



**FIRST REPORT
OF
THE STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**on the consideration of proposals for the Variation of
Appropriation for the fiscal year 2015**

FIRST SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT (2015/2016)

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Standing Finance Committee

The Standing Finance Committee was established under House of Representatives Standing Order 82(1) to consider the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill. House of Representatives Standing Order 87(1) also states that, *“The Standing Finance Committee shall consider and report on all proposals for the expenditure from public revenue or other funds which are not included in the Annual Estimates, including proposals for supplementary and unforeseen expenditure.”*

Publication

An electronic copy of this report can be found on the Parliament website using the following link:
http://www.ttparliament.org/committee_business.php?mid=17&id=219&pid=28

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Date Laid in HOR: _____

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THE COMMITTEE

Mandate of the Committee

1. The Standing Finance Committee is established by Standing Order 82(1) of the House of Representatives Standing Orders. It is the duty of the Committee to consider the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill. The Committee is also empowered to consider and report on all proposals for expenditure which are not included in the Annual Estimates including proposals for supplementary and unforeseen expenditure.

Membership

2. In accordance with the House of Representatives Standing Order 82(1), this Committee is a Committee of the Whole House of Representatives and is chaired by the Speaker.

Meeting

3. The Committee held a public meeting on January 20, 2016 at 2:10 p.m.

4. The purpose of this meeting was to consider proposals for the variation of the appropriation provided in the Appropriation (Financial Year 2015) Act, 2014 as amended by the Finance (Variation of Appropriation) (Financial Year 2015) Act, 2015. The approval of the proposals is required to seek authorization for the utilization of any sums accruing from a reduction in expenditure under a certain Head of Expenditure for the purpose of meeting liability incurred through the increase in expenditure under other Head.

5. The following agenda items were discussed at the meeting:

- ✓ Variation of Appropriation for fiscal year 2015;
- ✓ Approval for write-off of losses for fiscal year 2015; and
- ✓ Transfer of funds between Sub-Heads under the same Head of Expenditure for fiscal year 2015.

Variation

6. The increase and decrease in the Appropriation for the 2015 financial year reflect the re-allocation of funds to retire an advance from the Treasury Deposits in the sum of Two Hundred Million Dollars (\$200,000,000). It was necessary to have a Variation of Appropriation of resources in the sum of Two Hundred Million Dollars (\$200,000,000) to bring to account expenditure for the extension of the Solomon Hochoy Highway to Point Fortin.

7. The Standing Finance Committee considered and approved a Variation to the 2015 Appropriation in the sum of Two Hundred Million Dollars (\$200,000,000). Table 2 provides details of this variation.

Table 1

Variation of 2015 Appropriation

Head of Expenditure	Increase \$	Decrease \$
40 Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs	-	200,000,000
69 Ministry of Works and Infrastructure	200,000,000	-
TOTAL	200,000,000	200,000,000

Write-off of Losses

8. The Standing Finance Committee considered and approved:

- ✓ The Write-off of an Overpayment of Salary in the sum of Thirty-Two Thousand, Nine Hundred and Seventy-Six Dollars and Forty Cents (\$32,976.40) to Mrs.

Pushpa Toolsieram-Rampersad, Clerk Stenographer I/II in the Treasury Division, Ministry of Finance and the Economy over the period April 6, 2004 to June 30, 2011; and

✓ The Write-off of an Overpayment of Salary and Acting Allowance in the sum of Forty-Five Thousand Three Hundred and Sixty-Eight Dollars and Twenty-One Cents (\$45,368.21) to Ms. Maureen Joseph-Bishop, former Human Resource Officer III, in the former Ministry of the People and Social Development over the period April 2003 to December 2011.

