

**CONTRIBUTION TO THE 2018 – 2019 BUDGET DEBATE IN  
THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY BY THE HON.  
FRANKIE CAMPBELL, M.P., MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
FOR SOUTHERN SHORES CONSTITUENCY ON MONDAY,  
11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2018**

MR. SPEAKER:

ONCE AGAIN I AM GRATIFIED BY THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE ON THE OCCASION OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET DEBATE. IN SO DOING, I MUST IN THE FIRST INSTANCE PAY TRIBUTE TO THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN SHORES, WHO HAVE DEEMED ME WORTHY OF SERVING THEM AS THEIR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

SECONDLY AND NO LESS IMPORTANT IS THE CONFIDENCE PLACED IN ME BY THE HON. HUBERT MINNIS, OUR ESTEEMED PRIME MINISTER, WHO HAS BESTOWED ON ME THE HONOR OF SERVING IN HIS CABINET. AS I HAVE CONTINUED TO EMPHASIZE DURING MY TRIPS THROUGH THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THESE ISLANDS, I COULD NEVER HAVE IMAGINED IN MY WILDEST DREAMS THAT I WOULD EVER HAVE THE GREAT FORTUNE TO SERVE IN

SUCH A CAPACITY, AND I REMAIN HUMBLLED AND FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR THIS OVERWHELMING OPPORTUNITY. I DO NOT TAKE THIS LIGHTLY, AND I PLEDGE TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN SHORES, AND INDEED TO THE PEOPLE OF THE BAHAMAS, THAT I WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE THEM TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY, EQUALLY, AND WITHOUT FAVOR.

MR. SPEAKER, NOW THAT I HAVE SPENT A YEAR AS MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, I HAVE A FAR GREATER APPRECIATION FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY MY MINISTRY, AND I REMAIN COGNIZANT OF THE FACT THAT THE WORK CARRIED OUT BY THE STAFF OF MY MINISTRY AND ITS DEPARTMENTS TOUCH THE LIVES IN SOME WAY OF EVERY SINGLE PERSON RESIDING IN THIS COUNTRY. IT IS THEREFORE CRITICAL THAT WE SEEK TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL THE RESIDENTS OF THIS ARCHIPELAGO.

### **POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT**

WITH THIS FOR CONSIDERATION MR. SPEAKER, I WILL ADDRESS IN THE FIRST INSTANCE ONE OF THE ENTITIES IN

MY MINISTRY WHICH PROVIDES SERVICES ON EVERY ISLAND IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS, I.E. THE POST OFFICE. IN THIS RESPECT, I CHOOSE TO CONFRONT HEAD ON THE CHALLENGES WHICH HAVE IMPACTED THE POSTAL SECTOR, DUE TO THE DETERIORATING CONDITION OF THE GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING. LET ME FIRST OF ALL APOLOGIZE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE BAHAMAS FOR THE INCONVENIENCE THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED AS A RESULT OF THIS SEVERAL YEAR OLD SITUATION. I ASSURE YOU THAT CONSISTENT PROGRESS IS BEING MADE IN OUR EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THIS VEXING CHALLENGE. THE DIFFICULTY OF THIS CHALLENGE RESULTS FROM THE FACT THAT IT HAS BEEN ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE MINISTRY OF WORKS TO SECURE PARTS FOR THE AGED PLUMBING, ELECTRICAL, MECHANICAL AND AIR CONDITION SYSTEMS IN THIS MORE THAN 30 YEAR OLD BUILDING. IT IS NO SECRET TO ANYONE THAT SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS HAVE FAILED TO MAINTAIN THIS BUILDING, AND IT IS ALSO A KNOWN FACT THAT EVERY OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCY, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE GPO STAFF AND CUSTOMS, HAVE RELOCATED FROM IT.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS THEREFORE MADE A CONSIDERED DECISION TO RELOCATE THE GENERAL POST OFFICE, AND TO IMplode THE BUILDING. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR ME TO STATE HOWEVER, MR. SPEAKER, THAT THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, THOUGH FACED WITH WHAT AT TIMES APPEAR TO BE INSURMOUNTABLE CHALLENGES, CONTINUES TO HOLD FAST TO ITS COMMITMENT TO ENSURE DELIVERY OF THE MAIL TO ITS FINAL DESTINATION. THE DEPARTMENT IS ONE OF THE FEW OPERATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT THAT HAS A PHYSICAL PRESENCE IN MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED LOCATIONS ACROSS THE ENTIRE BAHAMAS; APPROXIMATELY 102 DISTRICT OPERATIONS IN TOTAL. UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT THE TOOLS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY ARE EMBRACED, MORE THAN NINETY PERCENT OF THE POSTAL OPERATION WILL BE EXECUTED VIA AN OUTDATED MANUAL SYSTEM. DESPITE THIS CHALLENGE, THE DEPARTMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO EXPLORING, AND IDENTIFYING THE LATEST METHODOLOGIES AND TECHNOLOGIES TO FACILITATE MORE EFFICIENT LEVELS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE, AND SATISFACTION.

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT MR. SPEAKER, THAT AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS OF A SERIOUS BACKLOG OF PARCEL AND LETTER MAILS, THE DEPARTMENT HAS SEEN A STEADY DECLINE IN THE BACKLOG TO JUST ABOUT NORMAL VOLUMES. THIS, OF COURSE, IS DUE ENTIRELY TO THE EFFORTS OF THE DEDICATED POSTAL OFFICERS WHO EXECUTE THIS VERY IMPORTANT SERVICE UNDER VERY DIFFICULT CONDITIONS. THIS ACHIEVEMENT, HOWEVER, IS CURRENTLY BEING CHALLENGED BY THE FACT THAT POSTAL OFFICERS AT THE GPO HAVE BEEN WITHIN THE PAST THREE (3) WEEKS WORKING FEWER HOURS (8AM TO 12 NOON), AS THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM IS COMPROMISED DUE TO THE NEED FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE MAIN CIRCUIT BREAKER, WHICH IS TWENTY YEARS OLD, AND CANNOT BE EASILY SOURCED. THE RESULT OF THIS IS THAT THE BUILDING IS NOW BEING POWERED BY A GENERATOR, WHICH CAN ONLY BE RUN FOR FOUR HOURS EACH DAY, TO PREVENT IT FROM SHUTTING DOWN. THIS IS A COSTLY EXERCISE, WITH FUEL/BATTERY EXPENSES WITHIN THIS SHORT PERIOD ALREADY STANDING IN EXCESS OF SOME FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$4,000.00), AND COUNTING.

THE GOOD NEWS FOR THE PUBLIC AND POSTAL STAFF IS THAT THE GENERAL POST OFFICE IS NOW IN POSSESSION

OF THE KEYS TO ITS NEW PREMISES SITUATED ON GLADSTONE ROAD, FORMERLY THE SITE OF PHIL'S GROCERY STORE, FOLLOWING THE RECENT COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF THAT PROPERTY BY THE GOVERNMENT. ALREADY EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY TO TRANSFORM THE BUILDING INTO A MODERNIZED, EXPANDED POSTAL FACILITY, TO THE TUNE OF IN EXCESS OF FOUR MILLION DOLLARS (\$4,000,000.00). THIS NEW POSTAL FACILITY WILL FEATURE AUTOMATED COUNTER SERVICES, EXPANDED EXPRESS MAIL SERVICE (EMS), EXPANDED PARCEL SERVICE, AND AN UPGRADED PHILATELIC SERVICE.

THE EXPECTED EXPANSION TO THE POST OFFICE'S VEHICLE FLEET BY THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE IS TIMELY, AND WILL FURTHER ENHANCE DELIVERY TIMES, AND IMPROVE THE OVERALL EFFICIENCY OF THE MAIL DELIVERY SERVICE, ON BOTH NEW PROVIDENCE AND IN THE FAMILY ISLANDS.

IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT FOR ME TO STATE MR. SPEAKER, THAT THE MOVE TO GLADSTONE RD. WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE COMMENSURATE OPENING OF A MID SIZE BAY STREET POSTAL FACILITY, SIMILAR TO THE LPIA OR SANDYPORT POSTAL FACILITIES, TO ACCOMMODATE THE BUSINESS, RESIDENTIAL, AND TOURIST COMMUNITIES,

TO AUGMENT THOSE SERVICES ALREADY PROVIDED BY THE SHIRLEY ST. POST OFFICE. I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE AWARE OF THE NEED FOR SUCH A FACILITY, AND IS POISED TO BEGIN THE SEARCH, ALONG WITH POSTAL STAFF, FOR AN APPROPRIATE BUILDING.

**MANPOWER NEEDS** –GIVEN THE EXPECTED EXPANSION OF SERVICES FOR AN ALREADY REDUCED STAFF COMPLEMENT, MR. SPEAKER, IT IS REASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT THE DEPARTMENT WILL NEED TO FILL THE MANY VACANCIES THAT CURRENTLY EXIST. THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT HAS LOST MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED (100) OF ITS OFFICERS TO RETIREMENT, TRANSFERS, AND RESIGNATIONS. ADDITIONALLY, DURING THIS BUDGET PERIOD 2018/2019 THE DEPARTMENT WILL LOSE ANOTHER NINE (9) OF ITS OFFICERS TO RETIREMENT. THIS DEPLETION IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT CANNOT BE IGNORED THEREFORE, VERY SERIOUS ATTENTION, AND ADDRESS, IS UNDERWAY AND IS CONSIDERED A VITAL COMPONENT TO THE IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT OF THE BAHAMAS POSTAL OPERATION. PURSUANT TO A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF MANPOWER NEEDS, CONDUCTED FOR THE POST OFFICE ON NEW PROVIDENCE AND THROUGHOUT THE FAMILY

ISLANDS, THE DEPARTMENT IS SEEKING TO FILL APPROXIMATELY EIGHTY-FOUR VACANT POSTS, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE VIA RECRUITMENT FROM WITHIN THE BROADER PUBLIC SERVICE.

# **THE REGULARIZATION OF SUBSTITUTION WORKERS SERVING AS GENERAL SERVICE WORKERS – FAMILY ISLAND POST OFFICES**

MR. SPEAKER, AS HAS BEEN STRESSED, THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COLLECTION OF GOVERNMENT REVENUE AND THE PROVISION OF POSTAL AND BANKING SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS. THE RECORD REFLECTS THAT THE PROBLEM OF STAFF SHORTAGES STARTED AS EARLY AS 1997.

IN THIS REGARD, THERE ARE CURRENTLY A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF POSTAL WORKERS IN THE FAMILY ISLANDS WHO HAVE BEEN ON THE JOB FROM 2007 WITHOUT PROPER STATUS. THESE SUBSTITUTION WORKERS (WEEKLY PAID), ARE FAMILY ISLAND POST OFFICE WORKERS WHO HAVE BEEN IN POST FOR MANY YEARS, AND IN SOME CASES, ARE THE OFFICERS-IN-CHARGE. THE POST



OFFICE CANNOT MANAGE WITHOUT THE SERVICES OF THESE OFFICERS, AND THERE IS ALSO A MORAL OBLIGATION TO ENSURE THAT THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE TREATED FAIRLY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LABOR LAWS. IN THIS REGARD, THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT WILL BE SEEKING, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, TO HAVE THESE OFFICERS' SERVICES REGULARIZED, IN THE NEW BUDGETARY PERIOD.

**PHILATELIC/STAMP SERVICES.....MR. SPEAKER,**  
ALTHOUGH TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES IN COMMUNICATION HAVE DIMINISHED THE RELIANCE ON THE NEED FOR PHYSICAL MAIL, RESULTING IN A SIGNIFICANT DECLINE IN STAMP PRINTING AND STAMP SALES, THE TRADITIONAL MAIL WILL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN A DEGREE OF RELEVANCE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, PARTICULARLY FOR AN ARCHPELAGIC NATION SUCH AS THE BAHAMAS WITH RURAL FAMILY ISLAND COMMUNITIES. ADDITIONALLY, SEGMENTS OF THE GLOBAL PUBLIC CONTINUE TO LOOK FORWARD TO REGULAR STAMP RELEASES, WITH CONSIDERABLE ENTHUSIASM. THEREFORE, DURING THE FISCAL PERIOD 2017/2018, THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT RELEASED TWO (2) STAMP ISSUES, NAMELY:

THE OLYMPICS ISSUE – RELEASED JULY, 2017, AND THE

## CHRISTMAS ISSUE- RELEASED DECEMBER, 2017

I AM PLEASED TO ADVISE MR. SPEAKER, THAT WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT WILL BE ANNOUNCING THE RELEASE DATE OF ITS LATEST STAMP ISSUE FEATURING THE NEWLY WED ROYAL COUPLE, PRINCE HARRY AND MEGAN MARKLE, THE DUKE AND DUTCHESS OF SUSSEX.

