



Parliamentary Roundup Bulletin No. 6 - 2011
Wednesday 23 February 2011

INTRODUCTION

The Major highlight in the House of Assembly yesterday was question and answer session where backbenchers quizzed cabinet Ministers about policy issues and programmes under their purview. The Senate on the other hand continued with its debate on the motion denouncing the violence which occurred in Harare recently.

House of Assembly Plenary Session on Wednesday 23 February

Questions without Notice

Backbenchers fired the following impromptu questions on policy issues at the few Ministers who were in the House yesterday;

Cabinet Role in the Budget Process

Hon. Willias Madzimure asked Deputy Prime Minister Professor Mutambara if the National Budget was a preserve of the Minister of Finance given that some Ministers, namely the Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Joseph Made and the Minister of Tourism, Mr. Walter Mzembi, have been accusing Hon. Tendai Biti of deliberately under-funding their sectors as a means of political sabotage. Professor Mutambara informed the House that the formulation of the National Budget was a collective Cabinet responsibility. Hence no Minister can disassociate himself or herself once the Budget has been passed by Parliament. He further said that if for whatever reason Ministers were not happy with certain aspects, the right platform to discuss those issues was at Cabinet meetings.

Rentals for Constituency Offices

Hon. Margaret Zinyemba asked the Minister of Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs as to who was responsible for settling Members' rentals for Constituencies Offices as some Members have been kicked out of the offices by landlords due to rental arrears. The Minister of Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs, Hon. Advocate Eric Matinenga informed the House that that was the responsibility of the Clerk of Parliament, not his Ministry's.

Administration of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF)

On a related question, Hon. Adv. Matinenga was asked by Hon. Prosper Mutseyami to clarify the policy regarding the administration of the CDF, in particular whether or not military and intelligence officers were part of the

administration structure. In his response, the Minister said there two documents that guided the administration of CDF; namely, the CDF Constitution and the Manual. He informed the House that those two documents only mentioned elected officials; the House of Assembly Member of Parliament, Senator and Councilor as the administrators of the CDF. Hence the security personnel had no business in the administration of the CDF. He advised MPs that if they encountered any problems with the implementation CDF programmes, they should alert his ministry.

On a supplementary question raised by Hon. Joram Gumbo if the Minister could consider allocating Senators their own specific portion of CDF, Hon. Adv. Matinenga said currently the economic resources did not permit such expenditure.

Increased number of School Dropouts

Hon. Makhosini Hlongwane asked the Minister of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture if there was any policy to address the plight of school dropouts who were on the increase due to inability by parents to pay school fees. The Minister, Senator David Coltart, said this was mainly due to inadequate resources from the fiscus. He reminded the House that parliament allocated \$469 million to his ministry. He further noted that out of that allocation \$406 was for salaries leaving only \$63 million for operations. The Minister also informed the House, that the cost of educating one child at a government school was \$73 per term. But currently school fees was pegged at \$10 per child per term, nobody was picking up the \$63 difference. He further noted that due to the poor economic performance many parents were out of employment and as a result were struggling to raise school fees for their children. The Minister said while government had in place the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) meant to cater for children from poor backgrounds, the challenge was that there was overwhelming increase of orphans and vulnerable children competing for the same meager resources provided through BEAM.

Teachers Incentives

In response to a related question regarding the policy on the teachers' incentives that parents were paying to supplement the salaries of teachers, the Minister said this was a stop-gap measure meant to keep teachers in schools until such a time that government was able to pay teachers decent salaries. The Minister was responding to a question posed by Hon. Ward Nezi.

Protection of Teachers from Political Harassment

Hon. Stewart Garadhi wanted to know if there was any policy in place to protect teachers from political harassment. In response, the Minister noted that incidents of political harassment on teachers have dramatically gone down since the formation of the Inclusive Government. However, he said recently he received two reports on the issue. He informed the House that his ministry was reviewing education regulations with a view to protecting schools from such problems. As an immediate intervention, Senator Coltart informed the House that he had issued a circular banning political activities at schools.

Presence of ZNA Members in Libya

Hon. Innocent Gonese, MDC-T Chief Whip, asked the Minister of Defence if there was any truth to the recent press reports that among the mercenaries who were assisting prop up Colonel Gaddafi in Libya against mass revolution were Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) personnel and also for the Minister to explain government policy regarding the use of force against unarmed civilians who are expressing themselves. Without giving a direct answer to the question posed, the Minister of Defence Hon. Emerson Munangagwa said he would not know what was happening in Libya and advised Hon. Gonese to direct his question to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Minister of Foreign Affairs was not in the House.

Relocated Chiadzwa Families

Hon. Fred Kanzama asked the Minister of Mines and Mining Development if the farm where Chiadzwa families were relocated had adequate carrying capacity to accommodate all the affected families. In response to the question, the Deputy Minister Mines and Mining Development, Hon. Gift Chimanihire, said it was government's responsibility to ensure that before relocating people there were adequate resources to cater for such programmes. However, he made an undertaking to the House, that he would investigate the Chiadzwa issue and brief the House on the actual position.

Biased Coverage of Political Parties by Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC)

Hon. Jani Varandeni asked the Minister of Information Communication Technology why ZBC (radio and TV) listeners were inundated with ZANU PF activities at the exclusion of other parties. Hon. Nelson Chamisa, said

while the issue did not fall under his portfolio, he was equally unhappy with the biased coverage shown by ZBC. He said he had raised the same issue with Hon. Webster Shamu, the Minister of Media, Information and Publicity, who assured him that the issue would be looked into.

