



CONTRIBUTION BY
THE HON. T. DESMOND BANNISTER,
M. P. MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS
TO THE
2021 / 2022 BUDGET
17th JUNE 2021
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCTORY:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this budget with a thankful heart.

First and foremost, Sir, I thank the Bahamian people for their prayers and encouragement. So many times, when I feel tired and discouraged, I get one of those messages that exhort me to hold my head up because I'm doing the right thing. So, I thank all of those discerning prayer warriors who stand in the gap for me and who pray unceasingly for our nation. They are the people who have put us here; they rely upon us to serve with integrity, and to provide leadership for the country. In that respect, I send a special shout out to Mrs. Rosena Heastie and Clara Cooper. Thank you all for your prayers.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I give thanks that I have been fully vaccinated. I'm grateful that I had the opportunity, and I encourage every Bahamian to get vaccinated. It's free, and the demand is rising once again.

Mr. Speaker, I know that some people are afraid

because of the misinformation on the internet, but after seeing people struggle to breathe on ventilators; and after seeing people die from covid, I'm happy that I chose to get vaccinated.... I chose life, Mr. Speaker, and I encourage everyone to do likewise.

The truth of the matter, Sir, is that the country needs to fully open up. Tourists have begun to return in large numbers. In fact, when I looked at airfares to Miami for Saturday afternoon, one of the major carriers was charging more than \$2,000 just for a round trip to Miami. Mr. Speaker, the Bahamas is a hot destination once again. We are the place to be. So, the revenue projections in this budget are right on target.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, Public Health England has recently published a report (Annex 1) that indicates that

the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine is 92% effective against the very dangerous Delta variant of the coronavirus that developed in India. As more tourists

come, Mr. Speaker, we have to protect ourselves, our children, family members and friends, so I urge all Bahamians to do their patriotic duty and vaccinate.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not publicly give thanks for the lives of some who are no longer with us. The last two memorial services that I attended were for Gertrude Simmons of Iguana Way in Carmichael, and Bishop Wenith Davis. Both have similar stories, Mrs.

Simmons attended an all-age school in Millers Long Island. Bishop Davis did the same in Mangrove Cay. They both

came to Nassau and eventually became exceptional educators before moving on to other careers. Both of them touched thousands of lives. Mr. Speaker, it is on the legacies of people like Bishop Wenith Davis and Gertrude Simmons that we find hope for a better Bahamas, and I offer condolences to the Simmons family, and to the Davis family, especially Bishop Ros Davis and Apostle Lee Watson.

Sir, I also offer my condolences to the families of Deborah Wilson and Anthony Keith Taylor of Flamingo Gardens, as well as the Porters from Faith Avenue, and retired Senior Nursing Officer Thelma Veronica Kemp

Rose from Golden Gates # 2.

Mr. Speaker, we have also lost Cedric Saunders, a great Bahamian.

Sir, my prayers extend to my friend Donette Moss in Flamingo Gardens who lost her dear husband Michael on Monday and to Mrs. Patricia Brown who lost her husband Arthur Brown on Monday. A few years ago, Mr. Speaker, Arthur Brown pulled off what many thought was impossible when he built the extension to the S.C McPherson Jr. High during the summer break.

Mr. Speaker, I pay special tribute to Aunt Jane, my late mother's good buddy. They were members of a special class of educators who gave much to this country. I can see them now holding evening classes for the Angels.

Mr. Speaker, I close this portion of my contribution by remembering my friend Peter “Macaroni” Gilcud. Mr. Speaker, some of you know that I worked as a Bus boy and as a bread loader as well as other humble jobs. When I graduated from high school, I could not find a job and my parents could not afford to send me to College. I eventually got a college education because of Track and Field. In my desperation to find employment, I answered an ad in the newspapers and accepted a commission only job. No salary. At the same time, Peter returned home from Minnesota and accepted the same job. He and I worked together as a team. We walked the streets together every day all day long trying to sell an unsellable product. We did that for months before we quit, and between the two of us may be made about \$100. But that experience was a learning one for me. Peter talked all day every day about his experiences, which fascinated me. He had his line where he introduced himself to all of the women as “Sweet Pete”, and to the men as “the cud”. He kept me entertained so much that I almost forgot

that we were not making any money. Those weeks with Peter taught me some valuable lessons, Sir. It also created a permanent bond between us that lasted until his death, even though we did not see each other frequently. Every now and again he would contact me and give me a few pointers. Mr. Speaker, I cherish those memories, his advice, and our friendship; and I take those lessons with me everywhere I go. Rest in peace Sweet Pete.

Mr. Speaker, I give thanks for you and the role that you play in our Parliamentary democracy.

I give thanks for Honourable members....Government and opposition. We all have our role to play to ensure that our precious democracy survives and thrives.

I give thanks for the Most Hon. Prime Minister and the wisdom, compassion and discernment that were conferred upon him to lead this country of ours through the most challenging time that any of us have ever faced. Mr. Speaker, after all of the wonderful

achievements of this Government under this Prime Minister, there's no excuse not to rock with doc again. Thank you, Doc., I'm rocking with you;

Mr. Speaker, I give thanks that by God's grace we are all still here. Through the storms, fear and uncertainty of the strongest Atlantic hurricane in history and the worst pandemic in a century, every member of this Honourable House is still standing. We have been truly blessed.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that we have been blessed with life when there are those who were close to us who did not make it confirms that there are special plans for all of our lives....

- Pineridge and Golden Isles, some of us are going back to preaching full time....
- Exuma, some of us will be running our businesses full time.....
- Englerston, some of us will be returning to the family law firm full time....
- Cat Island, some of us will be happily retired....
- Killarney, some of us will be serving in the second Minnis administration.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to my beloved Carmichael:

CARMICHAEL:

Mr. Speaker, by God's grace and by the will of the good people of Carmichael when I speak in the next budget debate in 2022, it will be as an elected member of the second Minnis administration, so please permit me to focus a little of my time by speaking directly to the people of Carmichael.

I begin by wishing Jennifer Cleare a belated blessed birthday yesterday.

I have an outstanding team in Carmichael. They know what it means to serve, and they work closely together to

really make a difference. I wish that I had more time to spend with them, but the service that I have to give to the country often requires me to be in many different places. So, we have not been able to walk as much as I would like to, especially since we're still in a pandemic; however I have no doubt that Carmichael

is still rocking with Doc; and I have a 9 year old on my team named Tai, who tells that to everyone she meets. Her grandmother tells me that she's been voting for them other people all her life, but Tai is working hard on convincing her to vote FNM. Thank you, Tai. Grammy, please listen to Tai.

Mr. Speaker, I owe a debt of gratitude to the residents of Carmichael who have elected me to make a difference. I have worked every day of the past four years to live up to my commitments to them, and every day I try to find new ways to improve my Carmichael community.

During the past four years, Sir, Carmichael has seen unparalleled growth and development. I need only recite a few:

1. Every classroom and office at the Sir Gerald Cash Primary School is now fully airconditioned; and even though as a result of the pandemic, students have not been able to use the air-conditioning, we know that once the pandemic is behind us the

comfort that the a/c brings to students will enable them and their teachers to perform at their best in the classroom.

2.Thanks to Minister Campbell, we now have an Urban Renewal Centre in the heart of Flamingo Gardens, ably staffed by persons who are committed to serving the community.

3. The Family Life Centre next to the Sir Gerald Cash Primary School has been completely and professionally renovated at a cost of \$203,350.98.