THE EXPANSION OF PHILATELIC SERVICES WILL ALSO FEATURE THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW POSTAL PRODUCTS, INCLUSIVE OF SOUVENIR ITEMS FEATURING POSTAGE STAMPS.

**ALLIANCES** ...THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT IS ALSO POISED TO LAUNCH AN ALLIANCE WITH FEDEX, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE PHASED IN OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THIS REGARD WILL BE FORTHCOMING SHORTLY, SUBJECT TO THE SATISFACTION OF BOTH PARTIES, AND THE GOVERNMENT. THE FEDEX ALLIANCE WILL FEATURE MAIL/PACKAGE DROP OFF AND PICK UP AT DESIGNATED POST OFFICE LOCATIONS, IN THE INITIAL PHASE, WITH ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS BEING ADDED OVER TIME. THE LAUNCH OF THIS NEW INNOVATIVE

EXERCISE WILL BE AT NO ADDITIONAL COST TO THE POST OFFICE, AND THE PROJECTED ANNUAL REVENUE GAINS ARE ANTICIPATED TO BE QUITE IMPRESSIVE.

MR. SPEAKER, TRAINING WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY AN INTEGRAL PART IN POSITIONING THE POST OFFICE TO SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVE ITS DESIRED GOAL OF PROVIDING ENHANCED AND IMPROVED QUALITY SERVICE, AND SUSTAINED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION. ACCORDINGLY, THE DEPARTMENT WILL COMMENCE THE ONGOING TRAINING OF BOTH MANAGERIAL AND LINE STAFF, AS PART OF ITS NEW AND IMPROVED QUALITY SERVICE INITIATIVE, AND OVERALL POSTAL SERVICE UPGRADE.

WHILE LOCAL TRAINING EXERCISES ARE SET TO COMMENCE, THE DEPARTMENT HAS ALSO ENDEAVORED TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF INTERNATIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN EXPECTED STANDARDS OF OPERATION IN THE AREAS OF EXPRESS MAIL SERVICE (EMS), POSTAL SECURITY, AND INTERNATIONAL POSTAL ACCOUNTS, AS MANDATED BY THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU) AND THE CARIBBEAN

POSTAL UNION (CPU). THESE TRAINING EXERCISES ARE HELD AT THE CARIBBEAN POSTAL TRAINING CENTER (CPTC) IN BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS.

MR. SPEAKER, THE CPU AND UPU ARE COGNIZANT OF THE CHANGING COMMUNICATIONS MARKET, WITH THE MOVEMENT OF ESCALATING VOLUMES OF SMALL PARCELS/PACKETS BETWEEN COUNTRIES. THE INTERNATIONAL POSTAL SECTOR NO LONGER INTENDS TO REMAIN EXCLUDED FROM THIS VERY LUCRATIVE REVENUE GENERATING MARKET, AND COUNTRIES ARE THEREFORE POSITIONING THEMSELVES TO MEET CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS, AS THEY RELATE TO TIMELY AND COST EFFECTIVE SERVICE.

ALTHOUGH LARGER ECONOMIES HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN THE E-COMMERCE MARKET VIA POSTAL DELIVERY FOR SOME TIME, SMALL ECONOMIES ARE ENDEAVORING NOT TO BE LEFT BEHIND, AND E-COMMERCE READINESS IS NOW THE FOCUS OF POSTAL ADMINISTRATIONS IN SMALL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THROUGHOUT THE CARIBBEAN REGION, WITH THE BAHAMAS BEING NO EXCEPTION. THE MOST RECENT WORKSHOP (HELD ONLY ONE WEEK AGO) WAS ATTENDED BY TWO (2) SENIOR POSTAL OFFICERS

FROM THE BAHAMAS, IN PREPARATION FOR E-COMMERCE READINESS OF CARIBBEAN POSTAL OPERATORS, AT A COST OF THREE THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED AND EIGHTY DOLLARS (\$3,480.00). IN AN EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE ITS STRONG COMMITMENT TO ENSURING THE READINESS AND PARTICIPATION OF ALL MEMBER COUNTRIES, THE CPU IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE UPU COVERED THE FULL COST FOR ONE (1) PARTICIPANT FROM THE BAHAMAS.

MR. SPEAKER, **EXPENDITURE** FOR THE POST OFFICE AS AT MARCH, 2018, STOOD AT 65% OF ITS TOTAL BUDGET ALLOCATION OF \$7.5M FOR 2017/2018. THE REMAINING 35% IS EXPECTED TO SATISFY COMMITMENTS UP TO 30TH JUNE, 2018. THE NEW AND REDUCED BUDGET ALLOCATION IN THE 2018/2019 BUDGET TO \$7.1M, DEMONSTRATES PRUDENT FISCAL MANAGEMENT OF PREVIOUSLY ALLOCATED AMOUNTS, HOWEVER, REQUIRED FUNDING ASSOCIATED WITH THE RELOCATION OF THE GPO, AND THE NECESSARY UPGRADE OF SERVICES WILL REMAIN WITH THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE.

AS MIGHT HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED MR SPEAKER, REVENUE INTAKE WAS REDUCED DURING THE CURRENT FISCAL PERIOD, DUE TO THE REDUCED OPERATING HOURS, AND ON SOME OCCASIONS, THE COMPLETE, CLOSURE OF THE GPO, WHICH IS THE CENTRAL UNIT OF POSTAL OPERATIONS. LIMITED ACCESS TO THE MAIN OPERATING OFFICE RESULTED IN LOW CUSTOMER TRAFFIC, AND THE SUBSEQUENT REDUCTION IN POSTAL ACTIVITY. REVENUE PROJECTIONS OF \$2.8M THEREFORE WERE NOT MET BY MORE THAN 60%, AS REVENUE DERIVED FOR THIS PERIOD WAS JUST OVER \$1M. HOWEVER MR. SPEAKER, WE ARE VERY MUCH CHEERED BY THE FACT THAT THE RELOCATION TO THE NEW GENERAL POST OFFICE, AND THE SEVERAL INITIATIVES BEING PLANNED TO MODERNIZE THE BAHAMIAN POSTAL SECTOR WILL LEAD TO A DEFINITE AND SUSTAINED REVERSAL IN THIS SITUATION.

### **DEPARTMENT OF ROAD TRAFFIC**

MR. SPEAKER, PERMIT ME NOW TO TURN MY ATTENTION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ROAD TRAFFIC. AS WE ARE ALL AWARE, THIS DEPARTMENT IS ONE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S HIGHEST REVENUE EARNERS, AND I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE APPROACHING SECOND

ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEPARTMENT'S AUTOMATION, VIA THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (TMS) FOR DRIVERS' AND VEHICLE LICENCING PROCESS HAS RESULTED IN CONSIDERABLE INCREASED REVENUE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION. IN THIS REGARD, I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN REVENUE OVER 2017 BY \$3,731,086.08, AND THE DEPARTMENT CONTINUES TO RECEIVE HIGH PRAISE FOR THE GREATLY SHORTENED WAIT TIMES. THE EFFICIENCY OF THE NEW SYSTEM HAS NO DOUBT ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE INCREASED REVENUE INTAKE PROJECTED FOR ROAD TRAFFIC FEES FOR THE NEW BUDGETARY PERIOD; \$49,687,062.00, UP FROM \$42,959,000.00 FOR THE PREVIOUS PERIOD LAST YEAR, WITH ONLY A PORTION OF THIS BEING THE RESULT OF A RECENT INCREASE IN THE VEHICLE LICENCE FEE BY THE GOVERNMENT.

IN ADDITION TO IMPROVING THE REVENUE, THE NEW SYSTEMS ALSO PROVIDE FOR SCRUTINY OF THE DAILY INTAKE, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE. STILL, WE REMAIN COGNIZANT OF THE FACT THAT AT THE END OF THE MONTH, LONG LINES PERSIST, AND THE

DEPARTMENT IS EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS TO ADDRESS THIS CONCERN, ACCORDINGLY, THE BUDGETARY ALLOCATION OF \$200,000.0 FOR ASSETS FOR THIS ASPECT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S BUDGET IS IN LINE WITH WHAT WAS REQUESTED. ADDITIONALLY MR. SPEAKER, THE DEPARTMENT HAS NOW FINALIZED ITS NEW DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE, WHICH IS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES.

REGARDING THE TMS, THUS FAR ALL OF OUR MOST POPULOUS ISLANDS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT ON LINE, INCLUDING NEW PROVIDENCE, GRAND BAHAMA, ABACO, ELEUTHERA AND EXUMA. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THE BAHAMAS TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANY (BTC) IS PRESENTLY LAYING FIBER IN ANDROS, LONG ISLAND AND BIMINI TO FACILITATE THE LAUNCH OF THE SYSTEM IN THESE ISLANDS. WE ARE ALSO WORKING WITH THE ADMINISTRATOR IN SANDY POINT AND THE MINISTRY OF WORKS IN ABACO TO RENOVATE A BUILDING IN THAT SETTLEMENT TO BEGIN OPERATIONS THERE. BTC SHOULD BEGIN WORK ON LAYING THE FIBER FOR TMS IN THE REMAINING ISLANDS OF CAT ISLAND, SAN SALVADOR, ACKLINS, CROOKED ISLAND, INAGUA AND MAYAGUANA



SHORTLY AFTER THE COMPLETION IN THE ISLANDS REFERRED TO EARLIER.

MR. SPEAKER, THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TMS SYSTEM REQUIRED THE ENGAGEMENT OF A NUMBER OF CONTRACTUAL PERSONS, WHO WERE SUBSEQUENTLY TRAINED IN THE RUNNING OF THE SYSTEM, TO ENSURE THAT THE INITIATIVE DID NOT FAIL. THE NEED FOR THESE SERVICES CONTINUES, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS AGAIN ALLOCATED \$1,113,000.00 IN FUNDING TO ALLOW FOR THE NEEDED CONTINUITY IN THE SYSTEM.

MR, SPEAKER, SINCE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE AUTOMATION PROCESS, MANY BAHAMIANS AND RESIDENTS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR DESIRE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ROAD TRAFFIC TO EXPAND ITS SUPPLY OF THE THREE DRIVERS' LICENCE PRINTING MACHINES WHICH ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABE, TWO IN NEW PROVIDENCE WHICH SERVICES NEW PROVIDENCE, THE MAINLAND OF ELEUTHERA, SPANISH WELLS AND HARBOUR ISLAND, AND ONE IN GRAND BAHAMA WHICH PROVIDES FOR GRAND BAHAMA AND ABACO, REGRETABLY, THERE HAVE BEEN

NUMEROUS ISSUES WITH THE PREVIOUS PRINTING MACHINES, DUE TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES SUCH AS THE SALT AIR AND MOISTURE, WHICH LED TO THE FREQUENT MALFUNCTIONING OF THE MACHINES. NOW THAT ROAD TRAFFIC STAFF HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE THREE GENERAL DYNAMICS /IXLA PRINTERS NOW IN OPERATION, AND ADJUSTMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO THEM, FIVE ADDITIONAL PRINTERS WILL BE SECURED AND PLACED IN MARSH HARBOUR, ABACO TO SERVICE ABACO, ITS CAYS, AND MOORES ISLAND, IN GOVERNOR'S HARBOUR, ELEUTHERA TO SERVICE ELEUTHERA, SPANISH WELLS, HARBOUR ISLAND AND CURRENT ISLAND, AND IN GEORGE TOWN EXUMA TO PROVIDE FOR EXUMA, THE CAYS, AND RAGGED ISLAND, LONG ISLAND AND ANDROS.

DATA TORQUE, THE VENDOR RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TMS HAS THE OBLIGATION OF ACQUIRING THE PRINTERS ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE BAHAMAS, AND TO PROVIDE REGULAR MAINTENANCE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT THROUGH ITS LOCAL PARTNER, NETWORK SECURITY AND CONSULTING GROUP (NSCG), TO SERVICE THE PRINTERS. FUNDING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$507,167.00

WILL BE UTILIZED TO PURCHASE THE PRINTERS, AND IS PROVIDED FOR IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE BUDGET.

