verify that it is that exact list that is being reproduced now for the House to approve.

But, since September 30,



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2011 (I was given that September 30, 2011 list sometime in October, I believe, late October), since that time, persons on the list have continued to service their mortgages, so the principal balances, the statement that will accompany the list will have the balances as of September 30, 2011. Some of them

ever you paid between September and now, that's for Social Security.

What is being written off is the principal balance as it stood at that time and whatever interest there was, and escrow amounts in the particular accounts.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have made the clarification because

"But it is clear that the joy at what we are doing is not confined only to those homeowners that are benefitting directly; all right thinking citizens resoundingly approve of compassion on the part of their government, compassion that gives a welcome and significant boost both to individual disposable income and to collective economic activity."

would have paid down a little bit more. I only say this because I don't want them to come later on and say, I want a rebate for the amount that we paid between September and December. We are already writing off everything; and I only concluded the deal with SSB at the end of December, and the House is only approving it now; so what-

there was a feeling that perhaps those that I have now discovered, the few that did not start off originally at 50 thousand when they first made their loans, should perhaps be removed from the list. But I really don't think that would be fair. But I want to make it clear to the acting CEO of SSB that this is my decision and the decision of the



Social Security Office in the Old Capital, Belize City

Government; so she doesn't have to worry about the fact that she may think that morally those people ought to come off the list. It was the list that SSB gave me; it was the list I took to Cabinet; it was the list I have always been operating on; and I don't think it is fair now to take anybody off, just in the same way as we are not putting anybody on.

Again, there may well be, Mr. Speaker, as we proceed, the discovery that one or two names on the list may be the names of persons that have died, and their loans would as a consequence have been written off by insurance. In that case, I will need for SSB to replace those loans, because we have bought 781. At that juncture, when that can become clear, if there are such instances, we can look at who next there was on the list that was just over \$50 thousand and try to slot them in. But that will have to await the exercise that SSB will do when there is rather more time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I had announced today's move in my New Year's Message, which was aired when I wasn't even in the Country, and the details were only supplied after I returned home and during the first working week of the year. There seemed to have been some initial confusion on the part, certainly, of some talk-show hosts (either confusion or bad mind, but I won't bother to try to determine which). I will just say that there clearly was a lack of information in terms of the details. I have clarified, I have set out painstakingly in my radio appearances what the background to this thing was, but I do so again for the benefit of the House.

Most of the beneficiaries of the write-off did not have original mortgages with SSB. What the last government did was to bundle up a number of differently sourced mortgages, including some held with the Ministry of Housing, with BIMCO, with the Belize Building Society, St. James Building Society, and sell them to SBB. This was in the bad old days of the PUP when SSB was little better than a feeding trough for government, so SSB's then directors and management were easily compliant. SSB turned around and securitized the mortgages, principally as I understand it, with RBTT, the Royal Merchant Bank of Trinidad and Tobago.

Of course, most, if not all of the homeowners whose mortgages

Continued on Page 16

By **Zelda Hill**

Faith Lift

Avoid Revenge, Embrace Forgiveness

As humans living in a fallen world we are all victims of evil - and perpetrators as well. It may have been a private injury inflicted by a stranger, a co-worker, a neighbor or a friend or a major offense for which we had to rely on the State for relief or justice.

And as heirs of a corrupt nature, we are prone to return wrong for wrong, tit for tat, or "an eye for an eye", often quoted to justify personal vendettas. The infamous 'eye for an eye' ruling [though commonly misconstrued] found in three Books of the Jewish Law provided for public justice by the judges of that time. It was not a personal guide for private vengeance but a measure to ensure that the punishment fit the crime and was neither too lenient nor too strict.

But even then, this regulation was seen as a warrant for taking redress into one's own hands. Consequently, and since the old law could never transform the heart, Christ came and offered a higher standard by instituting the new law of nonresistance recorded in the Gospels and reiterated in other parts of the New Testament (*Matthew 5:38-39; Luke 6:27-28; Romans 12:17-21*).

The counsel in Paul's epistle to the Romans is worthy of quoting: *'Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'*

The desire we have for justice is proof that we were indeed created in God's likeness, but clearly the Scriptures stress that retributive justice is God's prerogative and we must not take God's work out of His hand. To understand why a wise and omniscient God restricts us from avenging ourselves we can look to experience. For those of us who have entertained the desires to one day even the scores or may have done so, we can agree that revenge is not as sweet as is often promoted.

Seeking revenge for an insult or injury is just as wrong and always costs more than we may have initially realized and can afford. Even before the vindictive action is carried out, the mental, emotional, psychological and physical toll exacted due to the harboring of resentment and vindictive thoughts trigger various stress related illnesses that may even shorten our lifespan when these emotions become habitual.

The countless hours and sleepless nights spent nursing a fretful and vindictive spirit while concocting ways of exacting revenge, ruin our peace of mind and are to the detriment of our own bodies. Spiritually, we allow the devil to introduce evil strategies into our minds and we may begin a new day certainly equipped to act on our desires.

Nursing an offense by constantly bringing it to memory or by repeating it frequently to others will certainly make factual for us the statement, "I can forgive but I can't forget". Resurrecting the offense is often accompanied by an increase in blood pressure and the anger experienced initially and we cause ourselves to experience the hurt all over again. With time and forgive-

ness we can forget the wrong done to us; after all, we often unwittingly forget the good deeds of others. Instead of allowing hurtful memories and revengeful thoughts to eat us alive and hence fall under the control of the offender, try this prescription for offenses often repeated by my father: "When offended do not nurse it, do not curse it, do not rehearse it, but immerse it and you will soon reverse it."

Revenge also increases the chances of retaliation since it is uncontrollable and each act of retaliation brings another. It is said that retaliation is like adding fuel to a fire and like a boomerang that cannot be thrown without cost to the thrower. We may feel that once we get revenge it ends there but we fail to realize that the other person may also be planning another round of offense.

The pages of history and our local nightly news are filled with blood stories of revenge. The conflict in the Middle East today among the Israelis and the Palestinians, though sprung from cultural and religious roots, is perpetuated by an enormous appetite for revenge on both sides. The acid of revenge trickles from one generation to the next causing unnecessary suffering and destruction, which could have been avoided if one party had chosen to take the higher path and leave the matter to God.

Leaving the matter to God spares the victim and his generations from unnecessary grief. Moreover,

who can fully understand the root cause of the offense or the heart of the offender but God? A victim may be convinced that the perpetrator had malicious intent or he could have been injured without the offender being aware. The offender may have already suffered enough through a burdened conscience, through uneasiness and fear of expecting retaliation or from providential events since we can be sure that God will justly repay those who deserve it.

In no case does leaving the matter to God rule out the necessity of repelling an assault, defending our lives and the lives of others or seeking the protection of the law; it simply rules out a malicious desire with the motive to do wrong in exchange for the evil done to us.

Forgiving and praying for the offender are the only gears that can halt the revenge cycle. We can never hate someone or seek their harm after we have prayed for them.

As the adage confirms, 'to err is human and to forgive is divine', as long as we are in the flesh, offenses will come but we adopt God's divine nature when we forgive and are spared the dreadful consequences of revenge.

Christ's nobler path is not just for the Christian but for everyone who desires to live in peace and be at peace before we get to heaven, the only place where we will be free from offenses.

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Information From The

Department of Transport

THERE'S A THIN LINE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

TRAFFIC SAFETY TIPS FOR DRIVERS

1. Check your motor vehicle to ensure that everything is in good working condition. Example- brakes, all lights, horn, wipers, tires, spare-tire, tire tools, oil, water, brake fluid & dash board gauges.
2. Ensure that your driver's license is valid and that your vehicle is licensed and insured.
3. Wear your seat belts at all times when on the highways. (It is an offence for drivers and front seat passengers not to wear seat belts on the high ways).
4. Don't carry passengers in the back of open pickup trucks. (Vehicle only insured to carry amount of passengers as stipulated on certificate of registration/title).
5. Don't drive if you are consuming Alcoholic beverages or taking medication (drugs). Have designated driver (alcohol and drugs affect your vision and judgement).
6. Avoid making calls on cell phone when driving, it is best to pull off to the right to make calls or to answer your cell phone, don't text while driving.
7. Wear your helmet at all times when operating or being carried as a passenger on a motor cycle.
8. Only overtake if you have a clear view of the road ahead, never overtake around blind curves or when driving over a hill.
9. Drive within the speed limit at all times.
10. Obey all traffic law and signs.



