Minnis Stands Firm After Meeting Trump

The Bahamas was one of the targets of derision by many leaders of the Caribbean this past weekend, following a meeting between Prime Minister Hubert Minnis, three other Caribbean leaders and US President Donald Trump in Florida.

The brunt of the criticism came from the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Keith Rowley. The President of The Bahamas, His Excellency, the Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis, yesterday indicated that they are standing together in their fight against gun violence.

The Union of Teachers (BUT) President, Belinda Wilson, yesterday indicated that they are standing together in their fight against gun violence. The Union is demanding negotiations for the Union's new industrial agreement begin, adding that the Ministry of Education fails to communicate. The Ministry of Education has failed to communicate with the BUT on the issue of gun violence.

BPL INVESTIGATES FAKE ENERGY SAVING DEVICES

By Leah Cooper

The Bahamas Power and Light Company (BPL) yesterday indicated that they are investigating “whether and to what extent” its clients have employed alleged fake energy saving devices to lower their electricity bills. The Union of Teachers (BUT) President, Belinda Wilson, yesterday indicated that they are standing together in their fight against gun violence.

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ACDelco SYNTHEtic BLEND MOTOR Oil is formulated to Improve fuel economy, engine protection and provide the performance modern engines need. ACDelco dexos synthetic blend has excellent wear protection and outstanding resistance to thermal breakdown at operating temperature.

NURSES AND GOV’T AT IMPASSE

By Lisa McAllister

The President of The Bahamas Nurses Union, Amanda Williams, last Friday said that the Union and the Princess Margaret Hospital are at an impasse in their negotiations with the government. The Union indicated that it was not satisfied with the shift system that was expected to be implemented on December 19th, 2018. The new shift system would have established a 48-hour work week and an 8-day daily shift, as opposed to the current 10-hour shift for Night Duty Nurses.

Teachers Union Demands Talks

By Leah Cooper

The Bahamian Union of Teachers (BUT) President, Belinda Wilson, is demanding a meeting with Educational Officials as she said the BUT is still in negotiations. This past weekend, the BUT president promised that today, Educational Officials will be sent a letter demanding that talks for the Union’s new industrial agreement begin, adding that the Ministry of Education fails to communicate.

Bishops Want Action On Guns

By Leah Cooper

A group of local bishops yesterday indicated that they are standing together in their fight against gun violence. In a press release, the group consisting of Bishops Simon Hall, Victor Cooper, Greg Minnis, J. Carl Rahming, and Russ Davis, said that most of the senseless killings in recent times are being committed by persons illegally in possession of guns.

Since guns are not manufactured in The Bahamas, the group suggested that those found illegally importing guns should face the “strictest possible penalty.”

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Additional confirmed cases that have been reported by the AF Addleary and the Government High schools are beggining for some type of protocol they are currently dealing with such matters.

According to Bahamas Union of Teachers President Belinda Wilson there is the need for this, continue with the AF Addleary and the Government High schools are beggining for some type of protocol they are currently dealing with such matters.

He said, "I am moving forward with the protocol, they will be put in place in order to prevent the spread of this disease, then it is that if the election is delayed, they will take the matters that we are dealing with..." Wilson also said that the protocol will be put in place on how it is that if the election is delayed, they will take the matters that we are dealing with..." Wilson also said that the protocol will be put in place on how it is that if the election is delayed, they will take the matters that we are dealing with..." Wilson also said that the protocol will be put in place on how it is that if the election is delayed, they will take the matters that we are dealing with..." Wilson also said that the protocol will be put in place on how it is that if the election is delayed, they will take the matters that we are dealing with..." 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Governor General inspected the Guards at HMBS Coral Harbour

Her Excellency the Most Hon. Dame Marguerite Pindling bestowed remarks and inspected the guards during the Royal Bahamas Defence Force Governor General's Divisions Ceremony at HMBS Coral Harbour on Thursday, March 21, 2019. The occasion is a military tradition that allows the Governor General as the Commander-in-Chief to meet, inspect and address her troops on parade in ceremonial fashion. (BIS Photos/Letisha Henderson)

Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis this past weekend fought off claims from the Opposition that his frequent trips to the Family Islands is campaigning on the public’s purse. Dr. Minnis told reporters his visits to the Family Islands are in keeping with a campaign promise.

He said, “when we came in, I made a solemn commitment to the Bahamian populace that when there are national events, or any matters that are of concern to The Bahamas, we are not Nassau-centric.”

“it’s essential that the Family Islands know too, and I will go through the various islands explain- ing those particular national issues, how we came to those decisions, how we spend their money, etc.,” he added.

Adding to his case, the Prime Minister reasoned that many think when he speaks in the capital, all the family islands are tuned in, but that is not the case.

He said, “when you go there, you’d be surprised that they don’t have the proper communication. You’d be surprised that Cable Bahamas is not shown in that particular area or settlement, or on that island or that they don’t have ZNS.”

He added, “so, going through, they are more than happy to welcome their Prime Minister who comes through and is showing an interest and explaining what is hap- pening throughout The Bahamas.”

The Prime Minister also indicated that he will continue with these trips and added that the Opposition is simply not accustomed to doing such tasks.

“Now when it comes to election, whenever we call election, we will see what campaigning’s all about,” he said.

Dr. Minnis’ comments came during a press briefing following his return to the capital Saturday after a meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump in Palm Beach, Florida.

The leaders of Haiti, the Dominican Republic, St Lucia and Jamaica were also invited.

BY LEAH COOPER
Journal Staff Writer

Bishops Want Action On Guns

Continued from / PAGE 1...

They added that guns are too easily available to “criminals, gang members, and others involved in nefarious activi- ties.”

The group also called on National Security Minister Marvin Dames to “lead the war on guns by leading efforts to amend relevant legisla- tion which would significantly increase the present penalty for the illegal gun possession.”

They further encour- aged concerned and responsible parents to “play an active role in this war by deciding to not harbor children engaged in criminality or benefit from their criminal activities.”

The group also said that efforts to drastically reduce crime “must be led by the government,” but they also urged every Bahamian citizen and resident to partici- pate in this war.
BPL INVESTIGATES FAKE ENERGY SAVING DEVICES

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Teachers Union Demands Talks

As for now, the Union President says they have other issues to tend to: Speaking on the sidelines of the National Tripartite Council General Assembly, Union President Mr. Williams said, “we are now in a state where we are trying to retain and recruit nurses. We have a shortage of nurses presently in the Public Hospitals Authority, specifically the Princess Margaret Hospital, to run at a deficit. We’ve had issues such as overtime not being paid, rather said, it has been said that overtime is not going to be paid, which causes an imbalance in the Healthcare System. Overtime is to be paid in a timely fashion.”

“We realise we want to keep our Bahamian Nurses in the Bahamas, not have them go to Canada or the United States, so we haven’t reached a challenge, because we have no money, but the question to our government is, if we want to recruit foreign workers, where are you going to find the money, if you cannot pay overtime to the Bahamian Nurses that are presently employed?”

Mr. Jullian Mullings, Secretary General of the Union said, “what the BNUnsaid has from the very beginning is that there is a process that is involved and the BNU would like the government to follow the process that the IRA and the Industrial Agreement, that is all we are asking, is to respect the documents that were agreed upon, you cannot respect the process that we agreed upon, how can you trust to apply in an unbiased manner.”

“The Public Hospital Authority attitude right now, we have never seen it like this before, and the BNU has dismissed the presence of the Union in the negotiations. We do not want to meet with persons who cannot make decisions, for the betterment of both parties. Apply the process in an unbiased manner”, he added.

“There is a shortage of nurses worldwide, also including the Bahamas. There is overcrowding in the Public Hospitals Authority, and the Princess Margaret, in particular,” Mr. Mullings said. He also said that the hospital has a very large border population. “We do not have bed space to take care of the patients, who need to be in hospital.”

A strategy must be in place to reduce that bed shortage, to repair the bed units on a timely basis at the Princess Margaret Hospital.

“The Medical Surgical Ward has been out of commission for 5 years, and that is space that can be utilized. The bed units need to be repaired in a timely manner,” he said.

The Union President said “improve the motivation factor, for the employees as well, in particular the Nurses.” “Accident and Emergency needs to be adequately running, to have 15 nurses per shift.”
Day 2 – With a positive mind, I arrived at the Passport office just after 7am the following day to find that the crowd was already forming. There was a gentleman in charge of the ‘in’ sign and list who had to keep them in order (he was also up to the 90s). Apparently (and I stand to be corrected) the system is set in stone. I had a selected customer waiting on the outside by their office (a security staff – that shows some initiative)

At 7.30am the member came out on the outside to explain the procedure to the crowd, i.e. the overflow from yesterday would be seen first, followed by yesterday’s 9am, before 2pm, and directing everyone to cubicle 6 which indicated the date I should return at a date and time convenient for them – too bad, too sad! Is this customer service?

As we continued to sit, the service was not at all prompt, and the numbers changing rapidly from D5 to 11 and directing everyone to cubicle 6 which was supposed to be taken to the window on the other side of the room for payment. A general announcement then came over the PA system that there was a shortage of change, and money was needed to line up for service. This, however, resulted in no change, and as the doors would not open as well as the defence force officer who appeared to be working to prevent people from blocking the area and to return to our seats, still without providing any explanation of what was actually going on.

As we continued to sit, the service, cubicle staff members and number D1. The letter ‘D’ is apparently for remote.

Eventually we were called by rows to see a sign, we were shown our passport and in a partition with N1 card, were given a slip of paper (with no explanation of what it was for), but sat back down to wait, and wait as the service counter seats remained empty, with the doors closed, and when they started to fill up, the door was opened to allow an empty cabinet on the wall outside should be considered.

b) There is certainly no reason why persons should be standing up on the outside in such a lapsed manner. The current benches are a disgrace, and should be replaced by chairs that are cushioned, with those inside, placed and bolted to the ground in an easy way to seat and avoid the sitting in south in order to accommodate more people under the awning. Several chairs can also be placed facing west in front of the a/c units to the south of the desk. Several chairs should also be designated for senior citizens.

c) The Bahamian public is grateful for the facilities provided by the Passport office. I feel that the Bahamian populace has made great strides during the hotter summer months and rainy season, therefore an additional awning that is erected outside for protection from the sun and rain. I expect that the family or friend accompanying a minor, or were an adult tagging along with your family or friend to hog up a seat in comfort and soak up the sun while waiting?

The Bahamian passport office seems to be ‘cooking with gas’ these days. The queue at that area to make our way to that area to line up for service. This, however, resulted in no change, and the numbers changing rapidly from D5 to 11 and directing everyone to cubicle 6 which was supposed to be taken to the window on the other side of the room for payment. A general announcement then came over the PA system that there was a shortage of change, and money was needed to line up for service. This, however, resulted in no change, and as the doors would not open as well as the defence force officer who appeared to be working to prevent people from blocking the area and to return to our seats, still without providing any explanation of what was actually going on.

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The Bahamas Union of Teacher President Belinda Wilson said she is wondering when negotiations between the union and Ministry of Education will begin.

Her comments come just a few weeks after Education Minister Jeffrey Lloyd told reporters outside cabinet negotiations had begun.

Sounding off on the issue, Mrs. Wilson said that a lot of times Ministers would present information that is not correct.

“The Bahamas Union of Teachers presented an agreement to the government of The Bahamas through the Ministry of Education on June 20th, 2018. “To date, I do not have a counter proposal. I do not have any information from education as to who are the members of their team and we do not have a counter proposal.”

However, “I can promise you that they will get a letter by Monday and will be given seven days to come to the table,” she said. “The Union’s trade agreement expired on June 30th 2018. If the Ministry does not come to the table within the seven days, then it will be indicated in the letter. Mrs. Wilson said they will have to file a trade dispute.”

“It’s sickening that we cannot follow the policies on the laws that are presently in place and what is even worse is when education or the government does not communicate with you,” she said.

The Union’s trade agreement expired on June 30th 2018. If the Ministry does not come to the table within the seven days, then it will be indicated in the letter. Mrs. Wilson said they will have to file a trade dispute.

But’s Givens Ministry Seven Days For Counter Proposal

The Bahamas Australian & Industrial Farmers’ Association (BAIC) says it is pleased to hold a Mega Market, Saturday, March 23, 2019 on Gladstone Road in honour of the corporation’s 25th anniversary.

Chairman, Bishop Gregory Collie announced the corporation’s headquarters on Friday.

The chairman also announced the corporation’s partnership with the Ministry of the Environment and Housing to help prepare the country for the elimination of single-use plastics and Styrofoam containers for food and beverages, by 2020 – adding that some of the items that will be banned in two years will be shopping baskets, straws, utensils and Styrofoam containers.

The only way to accomplish this is if we can encourage younger persons to get into the business of farming. More farmers means more jobs.

He added: “The gains for farmers have been exceptional and we look forward to farmer’s markets popping up all over the country as they have begun in Long Island, Grand Bahama, and Eleuthera.”

PM Says He Has Confidence In Top COP

In the face of heavy public criticism after five high ranking officers of the Royal Bahamas Police Force were added to a list of officers who previously received letters that demanded they take vacation, the Prime Minister, Dr. Hubert Minnis said he has full confidence in Commissioner of Police Anthony Ferguson.

“We have a very astute, organized Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner will not do anything to endanger the lives of [the] safety of The Bahamas. “Just as I have confidence in the commissions and individuals off on vacation, you should have confidence.”

“He and his team have already cut crime down dramatically. In the inner city alone, murder has decreased by 40 percent, when we look at the rates. Armed robbery has decreased by 24 percent. So if I trust him, and the Bahamian people trust him, I would hope that the press do.”

When asked by reporters, following his trip to Mar-a-largo, about individuals off on vacation? They were asked to take vacation. What’s wrong with that? Dr. Minnis reiterated his confidence in the policies, and efforts initiated a policy, and the police, by 40 percent, when we look across the board in the service.

“We are not saying it’s against the police. Let’s get me wrong. I don’t get me wrong. I don’t have any information are the members of their team and we do not have a counter proposal.”

So, write to us and say what happen with that. We don’t need to speak forw ard to farm er’s m arket, which w ill be open for extended hours from 8:00 a.m . to 10:00 p.m.

“B AIC  looks forw ard to m ake an appearance at farm ets popping up all over the country as they have begun in Long Island, Grand Bahama, and Eleuthera.”

The Bahamas Agricultural & Industrial Farmers’ Association (BAIC) announced Saturday’s ‘Mega Market’ and partnership with MOE&H to eliminate single-use plastics.

The B AIC  looks forw ard to farmers having been exceptional and we look forward to farmer’s markets popping up all over the country as they have begun in Long Island, Grand Bahama, and Eleuthera.”

“The police force is running very well, the Commissioner will decide who needs to take vacation.”

He further noted that this action, of sending pur-
Minister of Tourism and Aviation, the Honourable Dionisio D’Aguilar, Wednesday challenged members of the Tourism industry to “continuous- ly improve their processes.”

“...In our tourism endeavour, we are guided by a powerful mantra: ‘It’s Better in The Bahamas.’ This, however, while demonstrating that any improvement in the productivity of any particular system is, aspires, up-seling, each of us to do our part, the benefits of which will be experienced by the customer, and other parties, the customer’s benefit. If you see and we see – what good will come of that? Let’s work together to find positive solutions for our operations and for the customer. We cannot allow for the customer’s experience to be less than what it should be on The Bahamas. A good tourism experience is not something that can be achieved in a day or a week. It takes time and effort, and the team at The Bahamas Tourism and Aviation is working tirelessly to ensure that we continue to improve the tourism product on a regular basis.”

Minister D’Aguilar’s comments came during a Press Conference on Wednesday, March 20, 2019, where she announced Tourism’s record-breaking performance for 2018. Mr. D’Aguilar said all indicators project that the upward trend will continue through 2019. He applauded the entire Tourism Team for its role in collectively fighting the trend and recording a record-breaking 2018. “This is a team effort. Ours is an all-inclusive programme that includes me, the Minister of Tourism, and our tourism team throughout The Bahamas and overseas, our promotion boards, our hotels, large and small, our contract- ed marketing and advertising agencies, cruise operators, airlines, our network of travel pro- fessionals, every local tourism board, each and every Bahamian who works in the industry, to ensure the length and breadth of The Bahamas are represented and marketed. As the CEO leading the tourism enterprise, it gives me great pleasure and pride this afternoon to report that the 2018 collective effort has yielded results that are truly remarkable. One of the most eye-catching statistics is that the number of tourists is up by 16.9%. All indicators project that this trend will continue through- out 2019. It will take all of us, united in effort and purpose, to maintain the growth in tourism that we have achieved over the past 12 months.

Minister D’Aguilar said the industry’s record-breaking performance in foreign air and sea visitor arrivals to The Bahamas, can be attributed to the collective efforts of Team Tourism and the suc- cessful elevation of the awareness and visibility of The Bahamas’ brand, that was accomplished via the use of a robust, marketing strategy. The Bahamas received more foreign vis- itors in its shores in 2018 – 6.6 million – than in any previous year in its entire history of being recorded. The latter award makes me smile. A Gold Adrian Award for the tourism industry’s Best Caribbean Travel Agency, Best Caribbean Travel Journal, the largest travel and leisure Caribbean tourism, bestowed on The Bahamas, awards for Best Caribbean and Paradise Island recorded a 34% increase in room rev- enues during 2018. It is not an event in the past ten years. The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and Aviation received three awards for outstanding travel marketing at the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMIA), the largest and most prestigious global travel marketing competitions.

The public Relations category, the Ministry was honoured with a Gold Adrian Award for excellence in influencer marketing and a Bronze Adrian Award for its communications campaign. In the Advertising category, the Ministry was recognized for advertising innovation for its unique 16 island-mar- keting strategy.”

Pam Burnside