4. As I promised during the 2017 debate, the formerly dilapidated park at Faith Avenue is now completely

renovated with protective walls, exercise equipment, a walking track and even grilling equipment. It is a wonderful place for family recreation.

5.The Phil Smith Park in Belair is currently being completely renovated. Dozens of truckloads of garbage have been removed; and protective walls and lights have been installed just as I promised.

6.The Park at the Mermaid pool and Somerset now has the longest walking trail in the country, together with a brand new tennis court, two pavilions, soccer and football facilities,

basketball court. There are lights on one side of the park, and as soon as I get the next instalment of my constituency allowance, we will begin installing lights on the Somerset side. Hundreds of people use this park on a regular basis; and we hope that the Prime Minister will agree to participate in the park's rededication soon. Another promise kept.

7. Silver Gates now has a very special park. People come from all over the island to enjoy the rubberized walking trail; the exercise stations; the tennis and basketball court; the pavilion and the wi fi.

8. We have paved: Turtle Drive

Emerald Gardens

Asphalt Street

Silver Close

Donohue Terrace

Bel-Dock Avenue

Black Sun Close

Silver Fish Boulevard

Apple Blossom Street

Dive Court

Faith Avenue

Silver Gates Drive

And several unnamed streets in Carmichael

9. Our commitment, as we have gone door to door in the community, has been to provide food vouchers to thousands of Carmichael residents, and at the same time to support small businesses in the Carmichael community.

Mr. Speaker, these are SOME of our achievements in Carmichael. It has been and continues to be my honour to serve the Carmichael community, and I remain grateful for that opportunity, whether it continues through 2022 or 2027.

No matter how long or short my tenure may be, Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud that Cabinet has agreed to provide funding to combat the flooding challenge that afflicts Belair every year.

Mr. Speaker, for twenty years I have besieged successive Governments for funding to deal

decisively with the flooding challenge.

Belair is a community with an extremely high-water table. Whenever we enter the rainy season, many houses on Turtle Drive and on Bel Dock Road are flooded, and time and again residents have lost furniture and suffered

tremendous damage. We have paved Turtle Drive and raised Bel Dock Road, but the problem persists. We have drilled new wells and deepened the existing wells, but when tide gets high those wells only spill water out in the community.

Mr. Speaker, last week's flooding downtown, and the challenges in Pinewood, South Beach and elsewhere reminds us that this flooding challenge is national in nature. In a previous debate I spoke about the fact that downtown Nassau sits in the middle of a bowl. With rising water levels resulting from climate change and an old, outdated drainage system, new solutions had to be considered. Moreover, it did not help that drainage grills were stolen from all over New

Providence, I guess to be sold as scrap metal. The Ministry has now replaced many of these grills, but this type of crime exacerbates our challenges.

We recognized that a new high-tech solution is required, and so our Engineers got to work on the problem. The Cabinet has now allocated the sum of \$1,994,153.90 for us to install a drainage system called the Aco Stormbrixx system in Belair. This will be a trial for the entire country. We also intend to select another trial site in Pinewood Gardens, and the Government is allocating \$2 million for that.

Mr. Speaker, the trial process will take some time and a considerable amount of patience. It will take almost a year to install the system, and once it is installed, we will have to monitor the results. However, once this trial period has been completed, Mr. Speaker, we intend to roll the system out nationally over a period of several years. Mr. Speaker, it is my firm conviction that when I leave Carmichael the drainage problem that has plagued the Belair community will be no

more.

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for being so good to Carmichael. I can assure you, Sir, that there is no question that Carmichael will be rocking with Doc whenever you ring the bell.

THE BUDGET

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the budget.

Sir, this annual exercise is one of the great hallmarks of our thriving democracy. It is one of the reasons why the Bahamas is, in fact, one of the world's great democracies, despite the small size of our population. It is the time when the Government publicly and transparently shows the country and the world what it has spent; how it has spent the people's money; and what it plans to spend in the upcoming year.

We all have our roles.

Mr. Speaker, you are the arbiter of disputes, and dissenting voices are free to speak as they wish so that their views can be heard.

Mr. Speaker, we must all take pride in our ability to freely participate in this process that is not permitted in many countries around the world. I'm certainly grateful to have had the opportunity.

This year we have presented a budget that faces the stark reality of an international recession and pandemic. We on this side have referred to it as a plan for growth. This is the budget that the Government firmly believes will accelerate the recovery of our economy. Despite the rhetoric of the debate, it is a budget that every loyal, patriotic citizen will support. If you vote against the national budget without having presented an alternative budget line for line, you have absolutely zero credibility.

Mr. Speaker, while we may not all agree with the best way to achieve them, no member of this Parliament can honestly disagree with the core pillars of fiscal responsibility; job creation; small business development; healthcare improvements and vaccinations, tourism development; public and private

sector investment; and digitization and innovation. And Mr. Speaker, no reasonable person will disagree with the fact that the Government has been fiscally responsible, so much so that it took the two worst disasters in our history to set us back from achieving a balanced budget during this first Minnis administration. So, Mr. Speaker, I urge all Bahamians to take a serious look at this plan for growth, and to support it to ensure that our beloved Bahamaland returns to the international place of prominence that we all know it should hold.

BOARDS

Mr. Speaker, my portfolio indicates that I have responsibility for relations with Bahamix and seven boards, the Town Planning Board; the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board; the Water & Sewerage Corporation Board; the Straw Market Authority; the Bridge Authority; and the BEC and BPL Boards. I want to briefly discuss the progress made in these areas this year, with the exception of the Town

Planning Boards and the Water & Sewerage Corporation board, which has been more than adequately covered by the Hon. member for Long Island. In the process I offer special thanks to Mr. Pericles Maillis for his stellar service as Chair of the Appeal board.

THE BRIDGE AUTHORITY

I thank Mr. Gregory Bonimy and his Board for their outstanding leadership in very challenging times.

The COVID-19 Pandemic upended all plans for 2020. For most of the 1st Quarter of 2020, operations were quite normal; but everything changed from March 22nd onwards. Nevertheless, TBA managed to complete a few

key maintenance initiatives from July onwards: •

Installed Jersey Walls around the Piers on the Eastern Bridge on the Potter's Cay side.

- Repaired the Asphalt paving to the Approach of the Toll Plaza.

- Repaired the Asphalt paving on the underpass of the Eastern Bridge at the Paradise Island end. • Took over the landscaping of the curbside to the bridges and the toll plaza environs once assumed by Atlantis.
- Effected emergency repairs to the Toll Plaza Canopy columns.
- Constructed retaining wall to prevent soil-runoff from the landscaping of the Eastern Bridge bulkhead.
- Improved signage and markings along strategic points on each bridgeway and waterway.

Certain projects that were planned for 2020 were not undertaken or completed due to COVID-19. They will be carried forward and will be attempted again in 2021, and the multitude of projects that are currently in progress will continue.

Our bridges were closed for a considerable period of time due to the pandemic, so all financial indicators except for income from interest will show decreases in income for 2020.

BAHAMIX

- Since July 2020 Bahamix has produced 24,181.69 tons of asphalt and paved so many miles of road, that it would take forever for me to mention them, so I have attached the list as Annex 2 to this contribution.
- There is an ongoing improvement of the Bahamix compound with the completion of the construction of the foundation for the new state of the art Astec manufactured asphalt plant.
- The asphalt plant foundation construction is now 90 percent complete and is scheduled to be completed by July 2021.
- Bahamix anticipates that the commissioning of new plant will be December of 2021, which will

greatly enhance efficiency.

