



Central Bank calls in Lindquist in Clico probe

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(Trinidad Express) In a bid to find out what went wrong at the country's largest conglomerate, the Central Bank has quietly retained the services of ace forensic investigator Robert Lindquist to sift through the tangled records of financially troubled insurance giant, Clico, to determine whether it was a case of bad judgment or corporate malfeasance.

Central Bank Governor Ewart Williams was not immediately available for comment on Wednesday, but sources close to the situation told the Express that Lindquist, who quietly took up sleuthing duties this week, has been tasked with the job of finding out what happened to cause the avalanche of financial troubles at the Lawrence Duprey-owned empire. Lindquist, a forensic accountant, has specifically been asked to determine if there was evidence of corporate malfeasance, according to one source, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Lindquist had no comment when contacted by the Express yesterday.

"No disrespect to you but I am not talking to the press," was all he said.

The Express understands that Lindquist will be working alongside Canadian accounting firm KPMG, who were brought in shortly after the Central Bank intervention.

The State-appointed chairman of Clico and former Central Bank Governor, Dr Euric Bobb, also had little to say on the matter. "We are engaged in a forensic accounting exercise to try to understand what went wrong. I can't say anything more specific than that," Bobb said when contacted.

The Express understands that the Central Bank, which seized control of several finance companies within the CL Financial Group on January 30, in its bid to safeguard taxpayers' money, has made it clear that it has a duty to ensure that there was no malfeasance at the privately-owned conglomerate before putting more bailout funds into the cash-starved group.

Sources say that the initial Lindquist investigation will be conducted within the context of the January 30 Memorandum of Understanding signed between Finance Minister Karen Nunez-Tesheira and CL Financial's executive chairman Duprey. The terms of reference, however, could change to include the whole CL Financial group depending

on the outcome of the Linquist probe, said sources, noting that special attention will be focused on the excessive inter-group transactions.

The Manning Government, through its lead negotiator on the State bailout, Finance Minister Nunez-Tesheira, has made clear that Duprey must go as executive chairman of the group's holding company, CL Financial.

Government last week presented Duprey with a list of demands for management control of the privately-owned conglomerate which went knocking on Central Bank's door for financial rescue in January.

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