THINK! DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE

Breaking it Down to Small Change

Hulse Takes Opposition to 'Flipping' School

Let me start off by saying that both of my colleagues have successfully been able to demonstrate the overwhelming justification for all actions taken, and that I cannot treat any action in its individual components. We're talking about the forgiveness, the write off of the government housing loans; we're talking about the write-off of Social Security Mortgages; we're talking about the Christmas Assistance Program; we're talking about the nationalization of BEL, BTL; and of course we have Water.

Let me try to translate that into real terms and what it really means to grass-root people. Many times we get carried away with the actual measure taken at the top level of government, and we don't understand what really goes on down at the grass-root level.

Let me start with this Housing thing. Sometimes we get carried away and say, boy, how you went and do that, and use taxpayers' money? Let me tell you something: taxpayers' money gets paid in to Government for one fundamental reason, to make life better for grass-root people. That is the whole bottom line of it; whether you spend it on fixing their streets, whether you spend it to survey lots, whether you spend it to make them live in a decent place. Because, Mr. Speaker, what was happening (and my colleague here from Pickstock spoke about it) was that a lot of those grass-root people went to get Housing loans, and a lot of them went and got housing from Social Security and DFC. I don't fault them for that. They knew it would have been tough to pay it back. But when you are out there struggling and not getting a break to own your own house, you will gamble and risk so that you could at least put four walls around you, and roof over your head; and you hope that some miracle down the road is going to help you.

And let me tell you something. This is not like the rich. When a grass-root person loses his or her home, that person doesn't have a snowball chance in hell of getting a loan again and



Hon. Melvin Hulse, Stann Creek West Area Rep

trying to build back. It ain't going to *flipping* happen! OK. So, that's why at no time you ever heard us focusing (we went through almost Ten Thousand at Housing Department, Seven Hundred, almost Eight Hundred in Social Security), never one day did we isolate any name and say this

"This is not like the rich. When a grass-root person loses his or her home, that person doesn't have a snowball chance in hell of getting a loan again and trying to build back. It ain't going to flipping happen!... When you have a family living in a twenty by twenty house, and you have Ma, Pa, Bredda, Sister and about ten pickney, it's no joke the licking that you take."

one is PUP or that one is PUP. We did not say that a *flipping* -tall; what we said was that they are poor people, they are in trouble, they need help. We help poor people; that is what we do! Again, we went and helped them (poor people) with the Venezuelan money that we took back.

Boy, those of you on the Opposition took us to task for going after those rich people and taking back 20 Million dollars. Imagine! We poor people don't even know how many zeros that has; but we know it's a lot of money. And that money went into 31

constituencies in this Country. And that money went to help poor people fix their house, their little verandah, the leaking in their roof. It might not sound like much, because we did not build any fancy big fancy house, but let me tell you, when you have a family living in a twenty by

twenty house, and you have Ma, Pa, Bredda, Sister and about ten pickney, it's no joke, the licking that you take.

So, when we got back that money and we went to help poor people to fix their house, they criticized. Then they turned around, and they were glad to get their piece of the *flipping* pie. I didn't hear anybody complain when they got their share to help people in their constituency. Let me tell you something, everybody on that side got their money before me. Right, Finny?

Don't get caught up by the fancy headings these programs fall under for helping the People. Translate it into what kind of help really went to the people. Now they are getting jealous because we went and gave food to poor people for Christmas. Madda Fish! What more do they want? Cross! That's why I always tell people, a lot of people—and I don't blame them, because most people start out from village and from grass-roots; and I am proud of them, when they get their little education, get a decent job; some of them are working for many years now, and they don't have to worry about putting food on the table on Christmas for themselves and their children; and I am proud of them; nobody has a right to envy them—but we forget that in every part of this Country we have poor people that have a difficulty; they have a hard time to find rice and beans, flour, sugar, lard, cooking oil to put on their table. That is real life, and it happens in every single village in this Country. So when the Prime Minister was able to shuffle that money, you know what his goal was? His goal was to make sure that every poor person in this country had a meal for Christmas; because sometimes some of us forget that they are poor out there.

The Prime Minister made it plain that not one individual in this National Assembly benefitted from that.

And, what are you fussing about? What about this Christmas package are you fussing about? What did the people get? They didn't get any refrigerator or car or something expensive; they got five pounds of rice, five pounds of beans, five pounds of flour, five pounds of sugar, some cooking oil, they got onion, and they got *flipping* salt. That is what grass-root people live with.

How can you, under the sun, have a problem with that? I would have thought you would have gotten up and said, boy, our people had a meal for Christmas day. Maddafish! How can you not want that? You are going to condemn us for helping

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Breaking it Down to Small Change

Hulse Takes Opposition to 'Flipping' School

(Continued from Page 8)

poor people to eat for Christmas, and then turn around and want to ask the grass-root poor people put you back into office? Something's *flipping* wrong with that kind of reasoning.

Let us go now to BEL and BTL. They had big demonstration that we must not nationalize BEL and BTL because we are taking advantage of Stan Marshall from Canada; we are taking advantage of Michael Ashcroft with BTL.

Let me tell you what has happened with BTL. As a government, talking and acting and doing on behalf of the grass-root people, we took BTL and today—because I don't try to pretend that I know every part of this Country, but I can tell you that in Stann Creek West—today, we have more coverage in the villages. Digicell works! We can call people in emergency, we can do our transactions, and we have entered into the modern age. It is out there now; and communication is the backbone of the development of a country, and it was not right that those villages out there should not have had communications for years.

We couldn't call the Police in emergency; we couldn't call the ambulance; we couldn't call anybody. Sometimes we had to try go to Independence or Dangriga and use their phone and put an announcement over Love FM and say, anybody who knows

where such and such a person is? Please tell him his father died. You couldn't call anybody.

That is what we solved. So, don't jump up and say, boy, we are taking away your constitutional right, Ninth Amendment, and horse fat and cow dead. Translate it into how it helped the poor people to get the communication. The electricity, I don't even want to concentrate too much on the reduction now, because this is no joke. Because you know the licking you take to pay light bill? Light Bill is no *flipping* joke, boy. Every pay day you have to wonder if you could pay for it. And you have to decide, boy, can I take a chance and not paying my light bill, and instead pay my grocery bill, because I need food; and hope that they don't cut me off before the next pay day when I can try to pay it. Or maybe we pay a little ten dollars towards it.

Let me tell you what has happened since we have BEL, as a Government for the People. Electricity is now out there; Electricity way back in Maya Mopan, in Cow Pen, in Santa Cruz. I like how you all do it, you know. Madda Fish. Boy, you all have more gall than me. You on that side were saying that we shouldn't have taken over. And now, you are talking about you will do Electricity expansion and what's not. Hey, you all had ten long, *flipping* years, and when the UDP left office in 1998, there

were already lampposts, and those people needed electricity, and those people had to live in darkness for ten, long, solid, dry, miserable, pitiful, *flipping* years.

And that is a basic necessity for this time and our generation and our lifestyle now. So, we got with European Union and we're getting grants and pushing it. But we will not only make sure that everybody in this Country gets Electricity (because we have a lot more expansion to do), we will also make sure that when you get it, it doesn't kill you to pay for it. You think it's just a little that this thing is being reduced; a few cents? Let me tell you something; that thing adds up.

And on top of that, we are talking about another thousand people who will pay a little 15 dollars flat rate. What we need to understand, Mr. Speaker—even though you hear me touching on different subjects—it is the translation into what this Government has always said it is about, and has exhibited in real tangible ways; we are *always for the poor people*.

The last topic I want to touch on, Mr. Speaker, is this. Notice in Stann Creek and Toledo districts, and around the Country, you think it's a joke, the Prime Minister has done it with Housing, the forgiveness, and with Social Security. We have not forgiven Education bills, but what we have done now is that

every single person, and let me say it very slowly, because people like to complain and play the fool when they want to talk stupidness out there; every boy and girl, every youth who goes to First and Second Form in the Stann Creek District (and Toledo District) get's 300 dollars assistance; no matter who you are (applause). Nobody says, boy, Hulse, you are Area Representative, so pick out a few UDP's whom you want to get assistance for. You step through the doors of that high school in the Stann Creek or Toledo districts and you automatically get 300 dollars help.