STRAW MARKET AUTHORITY

We are indebted to Ms. Kelli Ingraham and her dedicated Board for their exemplary service to the country.

The Straw Market was closed on 20th March 2020 in accordance with the provisions of the Emergency Orders. It will be reopened in accordance with the medical and legal advice which indicates when it is safe to do. Vendors will be fully consulted, as their income is impacted by the closure.

The Authority has sought to assist in these difficult times by:

* Providing thanksgiving and Easter Food Vouchers to

Vendors totaling \$67,305.00 to assist during the pandemic.

- * Donating \$50.00 food vouchers to each 2020 registered Vendor in November 2020. The SMA arranged for home delivery of vouchers to our elderly Vendors.

- * Donating \$50.00 food store vouchers to all 2021 Registered Vendors in March 2021. Again, the SMA again arranged for home delivery of vouchers to our elderly

Vendors.

Other Initiatives:

- * The Fire Alarm and Fire Sprinkler System and the Electrical issues at the Bay Street Straw Market have been addressed

- * The market has now been painted in beautiful colours, and The SMA is working on further painting upgrades to its other Straw Markets.
- * Electrical issues at the Paradise Island Straw Market are being addressed.
- * The process of regularizing employees and updating the handbook has been started.

Mr. Speaker, there are some legacy issues that I must address. They speak to the irresponsibility of the former Board under the former administration.

*** N.I.B.:**

From April 2015 to December, 2017, the SMA failed to make any of its required National Insurance contributions.

The SMA's Legacy Debt to NIB as of 19th March, 2019, was \$184,065.08 [\$168,327.83 in outstanding contributions plus interest of \$15,737.25 at 4.25%].

Sir, due to outstanding attention to fiscal matters by this Board under this FNM government, the full debt has now been paid in full. Mr. Speaker, unlike members opposite, this FNM Government does not merely talk about fiscal responsibility in governance.

We act.

*** B.P.L.:**

Mr. Speaker, when this Board was appointed in September 2017, the SMA owed BPL \$139,463.67.

The SMA with the assistance of the Ministry of Finance has now retired that debt. The SMA is now current with its BPL invoices.

Mr. Speaker, unlike members opposite, this FNM Government does not merely talk about fiscal responsibility in governance. We act.

*** Water and Sewerage Corporation:**

In September 2017, the Board met the SMA with a debt of \$58,518.71 to the W&SC. The SMA with the assistance of the Ministry of Finance has now retired that debt. The SMA is current with its W&SC invoices. Mr. Speaker, unlike members opposite, this FNM Government does not merely talk about fiscal responsibility in governance. We act.

*** Bahamas Telecommunications Corporation In**

September 2017, Board met the SMA with a debt of

\$112,319.35 to BTC. (\$45,935.63 for Board Member cell phone charges plus \$66,383.72 in land line charges. The SMA with the assistance of the Ministry of Finance has now retired that debt. In the circumstances, the SMA cancelled all cell phones. Mr. Speaker, unlike members opposite, this FNM Government does not merely talk about fiscal responsibility in governance. We act.

*** Overall Finances:**

The SMA has had no revenue since the closing of the Straw Markets due to the COVID 19 Global Pandemic.

The

Budgeted Expenses for 2020 were \$1,280,185.68 and the Actual Expenses were \$957,682.98, being a decrease of

25%. The Net Loss for the SMA for 2020 was \$777,147.98.

16.3 The Actual Expenses for the SMA as of 31st May, 2021 are \$468,448.63. The SMA estimates a Net Loss for 2021 in the amount of \$1,388,985.68.

*** Supreme Court Action**

Mr. Speaker, on 4th January 2019 a vendor filed a lawsuit which has been the subject of discussion and tabled by the Honourable member for Englerston in this place. On 7th April 2021 the Supreme Court, ordered: "...the action against the Second Defendant [Kelli Ingraham] be struck out on the grounds that the Second Defendant has been improperly or unnecessarily had a party to the

action and that the Writ of Summons filed on 4th January 2019 discloses no reasonable cause of action against the Second Defendant AND THAT the Plaintiff pay the Second Defendant's costs for the application in the sum of \$4,500.00 on or before the 30th June, 2021. Also, Sir, it has now been ordered that The Action will continue solely as against the Straw Market Authority. So, Kelli Ingraham, the Attorney General, Minister of Works are no longer defendants. Thank you for your service Chairman Ingraham. I hope that you get the money that is owed to you.

Mr. Speaker, let me now turn to BPL:

When we were elected, we tabled a secret report in this place that members opposite had paid almost a million

dollars for. That report shows the terrible condition that our electrical infrastructure was in; yet it was hidden from the Bahamian public and marked confidential. That report showed that our electrical infrastructure was ancient, poorly maintained, inefficient, inadequate for our needs, and badly in need of replacement. Yet the report was hidden from the Bahamian people, whose money had paid for it.

At the same time, Sir, the price of electricity was exorbitant, and every year the country was plagued with load shedding throughout the summer.

Worse yet, members opposite can't tell you anything that they did about the problem except bring a team of foreigners in; put them in charge of the Bahamians; and pay them a heap of money. Mr. Speaker, this FNM

Government changed that and put Bahamians in charge of our national utility. You see, Sir, we don't just speak about Bahamianization. We are the party that truly believes in Bahamians.

Mr. Speaker, BPL's challenges made my first year in office a most miserable experience. Load shedding was a daily experience. However, thanks to Chairman Dr. Donovan Moxey; C.E.O. Whitney Heastie and the current Board of Directors, BPL has been completely turned around. We're in the middle of June with average daily temperatures of 87 degrees and have not had a single

incident of load shedding in almost two years!

Nassau, it's about **YOUR FUTURE** just like Doc said it would be!

Mr. Speaker, while there has been no load shedding, we have had some outages in recent times. Some have been caused by challenging weather events. Some

have been caused by careless drivers knocking power poles down. Outages over the past two days were caused by the unfortunate fire on Monday night; and quite frankly, others have been caused by human error.

Mr. Speaker, BPL is working to improve its transmission and distribution capabilities to decrease the number of outages, and they know that I expect that appropriate action will be taken when outages are caused as a result of human error.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the elimination of load shedding, as a result of a deliberate hedging strategy, our power bills are now lower than any of us can remember.

Mr. Speaker, the new board of directors at BPL touted ***Power2Prosper: The BPL Strategic Plan 2020-2025***, and how it would address the ageing and severely weakened generation fleet and the transmission and

distribution grid that was so badly in need of investment. And while the

Board is still working diligently to close the Rate Reduction Bond, Mr. Speaker, I can say that we have seen and experienced the positive results of *Power2Prosper*. It is working, Mr. Speaker.

That plan has five pillars, as follows:

- I. **Safety** – The safety of customers and employees is of paramount importance.
- II. **Customers** – BPL will focus on providing the best possible service at the lowest possible costs.
- III. **People/Employees** – BPL will develop capacity so that the organization and customers benefit from a well-trained,

focused, and productive workforce.

IV. Asset Management – BPL will acquire the right assets for our environment; grow and maintain these assets so that we can provide reliable electricity and other services to customer at the lowest possible costs.

V. Financials – BPL will manage its finances so that the company will be able to consistently collect the revenue that it is due and will generate annual returns that will enable the it to continually invest in its people, processes, and assets in order to provide the best possible service at the lowest possible costs to our consumers.

BPL has entered a new phase of forward momentum.