✓ The Write-off of a mortgage debt in the total sum of Three Hundred and Eighty-Three Thousand, Two Hundred and Twenty-Nine Dollars and Thirteen Cents (\$383,229.13) owed to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee (SILWC) by the following eight (8) former sugar workers:

i)	Mr. Bisram Ramkhalawan	-	\$83,780.42
ii)	Mr. Samlal Ramdhan	-	\$83,886.32
iii)	Mr. Kenrick Sonny	-	\$71,036.67
iv)	Mr. Mathura Bissessar	-	\$40,933.15
v)	Mr. Harold Ramnarine	-	\$ 1,006.67
vi)	Mr. Indarjeet Mahase	-	\$91,532.56
vii)	Mr. Primchan Lalloo	-	\$ 3,693.45
viii)	Mr. Eddie Victor	-	\$ 7,359.89

Transfers

9. The Standing Finance Committee noted that the Minister of Finance and the Economy approved the transfer of funds in the sum of One Billion, Three Hundred and Ninety-Six Million, Eight Hundred and Five Thousand, Seven Hundred and Ninety-Three Dollars (\$1,396,805,793) between Sub-Heads under the same Head of Expenditure for fiscal year 2015.

10. The transfers were approved by the Minister, based on Notes from the respective Ministries requesting transfers between Sub-Heads, and reflect changed circumstances in Ministries and Departments and a consequential re-ordering of priorities.

Recommendations

Variation

11. The Committee recommends the Variation of the Appropriation for fiscal year 2015 in the sum of Two Hundred Million Dollars (\$200,000,000).

Write Off of Losses

12. The Committee recommends the write-off of losses in the sum of Four Hundred and Sixty-One Thousand, Five Hundred and Seventy-Three Dollars and Seventy-Four Cents (\$461,573.74).

13. The Committee respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of the House of Representatives.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sgd.

Hon. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George, MP
Chairman

January 21, 2016

APPENDICES

Minutes of Meeting

STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE
FIRST SESSION (2015/2016), ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20, 2016 AT 2:10 PM IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER,
MEZZANINE FLOOR, OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT, TOWER D,
INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE, 1A WRIGHTSON ROAD,
PORT OF SPAIN

Members of the Standing Finance Committee

Present

1. Hon. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George, MP - Chairman
(*Speaker of the House*)
2. Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis, MP - Minister of Planning and Development
(*Member for Arouca/Maloney*)
3. Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley, MP - Prime Minister
(*Member for Diego Martin West*)
4. Hon. Faris Al-Rawi, MP - Attorney General
(*Member for San Fernando West*)
5. Hon. Colm Imbert, MP - Minister of Finance
(*Member for Diego Martin North/East*)
6. Hon. Marlene Mc Donald, MP - Minister of Housing and Urban Development
(*Member for Port of Spain South*)
7. Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh, MP - Minister of Health
(*Member for St Joseph*)
8. Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds, MP - Minister of Works and Transport
(*Member for Laventille West*)
9. Hon. Stuart Young, MP - Minister in the Ministry of the Attorney General
and Legal Affairs
(*Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West*)
10. Hon. Shamfa Cudjoe, MP - Minister of Tourism
(*Member for Tobago West*)
11. Hon. Ancil Antoine, MP - Minister of Public Utilities
(*Member for D'abadie/Omeara*)
12. Hon. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn, MP - Minister of Social Development
and Family Services
(*Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West*)
13. Mr. Esmond Forde, MP - Deputy Speaker
(*Member for Tunapuna*)
14. Hon. Edmund Dillon, MP - Minister of National Security
(*Member for Point Fortin*)