Questions with Notice

Only the Minister of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture was available to answer written questions directed at his ministry. This did not go down well with backbenchers who expressed their dismay to Deputy Speaker, Hon. Nomalanga Khumalo. She also expressed equal dismay and asked the Deputy Prime Minister Prof. Mutambara to explain to the House why those Ministers who had written questions on the Order Paper did not come to the House to respond to those questions. Prof. Mutambara apologized on behalf of his colleagues and made an undertaking to ensure that the Ministers in question would come and respond to those questions.

The following questions have been on the Order Paper since November last year;

1. HON. MANGAMI: To ask the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education to explain:

- i) why there is only one special needs training institution for teachers of people with disabilities yet they constitute 10% of the country's population; and
- ii) whether the output from the training institution is adequate to meet the needs of all these people.

[Deferred from, Wednesday 17th November, 2010]

2. HON. F. M. SIBANDA: To ask the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education to state:

- i) the number of students who have been selected and benefited to study at Fort Hare and other Universities in South Africa since the inception of the Presidential Scholarship Programme to South Africa;
- ii) how many students per Province of Zimbabwe benefited;
- iii) the selection criteria since inception to date;
- iv) the status of 2009-2010 applicants to the same universities in South Africa;
- v) the Minister's response to accusations that the selection of would be beneficiaries of the said programme is undemocratic and biased against students/applicants from some Provinces; and
- vi) the condition of the welfare and privileges of Freedom of Association of the students in the said Universities that is in political terms.

[Deferred from, Wednesday 10th November, 2010]

3. HON. CROSS: To ask the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to inform the House the current position regarding the dispute between the Republic of Zambia and Zimbabwe over the issue of the new vehicle number plates being used in Zimbabwe.

[Deferred from, Wednesday 17th November, 2010]

4. HON. F.M. SIBANDA: To ask the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to explain:
- i) how the Ministry arrived at the conclusion that 5 year old vehicles were the major cause of road accidents in the country; and
 - ii) whether the Ministry conducted an impact assessment of the effects of the proposed ban of the 5 year old vehicles on transport, general living standards of the people and revenue inflows to the fiscus.

[Deferred from, Wednesday 17th November, 2010]

5. HON. F.M. SIBANDA: To ask the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to explain:

- i) why the construction of the following roads has not been completed given that some of the projects were started 10 years ago;

- a) Bulawayo - Nkayi Road
- b) Bulawayo - Matopo/Kezi Road
- c) Gweru - Silobela Road
- d) Mt Darwin - Mukumbura Road
- e) Rushinga - Mary Mount Mission; and

- ii) when the Ministry intends to embark on these projects.

[Deferred from, Wednesday 17th November, 2010]

6. HON. SARUWAKA: To ask the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to inform the House when the surfacing of the road which stretch 4km from Bonda Mission towards Mutasa District Council is going to be completed.

[Deferred from, Wednesday 17th November, 2010]

7. HON. MADUBEKO: To ask the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to inform the House when the Ministry intends to complete Lower-Gweru road which was started in 1998 in Vungu Constituency.

[Deferred from, Wednesday 17th November, 2010]

8. HON. S. NCUBE: To ask the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to inform the House whether the West Nicholson- Mberengwa road is ever going to be surfaced and if so to state when this would be done.
9. HON. S.L. MUSHONGA: To ask the Minister of State for State Security in the President's Office to explain to the House whether Central Intelligence Officers are allowed to hold positions in political parties, as is the case with Deputy Director General Elias Kanengoni who has been appointed as a Central Committee Member for ZANU PF.

[Deferred from, Wednesday 17th November, 2010]

10. HON. S.S. KHUMALO: To ask the Minister of Energy and Power Development to state:
- i) the Ministry's position regarding ZESA's actions in forcing un-metred clients to pay bills in full yet there would be receiving no electricity due to load shedding; and
 - ii) the Ministry's position on the high electricity tariff rates which are unaffordable to many Zimbabweans considering their meager incomes.

[Deferred from, Wednesday 10th November, 2010]

- *12. HON. BALOYI: To ask the Minister of Information and Communication Technology to inform the House the progress made in rolling out the expansion of the communication network to rural areas such as Malipati and Sengwe to date and also the utilization of the universal fund.

[Deferred from, Wednesday 10th November, 2010]

Senate Plenary Session on Wednesday 23 February

Motion on Political Violence

The Senate continued with its debate on the acts of violence that gripped Mbare and Budiro in the past weeks. Unlike on Tuesday 21 February 2011 when the motion was first introduced by Senator Komichi, the debate yesterday saw Senators trading accusations and counter-accusations as to which party was responsible for political violence in the county. Thus the Acting President of the Senate, Chief Charumbira had a torrid time trying to keep tempers down in the Senate.

Motion on Sanctions Expunged from the Order Paper

Following the President of the Senate's ruling that Ministers and their deputies were not allowed to move private member's motions or to

debate such motions, Senator Aguy Georgias's motion on "sanctions" was expunged from the Order Paper.

Legislative Update

- Deposit Protection Corporation Bill (H.B. 7, 2010) is at the Second Reading stage in the House of Assembly.

The following Bills are under consideration by the Parliamentary Legal Committee (PLC);

- Small Enterprises Development Corporation Amendment Bill (H.B. 9, 2010). This Bill was referred to the PLC on 17th November 2010).
- General Laws Amendment Bill [H.B. 8, 2010] - This Bill was referred to the PLC on 16th February 2011).
- The Public Order and security Amendment Bill, 2009, Bill [H.B. 11A, 2009] is at the second Reading Stage in the Senate.

Adjournment of Parliament

Both Houses adjourned yesterday to until 8 March 2011.