Building on the beginnings of a turnaround in management of its generation fleet and an ongoing improvement in our customer service, the company has consolidated the gains carved out in the first year of

operation under the guidance of *Power2Prosper: The BPL Strategic Plan 2020-2025*.

Mr. Speaker, while the former administration brought foreigners in to operate BPL, this administration showed that it had confidence in Bahamians. Now, the entirety of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee is 100% Bahamian, and the conclusive, verifiable and undoubtable advances made under this leadership team have been led by Bahamians.

Given the state that we met BPL in, only a well thought

out strategic plan could set the company on the right path. This has been done.

Mr. Speaker, BPL is now marching forward with a complete digital transformation plan, inculcating technology, training and development and an appetite for consistent improvements in customer service into the fabric of its operations. BPL has now turned its attention to improving the Transmission and Distribution network by upgrading its communications lines from copper to fiberoptic so that faults impacting the transmission and distribution network will be cleared more quickly, resulting in reduction of forced outages to customers as well as lessen the damage impact to equipment. The improvement in fibre communications will improve BPL's ability to remotely address outage incidents

without the need to deploy operators to field locations.

In

this way the duration of outage to customers can be significantly lessened.

That digital transformation includes BPL's new Generation Control Center and the new Call Center, which allow for improvements in customer service.

A. STRATEGIC GAINS

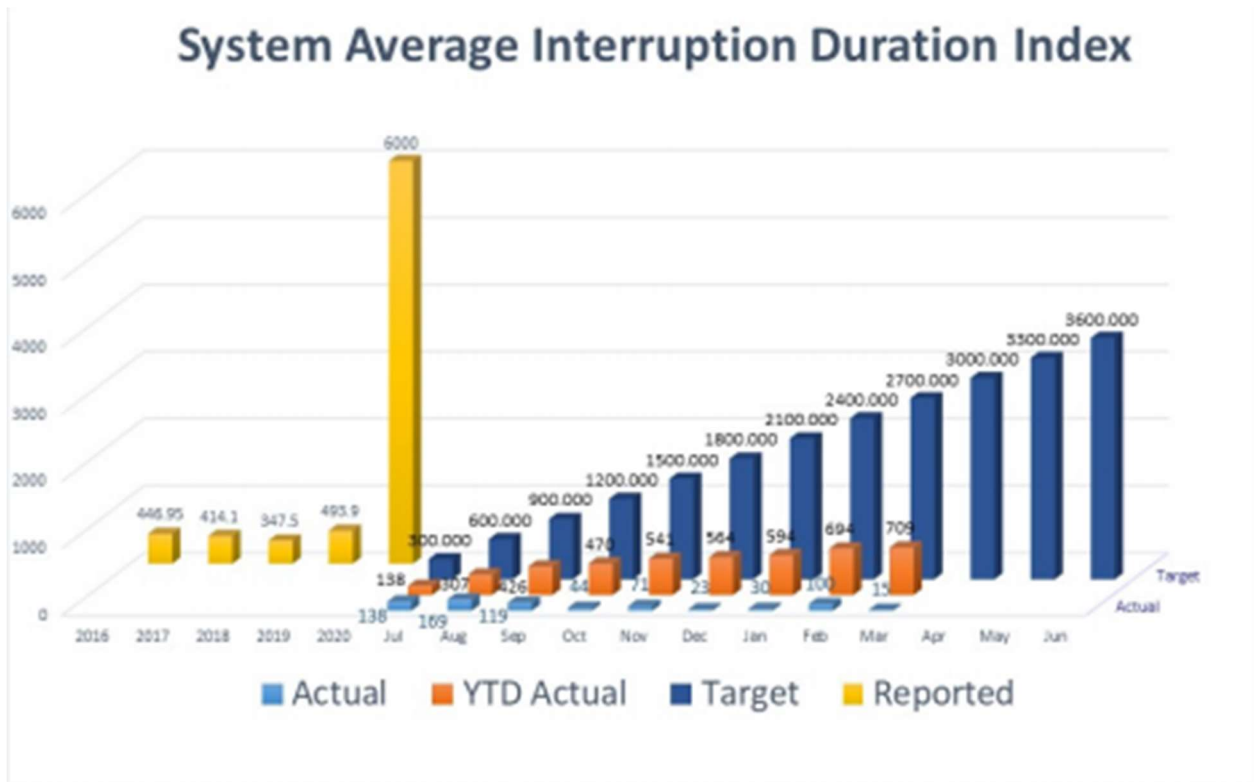
Mr. Speaker,

The turnaround and righting of BPL is well underway.

Our goal is to build a self-sustaining utility that is capable of meeting the growing power infrastructure needs of the country as additional islands are developed throughout the country.

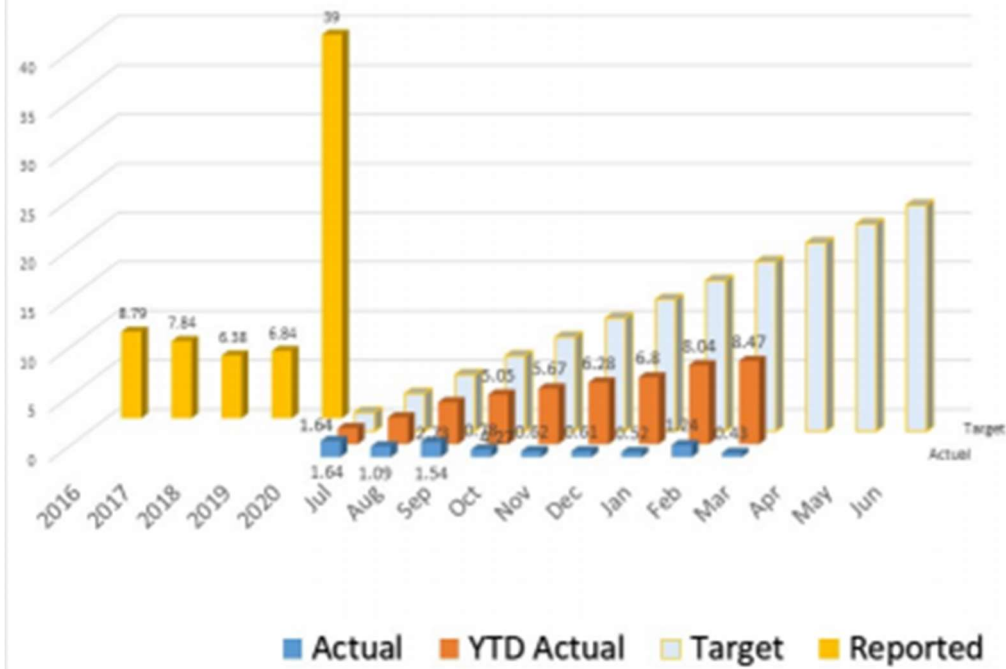
Reliability

The System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI) is an industry standard reliability indicator for electric power utilities. SAIDI is the average outage duration for each customer served and is measured in units of time, often minutes (as BPL does) or hours. BPL has demonstrated a consistent and remarkable improvement in reliability using the SAIDI index. So far for the year, BPL is consistently and significantly under the target duration set for each month. This year, the outages our customers had to endure were on average far shorter than anticipated.