15. Hon. Maxie Cuffie, MP	-	Minister of Communications <i>(Member for La Horquetta/Talparo)</i>
16. Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, MP	-	Minister of Community Development, Culture, and the Arts <i>(Member for St. Ann's East)</i>
17. Hon. Nicole Olivierre, MP	-	Minister of Energy and Energy Industries <i>(Member for La Brea)</i>
18. Hon. Ayanna Webster-Roy, MP	-	Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister <i>(Member for Tobago East)</i>
19. Hon. Anthony Garcia, MP	-	Minister of Education <i>(Member for Arima)</i>
20. Hon. Darryl Smith, MP	-	Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs <i>(Member for Diego Martin Central)</i>
21. Hon. Randall Mitchell, MP	-	Minister of Public Administration <i>(Member for San Fernando East)</i>
22. Hon. Dr. Lovell Francis, MP	-	Minister of State in the Ministry of Education <i>(Member for Moruga/Tableland)</i>
23. Mr. Adrian Leonce, MP	-	Member for Laventille East/Morvant
24. Mrs. Glenda Jennings-Smith, MP	-	Member for Toco/Sangre Grande
25. Mr. Ganga Singh, MP	-	Member for Chaguanas West
26. Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC, MP	-	Leader of the Opposition <i>(Member for Siparia)</i>
27. Mr. David Lee, MP	-	Member for Pointe-a-Pierre
28. Mr. Prakash Ramadhar, MP	-	Member for St. Augustine
29. Mr. Fazal Karim, MP	-	Member for Chaguanas East
30. Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan, MP	-	Member for Tabaquite
31. Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, MP	-	Member for Caroni Central
32. Mrs. Christine Newallo-Hosein, MP	-	Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla
33. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, MP	-	Member for Caroni East
34. Mrs. Vidya Gayadeen-Gopeesingh, MP	-	Member for Oropouche West
35. Dr. Roodal Moonilal, MP	-	Member for Oropouche East
36. Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh, MP	-	Member for Couva South
37. Dr. Fuad Khan, MP	-	Member for Barataria/San Juan
38. Mr. Rodney Charles, MP	-	Member for Naparima
39. Mr. Barry Padarath, MP	-	Member for Princes Town

40. Dr. Lackram Bodoie, MP - Member for Fyzabad
41. Mr. Rushton Paray, MP - Member for Mayaro
42. Ms. Ramona Ramdial, MP - Member for Couva North

COMMENCEMENT

- 1.1 The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m.
- 1.2 The Chairman indicated that in accordance with Standing Order 82 (6) and 87, a meeting of the Standing Finance Committee was convened to consider proposals for the Variation of Appropriation for the fiscal year 2015.
- 1.3 Members were advised that in accordance with Standing Order 45(1) the speaking time in Standing Finance Committee shall not exceed five (5) minutes on each intervention.
- 1.4 The procedure for the consideration of the Heads of Expenditure was outlined.

TRANSFERS

- 2.1 The Committee noted that the Minister of Finance and the Economy approved the transfer of funds in the sum of \$1,396,805,793 between Sub-Heads under the same Head of Expenditure. These transfers reflect changed circumstances in Ministries and Departments and a consequential re-ordering of priorities.

PROPOSALS FOR THE VARIATION OF APPROPRIATION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2015

Head 40: Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries - Decrease

- 3.1 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 40, Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs be varied by a decrease in the sum of \$200,000,000.
- 3.2 The question was put and agreed that Head 40, Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs be varied by the sum of \$200,000,000.

Head 69: Ministry of Works and Infrastructure - Increase

- 4.1 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 69, Ministry of Works and Infrastructure be varied by an increase in the sum of \$200,000,000.
- 4.2 The question was put and agreed that Head 69, Ministry of Works and Infrastructure be varied by an increase in the sum of \$200,000,000.

PROPOSALS FOR THE WRITE OFF OF LOSSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2015

Head 18: Ministry of Finance and the Economy

- 5.1 The Chairman proposed the question that losses in the sum of \$32,976.40 for Head 18, Ministry of Finance and the Economy be written-off.
- 5.2 The Minister of Finance provided an explanation for the write-off of losses. The Member for Caroni Central sought clarification.
- 5.3 After a brief discussion, the question was put and agreed that losses in the sum of \$32,976.40 for Head 18, Ministry of Finance and the Economy be written-off.

Head 56: Ministry of the People and Social Development

- 6.1 The Chairman proposed the question that losses in the sum of \$45,368.21 for Head 56, Ministry of the People and Social Development be written-off.
- 6.2 The Minister of Social Development and Family Services provided an explanation for the write-off of losses. The Member for Caroni East sought clarification.
- 6.3 After a brief discussion, the question was put and agreed that losses in the sum of \$45,368.21 for Head 56, Ministry of the People and Social Development be written-off.

