

Employees jobs not at risk says new Telemedia Board | Channel5Belize.com

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Godfrey Smith

Thrust in the middle of the crisis are the Telemedia employees. Earlier today, attorney Godfrey Smith, spoke on charges on whether or not the new board would fire over one hundred and fifty Telemedia employees. Smith said emphatically that the new board has no such intention and that employees need not worry nor the persons who bought the shares which the government obtained and resold during the nationalization process should fear losing the money they invested.

Godfrey Smith, Attorney for Dean Boyce

“The Prime Minister was on Krem saying that a hundred and fifty people will be fired and that was Dean Boyce said to the workers. Look, I was there at the meeting Friday, the workers came up for a meeting—it was cordial. Both sides pledged to work with each other and carrying on the negotiations that was in play prior to the judgment concerning workers’ benefits and Mister Boyce I heard him say look we will precede as per normal. So first let me shoot down straight away that lie told by the Prime Minister Dean Barrow, that Boyce said that a hundred and fifty people might be fired. All that Boyce said was that there may be some changes at the management level. No threats are being made to workers. I was asked on Love FM, what advice would, what’s the position of the workers? And I went at great pains to say sadly, regrettably, the people most exposed are the employees. Barrow and his people aren’t exposed. Boyce and his shareholders and directors aren’t exposed. Yes there are competing instructions being given. Mister Boyce as we speak is the chairman and he is acting like a chairman. He is calling banks, he is calling heads of departments, he’s calling employees, he’s getting reports and he is carrying on the business of the transition. As he is doing that, Net Vasquez and people like Karen Bevans are there trying to counterman those instructions. The ordinary employees are caught in the crossfire. If you ask why we are doing it, we are doing it because we believe that the Court of Appeal judgment authorizes us to do it. The Prime Minister says he will comply and then he sends in the police. The people who bought shares—whether it is S.S.B. or individuals or companies—I can say to you that in one of the legal maneuverings before the Caribbean Court of Justice in Trinidad, at our insistence and the Court insistence, Lois Young; on behalf of the government, had to give an undertaking in which she pledged that the government would take all money received from people who bought shares—S.S.B. and everybody else—and keep it separate and intact in separate bank accounts at the commercial banks. So if they kept the undertaking, if they were true to their word, then all those monies should not have been spent by the government but should be in an account waiting to give back to people who were misled into buying shares from a directorship, from a government that had acted unconstitutionally and unlawfully. On the question of dividends, obviously there would have to be an account. The effect of the judgment, Jose, is that government; that law and the order under which you acted, under which you appointed a board of directors and everything else that you did evaporates—it’s null and void, it’s no good. So they will have to account for decisions as well as dividends paid that should have gone to the real shareholders; that have gone...we don’t know where.”

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