

Fourth Session Eighth Parliament

PARLIAMENTARY ROUND UP: BULLETIN NO. 1 – 2017

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INTRODUCTION

The National Assembly resumed sitting yesterday and kicked off with debate on the 2017 National Budget. The debate commenced after Finance and Economic Development Minister, Hon. Patrick Chinamasa, moved a motion to suspend provisions of Section 51 of the Standing Orders dealing with Interruption of business and automatic adjournment of House - to expedite the second reading and debate of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Amendment Bill, Budget debate, and The Finance and Appropriation Bills. However, the MDC-T Chief Whip, Hon. Innocent Gonese, and other MPs expressed reservations on the suspension of Standing Order 51, saying justice will not be achieved as the processes would be rushed. Despite the protestations, Section 51 of the Standing Orders was suspended. During the sitting, the Movable Property Security Interests Bill was read for the first time and stands referred to the Parliamentary

Legal Committee. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Amendment Bill was read for the second time and debate on the Bill ensued.

DEBATE ON THE RESERVE BANK OF ZIMBABWE AMENDMENT BILL

A number of Parliamentarians applauded the introduction of bond notes saying it had eased the cash shortages in the country. Hon. Simbaneuta Mudarikwa (ZANU PF) Uzumba said the introduction of the bond notes had improved performance of Small and Medium Enterprises as well as the buying of inputs for this year's agricultural season since money was now circulating in the market. Hon. Sarah Mahoka (ZANU PF) Hurungwe East also added her voice and said that the issue of bond notes was important and that people in the communal lands were happy with the bond notes as farmers now have access to cash. Hon. Joseph Mapiki (ZANU PF) Shamva South

also added that long queues to withdraw money had now subsided.

However, Hon. Muchaneta Muchenje (MDC-T) Mashonaland East disagreed with the other legislators saying the introduction of bond notes was causing problems. She said nothing had changed since the bond notes were introduced and people were still sleeping in queues in the streets at banks. Moreover, she said that in communal areas, people did not have access to bank accounts or EcoCash and were still having problems accessing cash. Hon. Jasmine Toffa (MDC-N) Bulawayo Metropolitan added that people in Bulawayo were complaining about bond notes as people were failing to access the money. She also pointed out that another problem was that old people were standing in long queues despite being sick from different ailments and there was no-one to assist them.

In response, Hon. Chinamasa highlighted that bond notes were not introduced to stop cash shortages, but were introduced to curtail the vanishing of the US dollar from the market after a realisation that even the nostro accounts were becoming empty. He reiterated that the bond notes were interchangeable with the US dollar and emphasised the need for individuals to maintain single accounts.

STATE OF ROAD NETWORKS

Hon. Webster Maondera (MDC-T) Glen Norah asked Minister of Finance to declare the state of roads in the country a national disaster to allow for extensive debate on the issue in Parliament. Hon. Fani Munengami (MDC-T) Glenview North called on the Transport and Infrastructural Development Minister, Joram Gumbo, to give a ministerial statement on state of the roads and plans to rehabilitate them in light of potholes that are causing numerous accidents.

THIS WEEK BEFORE PARLIAMENT

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No Bills are currently before the National Assembly at various stages of debate. Portfolio Committees are also expected to present their reports on the budget following submissions from Ministries and interested parties. The National Assembly will engage in a question and answer session today during the afternoon.