Head 61: Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

- 6.4 The Chairman proposed the question that losses in the sum of \$383,229.13 for Head 61, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development be written-off.
- 6.5 The Minister of Housing and Urban Development provided an explanation for the write-off of losses.
- 6.6 The question was put and agreed that losses in the sum of \$383,229.13 for Head 61, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development be written-off.

OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1 The Chairman informed Members that the debate for the adoption of the Committee's Report will take place on Friday January 22, 2016 at 1.30 pm.
- 6.2 The adjournment was taken at 2.30 p.m.

We certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

January 20, 2016

APPENDIX II

Verbatim Notes

The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 82(6), I beg to move that this House now resolve into Standing Finance Committee to consider proposals for the variation of the 2015 appropriation.

Question proposed.

House resolved itself into Standing Finance Committee.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, in accordance with Standing Order 82(6) and 87, this meeting of the Standing Finance Committee was convened to consider proposals for the variation of appropriation for the fiscal year 2015.

Hon. Members, I am to advise that in accordance with Standing Order 45(1) the speaking time in Standing Finance Committee shall not exceed five (5) minutes on each intervention.

The procedure shall be as follows:

The proposals for decrease will be considered prior to the proposals for increase.

The Head and the amount to be decreased or increased will be announced.

The Chairman shall then propose the question that the Head be increased or decreased.

The Minister of Finance will then be invited to explain the purpose for the decrease or increase and Members may seek clarification from the Minister.

Once this is concluded, the Chairman will then put the question that the sum to be decreased or increased be approved. The procedure will be repeated for each Head. A similar procedure will be followed for the approval of the write-off of losses.

The Committee is being asked to note that the Minister of Finance has approved the transfer of funds in the sum of \$1,396,805,793 between Sub-Heads under the same Head of expenditure for fiscal year 2015. These transfers do not require the approval of the Committee.

Hon. Members, we shall now consider the proposals for decrease for fiscal year 2015.

Head 40: Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs.

Question proposed: That Head 40 be varied by a decrease in the sum of \$200,000,000.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Hon. Speaker, may I seek your guidance. Would you be kind enough to point us to which page in our document you are referring to?

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Siparia, if we look at item 01, pages 2 and 3 of the agenda for the second meeting of the Standing Finance Committee.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 40 varied by a decrease in the sum of \$200,000,000.

Head 69: Ministry of Works and Transport.

Question proposed: That Head 69 be varied by an increase in the sum of \$200,000,000.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 69 varied by an increase in the sum of \$200,000,000.

2.15 p.m.

Madam Chairman: We now move to “write-off of losses”. This would be at page 4 of the agenda. Hon. Members, we shall now proceed to the consideration on the proposals for write-off of losses.

Head 18: Ministry of Finance and the Economy, \$32,976.40.

Question proposed: That the write-off of losses in the sum of \$32,976.40 for Head 18 be approved.

Madam Chairman: I now invite the Minister of Finance to give an explanation for this loss.

The Minister of Finance (Hon. Colm Imbert): Madam Speaker, the notes are quite clear. Because of an administrative error this particular individual was overpaid because it was believed that she had attained certain qualifications, which she, in fact, had not attained and the overpayment was first discovered in 2011. I think if you look at the explanation on pages 4 and 5, it is self-explanatory.

Dr. Tewarie: A question to the Minister of Finance.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: Would you confirm, as it is written here, that it was a matter which began in 2004?

Hon. C. Imbert: Yes.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay.

Question put and agreed to.

The write-off of losses in the sum of \$32,976.40 for Head 18 approved.

Head 56: Ministry of the People and Social Development, \$45,368.21.

Question proposed: That the write-off of losses in the sum of \$45,368.21 for Head 56 be approved.

Madam Chairman: I will now invite the Minister of Social Development and Family Services to give an explanation.

