



Editorial

A SPINELESS OPPOSITION

The opposition party was driven out of office in 1998 for a variety of reasons; the cabinet members had become arrogant and conceited, many of them seeped in corrupt dealings and self-aggrandizing behavior; there was growing poverty, rampant unemployment and economic paralysis – the UDP leaders were bankrupt of ideas and displayed a callous and insensitive regard for the welfare of the people. Belize was going nowhere. The UDP was swept out of office on a wave of ‘fed-upness’.

The PUP responded with bold initiatives to rescue the economy from the doldrums; a series of political reform measures were implemented; poverty reduction took center stage. A National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan was approved by the new government which identified five priority areas for investment:

- economic growth and income generation through projects targeting the development of small to medium enterprises, agricultural diversification, eco-tourism, light manufacturing, the services sector and the informal sector;
- human capital formation through education and training;
- housing and human settlement;
- the provision of social safety nets; and
- protection and conservation of the environment.

Many of these policy goals have been translated into action. For instance, expansion of educational facilities and teacher training, broad based health reform expenditures and substantial investments to improve rural poor people’s access to water and power. Again, there has been a revolution in housing construction and upliftment throughout the country.

But it has not always been smooth sailing. Constraints to development are many in a small open economy and society, vulnerable to the vicissitudes of a turbulent and harsh world trading regime and the equally turbulent and harsh forces of nature. The persistent decline in commodity prices coupled with the persistent attacks from hurricanes (4 major storms in three years) have not made life easy for the Belizean

people.

The point is, however, that with the bold economic policies pursued by this government, Belize remains a stable and growing nation filled with hope and confidence.

The opposition is good at finding fault and tearing down. But they offer no real alternative. The UDP is be-deviled by a weak spineless leadership and shallow thinkers.

In opposition they were all in favour of building the Chalillo dam. Yet on Tuesday in Belmopan their Orange Walk candidates (Aragon, Urbina, de la Fuente sides with the burnt out political “has been” Sylvestre and the weak-kneed opportunist from Cayo West (Contreras, who has many questions to answer over the missing money at the Benque Viejo del Carriën Credit Union) in a poor show of support for Sharon Matola and her well-financed

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foreign campaign to stop the building of the dam.

Its either that Barrow cannot control his few remaining troops or he has flip-flopped again on the altar of the almighty foreign financed campaign dollars.

Why should anyone listen to the phony rhetoric from these people who have their own agenda driven by the big moneyed international environmental groups .

Belizeans must decide on Chalillo. They will not be fooled by spineless politicians and their foreign backers.

Our country needs reliable electricity; we need more non-polluting energy; we need renewable sources of energy. We need to plan for a long term independent energy policy. Yes, we support bagasse for energy and cohune for energy and all the other alternative sources. But we do need Chalillo if we are to provide a cheaper and more sustainable energy supply for a growing Belize.

Water is the source of life. Electricity is vital to an improved quality of life. In the final analysis the people must come first. They often do in the eyes of the Creator, must have dominion over *“the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, over the cattle and over all the earth and our every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”* Genesis 1:26)