ANOTHER CUSTOMER CENTRED IMPROVEMENT BEING INTRODUCED MR. SPEAKER, WILL BE THE INTRODUCTION OF A FACILITY WHICH WILL PERMIT PERSONS RESIDING OVERSEAS TO UPLOAD NEEDED DOCUMENTS, AND TO COMPLETE THEIR REGISTRATION FOR NEW DRIVER'S LICENCES ONLINE. SUCH PERSONS NEED ONLY GO INTO A BAHAMIAN CONSULAR OFFICE OR JP TO AUTHENTICATE THEIR DOCUMENTS, AFTER WHICH THEY WOULD BE SENT ELECTRONICALLY TO THE HEAD OFFICE IN NEW PROVIDENCE FOR PROCESSING.

MR. SPEAKER, THE DEPARTMENT OF ROAD TRAFFIC EXPERIENCED MANY CHALLENGES WHEN IT MOVED FROM THE CLARENCE BAIN BUILDING AS A RESULT OF DAMAGE SUSTAINED TO THE BUILDING BY HURRICANE MATTHEW. ONE OF THOSE CHALLENGES WAS THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL STORAGE SPACE FOR FURNITURE, ASSETS, AND OTHER SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT. THUS, THE MOVE TO THE MUNNINGS BUILDING ON UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD WAS FINALIZED, AND SUCH A MOVE REQUIRES ADDITIONAL SECURITY. FUNDS ARE AVAILABE UNDER BLOCK 50 IN THE

AMOUNT OF \$67,200.00 (SECURITY SERVICES) TO PROVIDE FOR THIS EXPENDITURE, AND THE DEPARTMENT IS MOVING TO ENSURE THAT A SUITABLE FIRM IS IDENTIFIED AND HIRED EXPEDITIOUSLY.

### **ROAD SAFETY**

MR. SPEAKER, THERE IS PERHAPS NO ISSUE OF MORE CONCERN TO ME IN MY MINISTRY THAN THE SUBJECT OF ROAD SAFETY. IN THIS REGARD, I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN THIS SEGMENT OF MY PRESENTATION BY CONVEYING MY VERY DEEPEST CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILIES OF THE FOUR (4) WOMEN WHO RECENTLY LOST THEIR LIVES DURING THE LABOUR DAY PARADE LAST WEEK, AND INDEED TO THE FAMILIES OF ALL FATALITY VICTIMS AND TO THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY INJURED IN ROAD INCIDENTS, AND WHO FACE LIFE ALTERING CIRCUMSTANCES. MR. SPEAKER, THE CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ESTIMATES THAT ROAD INJURIES ARE THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN THE US, AND CAN BECOME THE SEVENTH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH AROUND THE WORLD. SINCE YOUNG CHILDREN ARE CONSIDERED TO BE THE MOST VULNERABLE ROAD USERS, MY MINISTRY HAS DETERMINED THAT THERE IS A NEED TO BEGIN WITH THIS GROUP. IN THIS REGARD, I WILL SAY TO YOU THAT I WAS

KNOCKED DOWN AS A CHILD WHILE TRYING TO CROSS THE STREET AS A PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT. I THEREFORE HAVE A VERY PERSONAL INTEREST IN THIS CRITICAL ISSUE. I REALIZE THAT THERE IS A NEED TO REACH THE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE, TO TRAIN THEM IN SAVING THEIR OWN LIVES, AND THE LIVES OF THOSE NEAR AND DEAR TO THEM.

MR. SPEAKER, ON AVERAGE, 50-55 PERSONS LOSE THEIR LIVES EVERY YEAR ON THE STREETS OF NEW PROVIDENCE, AND THIS YEAR WE ARE SADLY APPROACHING NEAR EPIDEMIC PROPORTIONS, AS FATALITIES ARE KEEPING PACE WITH HOMICIDES, FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER. STEMMING THIS MAYHEM HAS BEEN THE FOCUS OF THE JUNIOR ROAD SAFETY PROGRAM. WHILE MOST PERSONS MAY SEE ROAD SAFETY AS AN OCCASIONAL EVENT, WE IN THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE ROAD TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT SEE THE NEED FOR A YEAR ROUND FOCUS. IN AN EARLIER COMMUNICATION I SAID THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT THE PUBLIC IS SENSITIZED THROUGH A SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH, ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ROAD SAFETY.

## **JUNIOR ROAD SAFETY PROGRAM**

THE JUNIOR ROAD SAFETY PROGRAM TACKLES THE PROBLEM FROM THE GROUND UP, WHERE PRIMARY STUDENTS ARE ENLISTED AND TRAINED IN THE NECESSARY SKILLS TO TAKE THE MESSAGE OF ROAD SAFETY TO THEIR SCHOOLS, PARENTS, CHURCHES, AND THEIR COMMUNITY AT LARGE.

OVER THE LAST TWO (2) MONTHS, WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED THIS PROGRAM IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEW PROVIDENCE, GRAND BAHAMA AND IN CAT ISLAND.

FROM SEPTEMBER 2018 TO JANUARY 2019, PROGRAMS WILL BE INTRODUCED IN THE REMAINING FAMILY ISLANDS AND WE ANTICIPATE THAT THIS EFFORT WILL BE VERY SUCCESSFUL IN SENSITIZING YOUNGSTERS OF THE NEED TO PRACTICE GOOD ROAD SAFETY HABITS, AND TO PASS THE MESSAGE ON TO THEIR FRIENDS, CLASSMATES, AND FAMILIES.

WE HAVE INCREASED THE FUNDS ALLOCATED FOR THE JUNIOR ROAD SAFETY AND OTHER ROAD SAFETY RELATED MEASURES THIS YEAR FROM \$6,000.00 TO \$10,000.00 AS WE SEEK TO MAKE GREAT INROADS IN ADDRESSING THIS CRITICAL ISSUE. THE JUNIOR ROAD SAFETY PROGRAM IS

BUT ONE ELEMENT OF MY MINISTRY'S ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE'S EFFORTS, AND OUR PARTNERSHIPS WITH VARIOUS PRIVATE SECTOR ENTITIES WILL ALLOW FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO BE INVESTED INTO THIS CRITICAL AREA. AS WE SPEAK, WE ARE FINALIZING PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMONWEALTH BREWERY FOR THE ERECTION OF BILLBOARDS TO PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE DRINKING BEHAVIOUR, AND WITH BTC AND ALIV, TO DISCOURAGE THE USE OF MOBILE PHONE USE WHILE DRIVING. CERTAINLY WE HAVE GREAT CONCERN GENERALLY ABOUT THE DISTRACTED DRIVING HABITS OF MANY MOTORISTS, AND PEDESTRIANS ALIKE.

WITH THIS FOR CONSIDERATION, MR. SPEAKER, OUR ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE BRINGS TOGETHER BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS TO DEVELOP PLANS FOR ADDRESSING THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE. WE HAVE THEREFORE RECENTLY FORGED A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH EDUKARTING, A KART RACING PROGRAMME WHICH TEACHES YOUNG STUDENT DRIVERS IMPORTANT ROAD SAFETY AND LIFE SKILLS. IT IS OUR OBJECTIVE MR, SPEAKER, TO MAKE ROAD SAFETY EVERYONE'S BUSINESS, ALL THE TIME.

MR. SPEAKER, ANOTHER EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE WORK OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT IS ENSURING THAT ADEQUATE LEGISLATION IS IN PLACE FOR ADDRESSING THE ROAD TRAFFIC NEEDS OF THE COUNTRY, AND SUBSTANTIAL WORK HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN IN THIS REGARD ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ROAD TRAFFIC ACT. WHILE OUR LONG TERM GOAL IS TO PRODUCE A COMPLETELY NEW ROAD TRAFFIC ACT, IT IS THE INTENTION OF THIS ADMINISTRATION TO ENSURE THAT KEY LEGISLATION IS IN PLACE TO ADDRESS CRITICAL CONCERNS FOR THE MOTORING PUBLIC, ON AN URGENT BASIS. MR. SPEAKER, TO THIS END, REGULATIONS TO ADDRESS THE DRESS CODE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE DRIVERS IS BEING PREPARED AND WILL BE LEGISLATED AND ENFORCED SHORTLY. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE MAKE THE NECESSARY DECISIONS TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THIS VITAL INDUSTRY FOR BAHAMIANS AND VISITORS ALIKE. FOCUS WILL ALSO BE GIVEN, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE POLICE, THE MINISTRIES OF WORKS, HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO EXAMINING ASPECTS OF THE ACT WHICH



IMPACT SAFETY ON THE STREETS AND ENSURING THAT THE RIGHTS OF ALL ARE PROTECTED. EFFORTS ARE ALSO UNDERWAY TO UNDERTAKE A REVIEW TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF INTRODUCING A TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM WHICH WOULD FACILITATE ELECTRONIC TICKETING OF ROAD TRAFFIC OFFENDERS, FOR THE EXPANSION OF FIXED PENALTY OFFENCES, THEREBY PROMOTING A GREATER MEASURE OF DISCIPLINE AMONG SOME DRIVERS.

### **TRANSPORTATION POLICY AND PLANNING UNIT**

MR. SPEAKER, CRITICAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF APPROPRIATE LEGISLATION IS THE TRANSPORTATION POLICY AND PLANNING UNIT, WHICH MUST ITSELF BE LEGISLATED AS AN ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT FOR DEVELOPING SOUND TRANSPORTATION POLICY. MR. SPEAKER, THE CHALLENGE WITH ANY LEGISLATION IS ENFORCEMENT. HOWEVER, ENFORCEMENT IS PREDICATED ON REVISED LAWS WHICH MEET THE NEEDS OF A MODERN SOCIETY. AS A RESULT, MY MINISTRY IS RECONSTITUTING THE TRANSPORT POLICY AND PLANNING UNIT (TPPU) FOR THE PURPOSE OF

STRENGTHENING THE POLICY AND PLANNING EFFORTS OF THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT IN RESPECT OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT. IT WILL BE CAPABLE OF NOT ONLY ADDRESSING CURRENT TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, BUT WILL ALSO GUIDE THE LONG-TERM TRANSPORTATION POLICY/PLANNING DECISIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF FUTURE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS.

ITS ASSIGNMENT IS MULTI FACETED, TO CONSIDER PUBLIC AND STUDENT TRANSPORTATION, AND OTHER MODES OF TRANSPORTATION; PROVIDE SOLUTIONS THAT ARE SUSTAINABLE OVER THE LONG-TERM; EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THE TOURISM/ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES OF THE BAHAMAS AND PROVIDE FOR INCORPORATING COMMUNITY VALUES THAT ARE IMPLEMENTABLE WITHOUT MUCH EFFORT.

MR. SPEAKER, IN ADDITION TO THE TPPU, ANOTHER IDB RECOMMENDED AND FUNDED PROJECT IS THE UNIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC BUSING SYSTEM. THIS INITIATIVE IS DESIGNED AS A SIX MONTH PILOT PROJECT,

TO COLLECT STATISTICS ON RIDERSHIP, REVENUE AND ON-TIME SCHEDULE AND BUS DRIVERS' PROFESSIONALISM, WITH A VIEW TO DETERMINING A MODEL FOR AN ISLAND WIDE UNIFIED SYSTEM THEREAFTER. THE DATA COLLECTED WILL BE USED TO INFORM THE LARGER BUS UNIFICATION PLAN THAT WILL SPEAK TO ON-TIME SERVICE, PROFESSIONALISM, AND AN ORDERED AND COORDINATED SYSTEM DESIGNED TO SERVICE ALL RESIDENTS LIVING IN NEW PROVIDENCE. THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (IDB) THROUGH THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS COMMITTED \$500,000 FOR THIS INITIATIVE, SOME OF WHICH HAS BEEN EXPENDED, TO ASSIST WITH THE LAUNCH OF THE PILOT PROJECT FOR SIX MONTHS. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE BAHAMAS IS PRESENTLY CONSIDERING COUNTERPART FUNDING OF \$230,000 FOR THE DAY TO DAY OPERATION OF THE PROJECT. THE MINISTRY IS PARTNERING WITH A GROUP REPRESENTING THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BUS OWNERS TO OPERATIONALIZE AND MANAGE THE PROJECT. A PROJECT MANAGER HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO MANAGE THE PROJECT'S EXECUTION, AND TO COORDINATE THE RELEASE OF FINAL REPORTS FOR A PROPER ANALYSIS OF IT FOLLOWING THE SIX MONTH TERM. MR. SPEAKER, A FORMAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) AND

OPERATIONS AGREEMENT IS IN THE FINAL STAGE OF NEGOTIATION, AND ONCE THIS IS COMPLETED, AND WITH THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT, MY MINISTRY WILL BE ABLE TO PROGRESS TOWARDS THE INITIATION OF THIS LONG OVERDUE PROJECT WHICH HAS HAD BI-PARTISAN SUPPORT FOR MANY YEARS.

MR, SPEAKER, OTHER IMPORTANT INITIATIVES BEING CONSIDERED BY MY MINISTRY FOR IMPLEMENTATION INCLUDE THE OUTSOURCING OF THE VEHICLE INSPECTION SYSTEM, AND THE INCREASE IN TAXI ZONE RATES AS DEEMED APPROPRIATE, I.E. IN INSTANCES WHERE RATES HAVE NOT BEEN INCREASED FOR MANY YEARS, AND WHERE IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED THAT COST OF LIVING INCREASES WARRANT SUCH INCREASES. IN THIS REGARD, IT IS NOTED THAT RATES WERE RECENTLY INCREASED IN NEW PROVIDENCE, AND ARE SHORTLY TO BE INCREASED IN GRAND BAHAMA. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT I ADVISE YOU MR. SPEAKER, THAT A TEAM OF PERSONS FROM MY MINISTRY, AND THE ROAD TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT, AND IN COLLABOARTION WITH THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND AVIATION RECENTLY UNDERTOOK A REVIEW OF RATES IN ABACO AND N. ELEUTHERA, AND ARE ABOUT TO TRAVEL TO S.

ELEUTHERA AND EXUMA TO DETERMINE WHETHER A NEED EXISTS FOR RATE INCREASES IN THOSE COMMUNITIES.

**DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**MR. SPEAKER,**

I TURN NOW TO MATTERS PERTAINING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

**MR. SPEAKER,**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WAS INTRODUCED TO FAMILY ISLAND COMMUNITIES IN 1996 BY AN FNM GOVERNMENT, AND WAS INTENDED TO BRING GOVERNMENT CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE. WE BELIEVED THEN, AND STILL BELIEVE, THAT LOCALLY ELECTED OFFICIALS CAN BETTER UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND TO LOCAL NEEDS. AS STATED IN THE MANUAL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROCEDURES, "THE DEEPENING OF DEMOCRACY IN THE BAHAMAS IS EXPECTED TO BODE WELL FOR FUTURE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. AND THAT IS WHY, MR. SPEAKER, WE WILL SEEK TO STRENGTHEN

THE EXISTING LEGISLATION FOR FAMILY ISLAND DISTRICT COUNCILS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME, INTRODUCE LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO NEW PROVIDENCE IN 2020, AS WE DID FOR THE FAMILY ISLANDS IN 1996.”

**MR. SPEAKER**

NOTWITHSTANDING THE PLEA BY FAMILY ISLAND COUNCILS FOR A GREATER DEGREE OF AUTONOMY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO POSITIVELY IMPACT THESE COMMUNITIES IN SO MANY WAYS.

I HAVE SEEN THIS ON MY VISITS TO A NUMBER OF DISTRICTS DURING THE COURSE OF THIS FISCAL PERIOD. I AM SATISFIED THAT THE LOCAL COUNCILS ARE FULFILLING THE MANDATE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AND THIS IS EVIDENT IN THE AREAS OF:

GENERAL HEALTH AND SANITATION, STREET CLEANING, MAINTENANCE OF ROAD VERGES, COLLECTION AND REMOVAL OF REFUSE FROM PUBLIC PLACES, GENERAL UPKEEP, MAINTENANCE OF MONUMENTS,,,, CEMETERIES, PLAYGROUNDS RECREATIONAL GROUNDS, BEACHES, SPORTS AND CULTURAL CENTERS AND SO MANY OTHER AREAS.

## **SMALL SCALE CAPITAL**

### **MR. SPEAKER**

IN THE 2017/2018 FISCAL PERIOD, WE MADE A DECISION TO PROVIDE DISTRICT COUNCILS WITH FUNDS IN EXCESS OF SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SMALL SCALE CAPITAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES. MR SPEAKER, THESE FUNDS HAVE YIELDED TREMENDOUS BENEFITS THROUGHOUT FAMILY ISLAND COMMUNITIES.

JUST TO GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE, MR SPEAKER, A FEW WEEKS AGO I VISITED CAT ISLAND AND WAS IMPRESSED WITH WHAT THE COUNCIL DID WITH THEIR CAPITAL ALLOCATION: EIGHT (8) BUS STOPS WERE CONSTRUCTED THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT.

FIVE (5) FISH STANDS WERE BUILT FOR THE FISHERMEN OF CAT ISLAND. UNDOUBTEDLY THE COUNCIL IN CAT ISLAND WILL MAKE EQUALLY GOOD USE OF THE \$392,787.00 ALLOCATED TO THEM FOR THE NEW BUDGETARY PERIOD.

**MR SPEAKER**

REPORTS COMING IN FROM THROUGHOUT THE FAMILY ISLANDS, HIGHLIGHT A VARIETY OF PROJECTS COMPLETED BY COUNCILS. THESE INCLUDE:

- CONSTRUCTION OF GUARD RAILS
- REPAIRS AND UPGRADES OF PUBLIC PARKS
- CONSTRUCTION OF SEA RAMPS AND DOCK REPAIRS
- RENOVATION OF SEA WALLS
- GAZEBO CONSTRUCTION
- REPAIRS TO PUBLIC RESTROOMS
- REPAIRS TO BLEACHERS AND BASKETBALL COURTS

AND SO MANY MORE.....

**MR. SPEAKER**

WHILE THE ALLOCATIONS MIGHT SEEM SMALL AND INSIGNIFICANT TO SOME, THE TREMENDOUS IMPACT THESE SMALL SCALE CAPITAL PROJECTS HAVE ON IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THESE FAMILY ISLAND COMMUNITIES CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED.



AND SO MR. SPEAKER, I AM PLEASED TO ADVISE AND ASSURE COUNCILS THAT EACH LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT WILL ONCE AGAIN BE GRANTED FUNDS TO ASSIST WITH FURTHER SMALL SCALE CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN THEIR DISTRICTS, OR COMPLETE PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN IN THE 2017/2018 FISCAL PERIOD. I HASTEN TO ADD, MR. SPEAKER, THAT THIS REPRESENTS A NEW DAY FOR DISTRICT COUNCILS. ONCE AGAIN, THEY ARE BENEFICIARIES OF CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS, OUTSIDE OF THEIR ANNUAL RECURRENT BUDGET. I BELIEVE THAT THIS IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

WHILE I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE FUNDS, IN MANY INSTANCES, WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DO ALL THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE, IT DOES HOWEVER, DEMONSTRATE MY MINISTRY'S COMMITMENT TO WORKING WITH THE COUNCILS IN AN EFFORT TO PROVIDE THEM WITH MORE FUNDING TO DO A LITTLE MORE THAN THEY HAVE BEEN DOING. A NUMBER OF COUNCILORS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION IN THIS REGARD. I NOTE ALSO MR. SPEAKER, THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAS RECEIVED AN APPROXIMATE \$3 MILLION INCREASE IN ITS 2018/2019 BUDGETARY FIGURE, FROM \$23,638,760, TO

\$26,422,767.00. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THIS ADDITIONAL FUNDING IS TO COVER ITEMS WHICH WERE PREVIOUSLY IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE BUDGET. IN THIS REGARD, \$2 MILLION HAS BEEN RECEIVED FOR GASOLINE, \$6,000.00 FOR DIESEL, \$100,000.00 FOR LOCAL TRAVEL, \$20,000.00 FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL, AND \$40,000.00 FOR OFFICE SUPPLIES AND STATIONERY.

IT IS NOTED ALSO THAT AN ADDITIONAL \$400,000.00 PLUS HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOR PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS TO PROVIDE REASSESSMENTS, PROMOTIONS AND ANNUAL INCREMENTS. THE DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW PROVIDENCE**  
MR. SPEAKER, I HAVE MENTIONED BEFORE THAT THE CABINET HAS APPROVED THE APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NEW PROVIDENCE. THE COMMITTEE IS WORKING AND IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE ITS PROGRESS REPORT TO CABINET SOMETIME IN AUGUST, 2018. I AM PLEASED TO REPORT MR. SPEAKER THAT \$100,000.00 HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOR THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE.

MR. SPEAKER, I WISH TO ADVISE THAT I RECENTLY RECEIVED A COMMUNICATION FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM (CLGF), DR. GREG MUNRO, ON THE PROPOSED INTRODUCTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NEW PROVIDENCE. MR SPEAKER, CLGF ENDORSES OUR EFFORTS AND STANDS READY TO SUPPORT THE PROCESS AND TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, CLGF HAS OFFERED TO FEED IN IDEAS AND SHARE THE EXPERIENCES AND LEGISLATION OF OTHER RELEVANT COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT HAVE RECENTLY UNDERGONE REFORM.

MR. SPEAKER, WE WELCOME AND APPRECIATE THIS LEVEL OF SUPPORT FROM CLGF.

MR. SPEAKER, SOME FORM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT WILL BE INTRODUCED IN NEW PROVIDENCE, I ASSURE YOU. WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE DEVOLUTION OF POWER FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND GIVING SUBSTANTIAL AUTHORITY TO LOCALLY ELECTED LEADERS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICTS IN NEW PROVIDENCE.

MR. SPEAKER, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE PEOPLE OF NEW PROVIDENCE ARE READY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND WE AWAIT THE INITIAL REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

MR. SPEAKER, I WISH TO ALSO EMPHASIZE THAT THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL ALSO REVIEW THE EXISTING LEGISLATION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND WILL ADVISE HOW WE CAN FURTHER STRENGTHEN AND EMPOWER FAMILY ISLAND DISTRICT COUNCILS.

#### REGULARIZATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

**MR. SPEAKER,**

DURING THE 2017/2018 FISCAL PERIOD, THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN PROCESSING THE CONFIRMATION OF 264 PERSONS FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT COUNCILS THROUGHOUT THE FAMILY ISLANDS. THESE EMPLOYEES SERVED AT LEAST 10 OR MORE YEARS.

MR SPEAKER, IT IS EXPECTED THAT THESE EMPLOYEES WILL RECEIVE LETTERS OF CONFIRMATION DURING THE COURSE OF THIS FISCAL PERIOD.

THE INTENTION IS NOT ONLY TO HAVE THESE EMPLOYEES CONFIRMED, BUT TO ALSO ASSESS THEIR SALARIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH PUBLIC SERVICE POLICY.

### **ADDITIONAL FAMILY ISLAND ADMINISTRATORS**

**MR. SPEAKER,**

THREE ADDITIONAL FAMILY ISLAND ADMINISTRATORS JOINED THE CADRE OF ADMINISTRATORS TO SUPPLEMENT THE PRESENT CADRE OF ADMINISTRATORS NOW IN POST. THESE THREE (3) NEW RECRUITS ARE ALL SERVING PUBLIC OFFICERS WITH VAST BACKGROUNDS IN LAW, TEACHING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT. THEY ARE EXPECTED TO BE POSTED AND IN PLACE BY THE LAST WEEK OF JUNE 2018. I WELCOME AND WISH THEM SUCCESS IN THIS NEW UNDERTAKING.

MR SPEAKER, THERE IS ALSO A NEED FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO RECRUIT SIX (6) FAMILY ISLAND ADMINISTRATORS

LATER THIS YEAR. SEVERAL OF OUR ADMINISTRATORS WILL BE RETIRING SOON AND REPLACEMENTS ARE REQUIRED.

I WISH TO ALSO AT THIS TIME OFFER MY THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO ALL OF OUR SERVING ADMINISTRATORS AND THEIR STAFF, ALONG WITH OUR CHIEF COUNCLORS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRACTITIONERS.

GASOLINE/INK/SUPPLIES ETC

**MR SPEAKER**

A VEXING PROBLEM THAT EXISTS THROUGHOUT FAMILY ISLAND DISTRICTS IS THE SLOW AND INADEQUATE PROCESS BY WHICH SUPPLIES ARE PROCURED TO EFFECTIVELY RUN FAMILY ISLAND OFFICES. I AM HAPPY TO ADVISE ADMINISTRATORS THAT FUNDS HAVE BEEN PLACED IN THE DEPARTMENT'S BUDGET TO ACCOMMODATE THE PURCHASE OF SUPPLIES SUCH AS GASOLINE, INK, PAPER ETC., IN THE AMOUNT OF \$40,000.00.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT JUNIOR COUNCIL

THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS SERIOUS ABOUT INVESTING IN THE NATION'S YOUTH. WE ARE PLEASED TO CONTINUE TO INVEST IN OUR YOUNG PEOPLE. WE DO SO THROUGH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT JUNIOR COUNCIL PROGRAMME. THIS PROGRAMME AFFORDS YOUNG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP ROLES IN THEIR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES. IN THE LAST EIGHT (8) YEARS, THE PROGRAMME HAS BEEN INCREMENTALLY INTRODUCED TO NINETEEN (19) LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICTS AND TWENTY-THREE (23) SCHOOLS. SINCE ITS INCEPTION, THE PROGRAMME HAS HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON HUNDREDS OF YOUNG PERSONS ON OUR FAMILY ISLANDS. THEY POSSESS A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS IMPORTANCE.

IN THE LAST EIGHT (8) YEARS, SOME OF THE PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN INCLUDED, UPGRADING AREAS SUCH AS HISTORICAL LANDMARKS, COMMUNITY PARKS AND BEACHES CLEAN-UPS, SCHOOL EQUIPMENT DONATIONS, SCHOOL BEAUTIFICATION, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS PAINTED, CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY SETTLEMENTS

SIGNS, TUTORING PROGRAMMES, ASSISTING THE ELDERLY AND LESS FORTUNATE IN COMMUNITY, ETC.

**MR SPEAKER**

WHILE IN CAT ISLAND RECENTLY, I HAD THE HONOUR AND PLEASURE OF OFFICIALLY COMMISSIONING A WONDERFUL BUS STOP/SHED AT THE OLD BIGHT HIGH SCHOOL. THAT IS A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT OF THE JUNIOR COUNCIL.

MR. SPEAKER, THE PROGRAMME WILL CONTINUE.

ADDITIONALLY, MR SPEAKER, THE DISTRICTS OF ACKLINS, CROOKED ISLAND AND MAYAGUANA WILL BE INCLUDED THIS FISCAL YEAR, AND THESE WILL BE THE LAST THREE (3) DISTRICTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME.

**MR SPEAKER**

THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD EXPERIENCE ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL AND PRODUCTIVE YEAR, FINANCIALLY AND OTHERWISE. THE FUNDING PROVIDED FOR THE 2018/2019 BUDGET YEAR CAN



ADEQUATELY ASSIST THE DEPARTMENT WITH MEETING ITS MANDATE GIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT.

## **PORT DEPARTMENT**

### **PORT DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

MR. SPEAKER, UNDER THE BOAT REGISTRATION ACT, CHAPTER 277; THE COMMERCIAL RECREATIONAL WATER CRAFT ACT, CHAPTER 278A; THE PORT AUTHORITIES ACT, CHAPTER 269; THE WATER SKIING AND MOTOR BOAT CONTROL ACT, CHAPTER 278, THE SHIP & PORT SECURITY REGULATIONS, 2016 AND THE SUPREME COURT ACT, CHAPTER 53, THE PORT DEPARTMENT IS GENERALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REGULATION OF ALL MARITIME MATTERS IN THE BAHAMAS, FOR THE OPERATION OF ALL GOVERNMENT PORTS, AND FOR ALL MATTERS RELATIVE TO COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS RELATIVE TO BOTH GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE PORTS. THE PORT CONTROLLER ALSO SERVES AS THE ADMIRALTY MARSHALL FOR THE BAHAMAS.

### **PORT DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP:**

MR. SPEAKER, THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT & LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THE RETIREMENT OF CAPTAIN CYRIL A. ROKER, ACTING PORT CONTROLLER, WHICH WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE ON 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018. THE MINISTRY ALSO RECOGNIZES HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PORT DEPARTMENT FOLLOWING 35 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO THE BAHAMIAN PEOPLE.

ADDITIONALLY, THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT & LOCAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF COMMANDER RAYMOND KING OF THE ROYAL BAHAMAS DEFENCE FORCE AS THE NEXT ACTING PORT CONTROLLER WITH EFFECT FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2018. COMMANDER KING HAS SERVED 31 YEARS IN THE DEFENCE FORCE IN VARIOUS OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITIES THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER.

## **ACTIVITIES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2017/2018**

### ***REVENUE COLLECTION (2017/18)***

1. THE TOTAL REVENUE COLLECTED AT THE PORT DEPARTMENT DURING THE PERIOD 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2017 – 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2018 AMOUNTED TO \$8,224,189.32

***EXPENDITURE SUMMARY (2017/18)***

1. EXPENDITURE INCURRED BY THE PORT DEPARTMENT WAS \$2,323,733.19. THESE FUNDS WERE UTILIZED FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE UPKEEP OF THE VARIOUS PORT FACILITIES THROUGHOUT THE BAHAMAS.
2. AS OF 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY, 2018, THE PORT DEPT. WILL HAVE A BALANCE OF APPROXIMATELY \$2,000,000.00. THIS WILL BE SPENT ON REPAIRS TO THE EXTERIOR OF THE PORT ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, TOWER AND OTHER ANCILLARY WORKS, WHICH WILL INCLUDE REPAIRS TO THE EASTERN SECTION OF FESTIVAL PLACE; AND THE REPAIRS TO THE ROOF OF THE DOCK MASTER'S OFFICE AND WAREHOUSE BUILDINGS, AT POTTER'S CAY DOCK.

**PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS:**

THE NORMAL RECURRENT EXPENDITURE AMOUNTED TO \$2,441,722. THIS AMOUNT WAS ALLOCATED FOR PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS, SUBSISTENCE TRAVEL ALLOWANCE, RENTAL EXPENSES, ADVERTISEMENTS, MAINTENANCE, FEES AND OTHER CHARGES, OPERATION OF FACILITIES, AND CONTRACT DEVELOPMENT.

### **EXPENDITURE COMMITMENTS (2017/18)**

COMMITTED EXPENDITURE TOWARDS THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR (2017/2018) INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

#### ***OUTSOURCED SERVICES:***

1. LEASING OF TWO (2) 50 BOLLARD AZIMUTH STERN DRIVE TUGBOATS (\$1,053,937.50).

#### ***ONGOING INITIATIVES (2017/18)***

1. CONTINUATION OF THE POTTER'S CAY \$2.3M RE-DEVELOPMENT PROJECT WITH THE COMPLETION OF PHASE 1 (98%) WHICH COMPRISED CREATION OF PARKING LOTS, BOARDWALK, ADDITIONAL LIGHTING, AND ENHANCED LANDSCAPING.

2. PHASE 2 OF THE PROJECT WILL INCLUDE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY CHECKPOINTS CONSISTENT WITH INTERNATIONAL PORT SECURITY REQUIREMENTS, SOLAR LIGHT INSTALLATION IN THE PARKING LOTS AND ALONG THE DOCK, CONSTRUCTION OF A FREIGHT DEPOT WITH BATHROOM ACCESS, PASSENGER HOLDING AREA, IMPROVED/INCREASED BATHROOM FACILITIES, INSTALLATION OF CONCRETE BARRIERS, CURBING, SIDEWALKS, ASPHALT PAVING, AND EMERGENCY GENERATOR INSTALLATION.
3. PHASE 3 OF THE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT WILL FOCUS ON THE CAUSEWAY (UPGRADE) WITH EMPHASIS ON CONSTRUCTION OF NEW VENDOR STALLS, ERECTION OF BOARDWALK, EXTENDED SIDEWALK WITH BRICK PAVERS, AND DEDICATED LOADING ZONES.

### **INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN (2017/18)**

1. THIS SERVICE INCLUDES A MANDATORY TOWAGE FEE FOR CRUISE AND CARGO VESSELS FOR NASSAU HARBOUR AND CLIFTON PIER.

2. LEGISLATIVE REVISION/AMENDMENTS TO ENHANCE BOATER SAFETY VIA STRINGENT INSPECTION PROCEDURES, INCLUSION OF SAFETY MANAGEMENT MEASURES, AND COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL SHIP AND PORT FACILITY PROTOCOLS. SUCH MEASURES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- INCLUSION OF COMPONENTS OF THE CARIBBEAN CARGO SHIP SAFETY AND SMALL COMMERCIAL VESSEL CODES (BOAT REGISTRATION REGULATIONS) AND SUBSEQUENT REQUIREMENT OF A LOCAL SAFETY CERTIFICATE FOR DOMESTIC COMMERCIAL VESSELS IN EXCESS OF 100 GROSS TONS.
- CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL CREW RATINGS ONBOARD DOMESTIC COMMERCIAL VESSELS NAMELY SHIPMATES, ENGINEERS, AND DECKHANDS AMONG OTHERS.

**INITIATIVES TO BE PURSUED - 2018/19 FISCAL YEAR**

1. ENFORCEMENT OF REVENUE COLLECTION OF OUTSTANDING FEES FOR PRIVATE DOCKS, GROINS, MOORINGS, PRIVATE VESSELS IN GATED COMMUNITIES, PRIVATE ISLANDS ETC.

2. INCREASING THE RATES FOR PRINCE GEORGE DOCK (CRUISE SHIP WHARF).

a. IN AN EFFORT TO BRING ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PORT FACILITY, THE PORT DEPARTMENT HAS EMBARKED UPON AN AGGRESSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT TO AFFECT THE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS.

b. THIS RE-DEVELOPMENT WILL CONSIST OF THE RESURFACING OF THE PIER, CONSTRUCTION AND BEAUTIFICATION OF THE ENTIRE PORT FACILITY, AND REPAIRS TO THE PORT ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AND A PORTION OF FESTIVAL PLACE. THERE WILL ALSO BE UPGRADES TO THE CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV) SYSTEM, NEW ENERGY EFFICIENT LIGHTING, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF AN ON-LINE BERTHING

SYSTEM, AND A PASSENGER TRANSIT SYSTEM FOR PRINCE GEORGE WHARF.

c. IN LIGHT OF THIS EXERCISE, EFFECTIVE 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY, 2018, THE FOLLOWING FEES WILL TAKE EFFECT:

- i. THE EXISTING PIERAGE RATE WILL INCREASE BY 30% (FROM \$0.18 PER FOOT TO \$0.23 PER FOOT), FOR CRUISE SHIPS BERTHING AT PRINCE GEORGE DOCK.
- ii. THE EXISTING HARBOUR DUES RATES WILL INCREASE BY 10% (FROM \$0.02 PER NET TONNAGE TO \$0.022 PER NET TONNAGE) FOR CRUISE SHIPS BERTHING AT PRINCE GEORGE DOCK.
- iii. A \$1.00 SECURITY TAX WILL BE LEVIED FOR ALL CRUISE PASSENGERS ARRIVING AT PRINCE GEORGE DOCK.
- iv. AN ENVIRONMENTAL TAX OF \$10 PER VEHICLE WILL BE LEVIED FOR ALL SERVICE



VEHICLES (NO FEE FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES) ENTERING PRINCE GEORGE DOCK.

v. THE EXISTING SALE OF WATER WILL INCREASE FROM \$0.015 TO \$0.15 PER GALLON FOR ALL PUBLIC DOCKS

vi. THERE WILL BE AN INCREASE IN THE PIERAGE FEE FOR YACHTS TO \$2.50 PER FOOT FOR BERTHING AT PRINCE GEORGE DOCK.

3. WHILE THE “MANDATORY FEES” WILL TAKE EFFECT ON 1<sup>ST</sup>, JULY, 2018; THE FEES OUTLINED ABOVE WILL NOT TAKE EFFECT UNTIL PRINCE GEORGE WHARF IS RE-SURFACED.

4. THESE FEE INCREASES ARE CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN THE FEES CHARGED AT OTHER CARIBBEAN CRUISE PORTS FOR THESE SERVICES.

**FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF PORT OFFICES IN THE FAMILY ISLANDS 2018/19:**

- THE PORT AREAS IN THE FAMILY ISLANDS CAN NO LONGER BE IGNORED, AND THEY ARE EQUALLY AS IMPORTANT AS NEW PROVIDENCE, ABACO, OR GRAND BAHAMA. THE MARITIME INDUSTRY IN THE BAHAMAS HAS GROWN AND CONTINUES TO GROW, BUT THE PORT DEPARTMENT HAS NOT KEPT PACE WITH THIS CHANGING ENVIRONMENT.
- ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN A GROWTH IN MARITIME ACTIVITIES IN ALL THE FAMILY ISLANDS, THE MAIN REVENUE AREAS ARE *ELEUTHERA*, *SAN SALVADOR*, *LONG ISLAND*, *CAT ISLAND*, *EXUMA*, *BIMINI* AND THE *BERRY ISLANDS*. THESE ISLANDS ACCOMMODATE A GREAT NUMBER PRIVATE AND COMMERCIAL DOCKS AND FOREIGN CHARTER BOATS, AND BECAUSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT ON THE ISLANDS, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF FOREIGN CARGO SHIPS PLYING TO THEIR SHORES WEEKLY. DOCKS ARE BEING BUILT WITHOUT THE PROPER AUTHORIZATION; AND THERE ARE LOCAL BOATS THAT WERE NEVER REGISTERED.
- THE PORT AUTHORITIES ACT, CHAPTER 269 WAS ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONSTITUTION

AND APPOINTMENT OF PORT AUTHORITIES FOR NEW PROVIDENCE AND THE OUT ISLANDS; IT WAS ESTABLISHED SO THAT THE VARIOUS PORTS AND HARBOURS OF THE BAHAMAS THEREIN MAY BE BETTER REGULATED AND CONTROLLED.

- PRESENTLY, THE PORT DEPARTMENT IS MAKING PROGRESS ON ESTABLISHING A PORT OFFICE IN BIMINI, GREAT HARBOUR CAY AND EXUMA AT AN ESTIMATED COST OF \$300,000.00. WHILE IT IS NOTED THAT THERE IS NO FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR THESE PROJECTS AT THIS TIME, IT IS HOPED THAT SOME OF THE SUBSTANTIAL FUNDING TO BE DERIVED FROM NEW AND INCREASED FEES DURING THE BUDGETARY PERIOD CAN BE UTILIZED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THESE ESSENTIAL OFFICES, AS THERE CONTINUE TO BE A NUMBER OF UNREGULATED ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE, AND MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN LOST REVENUE.

**STAFF RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT 2018/2019** - PLANS ARE BEING FORMULATED TO RETAIN THE SERVICES OF TRAINED *PORT OFFICER(S)* ON EACH ISLAND TO CARRY OUT THE FUNCTIONS MANDATED BY

LEGISLATION. UTILIZING THE LOCAL EMPLOYMENT POOL ON THE VARIOUS ISLANDS WILL ELIMINATE THE COST OF HOUSING AND ALLOWANCES. THESE OFFICERS WILL ENSURE THAT THE PROPER PROCEDURES ARE CARRIED OUT, AND THAT REVENUE IS COLLECTED. CROSS-TRAINING IN OTHER AGENCY MATTERS CAN ALSO BE AFFORDED THESE INDIVIDUALS (I.E. FISHERIES), TO MAXIMIZE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS.

#### **DEPARTMENTAL AUTOMATION 2018/19:**

- INTRODUCTION OF ONLINE BERTHING AND VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO PROVIDE REAL-TIME SHIPPING INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO HARBOUR OPERATIONS, ADMINISTRATION, SECURITY AND PORT SCHEDULING.
- INSTALLATION OF PORT MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM TO PROVIDE FOR THE REGISTRATION, PROCESSING, AND MANAGEMENT OF SHIPS WITHIN THE BAHAMAS. ADDITIONALLY, THE SYSTEM WILL INTEGRATE EXISTING FINANCIAL SYSTEMS, PERMIT ACCESS TO PORT APPLICATION FORMS, FACILITATE

ONLINE PAYMENTS, AND LINK SATELLITE PORT OFFICES IN THE MAJOR FAMILY ISLANDS. LIKEWISE, THE CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF A VESSEL REGISTRY.

**PORT FACILITY REPAIRS/UPGRADES 2018/19:**

1. REPAIRS TO NASSAU HARBOUR CONTROL TOWER.
2. GENERAL REPAIRS TO PORT ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AND FESTIVAL PLACE.
3. GENERAL REPAIRS TO DOCK MASTER'S OFFICE, POTTER'S CAY

**NAVIGATIONAL AID REPAIRS AND REMOVAL OF WRECKS  
2018/19:**

1. NAVIGATIONAL AIDS REPAIRS/REPLACEMENT LIGHTS (GREAT BAHAMA BANK).

***RESOURCE ACQUISITION 2018/19:***

1. EQUIPMENT FOR BEACH ENFORCERS (JET SKIS, ATV BEACH PATROL VEHICLES).

2. ASSET REQUIREMENTS – 2 PATROL CRAFT & 10 VEHICLES (ENFORCEMENT OF SAFETY MEASURES AND REVENUE COLLECTION THROUGHOUT COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS). FUNDING REQUIRED FOR THESE EXPENSES WILL BE DERIVED FROM THE \$800,000.00 BUDGETED UNDER OPERATION OF FACILITIES OR OTHER SERVICES.

***BOATING SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS 2018/19:***

1. SAFETY MEASURES (REGULATORY AND LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS). SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS MADE – AMENDMENTS PROPOSED, MOU BETWEEN BAHAMAS MARITIME AUTHORITY AND PORT DEPARTMENT AGREED UPON; STAKEHOLDER’S MEETING PENDING.

**MAIL BOAT TARIFFS**

MR. SPEAKER, IN ORDER TO BRING SOME RELIEF TO THE MAIL BOAT INDUSTRY, WHICH HAS NOT SEEN AN INCREASE IN TARIFFS SINCE 1995; THE TARIFF STRUCTURE IS BEING REVAMPED AND WILL SHORTLY BE PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR CONSIDERATION. ADDITIONALLY, MAIL BOAT OPERATORS HAVE NOT SEEN A RENEWAL OF THEIR CONTRACTS, OR INCREASE IN THE RATES SINCE 2007, AND THIS MATTER IS EXPECTED TO RECEIVE CONSIDERATION AT A LATER DATE. HOWEVER IT IS NOTED THAT A MODERNIZATION OF THIS INDUSTRY IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING A COMMENSURATE IMPROVEMENT IN STANDARDS AS DEEMED NECESSARY.

**DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY**

MR. SPEAKER, I NOW MOVE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY.

MR. SPEAKER, THE BAHAMAS DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY PROVIDES METEOROLOGICAL AND CLIMATOLOGICAL SERVICES TO AVIATION, MARINERS AND

THE GENERAL PUBLIC WITH THE AIM TO ASSIST IN THE SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF LIVES, PROPERTY AND INTERESTS IN THE BAHAMAS.

THE **VISION** OF THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY IS TO ATTAIN THE MAXIMUM LEVEL OF PROFESSIONALISM AND THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY IN PROVIDING USER-ORIENTED METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES AND PRODUCTS.

THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY'S **MISSION** IS TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY METEOROLOGICAL AND CLIMATOLOGICAL INFORMATION ON A TIMELY BASIS TO BE USED BY SPECIAL INTERESTS AND THE PUBLIC AT LARGE FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND TO SAVE LIVES AND PROPERTY.

THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY IS FULLY COMMITTED TO PROVIDING THE MOST ACCURATE AND TIMELY AERONAUTICAL METEOROLOGICAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES UNDER PRESENT TECHNOLOGY TO FULLY MEET THE NEEDS OF ITS CUSTOMERS.



THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY IS FURTHER MANDATED TO CONTINUALLY MONITOR AND IMPROVE ITS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THROUGH A QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WHICH ADHERES TO DEFINED REGULATIONS THAT MEET THE NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS OF STAKE HOLDERS, THROUGH A VERIFICATION OF ITS PRODUCTS.

HOWEVER MR. SPEAKER I MUST DEVIATE A LITTLE TO ADVISE THAT:

AT PRESENT, THERE ARE NO LEGAL INSTRUMENTS IN PLACE TO GUIDE OR TO DICTATE THE OPERATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY.

HOWEVER, **MR SPEAKER**, A DRAFT OF A PROPOSED BAHAMAS DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY BILL IS AT THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR REVIEW. THE REFERENCED BILL WILL SEEK TO ESTABLISH THE BAHAMAS DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY AS THE OFFICIAL AND SINGLE AUTHORITATIVE ENTITY FOR METEOROLOGICAL

SERVICES IN THE BAHAMAS; AND FOR THE BAHAMAS DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY TO PROVIDE METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES, INCLUDING PUBLIC GOOD SERVICES AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES, AS ARE NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES, PROVIDED THAT IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE BAHAMAS.

THE BILL WILL ALSO ALLOW THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY TO CHARGE AND RECEIVE PAYMENT FOR ITS MANY PRODUCTS THAT ARE PRODUCED FROM THE MEASUREMENT AND RECORDING OF METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS AND FROM THE PROCESSED FORM OF THIS DATA THAT IS MAINTAINED IN ITS CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA BASE.

**AND ALSO MR. SPEAKER,** SUCH A BILL WOULD OBVIOUSLY AID THE BAHAMAS DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY TO FULFIL THE INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS WHICH IT AGREED TO UNDER THE CONVENTION OF THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION, AND UNDER

THE CONVENTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION.

**MR. SPEAKER, I THINK WE CAN ALL NOW AGREE THAT: IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH ITS MANDATE, WHICH IT IS REQUIRED TO DO SO TWENTY-FOUR HOURS-A-DAY, SEVEN DAYS-A-WEEK, THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY MUST BE IN POSSESSION OF A RANGE OF RESOURCES, WHICH WOULD INCLUDE: STATE-OF-THE-ART MODERNIZED METEOROLOGICAL AND SUPPORTING TECHNOLOGY, FULLY OPERATIONAL EQUIPMENT, AN AMPLE COMPLIMENT OF TRAINED CERTIFIED STAFF, AND A SUITABLE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT.**

**SO, I WILL MOSTLY HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR THESE IN MY REVIEW OF THE 2018/2019 BUDGET.**

**2018/2019 BUDGET**

**MR. SPEAKER, THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY FOR 2018/2019 IS \$2,958,620.00. THIS AMOUNT, IF APPROVED, WILL BE JUST A \$126,520.00 INCREASE OVER THE 2017/2018 BUDGET FIGURE**

OF \$2,832,100.00.

**THE MAIN FOCUS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY'S 2018/2019 BUDGET ARE:**

**CONTINUATION OF THE DOPPLER WEATHER RADAR AND AIRPORT WEATHER OBSERVING SYSTEM PROJECT**

THE DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO FORGE AHEAD WITH THE \$19,136,110.00 DOPPLER WEATHER RADAR AND AIRPORT WEATHER OBSERVING SYSTEMS PROJECT THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE BAHAMAS ENTERED INTO ON THURSDAY/27/OCTOBER/2016 WITH VAISALA OJY, A FINNISH COMPANY. THIS COMPANY HAS AN OUTSTANDING REPUTATION FOR THE PRODUCTION DOPPLER WEATHER RADARS AND METEOROLOGICAL EQUIPMENT.

THIS PROJECT REMAINS VERY RELEVANT AND NECESSARY AS WE IN THE BAHAMAS HAVE EXPERIENCED THREE DESTRUCTIVE MAJOR HURRICANES IN THREE YEARS: MAJOR HURRICANE JOAQUIN, 2015; MAJOR HURRICANE MATTHEW, 2016; AND MAJOR HURRICANE IRMA, JUST LAST YEAR, 2017.

DOPPLER WEATHER RADARS WOULD ALLOW THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY TO TRACK AND WARN ON HURRICANES BUT THEY WOULD ALSO WARN OF OTHER FORMS OF SEVERE WEATHER SUCH AS, FLOODING, TORNADOES, WATERSPOUTS, LIGHTNING, HAIL, THUNDERSTORMS, AND FOG, WHICH ALSO ARE EXPERIENCED IN THE BAHAMAS.

**THE DOPPLER WEATHER RADAR PART OF THE PROJECT WILL CONSIST OF: FOUR VAISALA WRM200, DUAL POLARIZED C-BAND DOPPLER WEATHER RADARS, WITH RANGES UP TO 250 MILES, CONTRACTED TO BE INSTALLED AT: THE LYNDEN PINDLING INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, NASSAU; THE LENNARD A. KNOWLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, MARSH HARBOUR, ABACO (FORMERLY THE MARSH HARBOUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT); LONG ISLAND; AND MAYAGUANA.**

**MR. SPEAKER, AT PRESENT:**

THE DOPPLER WEATHER RADAR FOR THE LYNDEN PINDLING INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (LPIA) WAS INSTALLED AND HAS BEEN MADE OPERATIONAL SINCE NOVEMBER 2017.

THE DOPPLER WEATHER RADAR FOR THE LENNARD A. KNOWLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ABACO HAS BEEN INSTALLED AT THE MARSH HARBOUR AIRPORT, HOWEVER THE DEPARTMENT AWAITS THE ELECTRICAL POWER CONNECTION BY THE BAHAMAS POWER AND LIGHT BEFORE IT CAN BECOME OPERATIONAL.

THE CONTAINERS FOR THE DOPPLER WEATHER RADAR INSTALLATION FOR LONG ISLAND HAVE BEEN DELIVERED TO ITS PROPOSED SITE IN MIDDLETON'S LONG ISLAND. THE SETUP OF THIS RADAR SHOULD BEGIN IN JULY 2018 AND BE COMPLETED BY NOVEMBER 2018.

AND THE DOPPLER WEATHER RADAR FOR MAYAGUANA IS EXPECTED TO BE DELIVERED TO THE SITE IN OCTOBER 2018

AND THE INSTALLATION TO BE COMPLETED BY JANUARY 2019.

ALSO, VAISALA IS TO REFURBISH THE OLD DOPPLER WEATHER RADAR, WHICH WAS LOCATED AT LPJA, AND INSTALL IT IN RAGGED ISLAND. THE FOUNDATION FOR THIS RADAR HAS BEEN COMPLETED WITH FURTHER CIVIL WORKS TO BE ADDRESSED. HOWEVER, THIS INSTALLATION IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN IN FEBRUARY 2019 AND TO BE COMPLETED BY MAY 2019.

**NOW MR. SPEAKER, CONCERNING THE AIRPORT WEATHER OBSERVING SYSTEMS PART OF THE PROJECT.**

**MR. SPEAKER,** I MUST FIRST ADVISE THAT FOR CATEGORY I, II AND III INSTRUMENT APPROACH AND LANDING OPERATIONS, IT IS REQUIRED BY THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO) THAT AUTOMATED EQUIPMENT FOR MEASURING OR ASSESSING, AND FOR MONITORING AND REMOTE INDICATING OF SURFACE WIND, VISIBILITY, RUNWAY VISUAL RANGE, HEIGHT OF CLOUD BASE, AIR AND DEW-POINT TEMPERATURES AND ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE ARE TO BE INSTALLED TO

SUPPORT APPROACH AND LANDING AND TAKE-OFF OPERATIONS. THESE DEVICES MR. SPEAKER, MUST BE INTEGRATED AUTOMATIC SYSTEMS FOR ACQUISITION, PROCESSING, DISSEMINATION AND DISPLAY IN REAL TIME OF THE METEOROLOGICAL PARAMETERS AFFECTING LANDING AND TAKE-OFF OPERATIONS.

THEREFORE MR. SPEAKER, VAISALA OJY, HAVE BEEN CONTRACTED TO SUPPLY AND INSTALL NINE AIRPORT WEATHER OBSERVING SYSTEMS WHICH MEET THESE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS, AT AIRPORTS IN: NASSAU; FREEPORT, GRAND BAHAMA; TREASURE CAY, ABACO; MARSH HARBOUR, ABACO; NORTH ELEUTHERA; GOVERNOR'S HARBOUR, ELEUTHERA; STELLA MARIS, LONG ISLAND; GEORGE TOWN, EXUMA; AND SAN SALVADOR.

AS AN UPDATE MR. SPEAKER,

THE AIRPORT WEATHER OBSERVING SYSTEM FOR LPIA HAS BEEN INSTALLED AND SHOULD BE MADE OPERATIONAL SHORTLY. VAISALA OJY HAS ALSO TRAINED THE MET STAFF ON THE USE AND OPERATION OF THIS SYSTEM



THE AIRPORT WEATHER OBSERVING SYSTEMS FOR MARSH HARBOUR AND TREASURE CAY, ABACO ARE PRESENTLY BEING INSTALLED AND THEIR INSTALLATION SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY JUNE 2018.

THE CONTAINERS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF THE AIRPORT WEATHER OBSERVING SYSTEM FOR THE GRAND BAHAMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, FREEPORT, GRAND BAHAMA HAVE BEEN DELIVERED TO THE SITE AND WILL BE ASSEMBLED AND INSTALLED BY OCTOBER 2018.

ALL OF THE OTHER INSTALLATIONS OF THE OTHER INSTALLATIONS OF AIRPORT WEATHER OBSERVING SYSTEMS IN NORTH ELEUTHERA; GOVERNOR'S HARBOUR, ELEUTHERA; STELLA MARIS, LONG ISLAND; GEORGE TOWN, EXUMA; AND SAN SALVADOR ARE SCHEDULED TO BE COMPLETED, IN TURN, BY JULY 2019.

SO MR. SPEAKER, SUCH A COMBINATION OF THE LATEST, MOST MODERN, STRATEGICALLY PLACED AIRPORT WEATHER OBSERVING SYSTEMS AND DOPPLER WEATHER RADARS SHOULD PRODUCE MORE TIMELY WARNINGS AND MORE ACCURATE WEATHER FORECASTS, THUS RESULTING IN A GREATLY

IMPROVED BAHAMAS EARLY WARNING WEATHER SYSTEM FOR ALL INTERESTS THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE BAHAMAS.

AND NEXT MR. SPEAKER,

**RENOVATION TO THE UPPER AIR STATION AT LPIA**

THE BAHAMAS DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY HAS AN UPPER AIR STATION, WHICH IS LOCATED AT THE LYNDEN PINDLING INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. AND AS YOU ARE AWARE MR. SPEAKER, FOR OVER FORTY YEARS A BALLOON FILLED WITH HYDROGEN WITH AN ATTACHED RADIO TRANSMITTER HANGING ABOUT EIGHTY FEET BELOW IT, HAS BEEN RELEASED INTO THE ATMOSPHERE FROM THE UPPER AIR STATION. AS THE BALLOON ASCENDS THE MEASUREMENTS OF ALTITUDE, PRESSURE, TEMPERATURE, RELATIVE HUMIDITY, AND WIND SPEED AND DIRECTION ARE TAKEN. MR. SPEAKER, PLEASE BE REMINDED THAT THESE BALLOONS CAN ASCEND TO OVER 20 MILES ABOVE THE EARTH, WITH THE FLIGHT LASTING BETWEEN NINETY AND ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY MINUTES BEFORE THE BALLOON BURSTS. THE RESULTING PROFILE OF THE ATMOSPHERE IS INGESTED INTO (FED INTO) COMPUTER WEATHER MODELS AND METEOROLOGISTS THEN PRODUCE

FORECASTS. ALSO, **MR. SPEAKER**, THESE PROFILES ARE IMPORTANT FOR THE SAFETY OF AVIATION BECAUSE THEY ADVISE ON THE HEIGHT OF THE FREEZING LEVEL (THE HEIGHT AT WHICH AIRFRAME ICING CAN OCCUR.) OF WHICH PILOTS MUST BE AWARE.

WELL **MR. SPEAKER**, THE PLACE WHERE THIS IMPORTANT WORK IS DONE IS IN URGENT NEED OF REPAIR AS CRACKS HAVE DEVELOPED IN THE WALLS, AND THE ROOF IS ROTTING. BUDGETARY PROVISION OF **\$150,000.00** HAS BEEN MADE TO EFFECT THE REPAIRS.

**AND NOW, CONCERNING TRAINING AND RE-TRAINING MR. SPEAKER.**

### **TRAINING AND RE-TRAINING**

**MR. SPEAKER**, WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT THE ENTRY LEVEL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY ARE THREE BGCSES (OF WHICH MATH AND PHYSICS ARE MOST DESIRABLE), THIS REQUIREMENT, IN AND OF ITSELF, DOES NOT MAKE ONE A METEOROLOGICAL FORECASTER OR A METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVER. FURTHER TRAINING AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED TO OBTAIN CERTIFICATION AS MANDATED BY THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION (WMO) AND THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO).

SOME OF THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE: *THE MINIMUM OF THE WMO ENTRY LEVEL METEOROLOGICAL TECHNICIANS' CERTIFICATION CERTIFICATE FOR A METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVER; AND THE MINIMUM OF A BSC DEGREE IN METEOROLOGY WITH THE WMO BASIC INSTRUCTION PACKAGE CERTIFICATION CERTIFICATE OR A RELEVANT BSC DEGREE IN MATHEMATICS, PHYSICS AND OR ENGINEERING FOR A METEOROLOGICAL FORECASTER.* SO, MR. SPEAKER, SINCE METEOROLOGISTS, FORECASTERS OR METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVERS CANNOT BE FOUND IN THE BAHAMAS THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY ATTEMPTS TO FILL THESE POSTS THROUGH TRAINING.

ALSO MR. SPEAKER, METEOROLOGY IS A SCIENCE AND, AS IS COMMON TO SCIENCE, TRAINING AND RE-TRAINING ARE ESSENTIAL, AS NEW THEORIES RESULT FROM THE LATEST RESEARCH AND MORE MODERN AND PRECISE METEOROLOGICAL EQUIPMENT AND INSTRUMENTS ARE DEVELOPED. THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE IS QUITE SENSITIVE EVEN TO SLIGHT CHANGES IN ITS CONSTITUENTS OR COMPONENTS. THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE IS CONTINUALLY BEING MODIFIED BY HUMAN IMPACTS. THEREFORE, THE ATMOSPHERE MUST BE CONSTANTLY STUDIED AND MONITORED. SO, MR. SPEAKER, THE METEOROLOGISTS, AND FORECASTERS AND METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVERS MUST BE MADE AWARE OF THE LATEST RESEARCH AND WEATHER MEASURING AND MONITORING TOOLS AVAILABLE THAT

WOULD ALLOW THEM TO BETTER UNDERSTAND AND FORECAST THE WEATHER.

FURTHER TO THIS THE ELECTRONIC AND ENGINEERING TEAM, THAT SUPPORT THE METEOROLOGISTS AND FORECASTERS, THROUGH THE INSTALLATION, MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF THE METEOROLOGICAL INSTRUMENTS AND EQUIPMENT NEED TO REMAIN COMPETENT AND THIS IS DONE BY TRAINING AND RE-TRAINING ALSO.

THEREFORE, MR. SPEAKER, THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY HAS ESTIMATED THAT \$60,000.00 WOULD BE REQUIRED DURING THE 2018/2019 BUDGET PERIOD.

**MR. SPEAKER,**

**TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE**

THE BAHAMAS IS AN ARCHIPELAGO, OF A 100,000 SQUARE MILE EXPANSE, AND THUS METEOROLOGICAL INSTRUMENTS AND EQUIPMENT MUST BE INSTALLED OVER VAST DISTANCES, AND THEY MUST ALSO BE MAINTAINED AND SERVICED. SO ALONG WITH THE TRAVEL BY THE DEPARTMENT'S OFFICERS OVERSEAS IT IS ESTIMATED THAT \$70,000.00 BE BUDGETED FOR TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE DURING THE 2018/2019 BUDGET PERIOD.

AND LASTLY MR. SPEAKER,

## **PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS**

PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS HAVE BEEN ESTIMATED TO BE \$2,490,000.00. THIS WORKS OUT AS JUST OVER 84% OF THE TOTAL \$2,958,620.00 2018/2019 BUDGET ESTIMATE.

## **DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY - PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS**

### **HIRING**

THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY (DOM) CONTINUES TO EXPERIENCE A CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER IN THE METEOROLOGICAL (MET) FORECASTER, OBSERVER AND ELECTRONICS RANKS, WHICH RESULTS IN THESE OFFICERS HAVING TO WORK EXTENDED PERIODS AND TO BE GIVEN LIMITED PERIODS OF LEAVE; PUTTING A TREMENDOUS STRAIN ON THEM. THIS IS EVIDENT IN BOTH OF THE DEPARTMENT'S FORECAST OFFICES: NEW PROVIDENCE AND GRAND BAHAMA. TO THIS END THE DEPARTMENT PROPOSES TO CONTINUE ITS HIRING EFFORTS OF PERSONS WITH BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREES IN METEOROLOGY, ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCE, ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE OR RELATED SCIENCES (MATHEMATICS, PHYSICS, CHEMISTRY, ETC.), WHICH WILL ALLOW THEM TO BE TRAINED AS MET FORECASTERS IN THE SHORTEST TIME POSSIBLE. THE DOM

WITH FIRST SEEK TO RECRUIT OFFICERS FROM WITHIN THE PUBLIC SERVICE TO FILL REQUIRED POSITIONS, FOR OFFICES IN NEW PROVIDENCE AND GRAND BAHAMA, AND WILL THEREFORE BE ADVERTISING FOR THESE POSTS SHORTLY.

THE POPULATION OF THE GRAND BAHAMA OFFICE IS PRIORITY ONE FOR DOM, AS THIS FORECAST OFFICE IS SEVERELY UNDERSTAFFED AND THE STAFF MEMBERS THERE ARE IN DIRE NEED OF IMMEDIATE RELIEF. CURRENTLY THERE ARE ONLY THREE (3) METEOROLOGISTS WORKING IN THE GRAND BAHAMA FORECAST OFFICE, WHICH OPERATES FROM 7AM TO 7PM DAILY. THESE COMMITTED OFFICERS WORK SIX (6) DAY WEEKS AND HAVE BEEN WORKING UNDER THESE CONDITIONS SINCE AUGUST 2016. THEY ARE UNABLE TO TAKE ANY LEAVE, AS DOING SO WOULD SERIOUSLY COMPROMISE THE OPERATIONS OF THIS OFFICE. THE DEPARTMENT HAS FORMULATED A SHORT TERM SOLUTION TO ITS MANPOWER ISSUE. BUT THIS TOO WILL STRETCH THE RESOURCES IN NEW PROVIDENCE THIN. THEREFORE, THE PROPOSED LONG TERM SOLUTION, AND MOST PRACTICABLE SOLUTION, FOR THE DEPARTMENT IS TO HIRE AN ADDITIONAL FIVE (5) PERSONS, WITH BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREES (EG. METEOROLOGY, ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS,

PHYSICS, CHEMISTRY) WHO ARE DOMICILED IN GRAND BAHAMA TO SUPPLEMENT THE CURRENT STAFF.

### ALLOWANCES

THE DEPARTMENT IS DILIGENTLY SEEKING APPROVAL FOR A TEMPORARY SOLUTION TO PROVIDE RELIEF TO ITS COMMITTED HARDWORKING MET FORECASTERS, IN ITS FREEPORT FORECAST OFFICE. THESE OPERATIONS ARE RUNNING ON A SKELETAL NUMBER OF TRAINED MET FORECASTER PERSONNEL. HENCE, DOM'S SUBMISSION FOR ALLOWANCES TO FACILITATE POSTING OF TWO (2) MET FORECASTERS TO FREEPORT, UNTIL THE REQUISITE TRAINED PERSONNEL ARE OBTAINED. DOM WILL RECEIVE DISTURBANCE AND ALLOWANCES, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$15,000.00, TO DEFRAY THE COST OF EXPENSES TO REDEPLOY OFFICERS TO GRAND BAHAMA TO RELIEVE THEIR GRAND BAHAMA COLLEAGUES, ALLOWING THEM TO TAKE MUCH NEEDED VACATION TIME.

### UPGRADING OF CAREER PATH AND POST QUALIFICATIONS

DOM IS MANDATED TO ADHERE TO THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO) AND THE WORLD



METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION (WMO) MANDATE FOR ALL MET FORECASTERS PROVIDING METEOROLOGICAL AVIATION SERVICES TO BE QUALIFIED TO AT LEAST A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (BSC) DEGREE IN METEOROLOGY, WITH CERTIFICATION IN THE BASIC INSTRUCTION PACKAGE FOR METEOROLOGICAL TECHNICIANS (BIP-MT) OR A BSC. DEGREE IN AN ACCEPTED SCIENCE, AND CERTIFIED IN THE SENIOR-LEVEL METEOROLOGICAL TECHNICIANS' COURSE (SLMTC). THIS REQUIREMENT BECAME EFFECTIVE IN NOVEMBER 2016. THEREFORE, IT IS COMPULSORY FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO UPGRADE ITS QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR MET OFFICERS TO REMAIN IN ACCORD WITH ICAO AND THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION'S (WMO'S) NEW QUALIFICATION MANDATE FOR QUALIFIED METEOROLOGICAL FORECASTERS AND OBSERVERS. THERE ARE INSUFFICIENT CERTIFIED METEOROLOGISTS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT WHO MEET THIS CRITERION. HENCE, IT IS NECESSARY THAT STAFF MEMBERS WITHOUT THE MANDATORY QUALIFICATIONS OBTAIN THEM, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. TO THIS END, IT IS NECESSARY FOR DOM TO AMEND IS CURRENT CAREER PATH AND ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS, TO ALIGN WITH ICAO AND WMO EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATION DECREE. DOM INTENDS TO COMPLETE THIS PROCESS DURING THE 2018/2019 TERM.

## TRAINING

THE DEPARTMENT COMPLETED THE BULK OF TRAINING FOR THE NEWLY RECRUITED MET PERSONNEL DURING THE 2017/2018 BUDGET PERIOD. THIS WAS NECESSARY TO REMAIN IN HARMONY WITH WMO AND ICAO, WHICH GLOBALLY REQUIRE THAT MET PERSONNEL ARE SUITABLY QUALIFIED AND CERTIFIED FOR THE TASKS THEY PERFORM, PRIMARILY FOR AVIATION PURPOSES. DURING THIS 2018/2019 BUDGET DOM WILL RECEIVE \$60,000 IN ITS TRAINING BUDGET, TO CONTINUE PREPARING ITS PERSONNEL AND KEEPING THEM CURRENT TO PERFORM THEIR DAY-TO-DAY TASKS AND IN ACCORD WITH THE MANDATES SET BY ICAO AND WMO, EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 2016.

DOM CONTINUES TO EXPERIENCE THE SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER IN THE FORECASTER RANKS. FURTHERMORE, IN THE NEXT THREE (3) TO SEVEN (7) YEARS, DOM WILL LOSE SIX (6) CERTIFIED METEOROLOGISTS, WHO ARE SCHEDULED TO EXIT THE PUBLIC SERVICE DUE TO MANDATORY AGE RETIREMENT. THEREBY, THE 5 MET OFFICERS PURSUING BSC. DEGREES, WHO ARE EXPECTED TO COMPLETE THEIR CERTIFICATIONS WITHIN THE NEXT 1 TO 4 YEARS, WOULD ONLY REPLACE THE CERTIFIED METEOROLOGISTS LOST AND THEREFORE, ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING.

OTHERWISE, THERE WILL BE A SHORTAGE OF CERTIFIED METEOROLOGISTS IN THE DEPARTMENT TO PREPARE AVIATION FORECASTS FOR THE LYNDEN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (LPIA), AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS THROUGHOUT THE BAHAMAS. THIS COULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE STANDARDS AND RATINGS OF THE LPIA. HENCE, THE DEPARTMENT'S STRONG FOCUS TO HAVE THEIR METEOROLOGICAL OFFICERS, BECOME CERTIFIED.

### **OVERTIME**

AS THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY CONTINUES TO EXPERIENCE A SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT SUFFICIENT FUNDING BE PROVIDED TO COMPENSATE ITS DEDICATED AND HARDWORKING PERSONNEL FOR THEIR EXTENDED HOURS OF WORK, IN NEW PROVIDENCE AND GRAND BAHAMA. ACCORDINGLY, THE DOM WILL RECEIVE FUNDING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$20,000 TO FINANCE PAYMENTS OF OVERTIME FOR STAFF.

### **BAHAMAS MARITIME AUTHORITY**

MR. SPEAKER, I TURN NOW TO THE BAHAMAS MARITIME AUTHORITY A DEFINITE BAHAMIAN SUCCESS STORY. THE BMA REMAINS A HIGHLY REGARDED

NATIONAL SHIPPING REGISTER COMMITTED TO THE EMPOWERMENT OF BAHAMAINS, AS EVIDENCED BY ITS RECENT FIRST MARITIME WEEK. THIS YEAR, MR. PETER JOHN GOULANDRIS WAS HONORED FOR HIS OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT AND RUNNING OF THE BMA, AND FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO ITS SUCCESS. DURING THIS BUDGETARY PERIOD, THE BMA WILL EXPEND OVER \$2.5 MILLION FOR PROJECTS AND INVESTMENTS, AND WILL REMIT \$4.5 MILLION TO THE BAHAMAS TREASURY.

AS THE LARGEST FLAG FOR PASSENGER SHIPS, THE BMA CONTINUES TO WORK HARD TO RETAIN ITS MARKET SHARE, AND TO FACILITATE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES BY PROMOTING A BROADER BAHAMAS OFFERING. IT CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH CRUISE LINE OWNERS AND THE CRUISE LINE INDUSTRY GROUP, AND WITH THE BAHAMAS' CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES, AND SHIPBUILDERS, IN ORDER TO GROW THE REGISTRY AND TO MAINTAIN ITS COMPETENCE AND CAPACITY.

MR. SPEAKER, GREECE AND JAPAN REMAIN THE TWO LARGEST SHIPOWNING COUNTRIES GLOBALLY, AND THE BMA IS INCREASING ITS PRESENCE IN BOTH OF THESE

COUNTRIES, AS EVIDENCED BY THE BAHAMIAN DELEGATION'S RECENT RETURN FROM THE POSIDONIA SHIPPING CONFERENCE IN GREECE, AND THE OPENING OF A DEDICATED BMA OFFICE IN TOKYO, JAPAN, WITHIN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE FISCAL YEAR. AS REGARDS GREECE, THE BMA CONTINUES TO STRENGTHEN ITS CAPACITY IN THAT COUNTRY, AND TO COOPERATE NOT ONLY WITH ITS SHIPOWNERS, BUT ALSO WITH THE UNION OF GREEK SHIPOWNERS, AND WITH THE BROADER GREEK MARITIME SECTOR, TO CREATE FURTHER BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES.

THE BMA TOKYO OFFICE WILL PROVIDE FULL SERVICES TO THE JAPANESE MARKET, AND COMPLEMENT THE EXISTING HONG KONG OFFICE IN RELATION TO THE BROADER ASIAN MARKET.

MR. SPEAKER, AS THE HOME FLAG FOR A SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATE, THIS YEAR THE BMA WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY REGULATIONS, WHILE ENDORSING A GOAL BASED APPROACH FOR COMPLIANCE. IT REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO), AND WILL CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE

FOR REGULATIONS THAT ARE EFFECTIVE AND PRACTICAL IN RELATION TO THEIR IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT. DURING THE NEW BUDGETARY PERIOD, THE BMA WILL:

- CAPITALISE ON TECHNICAL OFFERINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN THE MARITIME CAPACITY AND WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT NATIONAL INITIATIVES AIMED AT INCREASING THE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BAHAMIANS TO ENTER THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY.
- CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND WORK WITH THE PORT DEPARTMENT TO STRENGTHEN THE BAHAMAS' NATIONAL CAPACITY AND IMPROVE THE STANDARDS OF HOME TRADE SHIPS.
- CONTINUE ITS COOPERATION AND COLABORATION WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE BAHAMAS' LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK REMAINS ALIGNED TO REFLECT THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF SHIPPING, AND THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY PROCESS. THIS YEAR, THE BMA'S MAJOR LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVE IS THE AMENDMENT OF THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT.
- THE BMA WILL ALSO REMAIN COMMITTED TO THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARTIME ORGANIZATION

(IMO), AND WILL CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE FOR INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS AS OPPOSED TO UNILATERAL REQUIREMENTS, RECOGNISING THE GLOBAL NATURE OF SHIPPING. THE AUTHORITY WILL ALSO ADVOCATE FOR REGULATIONS THAT ARE EFFECTIVE AND PRACTICAL IN RELATION TO THEIR IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT.

MR. SPEAKER, AS I CONCLUDE MY REMARKS ON MY MINISTRY'S 2018/2019 BUDGET, I WISH TO ONCE AGAIN THANK THE PEOPLE OF THE BAHAMAS, THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN SHORES, AND THE PRIME MINISTER, FOR PERMITTING ME TO MAKE MY CONTRIBUTION TO OUR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. I WISH TO THANK ALL OF THE STAFF OF THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT & LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND ALL ITS DEPARTMENTS AND AFFILIATED ENTITIES, NAMELY THE POST OFFICE DEPT., THE ROAD TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, THE PORT DEPARTMENT, THE BAHAMAS MARITIME AUTHORITY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY, FOR ALL THEIR HARD WORK THIS PAST BUDGETARY PERIOD. WITHOUT YOU, I CAN DO NOTHING. I ALSO WISH TO COMMEND THE WORK OF THE VARIOUS BOARDS, NAMELY THE BMA BOARD, THE ROAD TRAFFIC AUTHORITY, THE CABS BOARD, THE NATIONAL MARITIME

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE, THE PORT BOARD, THE DISTRICT COUNCILS AND TOWN COMMITTEES, THE STATUTORY BOARDS, AND MOST RECENTLY THE COMMITTEE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO NEW PROVIDENCE. YOU HAVE ALL SHOWN YOUR COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVING THE GOALS ESTABLISHED BY THIS GOVERNMENT, AND ON BEHALF OF A GRATEFUL NATION, I SAY THANK YOU. AND NOW I WISH YOU ALL A VERY PLEASANT AFTERNOON, AND A SAFE, BLESSED AND FRUITFUL WEEK.