The Minister of Social Development and Family Services (Hon. Cherry-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn): Madam Speaker, in 2013 when the Human Resource Officer III in the Ministry of the People and Social Development retired, it was discovered that she would have been overpaid. This overpayment arose as a result of an administrative error, in that when Mrs. Joseph-Bishop was on secondment and when she returned to the Ministry of Legal Affairs, she would have been placed at the incorrect incremental point. This resulted in her being overpaid over the period 2003 to 2011. The Minister of the People and Social Development felt that in light of the fact that the overpayment would have been due to an administrative error and given the lapse of eight years over which she would have been overpaid, felt that it would have been unfair for her to have to effect the repayment. Accordingly, a minute was taken to Cabinet and Cabinet agreed that the sum be written off. The Standing Finance Committee is therefore now being asked to approve the write-off of the sum of \$45,368.21.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Could the Minister indicate from what period of time the overpayment began?

Hon. C. Crichlow-Cockburn: The overpayment began in 2003.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

The write-off of losses in the sum of \$45,368.21 for Head 18 approved.

Head 61: Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, \$383,229.13.

Question proposed: That the write-off of losses in the sum of \$383,229.13 for Head 61 be approved.

Madam Chairman: I now invite the Minister of Housing and Urban Development to give an explanation for this loss.

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Marlene Mc Donald): Madam

Speaker, the sum of \$383,229.13 was owed to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee (SILWC) by eight former sugar workers. The then Minister of Housing was of the view that six of the defaulters were unable to meet their financial obligations because of debilitating health challenges and two of those workers are now deceased. The members of the Lands and Arrears subcommittee undertook site visits to the homes of the eight persons and based on their assessment of the subject the families were unable to meet such payments. The total debt, as I indicated, is in the sum of \$383,229.13. As a consequence, the then Minister succeeded in getting Cabinet to agree to the write-off of the mortgage debt.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Siparia.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you. Just for the record, there is a name which carries my married name, "Bissessar". Just for the record to indicate that person is not of any relationship known to me.

Mr. Hinds: Shocking.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Out of an abundance of caution.

Question put and agreed to.

The write-off of losses in the sum of \$383,229.13 for Head 61 approved.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, this meeting of the Standing Finance Committee is now adjourned. I would wish Members to note that the Committee's Report will be circulated tomorrow to all Members. I now call upon the Leader of the House.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. *[Interruption]* Sorry.

Madam Chairman: I am sorry. Member for Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: I just wanted to ask if we are not going to examine the ministerial – *[Interruption]*

Dr. Gopeesingh: The various Heads.

Madam Chairman: This is Item No. 03?

Dr. Tewarie: I am just asking. I mean, I have no compulsion to do it.

Madam Chairman: No, hon. Member. I indicated when we were about to start that these transfers are done by the delegated authority –

Dr. Tewarie: Of the Minister of Finance.

Madam Chairman: – of the Minister and therefore it is really for the noting.

Dr. Tewarie: Right, okay. Noted.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Leader of the House.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Madam Chairman, I beg to move that the House be resumed.

Question put and agreed to.

House resumed.

APPENDIX III

Schedule relating to the Variation of Estimates 2015

HEAD/SUB-HEAD/ITEM AND SUB-ITEM			Provision in Estimates 2015 including Supplementary Warrants, Direct Charges, Transfers & Virements	Revised Provision 2015	NET		Explanation
					Increase	Decrease	
HEAD			\$	\$	\$	\$	
	40	MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND ENERGY AFFAIRS	5,468,242,400	5,268,242,400		200,000,000	
SUB-HEAD	04	CURRENT TRANSFERS AND SUBSIDIES	5,262,759,773	5,062,759,773		200,000,000	
Item	007	Households	5,255,697,659	5,055,697,659		200,000,000	
Sub-item	01	Shortfall in Subsidy re: Sale of Petroleum Products	5,255,697,659	5,055,697,659		200,000,000	01 - Transferred to Head - Ministry of Works and Infrastructure
HEAD	69	MINISTRY OF WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE	1,329,830,000	1,529,830,000	200,000,000		

SUB-HEAD	04	CURRENT TRANSFERS AND SUBSIDIES	433,565,280	633,565,280	200,000,000		
Item	011	Transfers to State Enterprises	414,525,900	614,525,900	200,000,000		
Sub-item	12	NIDCO - Interim Funding for Extension of Solomon Hochoy Highway to Point Fortin	0	200,000,000	200,000,000		12 - Transferred from Head - Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs