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"POVERTY AND INEQUALITY ENTRENCHED"

The leader of the Official Opposition Philip Davis says, "Poverty and inequality in our country are becoming entrenched. A recent Central Bank survey revealed that 50% of working Bahamians surveyed were having difficulties making ends meet."

Mr Davis said that everywhere he goes Bahamians are saying, "I can't make it on what I'm making". Even Bahamians who are working more than one job, losing time with children or sick parents who need them, are struggling to pay bills. The cost of living keeps going up, and people feel like they're drowning.

"Economic anxiety is not limited to certain areas or segments - it's



► Opposition Leader, Philip Davis

■ See page 3...

10TH BAHAMIAN GOVERNOR GENERAL APPOINTED



► Mr. Cornelius A. Smith

■ See page 4...

It is now official. The Cabinet Office has announced that Mr. Cornelius A. Smith will be appointed as the next Governor General of the Bahamas with effect from 28th June 2019.

It was also announced that Her Excellency, the Most Honourable Dame Marguerite Pindling, the current Governor General will be demitting office on 28th June 2019. Dame Marguerite served as Governor General from 8th July 2014.

Mr. Smith has been described is a committed civic-minded individual who has, for more than half a century, provided

DAVIS LACKS CONFIDENCE IN GOV'T TO MANAGE FINANCES

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

Progressive Liberal Party Leader Phillip Davis yesterday made a strong case why his party has no confidence in the government's ability to manage the country's public finances.

Wrapping up the Opposition's contribution to the 2019/2020 budget in the House of Assembly, Mr. Davis charged that the government missed

■ See page 4...

BIMINITES ARRAIGNED ON DRUG OFFENCES

Four persons were arraigned before Magistrate's court yesterday afternoon following their arrests in Bimini over the weekend during the Royal Bahamas Police Force's operation Poseidon Purge.

Couple, Vicaro Poitier and Joenisha Poitier, were both arraigned before Deputy Chief Magistrate Subusola Swain with one count of possession of dangerous

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PUBLIC SERVICE TO HIRE 200 COLLEGE GRADS

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

Three million dollars has been earmarked in the upcoming fiscal year for recruiting 200 college graduates within the Ministry of Public Services, according to the Minister responsible, Brensil Rolle during his contribution to the budget debate in parliament.

This, he said, will offset the 400 retirees each year leaving the sector.

The Minister also



► Min. Brensil Rolle

■ See page 4...

GOVERNOR GENERAL WELCOMED CENTENARIAN MS. LEAN POITIER AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE



► Her Excellency the Most Hon. Dame Marguerite Pindling, Governor General, received Ms. Lean Poitier in a courtesy call on the occasion of her 100 birthday at Government House on Friday, June 14, 2019. (BIS Photo/Letisha Henderson)



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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

UNIFIED TRANSPORTATION PILOT TO LAUNCH NEXT WEEK

BY LEAH COOPER
Journal Staff Writer

Transport Minister Renward Wells yesterday announced that his ministry has agreed in principle with the United Transportation Company Limited to a Unified Public Transportation

Project for Route 17 expected to launch next week.

He added that the public transit service will operate along with this fixed route, according to a predetermined schedule.

He said, "the service will be provided by mod-

ern, clean buses; and users will board buses at designated bus stops or at other locations as directed by the Ministry along the route."

The services will operate seven days a week; from 6am to 8pm with buses operating every 15 minutes.

Five of them are projected to operate this pilot based on a 60 to 75-minute roundtrip time.

"A fare will be charged for all trips taken on the transit service. The fare structure is applicable to each one-way trip and applies to all customers. All fares are by exact

change cash on a 'pay as you enter' basis."

He added, "fares must be deposited by the customer into a fare-box on the bus. Bus drivers may not handle or deposit fares on behalf of customers except when the customer is unable to do so due to a disability."

The Ministry of Transport, he said, will reserve the right to alter the fare levels for the pilot project, the fare structure, introduce fare zones and to offer fare reductions or introduce alternate fare payment method as it deems appropriate.

PLP OUTRAGED OVER LPIA RUNWAY CONTRACT

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
Journal Staff Writer



Request for Expressions of Interest Individual Consultant: Communications Strategist "Skills for Current and Future Jobs in The Bahamas"



The Inter-American Development Bank and the Government of The Bahamas (GoBH) signed the Loan Contract No. 3787/OC-BH for the execution of the investment programme "Skills for Current and Future Jobs in The Bahamas" 9BH-L1037. The general objective of the Programme is to increase the employability and quality of employment of beneficiaries, by improving access to quality jobs in The Bahamas, with particular emphasis on youth, in three strategic sectors: maritime, medical services and IT/telecommunications. The specific objectives are to: (a) increase relevant skills and employability in productive jobs for Programme beneficiaries; (b) improve the effectiveness of the Public Employment Services (PES); and (c) enhance the capacity of the labour market intelligence system.

The GoBH has designated the Ministry of Labour (MOL) as the Programme Executing Agency (PEA). The MOL will establish a Programme Executing Unit (PEU) within its organizational structure under the Office of the Permanent Secretary. Accordingly, the PEU now invites interested eligible individual consultants to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) indicating qualifications and experience required to provide consulting services of Strategic Communications Consultant. The contract duration for this consultancy is 12 months, renewable annually. This consultancy shall be based in New Providence.

Main Responsibilities of the Consultancy

The objective of the consultancy is to provide strategic, organizational, and technical direction to the PEU in the development of a Communications Strategy for internal and external stakeholders. The internal audience is comprised of the Ministry of Labour as the Executing Agency, the Project Steering Committee, and members of the Programme Implementation Unit. The external audience includes parents, apprentices, firms, employer groups, academia, training providers, government agencies and civil society among others.

Specific responsibilities and activities are itemized in the Terms of Reference (TOR) for this consultancy, which can be accessed via this link, <http://jobseekers.bahamas.gov.bs>.

Required Qualifications

The consultant must hold a post-graduate degree in Business Administration, Marketing, Communications, Journalism or Public Affairs, or related field. He/she must have a minimum of five years of relevant work experience leading the design and implementation of corporate communications strategies.

The Consultant will have superior planning and logistical skills, with ability to identify resources, address and prioritize a wide range of issues and activities for timely completion, and a proven ability to take initiative and work independently. He/she will be experienced in coordinating strategic communication efforts and/or initiatives, disseminating knowledge, improving visibility, and developing relevant content. Graphic design experience/knowledge is beneficial, as well as competence in storytelling, communication and messaging, writing and editing, media design and development, stakeholder insight and outreach, and marketing.

Additionally, he/she will be competent in:

- Creative writing, data storytelling techniques, message development, graphic design, digital campaigns, social media.
- Coordination experience among multiple stakeholders. Consultant will need to be able to understand different stakeholders to be able to tailor key messages according to their needs/interests.
- Collaboration, teamwork and inclusion – the Consultant will work cooperatively with others independent of background (gender, ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, background, perspective) or organizational role, and takes a team based and inclusive approach to projects and decision making.
- Innovation and creativity – The Consultant will develop strategic ideas and solutions through creativity, experimentation, and critical thinking.
- Communication and influence – The Consultant will communicate effectively and leverage relationship and strategies to influence others.
- Client focus – The Consultant will understand client and needs and provide services that meet their expectations for quality and performance.

Expressions of interest should include a cover letter highlighting the consultant's interest in the position, relevant experiences and qualifications, a recent copy of the consultant's curriculum vitae (CV), three written professional references, and a sample of the consultant's technical writing.

Submissions of Expressions of Interest may be submitted by hand to the address below or by email to skillslabour@bahamas.gov.bs, no later than 5.00 p.m. June 14th, 2018.

**Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Labour
Charlotte House,
Shirley Street and Charlotte Streets
Nassau, The Bahamas
Re: Strategic Communications Consultant, Skills for Current and Future Jobs in The Bahamas**

The fact that the Bahamas Hot Mix is involved in LPIA's runway refurbishment works has drawn the ire of the opposition, whose Chairman is outraged that the company – owned by sitting Cabinet Minister Brent Symonette – has been awarded yet another multi-million contract.

Senator Fred Mithell said in a release that 20 years ago, Mr. Symonette had to resign as Chairman of the Airport Authority after the contract to pave the airport's runway was awarded to his company.



► Senator Fred Mithell

Further, he stressed that Mr. Symonette's father's government lost the 1967 election and was condemned by the commission of inquiry because his government awarded itself contracts.

Mr. Symonette, he said must decide if he will be a private citizen bidding for government contracts or a government minister benefiting from the largesse from the public treasury and breaking all the rules put in place to prevent malfeasance in office.

To the Prime Minister, he insists Mr. Symonette must choose or go.

The Bahama Journal reached out to Financial Services and Industry and Immigration Minister Brent Symonette, but he declined to comment.

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Continued from / PAGE 1...

widespread. People who felt comfortably middle class are worried about losing what they've worked so hard to gain. People who did OK for themselves are worried their children can't make it. People who thought they were secure are being battered by rising costs of everything.

"And yet we have a government that seems indifferent to the stresses Bahamians face, and ignorant about the role their policies have played in bringing them about," said Mr. Davis.

The Cat Island MP said the government raised Value Added Tax by 60 per cent, but failed to raise the minimum wage, and caused mass firings and separations in the public service.

"For an encore, the government has now slashed \$25 million from the public service salary budget. Many Bahamians are worried this is the first step towards another round of firings and separations.

"And now we have a new tax – and yet another broken promise, because the government had promised no new additional tax increases. This time it's a tax on US dollar transactions. That's going to hurt many Bahamians and businesses. It is wrong to keep going into the pockets of Bahamians who can't afford more pain," said the PLP leader.

The Opposition leader said, "the government's decision to delay payments to many contractors and vendors has caused hardship on them and in fact functions as an invisible tax on these persons. I am reliably advised that the promised increases in the contract amounts to current contract holders to compensate for the 60% increase in VAT and NIB fees have not been done. Contractors are forced to lay off minimum wage workers which add to unemployment and misery.

"I was surprised to learn from a government contractor that the banks no longer accept govern-

ment contracts as security for bridge financing – let's say to pay salaries until the Treasury Department issues the next check.

"I thought the government said that it was putting policies and procedures in place to improve the ease of doing business in the Bahamas, but many contractors feel that it is becoming more difficult and cumbersome to do business with the government. Things are getting harder, not easier," said Mr. Davis.

"Frequently, it feels like the government does the boasting instead of the work. There's that emphasis on propaganda again, their specialty.

The Bahamian people urgently need relief from oppressive cost of living increases.

But this budget is not going to help them.

This is not a people's budget, just like it's not the people's time.

Now, of course, there are exceptions. If you're well-connected at the top, well, then, there's plenty for you," Mr. Davis said.

He said, "the Prime Minister has announced a series of policy initiatives that in effect transfer state wealth to FNM elites and political cronies. This is the reason they wanted power in the first place; this is what they're all about. Here's what they have promised to do the following in the next fiscal year:

- Transfer public buildings to a fund created by Holowesko Partners to minimize the ability of other Bahamian individuals and entities such as the National Insurance Board, churches and ordinary Bahamians from renting to the Government. At an estimated \$400 million price tag, one can only imagine the windfall the Holowesko Partners stand to gain from compounded interest payments alone.
- Eliminate business license fees for all banks including RBC, Scotia, CIBC,

Citibank and Commonwealth Bank.

- Ensure that business license and VAT is calculated on the same tax base to reduce the business license fees of large food stores, pharmacies, Morton Salt and others with large zero-rated or exempt supplies.
- Join the World Trade Organization and reduce the Common External Tariffs (CEF) to an average of 15% in less than 3 years, benefiting large importers and in the process, foregoing more than \$100 million in revenue without any articulated replacement plan.

Mr. Speaker, do these policies seem designed to lift all boats, or maybe just a very few yachts?

"This government has also announced its intention to reduce the deficit to 1% of GDP in the absence of a pro-growth strategy (that is, reduce and starve much-needed recurrent and capital expenditures by approximately \$100 million).

"In the best of economic times, these policies of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are bad ideas, ones which could send the economy reeling into recession.

"With 1.6% economic growth, with no money on the ground nor short-term strategic growth prospects on the horizon, this is clearly not the best of times.

"On the issue of a pro-growth strategy, I note the following:

The \$65 million paid for the Grand Lucayan, has resulted in the loss of jobs and continued government subsidy with no economic benefit to that island.

It was reported that the government must now find another \$4.3 million to settle with the severed employees there.

The total expenditure to date is in excess of \$100 million.

The news in Grand Bahama is getting no better.

Of the \$8 billion in

projects that Peter Turnquest announced were approved by the FNM government since coming to office, he suspiciously named only a handful - 3 to be exact, totaling \$181.5 million.

"Does the government lack confidence in the other projects?

It's a fair question. Because that's what happens when a government is engaged in constant spin – we never know what's real and what's propaganda.

This is a government that held a fake signing ceremony for an oil refinery! What a spectacle Oban was. Part comedy, with all the shifty characters and shifting explanations, but mostly tragedy, because of what's at stake for the environment and our country.

"I have said on numerous occasions that this government is a 'balance sheet' government that fails to consider the impact of their policies on the everyday lives of ordinary Bahamians.

I remember Senator Mitchell repeatedly telling this government to put money on the ground in Grand Bahama and the Minister of Finance mocked him. When the government purchased the Grand Lucayan for \$65 million, he characterized that as 'putting money on the ground.'

When the last employment figures were released, this government made a big PR spectacle out of the numbers coming out of Grand Bahama.

They knew that Grand Bahamians were leaving in droves to Canada, Nassau and Bimini and Abaco in search of better economic opportunities.

They knew that Bahamians were sleeping in their cars and on the beach because they were homeless.

They knew they (the government) were deferring payments to vendors and contractors and withholding certain benefits duly owed to civil servants.

They knew that the

capital budget was being starved intentionally with about half spent by the last quarter of this fiscal year.

They knew they had slashed social service assistance to the most vulnerable and separated thousands of minimum wage employees from the public service.

So surely they had to know that their policies were hurting Bahamians and increasing joblessness, yet they behaved as if none of the suffering and misery were taking place.

Mr. Speaker, all these hurt-causing policies were done in service of prettying up the books -- and yet, despite all the pain they've caused, the government has missed their revenue and deficit targets for two consecutive years.

In this budget they seem to be doubling down and heading in the same direction.

They don't get it. The economy isn't numbers on a piece of paper, it's people," said Mr. Davis.



THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT

RE: TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF FLAMINGO GARDENS CLINIC

The Ministry of Health wishes to advise members of the public, clients and residents of the Flamingo Gardens Health District, that due to unexpected circumstances, all clinic services at the Flamingo Gardens Health Center, Carmichael Road will be temporarily suspended effective Tuesday June 11, 2019 until further notice.

Antenatal Clients scheduled for follow up services tomorrow June 11th at the Flamingo Gardens Clinic, are advised to attend the South Beach Health Center East Street South at their usual appointment times.

Other Clients in the Flamingo Gardens Health District in need of non-emergency services are asked to visit the Elizabeth Estates, South Beach and Fleming Streets Clinics until services are resumed at the Flamingo Gardens Clinic.

The public and residents of the Flamingo Gardens Clinic District, are further advised that the hours of operations at the South Beach Health Center, Elizabeth Estates and Fleming Street is Clinic is 9am to 9pm.

The Ministry of Health apologizes for any inconvenience caused and will continue to provide updates.

Monday June 10th, 2019

GOT NEWS?
Please call The Bahama
Journal's News TIP
LINE at 356-7254
and let us know!

BIMINITES ARRAIGNED ON DRUG OFFENCES

Continued from / PAGE 1...

drugs, namely cocaine, with the intent to supply.

It is alleged that on Saturday, June 15, shortly after 4:00am, the operation team conducted a search of a home in Alice Town, North Bimini and recovered

one plastic package of suspected cocaine.

An adult male and female were taken into custody in connection with the recovery.

Both pleaded not guilty to the charges and were remanded to the Bahamas Department of Corrections until August

27th, 2019.

The prosecution noted that the lengthy remand was as a result of the matter still being under active investigation.

The drugs found weighed 2.8 pounds and carries a street value of \$18,000.

Also charged before

the courts were Anvon Saunders and Trevaughn Sands with one count of possession of ammunition and one count of possession of ammunition with the intent to supply.

During the same operation, shortly before 5am, a search was con-

ducted on a home at Buccaneer Point, South Bimini, where 36 rounds of .45 ammunition and 2 rounds of .38 ammunition were recovered.

The couple were subsequently arrested and charged.

They pleaded not

guilty to those charges and were remanded to the Bahamas Department of Corrections.

They will return to court on September 5th when their case will be heard, as they opted to be tried in the magistrate's court.

DAVIS LACKS CONFIDENCE IN GOV'T TO MANAGE FINANCES

Continued from / PAGE 1...

critical fiscal targets for the past two budgetary periods because they failed to present realistic budget targets.

"What I'm saying is that they burrowed four times to pay salaries and the next question I asked is, if in the same time did they not even ask the

bank to extend the overdraft facility three times to make payroll."

"Now, what I'm saying is that will make seven times that they were unable to meet salaries in the period of nine months," he said.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Peter Turnquest strongly disagreed, argu-

ing that the government is well within its borrowing perimeters for the year.

"The point is again, to meet its cash flow requirements, from time to time the government has to engage in short term borrowings in order to provide for salaries, for rent and for everything else that it needs,

because again it is not an even flow of revenue across the year," said the Minister of Finance.

"One of the budget goals that we have is to even out or provide for the collection of business licenses taxes for example four times during the year that will help us to even out this cash flow problem that

we have.

"There's nothing unusual and I want the public to be aware that although there are some implications that there is something wrong here, that this is normal," Minister Turnquest said.

Not letting up, Mr. Davis stressed that the government's borrowing to meet salaries is worry-

ing.

He questioned how the government collected some \$250 million dollars more this fiscal year, but still had to borrow to meet salaries.

The opposition maintains that the Minnis Administration will again miss its revenue and deficit targets and miss them badly.

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10TH BAHAMIAN GOVERNOR GENERAL APPOINTED

Continued from / PAGE 1...

leadership to the Bahamian community and social and civic organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce and the Kiwanis and Rotary organizations. A community and political activist from the seventies

(1970s), he is a founding member of the governing political party.

Mr. Smith has served the Bahamian people as a senior Cabinet Member and as Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States and Non-Resident

Ambassador to Mexico, Malaysia and Columbia. Mr. Smith recently resigned as The Bahamas' Non-Resident Ambassador to six Central American countries.

Mr. Smith will be the 10th Bahamian to hold the office of Governor General.

PUBLIC SERVICE TO HIRE 200 COLLEGE GRADS

Continued from / PAGE 1...

explained that the nature of successful candidates' employment will be contractual.

He said, "one of the reasons we are putting them on contract is because we say to them, 'listen, we know if you come, the service may

have a beginning salary that may not look good to you. We know that you may not be a career public officer, but we will put you in a space where we will encourage you to do just that."

This also comes as the Ministry places emphasis on training, developing and improving its current

staff.

An additional \$8 million has been allocated to new hires throughout the public service.

All qualified college graduates are asked to fill out an application at the Ministry of Public Works.

Successful candidates will be placed based to their qualifications.

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