And we have quite a number of high schools now; Ecumenical, Delille, ITVET, George Town, Independence High School. So we have helped with this Education thing, and we have built the schools.

So they want to know the benefits we have gotten by acquisition and assistance, Mr. Speaker? These are the things we have been able to do with the money. This is how we have helped them to live a better life. And, I am glad that we are now into the New Year, because there is a lot more electricity expansion to do; and with the lower rates now, people can afford to *flipping* hook up. We as a government must always be for the grass-root people, and do everyday something to make them live decently like a human being. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.



We are Keeping

Our "WITZ" with us.

We are Staying RED!

Fire Service Steps Up

Nineteen New Recruits Graduate



Hon. Melvin Hulse handing out certificates to the new recruits



Hon. Edmund Castro handing out awards to outstanding recruits

It resembled a Police or BDF passing out ceremony, but it was neither of the above. It was a passing out ceremony, alright, but that of the Fire Department.

It was held last Thursday, January 12, 2011 at the Fire Department Belize City Headquarters on Cleghorn Street, and the men of the moment were nineteen new recruits that have now taken their place among other seasoned firefighters in the Department.

Neither was it any ordinary passing out ceremony. It marked a new phase in the systematic upgrading of the Department under the leadership of the no-nonsense Minister in charge, Hon. Melvin Hulse.

The last passing out ceremony held two years ago had already marked a significant upgrade in the level of preparation for new recruits, and this one marks a further upgrade to yet another level.

The recruits who underwent 13 weeks of intense training, displayed at the passing out ceremony some of the valuable skills and discipline acquired. During an exhibition presentation, they showcased a physical drill, a wet drill and a parade drill.

Among the pack of 19, recruit Deitrick Kingston was recognized as the most outstanding and had the honour of delivering the valedictory address. He also received an award, presented by ministerial guest, Edmund Castro.

He was selected as valedictorian because he is the recruit that has shown the most steady improvement; because he has done well in his physical training and has demonstrated steady improvement in practical and classroom sessions; because he is a team player and often takes it upon himself to encourage other recruits to improve themselves whether it be

in discipline, practical drills or classroom work; and because he has displayed maturity, responsibility, leadership, dedication and seriousness in his work.

Second place award went to Recruit Kareem Underwood,

and Third place to Guyon Gaynar.

Delivering the main address and handing out certificates was Minister with responsibility for the Fire Service, Hon. Melvin Hulse. He told the recruits they must be serious about their

new career, and the duties and responsibilities that come with it.

“Respect yourself and make people respect you; never forget that you are obligated to the people and the country. They are paying us and we owe them the best service



Recruits taking part in a drill

(Continued on Page 11)



Guests include Hon. Edmund Castro and CEO Candelaria Morter as Valedictorian Deitrick Kingston delivers his speech



More drills for the new recruits

Fire Service Steps Up

Nineteen New Recruits Graduate



The new recruits looking like Soldiers



One of the new fire-stations, this one in Pomona, Stann Creek

(Continued from Page 10)

we can give. We must be ready and alert to do what needs to be done to make the Fire Department better," he said.

Hulse told the new recruits he is proud of them for displaying the kind of teamwork as a unit and for their individual ascendancy to new and higher standards in a career that is being modernized and is now respected worldwide.

"We older heads are virtually finished; we're just hanging on until you all can earn your stripes and get there and take over our positions," he concluded.

Other special ministerial guests at the ceremony included Minister of Health Hon. Pablo Marin, and Belize Rural Central Area Representative Hon. Michael Hutchinson, in whose constituency the new Ladyville Fire Station was recently inaugurated, modelled off the new Pomona Fire Station in Hulse's own constituency.

Other rural substations are also being established in Placencia and Independence.

The Ministry's CEO, Candelaria Saldivar Morter told us the new recruits will be deployed throughout the country to beef up the Fire Service, which under this administration is becoming a true National Fire Service, not only in name, but in practice. The next intake, she said, will be in February.

The National Fire Service is currently headed by Colonel Francis Thomas.



Belize Water Services Limited

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Public Notice

January 5, 2012

BWS submits Annual Review Proceedings (ARP) application

On December 23, 2011, Belize Water Services Limited (BWS) submitted its formal notification for an Annual Review Proceeding to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) for the determination or confirmation of the regulated values, rates, tariffs, fees and charges for the period April 1, 2012 through to March 31, 2013.

This submission is being made in accordance with Section 27, Part IV of Statutory Instrument 67 of 2002. The submission officially commences the company's Annual Tariff Review Proceeding.

BWS has informed the PUC that the company is not seeking any change in tariffs.

BWS's submission is available for viewing at the branch offices of BWS and on its website at www.bws.bz, and at the PUC office at 41 Gabourel Lane, Belize City, and the PUC website at www.puc.bz.

Members of the public may participate in the ARP by submitting written comments on BWS' submission to the PUC by January 13, 2012, by email at info@puc.bz or in writing at the PUC office.

Where any person submits comments or information purported to be factual, such comments or information shall be accompanied by a sworn affidavit.

Three copies of all applications, reports, documents, comments or information provided by members of the public shall be filed at the PUC's office and a copy shall be provided to BWS at its principal office of business on the same day.

The PUC is required to issue an Initial Decision on the submission by January 23, 2012.

The licensee or an interested party representing users of at least 10% of the water supplied in the preceding year may submit written comments on the Initial Decision within 15 days.

Where there is no objection to the Initial Decision the PUC shall adopt it as its Final Decision.

BWS – Delivering Water and More ...

Insider Trading & Hypocrisy

Sedi Shines the Light on PUP Leaders

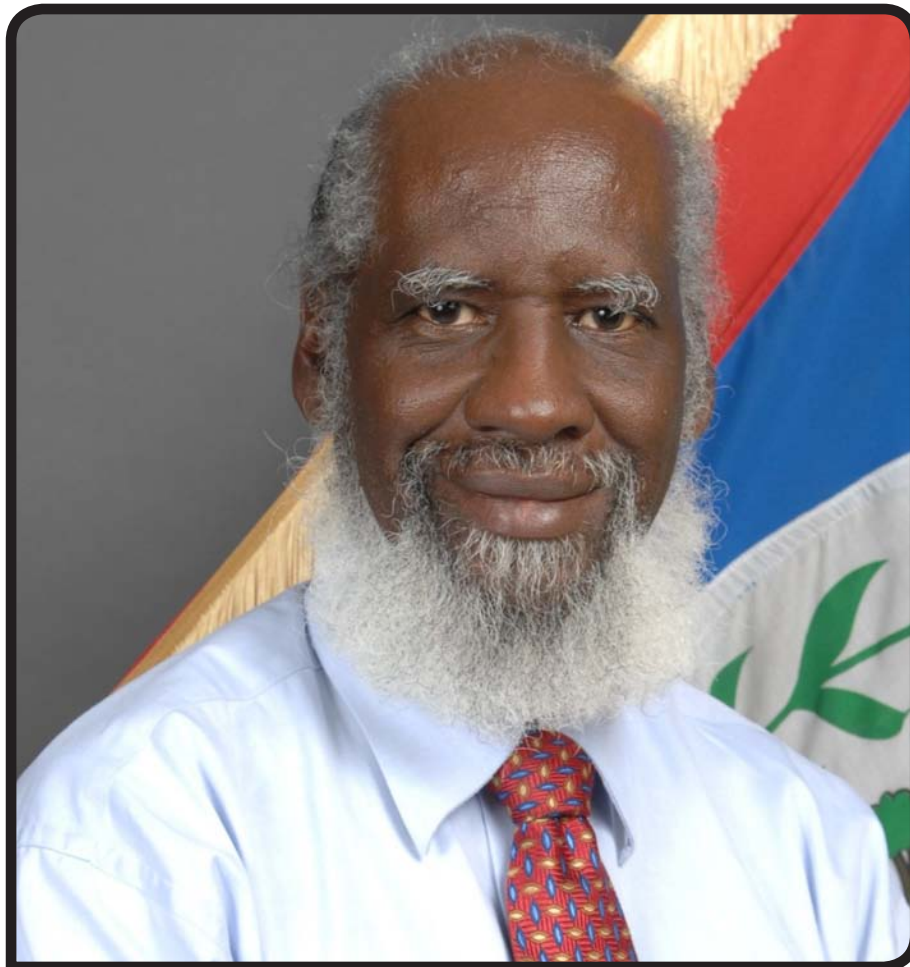
I am very concerned about what is unfolding. And in making my contribution, I am reminded of two quotations in the Bible, the first of which says, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." That is in relation to the woman who was alleged to have committed adultery, and the "righteous" in those days wanted to stone her to death. And they went to Jesus and the matter was raised before him, and he said, "Let who is without sin cast the first stone." And within a short while the entire crowd had disappeared. There was nobody without sin, so no stone could be cast. The second is that we *do* want to seek to take the speck out of our neighbors eyes, but we don't see the whole block, the whole tree, the whole plank that covers out own eyes.

Let me give you an example of insider trading, and you will know exactly who I am referring to.

I have a great difficulty with hypocrisy. I have a feeling that the whole issue of insider trading at Social Security is a side show that is being used to tarnish a beautiful program that is bringing benefit to the people of this country, the poor people of this country, the majority of whom were PUPs; because the majority of the people who got those houses were PUPs under a PUP program. And it was normally done just before election time. But I believe that so long as you are helping poor people, so long as you are helping them, it's a good thing. So they gave the houses at election time to try to buy votes; but the poor people could not pay the loans; and they knew that. We are now doing the right thing in writing off those loans.

Well, let me give you some examples of insider trading. I was at one time the legal advisor for the Central Bank of Belize. Central Bank had two beautiful buildings right behind the Barracks. Do you know who now own those buildings and who are living in them? They were not put to tender. But do you know who now own those buildings, and who now occupy those buildings?

Well, I will give you a hint. I won't tell you, but I will give you a hint. It starts at the top of the PUP party, the present PUP party, the present leadership of the PUP Party; the present leadership of the PUP party who are now talking about corruption; and another



Hon. Wilfred 'Sedi' Elrington, Pickstock Area Representative

aspiring leader of the party, who is not in power right now, but who is a very close associate of Lord Ashcroft himself. Those are the people who now own those properties. They were not put to tender, and they were picked up for a song. It was scandalous.

the reputation of people who have done stellar work and who have stellar reputation in this country.

Let me give you another example: When I was growing up, the Barracks out there was empty, you know, and we all used to go and play football on the

"And that is one of the reasons now that so many of their staunch supporters are going completely and totally broke; because they really did not have business acumen, but they were given these choice lands and these choice opportunities, including the Port and the Airport, and the like; because of insider trading."

So I cannot condone people who do that kind of thing routinely (because that's not the only example; I'm only referring to that one) coming now in this sanctimonious way and seeking destroy

Barracks. And when the UDP first decided that we were going to build the Ramada out there to stimulate the Economy, there was a big PUP demonstration: "Save the Barracks! Save the Barracks!



The shaded home of Francis Fonseca, formerly a Central Bank House

Don't mess with the Barracks!"

Well the Ramada is there, now the Princess, providing employment and entertainment, but you know who got the next big piece? A place called Marina Towers. And ask who owns Marina Towers. We are not supposed to be hypocritical, when we live in glass houses.

Do you know how many choice pieces of land the people over the other side of the House own? Not only Government lands; lands that they took away from private people, people who they had influence over, they took away their best lands. And, whenever they decided that a new road was going to be built, do you know who bought up the lands along the road? Do you know who bought up all the lands where that road was going to be put? It was being done consistently for all the years that the PUP was in government.

And that is one of the reasons now that so many of their staunch supporters are going completely and totally broke; because they really did not have business acumen, but they were given these choice lands and these choice opportunities, including the Port and the Airport, and the like; because of insider trading.

I don't think that it is a criminal offence in our country. I can't recall seeing a legal criminal offence such as that. I know that it is considered to be morally wrong, but I don't know that it is a legally criminal offence. But I don't know about the Belizean in high places who is not guilty of it. And you must ask yourself. And the last thing we need is to be hypocritical.

Now, people don't go into poverty suddenly and overnight. The single biggest cause of the reversal in fortunes for Belize is the debt, that 3 Billion dollar debt. And that 3 Billion dollar debt was caused by the member on the other side who was the head of the ship at the time. For ten years, they borrowed monies from wherever they could borrow, treated the people's money as if it was theirs; everybody took. Then, they sold out everything they could sell. You couldn't find anything in the country that belonged to the Government and People of this Country that wasn't sold out. They sold out everything.

So when we got into office now, we could not borrow as

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Insider Trading & Hypocrisy

Sedi Shines the Light on PUP Leaders

Continued from Page 12

we would have been able to do because so much debt had been incurred; and we really were limited in terms of what we could do, because so much had been sold out. With a debt payment this year of between 30 to 40 Million dollars (US currency), how are we going to be able to help our people?

And yet, I will tell you—and I challenge anybody to contradict me—no section of Belize City has benefitted more over the past four years than then South-side section of the City. The people in the South-side section of the City have gotten subsidized food; their children have been sent to school through scholarships and financial contributions; we have filled up everybody's lots who wanted some landfill; we have repaired homes for everybody



PUP Leader Francis Fonseca and former PUP Minister Godfrey Smith both recipients of houses formerly owned by the Central Bank

who were so frustrated that they were killing themselves. And now, that has subsided because we are providing employment for them.

And, I must congratulate the Prime Minister and urge him to do all in his power to con-

But the members on the other side, if they really look at the history of their party, they will see that the party systematically destroyed all the institutions that we had, that used to develop our people. My wife is a product of Belize Technical College. When she went to Belize Technical College, she paid 30 dollars for the year. That is no longer the case. The PUP government presided over the destruction of Belize Technical College.

In my view, the best, the very best secondary school in the Country was Lynam College; it provided just about the best. One of the students is sitting right at my right here (Melvin Hulse); just about the best; an awesome institution (applause).

The People's United Party closed down that school and turned it into a prison. We came back and rescued it; twice. We are doing, the Minister of Education is doing all in his power to make sure that everybody has a good education, and to make sure that everybody benefits.

Now, how is it that the people on the other side can be upset? I don't understand, because the majority of the people who are

benefitting from these write-offs are people who are formerly PUP supporters, staunch supporters. So, I find it incomprehensible that you should have difficulty with our government trying to help all the people of Belize; and, incidentally, your people are getting assisted. And I find it equally reprehensible that there is so much hypocrisy.

Really and truly, the perception seems to be over on the other side, that the Belizean people are stupid. We are not stupid. We may be poor, but we are not stupid. And, unless and until the People's United Party's leadership understands this, they will never come back into office.

So, Mr. Speaker, I fully support this initiative to write off the loans and I will want to end by saying to those on the other side who are critical of the behavior of the people at the Social Security Board, they might want to stop and think about the two biblical quotes that I presented earlier, about their own practice during all the time that they had been in government. The evidence is still there and can be referred to at any time.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(As Hon. Sedi Elrington noted, there are many more instances of PUP insiders using their positioning to set themselves up; in many cases, ending up with valuable government assets sold off at fire sale prices.

Another example that we recall instantly is that of the Government Printery. The man who headed it for government ended up being a major nominal shareholder when it was sold. As to whom he was fronting for, the fact that two secretaries closely connected to the Musa's were also listed as shareholders in the company give more than a hint.

Well said, Sedi; well said!)



Marina Towers built on portion of the Barracks Saved for Brother Billy

whose homes needed repairs; we have built homes. In the Pickstock Constituency, for example, we have built at least 30 homes out of Pickstock's share of the 20 Million that the former leader of the PUP had diverted to a private bank.

And that is the same story all over the South of Belize. In addition to that, the government has helped our farmers in the North so that they could have a successful cane season. We have helped the farmers in the South whose bananas had been blown down by storm, and we have done so in a quiet and effective way. We have used our resources to employ—and this is particularly touching to me at home, and I wish we could do more of it—we have used our resources to employ the abandoned and neglected youths in Belize City

tinue to make monies available for their employment. And, you see, as soon as we started spending money on them, Mr. Speaker, the violence has subsided. Belize is a more peaceful and safe place.



