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## THE PEOPLE'S PAPER BIGGEST AND BEST

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# DOWNTOWN ART TOUR

SEE ARTS SECTION C



## TRACK AND FIELD SCHOOL STARS BATTLE IT OUT - PICTURE SPECIAL IN SPORT

# Call for probe into voter fraud

### FORMER MP IN TEARS FOR NEXT GENERATION

By AVA TURNQUEST  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
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FORMER member of parliament Edward "Dud" Maynard broke down in tears yesterday over the growing disparity between the ideals and aspirations of the country's "trailblazers" and the younger generation.

Addressing students at a symposium commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Women's Suffrage Move-

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### LAING: DECISION TO BORROW WAS RIGHT

By SANCHESKA BROWN  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
sbrown@tribunemedia.net

MINISTER of State for Finance Zhivargo Laing yesterday defended the government's decision to borrow more than \$200 million from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for road works, saying it was necessary for vital infrastructure development.

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### INSIDE BAHAMAR

WORK is underway to transform the former Wyndham, Sheraton, and Nassau Beach properties into the world-class Baha Mar resort, slated for opening in 2014.

During a recent tour of the property, *The Tribune* was given full access to the resort's construction site as the multi-billion dollar resort begins to take shape.

See page 12 of today's *Tribune* for a spread of photographs on the tour, and be sure to check out [www.tribune242.com](http://www.tribune242.com) for a special video on the property.

## FNM hopeful seeks hearing over claims

FNM CANDIDATE Desmond Bannister is asking that an official hearing be held into his claims of voter fraud in North Andros within the next 14 days.

After the PLP denied flying Nassau and Grand Bahama residents in to register in Mr Bannister's prospective constituency, he revealed yesterday that a list of alleged illegal voters have already been turned over to local offi-

cial, and offered to name the political operatives responsible for the scam.

Mr Bannister said: "This is an act of deception that can lead to prosecution, and it is an act that we will expose in the interest of protecting our vibrant Bahamian democracy.

"We have compiled several lists of such persons. We have

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## PM WARNS AIRPORT STAFF

By KHRISNA VIRGIL  
kvirgil@tribunemedia.net

PRIME Minister Hubert Ingraham said customs and immigration officers at the airport are breaching their terms of employment by refusing to work the shift system outlined in their contracts.

Claiming that the civil servants' stance is politically motivated, Mr Ingraham said

it is unthinkable that people would do such "nonsense".

"The reality is that most of those (Customs) officers were hired by the government on the basis that they would work shifts. Many of them have signed a letter confirming, that's how they got hired and so the fact that they don't want to work that way is putting their own jobs in their

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PRIME MINISTER Hubert Ingraham welcomed as he arrives at a rally in Long Island, where he endorsed candidate Loretta Butler-Turner.

## DNA CANDIDATE'S 'COPYCAT' CLAIM

By DANA SMITH  
dsmith@tribunemedia.net

LONG Island DNA candidate Mario Cartwright claims the FNM is "copying (his) plans" with their campaign to win the constituency.

Speaking in response to Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham's promises to constituents, Mr Cartwright said he "doubts they plan to deliver." He claimed their cam-

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## CONCERN OVER MARINE POACHERS

By CELESTE NIXON  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
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PRIME Minister Hubert Ingraham will hold a meeting with Long Island fishermen to discuss growing concerns about marine poachers in the area.

During the FNM's Long Island constituency office opening on Monday, Mr Ingraham announced he will be returning on Friday along with the commodore of the Defence Force to speak with local fishermen about the

poaching problem - in particular the practice of Bahamian vessels hiring illegal workers as crew members.

He said: "I know that you continue to have serious concerns about our fisheries industry, a backbone of the Long Island economy, and you continue to hold serious concerns about our ability to police our resources and to keep you and your industry safe from poachers.

"I have already given immigration clear policy

SEE page 11

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LOCAL NEWS



All the fun of the  
**FAIR**

THE RED CROSS hosted a fair at the weekend in the grounds of Government House, bringing out families to join in the fun and the fundraising. The event included fairground rides, face painting, games, stalls and a host of activities. Photos: **Felipe Major/Tribune Staff**



**GOVERNOR GENERAL** Sir Arthur Knowles and his wife, Joan, take a look around the Red Cross Fair.

# Two accused of murdering man struck by car

BY DENISE MAYCOCK  
Tribune Freeport Reporter  
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FREEPORT – The murder trial of Coletor Johnson and Glinton Louis opened in the Supreme Court yesterday with testimony from eye-witnesses who recalled how 23-year-old Markinson Justin was struck by a car that left the scene.

The matter being heard before Senior Justice Hartman Longley.

Johnson, 23, and Glinton, 32, are accused of being concerned together and intentionally causing the death of Justin at Explorer's Way on July 12, 2011.

It is alleged that some time after 8am, the accused were in a gold 2000 Buick Century that struck and killed the victim, who was walking.

According to the prosecution, Justin landed on the ground about 88 feet from the point of impact and sustained multiple injuries.

Paul Wallace-Whitfield is representing Johnson, who is out on bail. K Brian Hanna is representing Louis.

Prosecutors Durell Taylor and Olivia Blatch are appearing on behalf of the Crown.

In its opening address, the prosecution claimed Johnson and Louis intentionally struck Justin and then left the scene.

Police Corporal Lincoln Dawkins of the Criminal Records Office was the prosecution's first witness.

He took photographs of the scene, the victim, and the Buick Century.

Cpl Dawkins compiled an album, which included photographs of a broken car windshield, dents on the front and top of the vehicle, and suspected human flesh on the windshield and vehicle.

He also took pictures of wounds on the victim's chest, thigh, right leg, and the back of the head.



THE ACCUSED, Glinton Louis, left, and Coletor Johnson.

Andre Burrows, an eye-witness, testified that he was driving east on Explorer's Way around 8am when he saw a young man standing under a Poinciana tree.

He said he saw the man run towards a gold Buick that was travelling in the westbound lane, getting into a scuffle with the passenger.

Mr Burrows said the vehicle then crossed into the eastbound lane of Explorer's Way, and headed east.

The driver then turned around again and headed west at high speed, he said.

Burrows said Justin was walking east on the northern side of the road when the vehicle crossed over in the eastbound lane and struck him.

Mr Burrows said he heard a loud "bam" and saw the Buick drive off heading west. He said Justin was lying "lifeless" on the ground.

Mr Burrows said two persons were in the vehicle at the time.

Juliann Kemp also took the stand. She testified that she saw a man taking off his shirt and running east after a champagne-colored Buick on Explorer's Way.

"The vehicle turned around. It picked up speed and went across to the next side of the road and hit the man," she recalled.

Ms Kemp said the car's windshield cracked when it struck Justin.

When asked by Mr Hanna whether Justin had jumped on the vehicle, Ms Kemp replied, "No".

Traffic Police Corporal 1324 Mick Sears said he went to Explorer's Way to investigate an accident involving a pedestrian.

He said he found a black t-shirt and one black tennis shoe, then proceeded to Rand Memorial Hospital where he spoke with a doctor.

Cpl Sears said he saw the body of a dark man with severe injuries, then returned to the scene, where he and PC 2877 Ian Saunders took measurements.

PC Saunders, a traffic reconstruction officer, said according to their measurements, the vehicle was travelling at about 51mph when it struck Justin.

He said that the driver left the westbound lane, crossed over into the eastbound lane, and hit Justin on the northern shoulder.

Maltide Time, mother of the victim, said she identified her son's body at the hospital's morgue on July 12, 2011. The trial will resume today.

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**"The country has set four murder records in five years"**

Nassau Guardian 28.12.11

# Christie 'a total abysmal failure'

By **DANA SMITH**  
dsmith@tribunemedia.net

PLP LEADER Perry Christie has been a "total abysmal failure" in terms of his impact on the justice system, Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham said.

After coming under fire from the PLP over crime levels and what they claim is a slow rate of conviction, Mr Ingraham hit back at a press conference in Exuma over the weekend. He said the FNM has taken "concrete steps" to ensure the Bahamian criminal justice system works.

"When we came to office we met two Supreme Court judges who were trying criminal cases in Nassau. We have now five such persons in office," Mr Ingraham said.

He also pointed out that Freeport, Grand Bahama has its own full-time judge, bringing the total to six.

Responding to PLP claims of slow conviction rates, Mr Ingraham said: "For the first time in many years, persons charged with serious offenses last year, 2011, have already gone through the system and been tried in the court, convicted, sentenced, and are now residing in Fox Hill Prison.

"We have a court and a judge who's only job is to try current cases, meaning that any case that came up between 2010 and today, that



**PRIME MINISTER** Hubert Ingraham in Long Island on Monday, where he spoke out to support local FNM candidate Loretta Butler-Turner.

is all that judge is supposed to do."

There are another two judges who try the cases dating back to before 2010, and one more whose job it is to retry cases if the Court of Appeal deems it necessary,

he explained.

Mr Ingraham said: "We now have case management, we now have the police working with the Office of the Attorney General from start to finish.

"When a serious offence is committed, when the

police are doing their investigation, we have lawyers who are working with them from day one... so we can approve the quality of the cases that we take to the Supreme Court.

"We are very proud of our

record and (PLP leader Perry Christie) ought to be ashamed of himself to even talk about it because he was an abysmal failure. An abysmal failure to the criminal justice system of the Bahamas - a total abysmal failure."

# HUNDREDS TURN OUT TO SUPPORT BUTLER-TURNER AT RALLY

By **CELESTE NIXON**  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
cnixon@tribunemedia.net

HUNDREDS of Long Islanders turned out to show their support for FNM candidate Loretta Butler-Turner, as did Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham - who described her as "passionate in her commitment to advancing equality for all God's children."

During Monday's opening of the party's constituency office on the island, Mr Ingraham told the crowd Mrs Butler-Turner has a progressive vision for the country and will

be committed to delivering to the people of the Long Island.

He said: "Loretta is in public life, not because of what she can get, but because of what she can give back to her country."

Mr Ingraham went on to assure those gathered that infrastructural improvements will be a priority in Long Island if the FNM is re-elected.

He said the party has already delivered on some infrastructural needs, including rebuilding seawalls, paving roads and dredging

around docks.

If returned to government, the FNM will continue to upgrade public facilities and educational institutions, Mr Ingraham said.

"Our long-term national vision is to ensure that every major island has the critical infrastructure needed for development," he said.

"Investments in infrastructure will help to attract domestic and foreign investment."

He also said the following areas of Long Island will have access to six television chan-

nels by the end of the month: Simms, Stella Maris, Millerton, Burnt Ground, Seymour's, Clarence Town, Dunmore, Hard Bargain, Mortimor's and Gordon's Settlement.

Mr Ingraham promised to deliver on the construction of a new airport with a 7,000 ft runway in Deadman's Cay and provide all of Long Island with potable water through the construction of a Reverse Osmosis plant.

During its next term in office, the FNM also intends to construct a small community hospital on the island,

"befitting your station and development".

The FNM's campaign team will move to Golden Gates on Thursday and Eleuthera this weekend.

• For more pictures from the rally, see page 11

# ARCHBISHOP DEFENDS PLP ATTENDANCE

ANGLICAN Archbishop Drexel Gomez said yesterday that he did not appear at a PLP event as an official representative of the church.

On Monday, Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham called on PLP leader Perry Christie to apologise for allowing Archbishop Gomez to make remarks at a PLP North Andros constituency opening on Friday, in support of his brother and PLP candidate for the area, Dr Perry Gomez.

The prime minister's comments came during the official opening of the FNM Long Island constituency office on Monday. He said: "I do call upon Perry Christie to apologise for that. He knows better."

Mr Ingraham said the FNM recently came under fire for holding political events and meetings during lent. "Well what do you think about a bishop on a political podium during lent?" he asked the crowd.

Describing Dr Gomez's accomplishments, including his career in the fight against AIDS as the director of the National AIDS Programme, Archbishop Gomez said he would be a good representative for the North Andros constituency.

Yesterday, the archbishop told the media that as the oldest living sibling, he thought it proper that he introduce his brother to the people of North Andros. He noted that he did so wearing his clerical collar under a suit rather than a cassock, as he was not representing the church at the time.

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# FORMER LONG ISLAND MP BACKS ANYONE BUT FNM

By **LAMECH JOHNSON**  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
ljohnson@tribunemedia.net

A FORMER Long Island MP said choosing another Free National Movement representative would not be a good move for the island.

Philip Smith, who represented Long Island, Exuma and Cat Island for the PLP between 1977 and 1992, said either the PLP or DNA would be a better choice after 15 years of sub-par FNM representation.

"Larry Cartwright and the FNM have been an abysmal failure to the people of Long Island," he said.

Mr Smith was responding to Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham, who at the FNM constituency office opening in Buckleys on Monday night, asked Long Islanders for their continued support.

"I know we're gonna win Long Island," Mr Ingraham said. "And so Long Island, I want you to stick with us because I've got to go to make sure that we win the government."

Mr Ingraham thanked the crowd for their loyalty, noting that "some of you are disappointed that we did not do more for you than we did".

But, Mr Ingraham said, compared to the neglect suffered under the PLP, "you'd have to agree that we did a lot for you. Maybe not enough, but we did a lot for you."

Mr Smith does not agree. He accused the FNM and current MP Larry Cartwright of taking advantage of Long Island.

"He and the FNM took advantage of the people throughout their time in power. Cartwright got elected in 1992 on a commitment of loyalty.

"He did nothing but serve

his own interests and got elected again in 1997 and then in 2007. They've done no good for the communities in Long Island."

Discussing the challenge of supplying sufficient drinking water for the island, Mr Smith said between 2002 and 2007, the PLP "did more to find the solution to end that problem as opposed to the FNM that has had 15 years of governance."

Regarding Loretta Butler-

Turner, FNM's new candidate for the seat, he said: "She's discovered that her performance in Montagu was not up to par and she's hoping that her family connections to Long Island and Mr Ingraham's support will be enough.

"When one looks at the PLP and DNA candidates running for Long Island, Alex Storr and Mario Cartwright, they can both claim an excellent background of service to the community."

Mr Smith said he can say with confidence that either would better serve the interests of the Long Island, as he has known both candidates and their families for a long time.

"I trust that the people will look at the history of all three candidates to decide who is best to represent them and their needs, and not serve Mr Ingraham's inflated opinion of himself," he said.

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## Union leaders meet today with Labour Minister

LEADERS of the Bahamas Customs and Immigration Allied Workers Union are scheduled to meet with Labour Minister Dion Foulkes this morning to clarify what their lawyer, Obie Ferguson, is now dismissing as a "misunderstanding".

One would have thought that if union leaders were sincere in their "misunderstanding" story — and the unrest had no political overtones — then the union would have ordered the immigration staff back to work until the matter could be clarified.

Apparently, this is not the case. Up to yesterday, some airport immigration staff were still working under General Orders — 9am to 5pm — with senior officers filling in after they have gone home.

According to Mr Ferguson, the chaos caused by Immigration officers abandoning their stations on Saturday, was "no strike, no sick out, no industrial action". He then added: "We actually have a right to strike as we have taken the strike vote ... but it was none of those things."

Having repudiated their own industrial agreement with government — an agreement that provides for a strike vote — and opted to go with General Orders, it is now debatable whether their strike vote is still valid. Mr Ferguson could well find that having abandoned the agreement, the union can no longer strike. We suggest that lawyer and union have drifted up a creek of confusion. They might find that without their strike paddle a mere "misunderstanding" will not be a sufficient excuse for their irresponsible behaviour.

On Saturday, Prime Minister Ingraham ordered them back to work, unless, of course they were prepared to face the consequences of disobeying orders. He told them that the shift system, which eliminates their exorbitant overtime, was still in effect.

"In fact," said Mr Ingraham, "if many of them would check their terms and conditions of employment they will find that since 1996 nearly all of them had been hired by the public service with a condition in their contract, which said you shall work on a shift.

"Persons who do not return to work forthwith," he warned, "will be dealt with by the public service without regard to any other consideration. We are serious about this."

This brought several officers back to the job, but we understand that there is

still unrest at the airport.

Mr Ingraham made it clear that government was never going back to the days of paying "millions and millions of dollars in overtime pay to customs and immigration officers". He said that they would receive whatever overtime pay was specified under the Employment Act — no more.

"So no amount of agitation on the part of immigration officers will change that unchangeable position," he said. "We increased pay for officers in immigration and customs so that a student coming out of high school with several BGCSEs at grade C and above can start working as a trainee for \$18,000 per year." He suggested that this was more than many would earn in the private sector.

The Bahamian taxpayer has a right to know how much these persons are now earning, and how much they had earned in the carefree days of overtime pay.

Many businesses in the private sector have switched to the shift system, knowing how employees can fiddle overtime. Overtime can be the death knell to any business — and should be outlawed in government service because of lack of proper supervision. In 1996, The Tribune did a survey of salaries of the BEC staff, only to discover that when overtime was added, they were making more than highly skilled professionals.

For example, common labourers at the corporation in 1996 earned in basic pay between \$16,000 and \$19,000 a year, jack hammer operators and tree trimmers took home between \$16,000 and \$29,000. However, by the time they collected their overtime pay, their wages could be in the region of \$40,000 to \$45,000 a year. Bahamian taxpayers were being bled to death.

We strongly suggest that if immigration staff want to operate under General Orders, then after the 9am to 5pm shift go home, bring in newly recruited staff contracted to work only the night shift and weekends at a fixed rate of pay.

This should mark the final year that unions can strong arm a government for benefits the country cannot afford only because it is an election year. As we have already suggested, unions should not be allowed to negotiate with government during an election year. They should get all of these matters out of the way the year before.

Public service unions have been allowed to have their way for far too long.

# Politics and Lent can mix

EDITOR, The Tribune.

I WAS most disappointed to read in the papers that Fr Sebastian Campbell has criticised politicians for having political rallies during the season of Lent. I was also most distressed at the language used by the good Father when he described our important national debate as a "political circus", and accused our political leaders of "jonesing for power".

It is a pity that Fr Campbell should feed into the view held by some shallow-minded people that there is something inherently wrong with politics. Politics is most certainly not a circus, even though in our Bahamian culture we approach everything important, even religion, with a certain amount of exuberance.

Politics is about the important business of governance and the affairs of state. It is the business of nurturing our parliamentary democracy and all the rights which flow from it, including freedom of religion.

There is no more important part of this business in a democratic country than the process of conducting a national debate and having the people elect who will govern them for the next five years.

Indeed, religious leaders should be encouraging their followers to pay attention to politics, participate in the

## LETTERS

letters@tribunemedia.net

process and most certainly to register and vote.

It's one thing for politicians in the heat of battle to use hyperbolic language criticising one another, but it's unbecoming of a respected religious leader to describe political leaders as "jonesing for power".

Is this the same Fr Campbell who is relentlessly campaigning for us to honour our national heroes, most of whom were politicians? And suppose politicians start negatively characterising preachers? What a field day they could have!

I see nothing wrong with holding political rallies during Lent. Lent is one of several seasons in the liturgical life of the apostolic churches — Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican. There are other holy seasons such as Advent, Easter, and Pentecost.

In the ancient church, Lent was mainly about preparing persons for Baptism at Easter. It is a season of self-examination, penance and special efforts to improve our practice of Christianity. At the beginning of the Lenten season, we place ashes on our foreheads to remind us that we are dust and to dust we shall return.

But we don't go around for

the rest of Lent in sackcloth and ashes flagellating ourselves and trying to look miserable.

We will celebrate the resurrection of Christ at Easter, but we know that he rose from the dead two thousand years ago, and that makes the Christian happy at all times.

I see no conflict between my religious exercises during this season and my attending and participating in political rallies, and I don't think the politicians are "encroaching on holy ground" when they continue with the business of the state and with the business of our parliamentary processes.

Democratic politics is necessarily adversarial, and we should celebrate that.

Some people will carry anything too far, even religion. But the vast majority of Bahamians are quite capable of conducting their politics with good cheer, not allowing it to divide them from their loved ones, friends and fellow citizens who happen to have a different opinion.

By the way, in Britain in 1992 the general election — the actual voting day — was during Lent, 10 days before Easter. And in 2007, Prime Minister Perry Christie had the House of Assembly dissolved during the Wednesday of Holy week!

CHRISTIAN  
Nassau,  
March, 2012.

## Political rhetoric vs political will

EDITOR, The Tribune.

THERE is a saying that can be found in almost all major religious text or Bible: "Ye shall know them by their fruits." That is to say, know them not so much by what they say but rather by what they do.

One can glean much about the two major political parties, PLP and FNM, by doing a comparison of their words to their works. To put this fully into context we need to understand that politics is a game of persuasion and perception.

Sometimes we are persuaded to perceive a political organisation in a way that is not rational or realistic — especially when you compare their words to action.

This is really a perfect time in our political history, here in the Bahamas, to compare the two main parties — their words to their deeds.

Take the current campaign slogans, for example.

The PLP says "Believe in the Bahamas" and "Put Bahamians First".

The FNM says simply, "We Deliver!" They also say that they can be "Trusted" and that they have "Proven" this to be so.

I will deal with the latter first as it is the easiest to decipher.

I think that all reasonable and informed persons within the Bahamas can come to the basic conclusion that the "We Deliver" message from the FNM has been earned and therefore they can claim ownership of this as their slogan.

Moreover, it resonates with the vast majority of Bahamians, I believe.

Many of us may differ in terms of our opinion on the cost or manner in which cer-

tain things were delivered.

However, there is no disputing the fact that much of what was promised, by the FNM, has been delivered in their current term in office. I could go into a whole list of things or programmes that have been achieved by the FNM during its current term in office but I think it is fair to say that most, if not all Bahamians, are aware of many of these new or enhanced benefits.

The second part of the FNM's current slogan says "Trusted and Proven." Again, it is not difficult for reasonable people to associate this slogan with the Ingraham led FNM government.

People generally elect a government to do, for them, the things that they might not be able to do for themselves. Some of these provisions might include building schools, passing laws, improving infrastructure, providing essential services, etc.

Whenever we vote for a person or a party to govern our concerns or affairs, I think that most of us do so with the trust that, in government, these individuals will have the political will to deliver on the promises made during a campaign.

We trust that these honourable men and women would seek to put in place policies, laws and things for the benefit of the people that they govern.

To this end, I think that the FNM government has proven, for the most part, worthy of that trust.

The PLP's slogan of "Believe in the Bahamas" is extremely vague and unclear. When you try to reconcile this slogan with the party that is using it, it becomes even more confusing.

I, personally, believe in the

Bahamas. As I am sure that most Bahamians do. I am vested in the Bahamas. I was born in the Bahamas. I was raised in the Bahamas. I was educated, work and live in the Bahamas.

I am married and raising a family, of my own, here in the Bahamas. I respect and abide by the laws of the Bahamas. I believe in the Bahamas! It is the only home that I have known.

Now, what does that have to do with the PLP? Is it that a vote for the PLP solidifies or somehow reinforces my belief in the Bahamas? Conversely, if I voted FNM or DNA, I no longer believe in the Bahamas? Is the message here that the FNM as government believes less in the Bahamas than does the PLP as government? I just do not see the connection of the slogan to the party.

The PLP loves to talk about how much they believe in the Bahamas and how much they care for Bahamians. However, upon closer examination the words really do not meet with action. Their record of under achievement in government is a testament to this fact. I can go on with a list of so many ways in which the PLP's words did not match their actions, but I think that there is one thing that absolutely crystallizes the point — The Straw Market!

Consider this, "prayer without action is powerless"

"faith without works is dead"

"vision without implementation is worthless"

Political rhetoric without political will leads to failure.

DWAYNE LOCKHART-GAILLARD  
Nassau,  
March, 2012.

## Well done, coaches

EDITOR, The Tribune.

AS THE Chief Councillor for Spanish Wells, I would like to take this opportunity to thank and praise the athletes from Spanish Wells All-Age School and their coaches for the performance that they

put on at a Track and Field meet in North Andros on the weekend of Feb. 10 and 11th, 2012.

These young athletes won a total of 28 medals — 11 First Place — 9 Second Place — 8 Third Place.

This just goes to show the

other children in the Bahamas that with dedicated effort and good coaches they can achieve great things at home or abroad.

ABNER PINDER  
Spanish Wells,  
February 20, 2012

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Deveaux and Young Streets

# POTCAKE SAYS

## 'The Bahamas' own street philosopher'



# Union warns of action over lack of negotiations

By LAMECH JOHNSON  
Tribune Staff Reporter  
ljohnson@tribunemedia.net

UNION members have warned BTC there will be industrial action unless it fulfills its promises over contract negotiations.

The union is unhappy that BTC has not completed negotiations since its sale to Cable and Wireless Communications last April, and members of the Bahamas Communications and Public Officers Union staged a demonstration outside BTC headquarters on John F Kennedy Drive yesterday afternoon.

BCPOU president Bernard Evans urged BTC to keep its promise over contract negotiations or "else there will be more demonstrations to come".

Mr Evans said: "Our current industrial agreement expired in September 2010. The union was told in late 2009 to wait on renewing the contract pending the potential sale of BTC."

The union said that BTC "is well positioned financially to grant our requests, which we might add, falls well within contracts awarded to us in the past".

Mr Evans said the company is expected to surpass all initial projections concerning



UNION protesting outside BTC headquarters yesterday.

Photo: **Tim Clarke**/Tribune Staff anchored by a market-leading employee proposition".

He said: "The discussions we have been having with our union partners have always been around these themes. So my hope is that while we may differ on the specifics of some parts of the agreement, we all manage to keep in our sights these principles which are critical to succeed against agile and aggressive competition now and in the near future."

The CEO noted that management will continue to negotiate in good faith and do all it can to keep the communications open and up front.

He concluded: "All BTC stakeholders must accept the reality that the company must be fundamentally changed if it is to compete successfully."

revenue. The union said the company had cut staff by 300 and reduced the percentage of salary towards the staff pension plan, but added that CWC had seen a \$20 million increase in profits by September of last year.

The new owners were also awarded 60% of net profit, despite the signed agreement between the company and government to split profit 51:49.

Mr Evans and union members promised industrial action until the contract negotiations are dealt with.

In response to yesterday's action, BTC CEO Geoff Houston reiterated the company's ambition concerning the organisation and its staff, which is to shape an agreement "that is customer and performance driven, and

## MAN CLEARED OF GUN OFFENCES

By DANA SMITH  
dsmith@tribunemedia.net

A MAN accused of pulling a gun on police officers after a high-speed chase was acquitted yesterday.

Gary Pierre, 30, was accused of drawing a pellet gun on two officers on April 7, 2011.

The prosecution, led by Kristan Stubbs, alleged officers had pursued Pierre in a high-speed chase through the Soldier Road area before he

pulled out the gun.

On seeing the weapon, officers drew their own guns and Pierre was shot in his left shoulder, it was claimed.

Defence attorney Calvin Seymour countered the prosecution, stating none of it was true.

Mr Seymour said Pierre never had a pellet gun and the officers were following him in a chase and shot at him, resulting in his injury.

Justice Indra Charles summarised the evidence to a jury

of nine before they were excused to deliberate.

After about two hours of deliberation, the Supreme Court jury acquitted Pierre of two counts of firearm possession with intent to put one in fear.

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#### Sunday, March 18th, 2012

The Convention closes on Sunday, March 18th, 2012 with the Annual Parade and Water Baptismal Service at the Western Esplanade, and with the live ZNS Radio 1540 AM, 810 AM and ZNS TV 13 evening broadcast service. During this service, the National Overseer, Bishop Dr. Elgarnet B. Rahming will deliver the final message on the Convention's theme.

#### Moderator:

Bishop Dr. Elgarnet B. Rahming & Minister Jacqueline B. Rahming



## LOCAL NEWS

# Montagu foreshore earns praise for government

IT'S not often that professional critics like Tough Call feel the need to offer kudos to those in office.

After all, they can draw on the multiple resources of the state (including a \$2.5 million-a-year "information service") to stroke themselves. And hopefully, the constructive criticism contained in this column is at least partly responsible for moving things along.

However, in the case of the Montagu foreshore, we intend to make a big exception. Frankly, it was easy for me to believe that this multi-dimensional problem would never be effectively addressed by any government. A horrifying thought.

That dread feeling was appropriately boiled down in this quote from Dr Kathleen Sullivan Sealey, a University of Miami marine biologist who lives in Montagu Heights and has been studying Nassau harbour and other marine areas of the Bahamas for many years.

"If we can't fix the Montagu ramp," she said incredulously, "we can't fix anything in this country."

Well, it has taken more than 20 years, and a lot of handwringing and behind the scenes effort, but finally the multiplicity of issues affecting the Montagu foreshore are being addressed. The response is not perfect, but a brief look at the record is instructive – and credit should be given where it is due.

Here is an excerpt from one of my earlier descriptions of the earlier descriptions that used to exist in this area:

"The Montagu shoreline is one of the few open spaces left on this island. But despite its use by inner city families, cookout vendors, sailing

enthusiasts and pleasure boaters, over the years it has been allowed to degenerate into a monstrous public health and safety hazard.

"The beach has all but disappeared due to man-made erosion, and the inappropriately-placed seawall has to be rebuilt at great expense every few years. The complex intersection is a traffic and pedestrian safety hazard. And there is a significant public health threat from pollution caused by garbage, oil and fuel discharges, human and animal waste, sewerage and storm water runoff.

"Despite the stench and the garbage, the ramshackle market is visited by confused tourists and people who stop their vehicles without warning to chat or park. Trailers block the road during rush hours, leading to miles of daily traffic jams and endless frustration for the 50,000 people living out east.

"The 1960s-vintage ramp was never meant for commercial traffic. The market originated in the 1970s with one or two casual fishermen hawking their catch to passers-by. But over the last 20 years, one of our few recreational areas has been transformed into a public slaughterhouse and commercial boat ramp without the slightest thought and without any remedial action so far."

Fish vendors moved to the ramp in numbers after the closure of Potters Cay in 1991 following an outbreak of conch poisoning. At that time, more than 1,000 people were hospitalised from eating conch infected with bacteria picked up from polluted water around the Paradise Island bridge.

There are now several lay-

ers of commerce at the ramp. They include vendors who buy marine products from the fishermen, freelance fish cleaners; and others who capitalise on the market by providing produce, ice, phone cards or cigarettes. There are also lunch ladies, and lately some entrepreneurs have set up shop in their cars to sell T-shirts and souvenirs.

There is also rising tension between the merchandisers of the marketplace and the jet ski operators who haul and launch their boats at Montagu.

So in 2004, with much fanfare, the Christie administration appointed a parliamentary committee to come up with solutions for "the traffic, health, environmental and related problems" at the Montagu ramp. It was led by independent MP Pierre Dupuch, and spent two years looking at the problem.

"Forty years ago," the committee said in its majority report, "there was no traffic jam caused by people buying fish or trailers being backed across the street. And the entrails from the catch of a lone fisherman's family were quickly swept away with the tides. Today, the commercial area has expanded and in a few years the eastern foreshore will be illegally commercial."

The report pointed to the lack of toilet and waste facilities in a popular recreational area, and noted that the site was too small to justify a major investment in public facilities, and that the commercial activities conflicted with the use of the area as a public park. It called for relocating the vendors and banning the sale of fish or other products at the ramp.



Then opposition MP Brent Symonette dissented from the majority report, arguing that the vendors could continue to be accommodated in the area, and that many of the traffic problems could be solved by improvements to the Johnson Road, Fox Hill Road and Blair intersections with the Eastern Road.

However, no action was taken to implement any of these recommendations, so in 2009 a new public/private sector committee was appointed by Montagu MP Loretta Butler-Turner to take another look at the problem.

Their report concluded that the ramp had become a chaotic free-for-all leading to "tension among vendors, dissatisfaction among residents and constituents and risks for recreational users". It called for redevelopment of the entire area as a public park.

That proposal also languished. Initially, Butler-Turner said it would cost millions and could not be covered by the budget, so the government was seeking to break it into more manageable pieces.

But eventually, action was taken. The Ministry of Works began to implement plans to upgrade the Fox Hill, Johnson Road and Blair junctions with the Eastern Road, as well as some reconfiguration of the ramp area.

These plans were developed from a traffic study years ago that looked at all intersections from Goodmans Bay to Fox Hill in the context of the multi-million-dollar New Providence Road Improvement Project that is nearing completion.

The Fox Hill junction was completed last year. The Blair and Johnson Road intersections, the reconfiguration of the ramp area, and a new roundabout at the junction of Shirley Street and Eastern Road, will all be completed by early April, insiders say. Two commercial-grade public toilet facilities will also be built to this deadline – one near the fort and one near the ramp.

The existing vendors have all been documented and regularised – they will be accommodated near the old hotel pier. Boat trailers will access the ramp just east of the exist-

ing traffic lights, and turning and parking will be on the reclaimed area, off the main road.

Private contractors will be hired to handle solid waste disposal, running water will be available for the first time, and waste from the toilet blocks will apparently be collected in septic tanks.

The reconfiguration of the ramp and the roundabout is expected to cost some \$300,000. The Eastern Road intersections are costed at under \$150,000 each. The beach restoration undertaken by Kerzner International was completed at a cost of \$1.8 million.

Ultimately, the plan is for the entire area to come under the management of an authority similar to the downtown straw market. These works will mark a major improvement in quality of life on the eastern end of the island – just as the roadworks and Saunders Beach restoration have radically transformed the western district.

This is what governments are supposed to do.

## Electronic Infrastructure

In addition to a massive programme of renewal for the country's physical infrastructure – especially on New Providence – the government is also upgrading its electronic infrastructure.

Just before Christmas, I went online and paid my property tax with a credit card and a few clicks of the mouse. I can also pay traffic fines, renew my driver's license and apply for a business license online.

I can do those things because last summer, the Bahamas launched a revamped and expanded e-government online platform – with the help of information communication experts from the government of Singapore.

Over the mid-term, more eServices will be rolled out, including work permit applications and renewals, and payment of Customs duties, passport applications and post office box rentals.

The goal is "to provide best-in-class eServices and increase the country's ranking to become one of the most

attractive countries in the Caribbean to visit, live, work and do business".

According to the 2012 United Nations E-government Survey rankings, we still have a long way to go. South Korea is the world leader in this regard, followed by the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Denmark, with the United States, Canada, France, Norway, Singapore and Sweden close behind.

In Korea, the government's main website has developed into an integrated portal where citizens can find almost every service they want, on both a national and local level.

Some developing countries have begun to catch up with higher-income countries – such as Kazakhstan, Chile, Malaysia, Colombia and Cyprus. Barbados is the sub-regional leader among Caribbean countries, followed by Antigua and Barbuda and the Bahamas.

But we still rank 65th in world e-government development – out of a total of 159 countries.

The UN survey found that governments "have begun to move from a decentralised single-purpose organization model of e-government to an integrated, unified whole-of-government model for the people. This approach supports the strengthening of institutional linkages with greater efficiency and effectiveness of governance systems; and better public service delivery".

A number of countries around the world (especially the United Kingdom and the United States) have also been opening previously 'locked-up' government-held data sets, providing raw data to their citizens. And citizens have actively taken up and made use of these data, the UN report says.

In this context, freedom of Information (FOI) legislation warrants attention. FOI is an important cornerstone of open data use because the latter can only take place when there is a right to access government information.

In 1990, only 13 countries had adopted FOI laws, whereas there are currently 90 out of 193 UN members (or 48 per cent) that have adopted such laws around the world. The Bahamas is currently in the process of passing its own freedom of information act.

What do you think? Send comments to [larry@tribune-media.net](mailto:larry@tribune-media.net)

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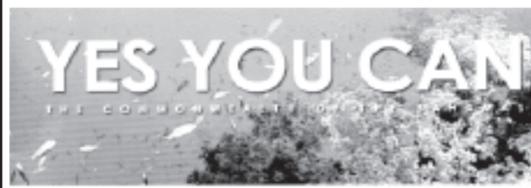


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LOCAL NEWS

# Former MP in tears for next generation

from page one

ment, Mr Maynard said he felt that young people were wasting hard-earned opportunities by indulging in drugs and distancing themselves from social history.

"We have taken over our country politically, but our children are falling behind," Mr Maynard said.

"That is a grievous feeling to me, it makes me feel like I've made sacrifices in vain. Some of us risked our lives, we risked all, so you could have.

"It's emotional for me because when I was making three pounds a week, my mother gave ten shillings of that to the organisation," he said. "I'm not upset about that. I just feel that lying down on Bay Street Black Tuesday hasn't come home to you people."

Heralded as one of the most significant achievements in Bahamian history, Women's Suffrage was achieved when a bill to grant equal voter's rights to women under the

General Assembly Elections Act 1959 was passed on February 23, 1961. After more than a decade of petitioning, the legislation came into effect on June 30, 1962.

Mr Maynard explained that the women activists employed every resource available and sacrificed everything to achieve their goal even at the cost of physical harm.

The suffragettes faced staunch opposition, according to Mr Maynard, who said the most formidable opponent to the movement was Sir Stafford Sands.

"Stafford Sands said that it would never happen," Mr Maynard said. "Not even over his dead body, and when it happened and he lost the elections in 1967, he won but he resigned. He said he would not take his seat in House of Assembly."

Mr Maynard added: "That's why I get angry when they say they don't want Sands' picture on the dollar bill. You need to have his picture there. We need to let the children know that's the nigga. I'm not talk-

ing about colour of skin, I'm talking about bad ways.

"You had suffragettes from the PLP, UBP, independents, but the most important thing is they got together like a hand in a glove and they worked together," he said.

Among the many women who toiled selflessly to achieve this milestone, lead suffragettes were: Mary Ingraham, Mabel Walker, Georgiana Symonette, Eugenia Lockhart, Mildred Moxey, Ethel Kemp and Dame Doris Johnson.

Under the theme Commemorating the Past, Reflecting on the Present, Envisioning the Future: 1962 and Beyond, a symposium reflecting on gender equality and the historic status advancement of Bahamian women began yesterday.

Joined by children and siblings of leading suffragettes, Mr Maynard spoke of his personal experiences as a witness and participant in the revolutionary movement.

Mr Maynard is the son of suffragette Georgianna Symonette and

the father of Charles Maynard, Minister of Youth, Sports and Development. Other relatives present were: Juliette Barnwell, daughter of Mabel Walker; Alice Musgrove-Rolle, daughter of Mary Ingraham; Wallis Carey, daughter of Eugenia Lockhart; and Shirley Cooper, sister of Dame Doris Johnson. Descendants encouraged students to take advantage of the opportunities available to them and to become active participants in the country's development.

Mr Maynard said: "All of us here at this table were not people who worked because we wanted to necessarily, we worked because we were told to and then we got to love it so much we couldn't stop."

He added: "Our mothers made sacrifices and they made sacrifices with you in mind, even before you were conceived. You have to make an effort to make something of yourselves, be one of the leaders in this country. You don't have to be prime minister to be leader, you don't have to be an MP to be leader.

"It's not good enough for some to go away to college and study medicine and become a doctor or a lawyer. You must think of this country and future generations, the way we did."

Jointly organised by the Bureau of Women's Affairs and the College of The Bahamas, the four-day event will feature panelists from institutions in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States.

Panel discussions engaged the following themes: Gender Equality in The Bahamas; Envisioning the Future: Tools for Transformations; and Gender Transformation: Moving Beyond Boundaries.

Mr Maynard added: "People made sacrifices, people did without, people took chances with their lives. I was shot at trying to make things better for you all before you were born.

"I'm not asking you to feel indebted to me for it, you should be indebted to yourself to do the best you can."

## CALL FOR PROBE INTO VOTER FRAUD

from page one

provided the first list of names for the administrator in North Andros. There will be more lists."

"We have requested that a hearing be conducted within 14 days in accordance with the rights guaranteed to legitimate residents of the constituency pursuant to the provisions of section 21 (2) of the Parliamentary Elections Act."

Mr Bannister noted that anyone whose registration has been challenged will have the right to appear before the Returning Officer to prove they live in the North Andros and Berry Islands constituency.

"If any of the persons cannot prove that they are ordinarily resident in the constituency, then I expect that the authorities will take appropriate action to prosecute them for the false oath that they have taken."

On Tuesday, opposition leader Perry Christie said he

would approve of a full investigation of Mr Bannister's claims, dismissing them as an attempt to gain ground after realising PLP candidate Dr Perry Gomez is "ahead of him in polling."

Yesterday, Mr Bannister said: "I welcome his comment that the Parliamentary Commissioner should probe the registration process and turn over his findings to the police immediately.

"In the spirit of co-operation I am prepared to assist Mr Christie. I am prepared to provide the names of the PLP operatives who have been flying unqualified persons in to Andros free of charge to register to vote in that constituency."

He said he has also informed the Parliamentary Commissioner "of the fact that one of the persons who was involved in the process of registering voters in the constituency holds a post of responsibility in the local PLP branch, and has campaigned

in her PLP regalia while involved in the registration process.

"One need only look at her facebook postings during the time that she was involved in the registration process to see that this person could not be fair, unbiased and dispassionate in carrying out her duties.

"There is compelling reason to review the list of persons that she scrutinised for registration, and if any are found to be unqualified, to require her to explain her actions to the police."

Mr Bannister noted that North Andros is a very small community, and everyone knows who has been away for years.

"Interestingly enough," he said, "the first name that voters in North Andros submitted to the administrator for scrutiny is that of the daughter of the other person who was initially responsible for verifying the residence of persons who sought to register as voters in the con-

stituency.

"This person has lived in New Providence for several years and works at a pharmacy in New Providence. I anticipate, in the interest of fairness, that the Parliamentary Commissioner will review her registration documents to see how that person came to be registered in the North Andros and Berry Islands Constituency.

"I cannot conceive for the life of me that the mother can truthfully claim that she did not know that her daughter was illegally registered in the constituency. If the mother is the person who verified her daughter's documents so that she could be registered as a voter in the constituency, then she too should receive a visit from the police, as Mr Christie suggested," he said.

Mr Bannister said the FNM looks forward to being granted a hearing within 14 days on the first list, and plans to move forward with the other lists immediately after.

## LAING: DECISION TO BORROW WAS RIGHT

from page one

Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham revealed in the House of Assembly on Monday that the government will borrow an additional \$65 million from the IDB to complete the already over-budget New Providence Infrastructure Improvement Project.

Once issued, it will take the government's existing road project loan to \$206 million.

Mr Laing compared the government borrowing money for the road works to homeowners borrowing money for renovations.

He said: "If you had to fix your house for the benefit of your family, and you had to borrow, you would do so - especially if you had the means and you could service your debt. The benefits of these road works will far exceed the temporary trouble. This is not money to pay a light bill or rent. This money is being borrowed for necessary infrastructure improvements.

"We have the ability to borrow money from an institution of which we are a mem-

ber and we have the ability to pay the money back."

Mr Laing accused the opposition of "muddying the facts" while they are, in fact, to blame for the amount of money being borrowed.

"What the opposition did not say was that they caused a five-year delay that caused the government to waste more than \$40 million," he said.

Mr Laing also said while he sympathises with those who may have lost their jobs due to the NPIIP, it is the cost that is paid for necessary development. "We have to do what is best for all, not just some. I accept some people were affected negatively but in the long term it is in the best interest of the majority. Not just with better roads, but better quality water, which is a basic human right."

The government will borrow \$30 million for fuel escalation, \$19 million in contingencies, \$14 million for variations and modifications, \$9 million due to delays in project completion and \$5 million in professional and engineering fees.

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# FNM IN LONG ISLAND



**THE CROWD** cheers, above, as Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham endorses the candidacy of Loretta Butler-Turner, below, to stand for the FNM in the seat of Long Island during a rally there on Monday. Photos: **Tim Clarke/Tribune Staff**

## DNA CANDIDATE'S 'COPYCAT' CLAIM

from page one

paigned is the same as their last. Monday night, the Prime Minister told constituents that in the FNM's next term, they will construct a new community hospital and upgrade Deadman's Cay airport with a new terminal and runway.

He also said the FNM will provide "all of Long Island" with potable water through the construction of new Reverse Osmosis plants and the expansion of the current plant in Deadman's Cay with new storage and booster tanks.

Within the next seven to ten days, Mr Ingraham said, there will be a pre-bid meeting for companies bidding for the salt water project, which will see new water mains, water distribution lines, and six transmission stations between Grays and Salt Pond.

However, Mr Cartwright said the FNM "carried on



**DNA CANDIDATE** Mario Cartwright, who has accused the FNM of copying his election tactics in Long Island.

with a lot of rhetoric" at the rally.

"The promises they are making now are the same ones they campaigned on back in 2007," he said. "I feel like this is more empty promises and I doubt they plan to deliver."

Based on the FNM's "track record" — being in power for 15 of the last 20 years, "they would have done it a long time ago if they wanted to do it," Mr Cartwright claimed.

The FNM continues to look at Long Island as a safe seat, which is why the FNM has "taken the constituency for granted for so long," he said.

Mr Cartwright said that when he was president of the Long Island Chamber of Commerce, "much of what they are saying now" the Chamber was advocating for, for two and a half years.

"Yet we got no response from them," he said. "And that is why I got involved with the DNA."

Mr Cartwright also said he's been campaigning on those issues since he announced his candidacy, last December.

"They are basically echoing the sentiments of Mario Cartwright. I addressed the Long Island Chamber of Commerce as the DNA candidate back in January and what they said last night is what I mentioned in my speech," he said.

"So they are basically — for lack of a better word, copying my plans and they recognize that they neglected the place, Ingraham himself said last night — he admitted that he neglected Long Island.

"So what more evidence do they need to have?"

He continued: "Every five years it's the same old story, more promises and promises and they never deliver.

"I think it's high time that they relinquish their claim to Long Island because they have done nothing for us.

"Let some one who is serious about developing Long Island represent the good people of Long Island — and that will be Mario Cartwright."

## CONCERN OVER MARINE POACHERS

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guidelines about the granting of work permits for non-Bahamians working on our fishing boats under the guise of being marine engineers.

"We know that they are mostly fishermen, plain and simple."

Mr Ingraham said that while the Defence Force will increase its presence in the area with a new base in Ragged Island and 10 more boats added to the forces' fleet, the public must also commit to protecting marine resources and do their part in reporting illegal activity regardless of who is involved.

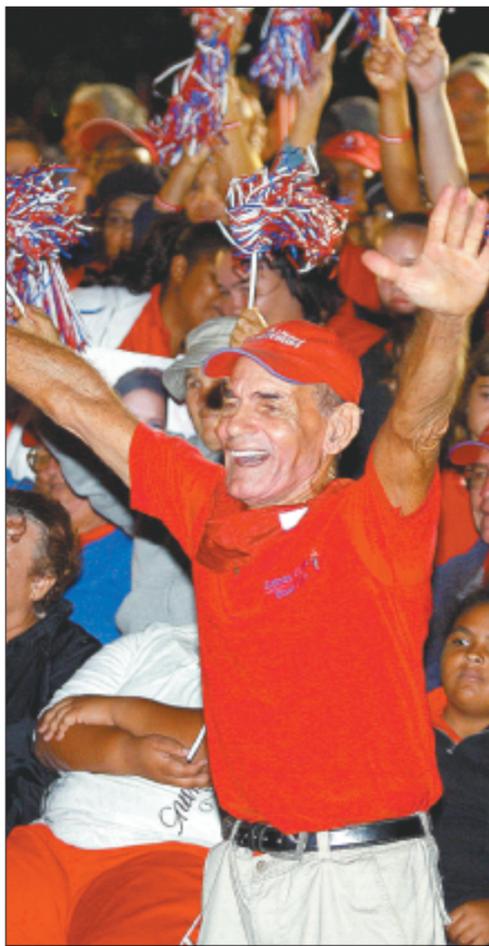
"You must commit to being our eyes on the high seas and reporting any incidents of abuse even when the abuse may be taking place under cover of other of our compatriots," he said.

In addition, Mr Ingraham said Bahamians need to limit the extent to which they enter into "marriages of convenience" with foreigners.

"When a Dominican fisherman marries a Bahamian to get status and then becomes engaged in fishing as a spouse of a Bahamian citizen, there is little the government can do to stop a man working to support his Bahamian wife," he said.

During his trip, Mr Ingraham will be commissioning a new classroom and pre-school in Mangrove Bush and a new technical and vocational block at the NGM Major High School.

According to the prime minister, the Ministry of Works also will be signing contracts for the repair of the Clarence Town Dock and the construction of a new toilet block at the dock.



# PM WARNS AIRPORT STAFF

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hands for them to decide themselves," Mr Ingraham said.

His comments came in Buckley's, Long Island, following the official constituency office opening for FNM incumbent Loretta Butler-Turner on Monday evening.

However, Bahamas Customs Immigration and Allied Workers Union president

Sloan Smith said they are unclear of which "signed agreement" Mr Ingraham is referring to.

He said: "What we were made to understand is that when the officers were hired they signed something that said they would eventually be made to work shift, but we haven't seen anything concrete."

"The only thing that we have seen concrete is the industrial agreement for 2005

to 2010 and the government really wasn't holding true to that."

With a clear confusion among all parties involved, Mr Smith said they are waiting for Mr Ingraham to agree to a meeting.

The minister responsible for civil servants, Deputy Prime Minister Brent Symonette, has also echoed Mr Ingraham's sentiments.

The Lynden Pindling International airport struggled to

process passengers in a timely fashion over the weekend up to Tuesday, although senior officials from both departments covered for staff who refused to work outside the 9am - 5pm work day outlined in General Orders for public servants.

Mr Ingraham warned at an emergency press conference in Exuma on Saturday that persons who did not return to work, from that day, would be dealt with by the public

service without regard to any other consideration.

He said: "Longer lines than we've ever seen before. Some people were in the queue for approximately two hours."

"There were people who fainted and no nurse was on duty. Unfortunately there were significant press calls on the British Airways flight to cover Harry's visit — they were very unhappy."

# A look around Baha Mar



THE TRIBUNE was given a tour around the Baha Mar development, to see how it is progressing, viewing construction as it is under way and to meet workers as they went about the process of creating this huge new development for The Bahamas. In these photographs, we present a glimpse at how the Baha Mar development as it currently stands. Photos: **Felipe Major/Tribune Staff**



**double McFish**

**i'm lovin' it**