The Printery that was owned by Government of Belize, now owned by PUP cronies

“Deeds are More Powerful Than Words”

Attorney General’s Address at Supreme Court Opening

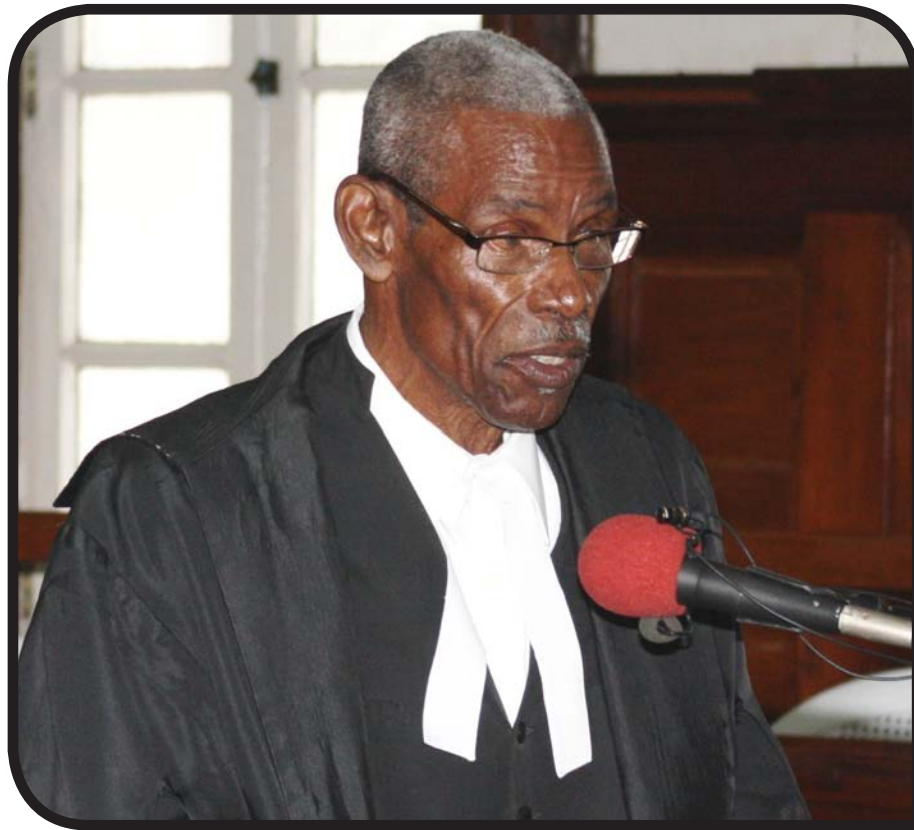
May it please your Lordships: Your Excellency the Governor General, Sir Colville Young, Chief Justice Mr. Kenneth Benjamin, President of the Court of Appeal Mr Manuel Sosa, Justices of the Supreme Court, Mrs. Cheryl Krusen, Solicitor General, Mrs. Cheryl-Lynn Vidal, Director of Public Prosecutions, Miss Cynthia Pitts, the Ombudsman, Miss Velda Flowers, Registrar of the Supreme Court, Ms. Ann Marie Smith, Chief Magistrate, and other Magistrates, Miss Margaret Nicholas, Director of Family Court, Mrs Jacqueline Marshall, President of the Belize Bar Association, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Members of the Clergy, Members of the Inner and Utter Bar, Commissioners of the Supreme Court, Justices of the Peace, Court Staff, ladies and gentlemen.

We are met once again to observe the opening of the legal year of the Supreme Court for the year 2012. This opening was fittingly preceded by the church service at Wesley Methodist Church, for our judiciary and the members concerned with the administration of our justice. Indeed we were reminded how much a part of our duty is posited upon the commandments of God and indeed each of us, upon taking up our respective duties were either affirmed or sworn upon an oath to perform our duties.

This outgoing year was interesting and full of events. The earlier part of the year, our Supreme Court was presided over by acting Chief Justice Mr. Samuel Awich, who did a splendid job and for which government and the people of Belize are extremely grateful. We’ve also seen Justice of Appeal Manuel Sosa C.B.E (Commander of the British Empire) elevated to the position of president of our Court of Appeal. Our courts and magistrate courts, right up to the Court of Appeal have experienced a busy year throughout 2011 with quite a bit of work spilling over to the year 2012.

During the year our Prime Minister appointed a select committee comprising of myself as Chairman, President of the Bar Association, Mrs. Jacqueline Marshall, learned Senior Counsel, Messrs Derek Courtney and Michael Young, as well as Mr. Pat Bernard, Chairman of the Public Services Commission to recommend a suitable candidate to fill the vacant position of Chief Justice of Belize. After careful consideration, we unanimously agreed and recommended to our Honourable Prime Minister that your lordship Kenneth Benjamin be appointed as Chief Justice in accordance with our constitution. This has been duly done and I again welcome you, our Chief Justice, on behalf of the government and people of Belize.

This administration is not insensitive to the crime situation and has revisited it from time to time and introduced such legislations with a



Attorney General, Hon. B.Q Pitts delivering his address

view to assisting in deterrence and commission of such crimes. From my point of view, Restore Belize, with its many prong approach to the problem has been so far successful. It is an ongoing process which does take time and requisite patience. When last I addressed this gathering I referred to certain pieces of legislations which were aimed at addressing the crime situation, such as the **Crime Control and Criminal Justice Act, the Firearms (Amendment) Act, the Interception of Communications Act, the Criminal Code (amendment) Act**, just to mention a few. Since then we have passed several other acts including but not limited to the Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2011, Indictable Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2011, Juries (Amendment) Act 2011, Supreme Court of Judicature (Amendment) Act, 2011 and Belize Telecommunication Limited (Amendment) Act, 2011.

Under the period under review we had the services of a draft expert from the Commonwealth Secretariat in the person of Mrs. Segametsi Mothibathsela of Botswana, who assisted us very well in drafting and conducting training exercises.

We promised to provide training for all the magistrates as well as clerks of courts, in further strengthen-

ing the courts in the administration of justice. We always have the need for education and training both at the bench and bar level in order to enhance the delivery of judicial services to the public.

Mrs. Margaret McKenzie who was Chief Magistrate is now in retirement from that post, and I wish to record our sincere gratitude for the excellent work she provided while she held the post. She is now succeeded by our present Chief Magistrate Ms. Ann Marie Smith, who has taken over quite smartly (efficiently.) On behalf of the Government of Belize and my ministry and the people of Belize we sincerely welcome her.

We have also appointed three more senior magistrates in addition to the one already in place, to provide more efficient service in the judiciary. One of the senior magistrates is now stationed in Belmopan, and is in charge of the Belmopan Magistrate Court the San Ignacio Magistrate Court and the Benque Viejo Magistrate Court, another senior magistrate is stationed in Corozal and is in charge of the Orange Walk Magistrate Court and the Corozal Magistrate Court. The third of the three newly appointed senior magistrates is in charge of the Stann Creek Magistrate Court, the Punta Gorda Magistrate Court as well

as the court we are now establishing in Independence Village, which will soon be operating as soon as suitable living accommodations are acquired for the magistrate to reside in. The court building and furnishings are already provided.

I promised that we would seek to have only fully qualified Attorneys at law appointed as magistrates. This is happening at a quick pace and we have already appointed four Attorneys at law as magistrates. We hope to have with us at the end of this academic year Mr. Dale Cayetano, Mrs. Kathleen Lewis and Mr. Hurl Hamilton as fully qualified magistrates. Mr. Emmerson Banner Mr. Leslie Hamilton and Mrs. Aretha Ford who are now pursuing further legal studies in order that each fulfil the new criteria for appointment as magistrate and will soon rejoin us upon their return from study leave.

It would be remiss of me not to mention again Belize’s accession to the Caribbean Court of Justice - CCJ. It may be recalled that last year I stated that Belize would slowly but deliberately become a member of the CCJ. We have been served very well by the CCJ, and already it must be obvious that Belize is taking full advantage of its membership. I believe that it is also a meaningful suggestion at this stage that we in Belize should do our own part – Bench and Bar – and seek to institute continued legal education to grow our jurisprudence.

We have always provided for the comfort of our courts in accordance with our needs and ability and will continue to do so. Our attention and care are also directed to the safety of our magistrates and judges. I assure you that this will continue to be so.

As far as I am aware we have observed, the rule of law and the doctrine of separation of power. Our Prime Minister continues to display high regard for the independence of the judiciary.

In relation to my own ministry, we are extremely fortunate in being able to attract the services of Mrs. Cheryl Krusen, SC as our Solicitor General, who has succeeded Mr. Oscar Ramjeet, our outgoing Solicitor General, for whose services we were extremely grateful. Solicitor General Mrs. Cheryl Krusen S.C. comes with a whole wealth of experience, and from any non-myopic point of view it can be readily opined that our Solicitor General is worth every ounce in gold. She is very diligent, efficient and hard-working. She has the attribute of a good administrator. Recent additions to our ministry include Mr. Herbert Panton, Attorney at law, as well as Mr. Ed Usher, who has recently returned from the University of the West Indies where he has completed the first set of requirement for his masters degree in Legal Drafting at Cave Hill. He now joins our ministry as a legal draftsman.

We are in the process of



The Chief Justice inspecting the Guard of Honour

(Continued on Page 15)

“Deeds are More Powerful Than Words”

Attorney General's Address at Supreme Court Opening



The procession by members of the Judiciary and the Bar

(Continued from Page 14)

renovating our Belmopan Offices to ensure that we have the space required to accommodate more Counsel and to provide all staff with a more comfortable working environment, and the tools with which to work. Given the volume of our work, this expansion has been well needed and deeply appreciated. Our Office of International Legal Cooperation, headed by a Director, has had its scope widened and renamed, International Legal Affairs Section, headed by a Deputy Solicitor General in the person of Ms Iran Tillett- Dominguez.

Along with our renovation and expansion of the Belmopan Office, we have also received the support of the Honourable Prime Minister in opening Offices of the Attorney General's Ministry on Albert Street, in Belize City. This renovation has allowed the AG's Ministry to be served

the requisite notices and other legal documents at its Belize City Office as well as provide the dire needed administrative support for our Counsel who are otherwise bereft of same, when they journey to Belize City and leave the office in Belmopan. Given that our courts have such a presence in Belize City, our Offices here will be very much used.

Our ministry has already established a Law Revision Unit of which we are receiving full support from the Commonwealth Secretariat and CARICOM. The revision unit is headed by Justice Dr. Zuru supported by staff we have provided. Dr. Zuru has already been appointed by me as Law Revision Commissioner. His work is on the verge of completion and arrangements are being made for the laws of Belize to be printed. I've requested and received full support from the Honourable Prime Minister for the publication of the laws expeditiously.

In addition to the revision of the laws of Belize, the Attorney General's Ministry is also upgrading its web site to provide the newly revised laws of Belize to the practitioners and public in a sustainable manner. Laws will be able to be read on line, and purchased for printing. The web site will also feature certain information of our legal fraternity and judiciary along with some general information to users seeking to know more about the jurisprudence of Belize.

Without repeating the names of my staff, whose names I've mentioned at my last address, I wish to say that all my staff members are working quite well and in most instances beyond the call of duty, even when they have been called to work on Saturday, Sunday or early as 6am on a Monday. Mr. Lewis Belisle has also been doing his part in order to keep us going and to see to the needs of our Ministry.

The Commonwealth Secretariat and the Government of Belize have recently acquired a draft person of enormous experience, Ms Michelle Daley, as assistance in our drafting department and to help train our counterpart drafters. She is with us in the first instance for two years, and subject to extension as has been agreed by the Government of Belize and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

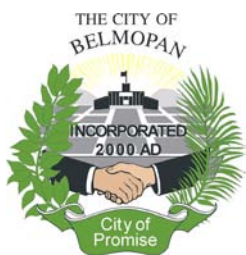
We have had a busy legislative year in 2011 and we are projected to be equally occupied in 2012.

My lord, as I say with a full heart and apprehension that it seems to me that it took the death of one of our most illustrious members of our profession, Dr. Elson Kaseke, that another illustrious colleague and Senior Counsel Mr. Michael Young saw it fit to circulate in an e-mail for all of us to respect each other and to act as lawyers should, and remember that we are all officers of the court and are an integral part of the administration of justice.

We must also remember that we must be respectful of all the courts and judges including the magistrates. I wish to remind members that your lordship by virtue of his appointment and position knows what to do in administering our courts and will deal with matters only and when they arrive before his courts. I am sure that whenever your lordship or any of the judges need help from any of us we would be called upon as an *amicus curiae*.

I conclude by exhorting my fellow practitioners to respect our profession; remember that *facta sunt potentiora verbis* (deeds are more powerful than words), but being mindful that by our words, we should seek only to enrich and leave a resounding legacy of this noble profession of ours.

I thank you



BELMOPAN CITY COUNCIL INCENTIVE PACKAGE 2012/2013



As of January 1, 2012, Property Owners in the City of Belmopan are eligible to participate in the following discount package:

- **25% Discount for full payment of 2012/13 Property fees made ON or BEFORE January 31, 2012.**
- **20% Discount for full payment of 2012/13 Property Fees from February 1 and February 28, 2012.**
- **15% Discount for full payment of 2012/13 Property Fees from March 1 and March 31, 2012.**

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 Boulevard, Belmopan City
Or call: 822-2271, 822-2319 or 802-3679

Housing, SSB, Heritage Bank

DFC will be Next, says PM Barrow

(Continued from Page 5)

were sold by the PUP, were not consulted or even informed until after the fact, and in many cases, when they discovered what had happened, they also found that their repayment schedules had been altered by SSB to their disadvantage.

In any event, the PUP government pocketed all the proceeds from their sale of the mortgages to SSB; but when SSB securitized to RBTT, it had to take a discounted payout for the mortgages. Government, it turns out (and please, Mr. Speaker, I wasn't around, and you know how they used to layer things with a view to making it impossible for a proper light to be shun on their transactions, so in trying to reconstruct what had happened, recollect that I am at a two-fold disadvantage; I wasn't there, and also I'm trying to work from data that was designed to obfuscate and confuse and conceal, so I'm doing the best I can).

So, SSB took this discounted payout from RBTT. In turn, for that amount, let's say it was 70 Million, SSB had to service the 70 Million with RBTT. For some reason, I don't why it had to be this way, Government pre-paid some of that 70 Million that SSB then had to service to RBTT. The amount that was pre-paid by Government to RBTT was then in turn to be repaid to GOB by SSB in monthly installments over a number of years.

SSB has been repaying the Government of Belize, which collects the monthly repayments in a lump-sum at the end of each financial year. It is a line-item in the budget—you will see repayment of securitization monies, it is a line item in the country's annual budget—and for the financial year ending in March of 2012, Government of Belize was budgeted to collect 4 Million Dollars.

It turned out that the actual amount scheduled by SSB as the annual repayment to GOB was closer to 11 Million Dollars. So that I found out that Government's desire to answer the cry for relief coming from the mortgage holders with SSB could be done without denting Government's actual cash flow. It was a matter simply of not collecting 6.9 Million of the money SSB already had for us, and using it thereby to pay for the mortgages.

Of course, we will still end up with our budgeted collection of \$4 Million since, as I said, the



Heritage Bank Headquarters in Belize City

total by the end of March was going to be a little over 11 Million.

I need to add, Mr. Speaker, that the call for help from the homeowners indebted to SSB had increased in volume after Government wrote off the GOB Ministry of Housing Mortgages, all nine thousand and odd, almost ten thousand. You see, in a sense, you become victims of your own success. But we are willing and happy victims. We wrote off all of those; people come and said, what happen to us, we would have benefited from that write-off if only the last crowd didn't take our mortgage and sell it to SSB without our knowledge.

It was in that kind of a climate that we decided we had to find a way to help as many of those persons as we could. And, this being an administration that is *always for the people*, it really become a matter of a moment's work to answer the call and produce what, if I might say so myself, is the wonderful result that the House is blessing and implementing today.

Mr. Speaker, but you know what happens. Now people are saying to me, what about the loans and the mortgages that are at DFC. Well, being always for the People, we can promise today that there will also be soon a form of assistance with the DFC mortgages (*applause*).

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me be clear; I don't know whether it will be a complete write-off, whether it will be a lowering of the interest rates, or a combination of both, so I cannot go beyond saying, assistance there *will* be in one form or another (*applause*).

But, for now, Mr. Speaker, we are happy that so many additional families are benefitting once again from another of the UDP's pro-people initiatives.

There are some would-be spoilers; some, what they call them, 'blue koncas', that have tried to rain on his parade; but it is clear that the joy at what we are doing is not confined only to those homeowners that are benefitting directly; all right thinking citizens resoundingly approve of compassion on the part of their government, compassion that gives a welcome and significant boost both to individual disposable income and to collective economic activity.

The nominal value of the mortgages being written off is just under 17 Million dollars; though we have been able to acquire them for 6.9 Million because of the impairment factor.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of a Government that is always for the People, I now take pleasure in moving the motion (*Applause*).

Wrap up of Debate on SSB Write-off Motion

Those on the other side, who tried to concentrate their fire on the CEO of the Social Security Board, can't get away with that.

What it appeared was being attempted by staffers at SSB had, and has nothing to do with the Government's write-off program, per se. In any case, what was contemplated could never have happened because, from the time I learnt of the allegations that were

making the rounds, I spoke to the Chair of the Social Security Board, and I knew that the Chair was going to convene a meeting to deal with the allegations. I also knew that I had the list upon which the contract was concluded, the list on the basis of which I had negotiated, and there was no way anybody would have been able to add to that list without the approval of the Government of Belize; and there was no way in the World that the Government of Belize would have given that approval.

So, I'm not going to try to defend the CEO; but I *do* have to observe that the thunderous denunciation of the CEO—coming from the member for Fort George—is rich, is ironical. If I were the CEO, I would take some comfort from the fact that the man who is my greatest detractor is the man whose record is so well known.

You know, he puts me in mind of what a famous actress in the golden era of Hollywood had once said. There was a lady, a young starlet whose reputation with respect to promiscuity, sexual matters, was similar to the member's reputation with respect to this whole issue of corruption. I listened to the member for Belmopan talking about all the compromises that the member for Fort George made when he was Prime Minister—or I should rephrase that—the various ways and the countless individuals to whom he *was* compromised.

And, I recollect what Betty Davis said about that starlet. Looking at her, she observed to people, "*There goes the good time that was had by one and all.*"

In relation to the member for Fort George and the question of those with whom he was compromised, we can look at him and in that respect say, "*There goes the good time that was had by one and all.*"

Again, I am at the point now where I don't pay too much mind to what he says, you know. Maybe it is because I don't want to personally get after him that I am driven to resorting to quotations and analogies.

There was a famous literary feud between the critic Mary McCarthy and the playwright Lillian Hellman. And Mary McCarthy said about Lillian Hellman, "Every word Lillian Hellman writes is a lie, including the words '*and*' and '*the*'. Every word my friend says is a lie, including the words '*and*' and '*the*'; and so, you will understand,

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Housing, SSB, Heritage Bank

DFC will be Next, says PM Barrow



DFC Headquarters in Belmopan City

(Continued from Page 16)

therefore, why I pay him no mind.

In terms of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, I can't sit down without saying that I'm at a lost to understand how the Leader of the Opposition can say that what we are doing today is as a consequence, is a sort of beneficial consequence of what the PUP did when it was in office. I've said to you that part of the motivation for doing this program is because of the countless complaints from people currently with SSB Mortgages who were not informed or consulted when their mortgages were bundled up and sold to SSB.

I had in my office yesterday a marshal of the Supreme Court of this Country who said, please, can I be written off; my house is on the auction block, and I originally had my loan with the Ministry of Housing; and nobody told me, nobody ever told me that it was transferred to SSB; I did not find out until I saw the publication of the notice of foreclosure in the papers.

And. I tell you that when they transferred these mortgages to the Social Security Board, SSB, under its watch, altered the repayment terms and conditions. They couldn't change the principal, but if the people were paying \$250 per month to the Ministry of Housing, they had to start paying \$400 to SSB. How can you be proud of that?

And to say that these homes were constructed as a consequence of good PUP programs? Please! You're talking about BIMCO and Ray Fuller; you're talking about St. James National Building Society and Glenn Godfrey? Talk about the poor quality of the houses that were built? Talk about the inflated cost to Government? And we come along now, and we give relief; and you say, you know what, boy, we can't praise you for saving the Belizean people because, if we didn't gunshot them in their head, you couldn't

operate on them and save them. That is the kind of thing these people on the other side are saying.

Mr. Speaker, no time to

waste. This is a government on the move. There is still some work to be done; there is yet more good tidings for this government to bring, again, on the basis that the United Democratic Party is Always for the People (*applause*).

Loans at Heritage Bank

Mr. Speaker, I move yet another write-off motion, this is the Government Housing Loan Write-off motion, 2012.

Again, as I've said earlier, these people on the other side, all these twisting and turning, multi-layered transactions that left people who had mortgages

originally with the government not knowing whether they were coming or going, resulted as well in the discovery now of about 17 loans that they actually gave to Heritage Bank. There are 17 such loans all for relatively small amounts, 30 thousand, 17 thousand, that sort of thing. Again, the total value of those mortgages is about 400 thousand dollars. Most of them are non-performing. So we're coming to the House now to write off those mortgages for those 17 or so persons (*applause*) including our good friend Eric Neal, Rico, a very good man at SJC.

UPDATE ON THE BELIZE MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR THE CITY OF BELMOPAN

Under the World Bank Infrastructure Project four(4) streets will be rehabilitated in the City of Belmopan: One-Way Street adjacent to bus terminal, Nim Li Punit Street, Racoon Street, Hummingbird Drive (a portion)

The following have been accomplished in regards to the project:

- The project has been approved by the Project Steering Committee (PSC).
- The Subproject Agreement has been signed. This agreement outlines the respective responsibilities, rights and obligations of the Social Investment Fund and the Belmopan City Council.
- The Belmopan City Council has deposited an amount equal to 1% of the estimated cost of the project as a counterpart contribution.
- Anthony Thurton and Associates, an engineering consultancy firm, have been hired to prepare the designs, costs estimates and technical specifications for the four streets and work have begun on the designs etc. which is expected to be completed by the end of January 2012.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

Mr Ernest Raymond, Project Co-ordinator, Belize Municipal Development Project, Constitution Drive, Belmopan Tel: 822-0239/0508 or via email: ernest.raymond@sifbelize.org or Cell No. 610-1836. Website: www.sifbelize.org

Belize Wins International Award to Help Save Wildlife



Dr. Isabelle Paquet-Durand receives her award at the Heska Inspiration in Action Awards Ceremony. From left to right: Heska president and Chief Operating Officer Dr. Michael McGinley, Belize Wildlife and Referral Center Founder Dr. Isabelle Paquet-Durand, Locust Trace Veterinary Clinic Veterinarian Dr. Jim Martin Second Place Winner, Dr. Robert Grieve, Chairman and CEO Heska

Press Release

18 January 2011

The wildlife of Belize is one of the most treasured and loved resources for Belizeans and people from all over the world, who come to enjoy the natural beauty of our country. Dr. Isabelle Paquet-Durand, a veterinarian who specialises in wildlife medicine, has devoted her life to helping the wildlife of Belize. Up until now, Dr. Isabelle has been doing her best with limited equipment and facilities and has literally had to operate out of the back of a pickup truck.

Despite the challenges, Dr. Isabelle is known by

everyone who works with her as a wonderful, cheerful and dedicated veterinarian, devoted to protecting the wildlife of Belize as well as to sharing her knowledge and skills for little or no recompense. Her ambitious goal has been to establish a world class wildlife clinic in Belize to care for and treat the many animals that become sick, orphaned or injured, but which could be safely returned to the wild if they received the help they needed.

So, when she entered a competition run by Heska - a USA based product and service provider to the veterinary profession - called 'Inspiration in Action' to try and win funding to equip the clinic, she



never dreamed that she might just win. However the word spread within Belize and then beyond, and on December 19th. Dr. Isabelle was astonished and delighted by the news that she had won the public vote! Dr. Isabelle will use the \$25,000US award to start equipping the Belize Wildlife and Referral Clinic (BWRC).

This will provide veterinary services to the wildlife of Belize, supporting the work of the Belize Forest Department and all other conservation entities. The facilities will also be available to all veterinary practices across the country, allowing access to equipment they have never previously had. All the animals in Belize can benefit, and healthier animals contribute to a healthier environment for everyone.

This week, on the 17th of January, Dr. Isabelle attended the Heska award ceremony in Florida, drawing international attention to the importance of Belize's ecosystem to the health of the planet.

Dr. Isabelle said, "The \$25,000US prize money is

not only a substantial amount of money for this project to receive, it is a resounding vote of confidence for the wildlife organisations and veterinarians of Belize."

The clinic is strongly supported by the Belize Wildlife Conservation Network (BWCN), founded by Dr. Isabelle - a group of individuals and organisations dedicated to wildlife conservation and research in Belize. BWCN works closely with the Belize Forestry Department, providing support with human/wildlife conflict issues.

If you would like to know more about the facilities that will be on offer, or would like to become a member of the Belize Wildlife Conservation Network, please visit www.wildlifebelize.com

If you are in possession of captive, orphaned or injured wildlife, contact the Belize Forest Department on 822 1524 or deliver it to the Forest Department on Forest Drive, Belmopan.



Golf Update

Dear Belizean Golfers,

This Saturday, January 21st, the race to find the 2012 champions of Belize begins, with our first tournament of the year. Gross, Net and the NEW Senior Net categories are up for grabs.

8.30am start. Register in Club House by 8.15am. All welcome to join. .
Email me to let me know if you are entering or call me (651 9929) or Mickey (665 3352).

Every monthly tournament we need 2 volunteers to help myself and Mickey. :
one volunteer to collect the \$10 Side Pot.

- one volunteer to organize the closest pin signs, long drive and long putt signs.

Can 2 members volunteer for this Saturday?

A few other points :

- Prize donations. If anyone has a prize they would like to donate let me know. You can choose what you want the prize to be for.
- Please pay Treasurer, Mickey Thornton, your \$80 registration fee.
- 2012 Match Play tournament **SIGN UP** form is on the Notice Board in the Club House. Rules attached.

Quit the Quibbling!

Just Drop the Electricity Rates

(Continued from Page 1)

proportionate to the top brass who are at high levels of management of these corporations, and those who are well-placed and wealthy enough to purchase significant shares in them.

There is no doubt in our minds that the previous administration sold us out lock, stock and barrel, and that, in a basic sense, our public utilities are much better off in the control of the Government and People of Belize.

It goes without saying that the last administration did such a horrible job defending the interest of the nation and its people, that it's almost impossible for any other administration—save another PUP administration with another Fonseca at its helm—to do even as bad, let alone worse.

But, here lies the true test for the government of Prime Minister Dean Barrow: it must not make the mistake of holding the PUP as the standard by which to measure its (the UDP's) success.

The truth is that the utility companies in Belize, whoever owns them, seem to have been built and cultured more for profit-making and less for delivery of good and affordable service. That is something that must be radically changed, if it hasn't yet been changed. And, if it hasn't yet been changed, we must ask, why not?

In the case of BTL, the competition, to some extent, is addressing that problem. But, of the three public utilities, one can easily conclude that Telecommunications, while it *has* indeed become an integral part of life in this modern world, is the least essential for basic survival and comfort.

Water we're not overly concerned about, as the slight increases in rates have been generally affordable and apparently justified in light of the welcomed expansion in areas like Cotton Tree and neighbouring villages along the Western Highway, and throughout the country.

Admittedly, there is, just the same, a continuing demand for expansion of Electricity. But, BEL has long adopted a policy of charging somebody upfront—whether the government, some international agency, or the pri-



BEL Technicians at Work

vate citizen who needs it—for the smallest of expansion, lamp-post and all. Yet, when major public investments were made to increase generation and improve efficiency in the transmission of energy, the company treated that as a given, and as if it owed nothing at all to the Belizean people for the investments made by the government on their behalf.

We are also now hearing from the PUC Chairman, John Avery, of the exorbitant legal bills the company has been in the habit of passing on to consumers. All of this has changed now, we are expected to believe. And, on the face of it, we have no reason to believe that it hasn't. But, as they say, the proof of the pudding is always in the eating.

To start with, the reduction of electricity rates, while a welcoming gesture, is rather minute. True, we know BEL does not generate most of its own electricity. And so, we must concede that taking control of the distribution of energy is only half the job. The bigger half, if we might so speak, is perhaps that of taking charge of the generation of that portion of energy that occurs here at home; in particular, that which utilizes the rivers that belong to the people themselves, and who have, to a great degree, already picked up the cost of the hydro-investments in taxes to repay loans, and in exorbitant rates for more than a decade.

As to the further costs to our environment and natural resources, that is yet to be fully determined, but there have been sufficient troubling signals to suggest that those might be just as real.

All of that would be cause enough for public concern and

demand for a proper accounting of what we're owed, what we're entitled to, and the cost we must continue to pay. But what, of late, has begun to trouble us is the fact that the dark spells are suddenly recurring more often than they have in quite some months, one of them occurring in the middle of the very House Meeting in which the Prime Minister had just made his statement regarding the imminent lowering of electricity rates.

We hope it wasn't a politically motivated act of sabotage. We know that anything is possible right now, as we are certainly well into what some have dubbed 'simple season', another term for election time.

Whatever the case, the explanations from BEL have not been nearly as forthcoming or clear as we deserve. But, beyond that, there are fundamental questions about how justified or unavoidable the outages are; and thus, how well run, at this particular point in time, is this essential public utility; whether its new management at the highest level is really up to the task, and whether it is paying enough attention to the service as against the profits.

It is well known that, on the ground, BEL has had some of the most skilled and efficient technical people, a fact borne out by the dizzying speed with which they restored power to almost the entire country in the wake of Hurricane Richard of 2010. If there's a finger to be pointed, it more than likely must be pointed at some person or persons in the boardroom.

Speaking of which, we are certainly not at all amused by the game-playing, if that is what it is, that began to unfold his week as

the executives at BEL appear to be quibbling with the PUC over the extent of the rate reduction that is justified and sustainable.

Out here, Mr. Barrow is our defender, and we are behind him one hundred percent as he fights for the people's interest and that of our country. The foreign despots have, for the most part been beaten back. But now, we must ensure that we're not being suckered from within.

Whether through negligence, incompetence or pursuit of the wrong objectives, things don't appear to be going as well as they should at BEL. The Belizean people need, deserve and have a right to demand that the situation be addressed and fixed promptly and decisively. We have a Prime Minister with a track record of not hesitating to act when it is time to act.

We will end by stating that there is no doubt in our minds that he will do so once more and uphold that outstanding record of defending the interest of our people and nation.

Onward, Mr. Barrow, we are with you! And to you executives there at BEL, please quit the quibbling and just lower the electricity rates! It's long overdue!

(The views expressed by the writer, whose name has been withheld for objectivity, are not necessarily shared by this newspaper's editor or its editorial board.)

We will concede, however, that we believe the concerns, questions and deductions are honest and well-meaning, even if somewhat unfounded or unfair. They are certainly not libelous; and we believe that, as a Belizean taxpayer and consumer, the writer, like the rest of us, is entitled to his views and concerns; and, perhaps more importantly, to his demand for answers about matters of public interest, whether or not any plausible or accepted answers to such exist.

Above all, we are convinced that the public interest could only be better served by him having, through this medium, been afforded the opportunity to raise them.)

UNITED DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Belmopan City Council Candidates

March 2012



Simeon Lopez – Mayoral Candidate
Educator for 40 years; Graduate of Western Australia School of Advanced Education- Perth Australia; Resident of Belmopan for 38 years; Completing second term as Mayor of Belmopan.



Joel Westby
Educator and community activist. Presently teaching at Kuxlin Ha Government School (Maya Mopan). Has worked with the Red Cross, HelpAge and Cancer Society and has served as an officer in the Volunteer Battalion of the Belize Defence Force. Internationally accredited softball umpire and current Chief Umpire for softball in the country of Belize.



Anna Guy
Community activist. A part of her neighborhood committee spearheading neighborhood initiatives and advocating for progress. Owner of Emjay's Beauty Salon.



Amilcar Umaña
Educator at the Belmopan Comprehensive School since 1991 and head of the Information Technology department for the past nine years. Graduate of the University of Belize with summa cum-laude distinction. CXC examiner since 1998 and co-author of five computer textbooks; presently pursuing double Masters Degree in Information Technology.



Steven W. O'Brien
Certificate in Economics, Sixteen years experience in Accounting and Management of Food, Beverage, Construction and Tourism Industries, Community Organizer, Sports Organizer, Social and Cultural Activist.



Tita Balona
Primary school teacher at St. Martin's Primary School in Salvapan, Belmopan. Currently pursuing a degree in primary education at the University of Belize.



Victor Perdomo
Businessman. Currently pursuing a Law Degree. Served as Deputy Mayor and councillor for two terms.