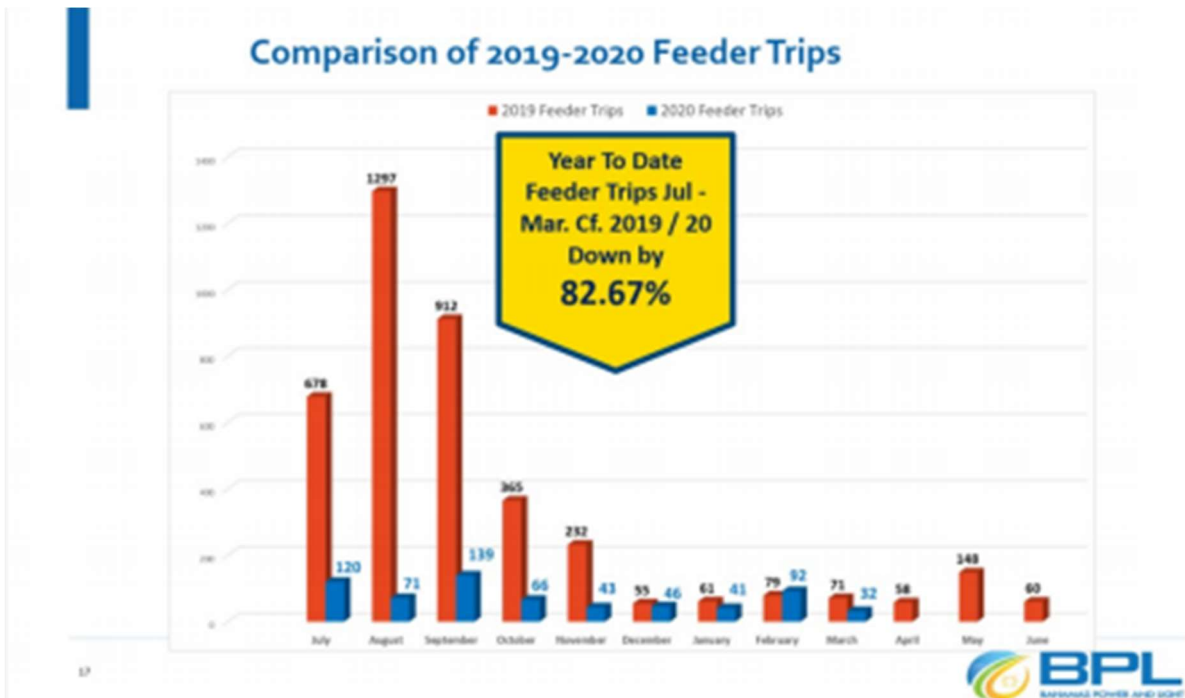


The System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI) is another commonly used reliability indicator. SAIFI is the average number of interruptions that a customer would experience and is measured in units of interruptions per customer. It is usually measured over the course of a year, as with SAIDI. Here again, BPL has demonstrated a consistent improvement. So far for the year, our average customer has experienced a far smaller number of outages than anticipated.

SAIFI



Another verifiable metric demonstrating the improvements at BPL are a comparison of feeder trips. Feeders are the distribution circuits that supply power to one or more (usually more) neighborhoods. The drastic reduction in feeder trips year over year testifies to the appropriateness of the steps we have taken.



Mr. Speaker, before I move on, while I applaud BPL for these stellar achievements, I want to admonish our people about driving habits that have demolished power poles and thereby caused power outages. In recent weeks we have also had power outages as a result of the weather and other challenges. I have informed BPL, Sir, that where outages are caused by human error, appropriate action must be taken.

B. GENERATION

Generation Control Centre

Mr. Speaker, BPL was pleased to celebrate the

inauguration of its new Generation Control Centre (GCC), which began operations in January 2021. The GCC brings control of 100% of BPL's generating assets on New Providence into the same physical space for the first time ever, heralding an unprecedented era of synergy between System Control and the generating team. This will significantly increase efficiency of fleet management and allow for exponentially faster reaction to generation related issues in the system.

The GCC will be key in speeding up the time in which BPL is able to restore units, and the ability of operators to keep the units available and keep them reliable.

Operators from Blue Hills Power Plant, Station B at the Clifton Pier Power Plant, Station A: Wärtsilä at

the Clifton Pier Power Plant, and Big Pond are all located in the same room, permitting the broader impact of new technology including widening the use of SCADA¹ (supervisory control and data acquisition).

Maintenance & Repairs

The lower load requirements during winter allow for planned maintenance and repairs of generation assets, with the aim to have all repairs and maintenance done in time for May. The teams at both Clifton Pier Power Station and Blue Hills Power Station were extremely busy.

A major support project is also underway at Clifton Pier aimed at creating new fuel treatment systems for the engines at Station A. Station A plus Station D will

eventually be baseload generation for NP (supplying 70% of the power to the island), so this project ensures their ability to maintain reliability of fuel supply independent of Station B or other factors.

Meanwhile, at Blue Hills, GT7, GT8 and GT9 are all now in service, with maintenance and repairs ongoing on the remaining units. In addition, the new Sun Oil 16MW

facility is online and generating power to the grid.

Mr. Speaker, on this generation issue, I am aware of the challenges that BPL has experienced in a number of

Family Islands, including Black Point and Staniel Cay, Exuma. I want to ensure those communities that BPL

is working on those challenges, and we expect that they will get relief soon.

SUMMER READINESS

Altogether, then, we can safely account for *a minimum* of between 315 and 350 megawatts across the summer against an expected summer peak load of 250MW. (For reference, the highest recorded peak reached is 248MW in 2017.) So Mr. Speaker, we feel confident that there will be no load shedding this summer.

The Future:

Mr. Speaker, our intention remains that Bahamian investor will have equity ownership in the energy sector going forward. BPL expects to break ground on a new station this year, depending on the successful Rate Reduction Bond offering. I will speak more to

this topic on another occasion.

Renewable Energy Programme:

The Small-Scale Renewable Generation (SSRG) Program continued during this year with the level of activity increased from the previous year.

- 155 Applications were received during 2019, 86 systems completed the application process and passed their functional test.
- 99 Applications were received during 2020, 51 systems completed the application process and passed their functional test.
- Current active capacity in the SSRG program is 4,007 KW (excluding Over Yonder Cay)

URCA accepted BPL's five-year renewable plan along with other technical and commercial documentation to

support larger scale private installations along with “utility-scale” installations. The company is now working on financial and technical approaches to achieve that goal. After delays caused by Dorian and COVID19, the installation of the microgrid on Ragged Island is now complete and will soon be going through its final

commissioning stages. Ragged Island is scheduled for commissioning this coming August.

Five (5) Projects are in development for the island of Abaco that will provide the ability to inject renewable energy into the grid as well as provide a resilient alternative energy supply to critical installations. BPL has embarked on the development of two microgrid projects on Abaco (Hospital/Government Complex in

Marsh Harbour, and Coopers Town Clinic).

Dorian Restoration

With the recent energizing of Red Bays, every single community on mainland Abaco either has power, or has access to power. Our work on the island continues to advance. To begin with, we concentrated on restoring the

Distribution system first, which is effectively mostly rebuilt, allowing the reconnection of all customers on the mainland who are ready to be reconnected.

We are now in the process of rebuilding the Transmission network on the island, building in increased resiliency and efficiency with the use of new ductile metal poles and other technological advances, adding in redundant lines and SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) remote control.

Regarding the

¹Abaco Cays, power is present on the entire Northern Loop (Matt Lowes, Man-O-War, Dickies, Guana etc.).

The dedicated line that feeds Elbow Cay (and the nearby cays) from the mainland needs to be replaced, and we are

working with the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection to advance this project, as well as the reconnection of the Southern Loop (Tilloo, Lubbers etc.).

Innovations

Mr. Speaker, BPL is excited about a number of innovations that you will hear about shortly. Among these are:

¹SCADA is a control system architecture comprising computers networked data communications and graphical user interfaces GUI for high level process supervisory management and is one of the tools BPL is using to increase the efficiency of asset management across the fleet.

1. The imminent access to a Distributed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in New Providence. BESS will complement and supplement BPL's primary generation systems by helping the Company respond to voltage spikes and sags, and as an alternative to generators to provide uninterrupted power supply during outages of other sources. The vendor has been selected and the board has approved this IDB-funded project.
2. The imminent launch of the BPL ATM at the Mall at Marathon.
3. The development of the MyBPL Customer Engagement App.

4. AMI (Advanced Metering

Infrastructure) **C. CUSTOMER**

SERVICE

Mr. Speaker, BPL does not want a single customer to be disconnected. To this end, in July 2020, BPL offered disconnected customers an option to be reconnected by paying 25% on outstanding bill and the balance to be extended over six months. On November 18th, 2020, BPL introduced two new payment arrangement options:

- 25% payment on outstanding arrears and balance to be spread over 12 months
- 50% payment on outstanding arrears and balance to be spread over 6 months

Residential customers interested in either of the payment arrangements completed and signed a payment request form. After making the required payment, an arrangement was opened by the customer service representative. The majority of customers requested the 25% down payment with the outstanding balance paid over twelve months.

Payment plans Opened	58	383	380	468	1,289
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To ensure there was consistent cash flow as a result of the payment arrangements, BPL changed its disconnection strategy to disconnection for nonpayment of total delinquent balances over 30 days and over \$500, which commenced on

January 4, 2021.

Customer Relations

Primary among the major Customer Relations initiatives over the course of the year was the change in meter reading and billing cycle for residential and small commercial customers. The purpose of change was to put the customer bills in their hands prior to the end of the month. It allows the customer to plan better prior to the average end of month payday.

The other major initiative in Customer Relations was the transition to a full-service Call Center (CALL BPL, 2255275). Hours of operations were expanded from 8AM to 7PM during the week and 10am to 6pm on weekends and holidays.

Also, BPL introduced the payment kiosk at the mall at

Marathon. The kiosk allows customers to make payments by cash or cheques 24 hours a day.

Customer Service

Over the course of the fiscal year, BPL restructured the Customer Service Division. That restructuring provided us the opportunity to delve into Customer Service Policy reform, to identify training needs and to facilitate core training sessions.

We completed a Knowledge Gap Analysis intended to identify and rectify training needs and improve the delivery of extraordinary Customer Service. The analysis resulted in training sessions on core customer service areas like Customer Application Policy and dealing with the Security Deposits.

Customer Sales

BPL supplied 107,481 customers as at the ten months from July 1, 2020, through April 30, 2021 with 1,196,154,021 units billed. This provided a total sales dollar value of \$278,803,333.34.

RATE REDUCTION BOND

Mr. Speaker,

The Rate Reduction Bond will allow BPL to make the much-needed additional investments in both generation and our Transmission and Distribution network, as well as in training of employees in order to build greater capacity within the organization.

The former administration created BPL in debt, and they left it in debt. The refinancing of the legacy BEC loans totaling \$246 million, and the BPL Interim loan of \$75 million, began in June 2019 with the issuance of the RFP to appoint a bookrunner/lead arranger, for the issuance of the long-

anticipated Rate Reduction Bonds (RRBs).

In February 2020, BPL/BRRBL (Bahamas Rate Reduction Bond Limited) were close to launching the Rate Reduction Bonds transaction in a listed, public format.

However, following the declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020 the public markets were severely impacted. As a result, BPL/BRRBL had to delay launch of the transaction.

In July 2020 BPL and its lead arranger began to explore alternative funding options, these centered on accessing different markets and debt formats, using the Rate Reduction Bond structure to minimize the cost of debt ultimately borne by BPL customers. You will hear more about this as BPL takes steps to launch the RRB in short

order.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, the Government of The Bahamas continues to support BPL because it supports the strategic plan. That plan

is good for the Company and good for the Bahamian people.

The Board and the Executive team are executing on this plan

and achieving success. Turning around a company the size

and complexity of BPL will take years, and we have made

great strides in year one. We also recognize and know that

once BPL is in the position to

provide reliable electricity services at the lowest possible

costs, especially with cost stability, it will serve as an

economic game changer for the country.

THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS:

Mr. Speaker, in my role as Minister of Public Works I am

guided daily by two bosses, Permanent Secretary

extraordinaire Mrs. Cora Bain Colebrooke, and our workaholic Director of Public Works, Ms. Melanie Roach. They are an incomparable team. I have been blessed to have the opportunity to work with them and to learn from them even though I'm never able to keep up with the constant flow of their emails.

Niki, Bianca and Vaughn see and put up with my grouchy side every day with very few complaints. They see the ups and downs, and the challenges of how public service impacts our lives. I'm so very thankful for their patience and understanding.

Mrs. Frazier is there early every morning to make my disorganized office comfortable, and Cambridge knows that he's in charge of the Ministry whenever I'm out. I thank them both.

Mr. Speaker, I also give thanks for the many, many outstanding professionals who serve tirelessly at the Ministry of Public Works for the betterment of all Bahamians.

Mr. Speaker, one truism about the Ministry of Public Works is that it is never boring. At every moment of every day there is something that needs to be fixed in the Bahamas. We do our best within the budgetary

limitations, and for that reason I'm thankful that the staff of the Ministry are receiving the highest number of promotions this year that we have ever had during any year in the history of that Ministry.

Human Resources Unit:

Mr. Speaker today, I'm pleased to celebrate the accomplishments of the Human Resources Unit. Indeed, First Assistant MRS. Julianna Braynen and her entire staff must be commended for their hard work and commitment to excellence.

In 2018 and 2019, having received the approved Career Path for technical staff of the Northern Compound from the Ministry of the Public Service, the Human Resources Unit

not only embarked on an extensive promotion exercise but also ensured that the status of

weekly and/or temporary employees were regularized in the public service. Today, my Ministry sees the results of teamwork and improved productivity.

Mr. Speaker, I have been advised by none other than the Minister with responsibility that this year the Ministry of Public Works broke all records with respect to promotions.

I am advised that to date 194 Orders have been completed, 37 are pending, and that there are an additional Public Service Commission submission. That adds up to a total of 306 happy employees when the Ministry of the Public Service releases the approved letters next month. Thank you, Minister Rolle.

This record was indeed an outstanding accomplishment, and the HR unit must be commended. Never before in the history

of the Ministry has this size promotion exercise ever been attempted. We are aware that some staff members of the northern compound waited for more than 20 years to receive a promotion. Unfortunately, they could not be promoted until the career paths were approved. Fortunately, that task has been successfully completed, and others will not have to wait long after qualifying for their status to be regularized.

Mr. Speaker, the “good news” is not limited to the Northern Compound. The HRU also received the approved career path for inspectors, and as a result, twenty-one (21) inspectors are to receive promotions, and in some cases double promotions. These officers would have waited ten (10) years or more to receive a promotion.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister, I celebrate with our employees. They are indeed deserving. Whenever ANYTHING happens ANYWHERE in this country, the Ministry of Public Works is called on, and we seek to answer promptly. Our employees know that the comfort of the Bahamian populace depends on their reliability and efficiency. It is time that promotions reflect their dedication.

Building Control

Mr. Speaker, the Building Control functions of my Ministry have been under increased national scrutiny this year.

In this respect, I make four preliminary comments.

First, this FNM Government will ALWAYS comply with the law.

Secondly, I commend the Building Control Officer, Mr.

Brent Ferguson, who is a professional engineer. He brings a high level of integrity and dedication to his job.

Third, Mr. Speaker, I have made, as I am entitled to make, some very strong comments on a recent Supreme Court ruling. I want to ensure, however, that my comments are noted as criticism of the judgment, not of the Judge.

Fourth, Sir, matters related to this topic are currently before the court. I will be guided accordingly so that nothing that I say will breach the sub judice rule.

This is in direct contrast to comments that were made by the Honourable member for Pineridge and the Honourable member for Englerston during this debate. Both of them made statements that purported to be factual conclusions on the issues that the court must decide in the case that was filed against me. But, Mr. Speaker, I don't mind because I

continue to be guided by Desiderata. I “Speak [my] truth quietly and clearly,” so when they were throwing shade at me for the past two years I only smiled. Now, as far as I’m concerned that case should be over.

On 15th April the court ordered the parties to file certain documents on or before

31st May 2021. The Order said that in default the party’s pleadings would stand dismissed. The Plaintiffs defaulted, so as of 1st June 2021 their twice reamended Statement of Claim stands dismissed. Unless the court extends the time, the court action is at an end.

With that said Mr. Speaker, let me add that the Building Control Unit of my Ministry impacts every one of us. The Building Control Officer is a statutory position. Whenever any of us seek to erect a structure or make significant

alterations to any structure, he and his Inspectors seek to ensure that they meet the requisite

standards for safety, both for the occupier and for the community. If the plumbing, electrical or structural standards are not met, we could face disaster. The job of the BCO is to ensure that the standards are met by EVERYONE.

Mr. Speaker, because certain matters are before the courts, I will be circumspect in my comments; however, I can say that the Government has taken the position that unregulated communities are dangerous to the health of our people.

These communities are built on other people's land without their permission. Illegal and dangerous electrical and water hookups are the norm. The sanitation measures

are meagre or nonexistent. This is in Carmichael in the heart

of my constituency.

Before the Mud was destroyed in Dorian it was impacted by dangerous fires caused by illegal and unregulated generators. During Dorian an undetermined number of people were killed in the shantytowns. More shantytowns are being constructed throughout the country every day, and the existing shantytowns continue to grow.

Previously, the Supreme Court had issued an injunction that prohibited the Government from demolishing existing shanty structures, and also prohibited persons from constructing or adding to these structures. The Government realized that persons were building in breach of the injunction, and we set out to demolish those illegal structures.

In accordance with Cabinet's mandate, I led a multi-agency

team on a site visit to The Farm on Saturday, 6th February 2021. The visit revealed the recent proliferation of a thriving community consisting of many unregulated, newly constructed, structures extending almost to the Treasure Cay Airport; the development of new unauthorized and unpaved roads; sanitary challenges; illegal electrical generators and wiring; illegal water piping; improper sewerage & waste disposal; and diverse commercial activity including bar rooms, stores, dance halls.

It is clear that the community poses critical sanitary and health challenges; that it is likely to negatively impact the water table; and among other challenges, through the unregulated utilization of electric power via haphazardly strewn power lines which evidence commercial activity and pose a challenge to the lives of residents.

As a direct result of the site visit, immediate action was taken. A police task force led by Chief Superintendent Taylor, OIC Abaco and inclusive of representatives from the various government agencies, oversaw the operation:

- a team of commercial electricians visited each residence at The Farm to disconnect and confiscate any generators that were observed
- only the main entrance was permitted as an access route

Further, in accordance with my Communication to the House of Assembly (HOA) on Wednesday 14th March 2021 and on the authority of the Minister with

responsibility for the environment, a total of forty-five (45) incomplete and unoccupied structures on The Farm Shanty Town, near Treasure Cay, Abaco were demolished on Thursday, 22nd April 2021.

On Friday and Saturday, May 14th and 15th, 2021 My

Ministry team, accompanied by officers from the Royal

Bahamas Police Force (RBPF), Royal Bahamas Defence

Force (RBDF) and the Department of Immigration (DOI)

again entered The Farm Shanty Town where an additional

ten (10) structures were demolished. Seven (7) out of the

ten (10) structures removed had previously been occupied.

The Debris from the demolitions have been safely disposed of. Personal and household items from the structures have also been secured.

In our continuing efforts, during the week of 25th to 28th

May another twenty (20) structures were demolished; all of which were previously occupied, with the exception of one (1) structure which was presently under construction.

The court has now issued an injunction prohibiting the demolition of any more structures, and the Government will obey that court Order.

The BCO has sought to uphold the law with respect to all construction in the country, and we await the court's guidance on the shantytown issue. In the interim I do ask

everyone to comply with the provisions of the Buildings Regulation Act and the Building Code; and I lament the reports of the proliferation of continued unregulated construction activities on private property and on Crown land throughout the country in shantytowns since last week.

The Numbers:

Mr. Speaker, the member for East Grand Bahama referred briefly to my budget. The capital budget for the Ministry of Public Works this year is \$108,424,452. That's \$42,673,068 less than last year. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Works always wants more money than he gets. It's just a fact of life. There is so much to be done. However, Mr.

Speaker, I give thanks that we have been able to get a considerable amount of funding for capital works even as the world is still in a recession and pandemic. Mr. Speaker, that

is a tribute to the masterful manner in which the good doc prescribed the appropriate medication to manage our economy in unprecedented times. The Bahamian people trust Dr. Minnis. The Bahamas is rocking with you Doc.

Let me put this in perspective, Mr. Speaker, during the last 14 months this caring FNM Government spent:

\$25.9 million on COVID-19 public health and safety measures. This investment ensured that our healthcare system and healthcare workers had the support needed to sustain us through the crisis.

- \$118.0 million in government-funded unemployment assistance. This budget contribution put cash directly in the hands of unemployed and self-employed Bahamians impacted by the economic downturn. This sum does not include, and is in addition to, the earned benefits that were paid out by NIB under its ordinary unemployment benefits program.

- \$32.8 million in social assistance. This cash injection largely funded the extensive food assistance program supported jointly by the government and NGOs. It ensured that the most vulnerable had access to food.

- \$44.4 million in the government's payroll support programme. This contribution allowed private businesses

to use tax credits to pay their employees, saving approximately 15,000 private sector jobs,

- \$53.3 million in business continuity support to Bahamian Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses. This investment provided hundreds of Bahamian businesses access to grants and government-guaranteed loans administered by the SBDC to survive, expand and jumpstart.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the cynics can say whatever they

want, but that's an unbudgeted \$251.4 million that the people's caring government spent to ensure that the Bahamian people could eat and live-in dignity during the pandemic.

Thank you for caring so very deeply Doc.

So Mr. Speaker, I'm grateful that I have a budget, and extremely thankful that there is some money for us to continue our service to the Bahamian people.

Stimulus Initiative

Mr. Speaker, during the height of the pandemic, us Government showed how much we care. As a result, hundreds of Bahamians were employed in various initiatives, so while some others were spreading fables, falsely alleging that we spent \$20 million on sidewalks, here's what we did:

1. Road "Markings" and "Sign" Installation

Many small contracts were issued too directly and indirectly provide much needed relief for the construction industry. Small Contractors were engaged for the installation of road markings and traffic signs which enabled the Ministry to address a number of safety issues that were raised by the public.

Mr. Speaker, the truth of the matter is that road markings and traffic sign installation enhance safety for pedestrians and drivers alike. Restriping and traffic signs are needed more often in both heavily trafficked areas (urban areas), semi urban area and Family Islands such as crosswalks and stop bars. The Ministry will continue its efforts in ensuring the areas that needs traffic signs and road markings are addressed with the given resources. The

Government through the Ministry of Public Works will continue to engage the small contractors because this has provided opportunity to Bahamians to participate in building and sustaining the infrastructure, and improving the safety of the road network. To our small contractors who did the road markings? It's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

2. New Providence Traffic Signals Upgrades and software

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we are aware that the existing Traffic infrastructure is about four (4) decades old. Pipes and components are brittle and expensive to maintain. We have begun to update the and installing modern equipment and technology to provide better traffic flow, safety and improve travel time. The process includes:

1. replacing all incandescent bulbs to LED's which is long lasting, better visibility.

2. Trenching to change all the underground electrical wires and conduits which are in bad condition.

3. Install new equipment and accessories with modern technology ready.

We have already completed installations at Annex 3

And anticipate that these actions will reduce the

exorbitant maintenance cost of traffic signals to the

Government, and improve road safety while decreasing

delays to the motoring public and Pedestrians. To the

small contractors who continue to work on the traffic

signal upgrades, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like

Doc said it would be!

3. Sidewalk Initiative

Mr. Speaker, in our continued efforts to keep the pedestrians safe, we have mobilized a number of small contractors a number of sidewalks, mostly over the hill.

Lest I be falsely accused of political bias, I will admit that the overwhelming majority of the sidewalks were built in Englerston. When it comes to the safety of the Bahamian people, Mr. Speaker, I don't see colours. Mr. Speaker, to those small contractors who were able to earn some money to feed their families, pay the rent or mortgage, and buy schoolbooks for their children in the midst of a pandemic.

It's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

4. Drainage - Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic, small contractors have

drilled in excess of one hundred drainage wells throughout New Providence. As I indicated earlier, Sir, the challenges now require us to move to higher tech drainage solutions, but in the interim, we have worked to ensure that communities throughout the island get immediate relief while at the same time benefitting many small contractors. To those small drainage contractors, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

5. Parks

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of this contribution I bragged about my parks in Carmichael. However, they are not to be seen in isolation. All over this island small contractors have been busy at work turning open spaces into scenic, beautiful healthy parks. I'm really proud of

the work that we have started, and are committed to continue in order to enhance healthy lifestyles among us people.

Mr. Speaker, I'm most excited about the plans that we have for Windsor Park. Windsor Park AKA Dorsey Park, is the historic heart of cricket and baseball in the?

Bahamas. It represents an important part of our sporting tradition. It's where many of our stars, such as the

Wenty, Eddie, Mario, Keith, Wardy, Andy, Leighton,

Kevin, Cory and Linda Ford developed their athletic

skills. Just about all of them played on national teams.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about Windsor Park, we're

talking about professional sports contracts, Del Jane, St

Pauli Girl Barons and the Holsten Knights. Mr. Speaker,

when we are finished remodeling Windsor Park, it will

once again be THE PLACE to play baseball and cricket over the hill. We are investing in the wholesome development of our children, Mr. Speaker. So East Street and Windsor Lane, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Mr. Speaker, one challenge that we are bound to face is that since the pandemic many construction materials are in short supply, and the prices fluctuate every day.

Building anything at this time is a financial challenge, so I fully expect that some of our cost estimates will be revised in the upcoming months.

What We Intend to Do:

Mr. Speaker, we have to be prudent and utilize our resources properly. This year we have many projects underway that we wish to continue or to complete. I will

Speak to some of the larger ones.

Mr. Speaker, I never come here to attack anyone. I focus on the positive, but sometimes people force me to respond to their outlandish allegations. For these four years, Mr. Speaker, my solemn pledge has been to NOT follow members opposite in the manner in which they betrayed the trust of the Bahamian people. Lest we forget, Mr. Speaker, they are the ones who committed \$30 million of our tax money on a building on Wulff Road. The challenge is that the Government did not own the land then, nor does it own the land now. They went ahead with that building without having so much a lease on the land. In short, Mr. Speaker, they did exactly what is happening in the shantytowns by constructing a building on someone else's land without the owner's permission.

The result is an albatross on Wulff road that the Bahamian people paid tens of millions for but cannot use. The result is that we have an incomplete albatross on Wulff Road, and not a single one of them would do the honourable thing and accept responsibility. Mr. Speaker, \$30 million down the drain.

Mr. Speaker, off Gladstone Road is another monument to their folly. An unexplained 91% cost overrun on an incomplete and non-operational wastewater treatment plant. They need to tell us:

6. Where did the \$18.3 million go?

7. Who is responsible for what Water & Sewerage

Executives referred to as a “stinker”?

8. Why were middlemen paid \$1.7 million?

9. What was the “questionable foundation” and the

“External influences / manipulation” that concerned the Board?

10. Who overruled the Board and to pay unauthorized millions to an ineffective contractor who the Board recommended for termination?

11. Mr. Speaker, we have millions gone and no answers from members opposite; and they want the Bahamian people to trust THEM??

Mr. Speaker, the Bahamian people will never forget the multimillion dollar contracts that were signed on the day before the election. Nor will they forget the scandalous \$4 million dollars that they paid to as contractor to allegedly prepay interest in so called PPP Agreements. Who prepays interest? These actions were unforgiveable betrayals of our trust.

What about the BAMSI scandals, Sir, and the fumbling non-explanations for that folly?

What about the millions that were wasted when a high bidder was awarded the contract for the Smith's Point seawall? I had to eventually terminate that contractor and hire the competent contractor who had been the low bidder in the first place.

What about the millions that were jeopardized when construction was started on an ill-advised Post Office with no approved plans; no traffic impact study; no site assessment for ground contamination; and no building permit? If that is how they govern, how would they have the moral authority to enforce the law with respect to shanty towns. When under their administration the Government itself broke the law in exactly the same way

as the squatters are?

Mr. Speaker, if they run on their abysmal record, they will not win a single seat.

Elect them again, Mr. Speaker? The Bahamian people een fool.

Mr. Speaker, I was challenged on Tuesday when the member for Cat Island blamed this Government for the airport not being constructed in Cat Island. I had a duty to this Parliament to look into the allegations. If he was right, I would have to say so even though it would make me look incompetent.

I instructed my office to look into the matter. The Deputy Director produced a Minute for me which I will read. I want you to know, Sir, that the Deputy Director is an Engineer. If an Engineer misrepresents anything he is

liable to lose his licence. The Minute reads:

STATUS OF PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
– THE
BIGHT CAT ISLAND BAHAMAS

The Cabinet by ICN33 (14) 10 agree that the

Government would guarantee repayment in the amount of 11.5 M to the Cat Island Partners monies spent toward the development of a new terminal building including runway and airside facilities as at captioned.

By letter dated 23 March 2016, the Permanent

Secretary advised the Developer, represented by Alexiou Knowles & Co that the agreement for construction by the Developers and repayment by the Government did not pan out and that the government would construct the facility using its own resources. The project was to be

funded by NIB,

(availability of the funds is to be confirmed).

By Tender Report dated 15 Feb 2016 the following design team was approved:

The Architect Studio – Architectural - Michael Moss
Pyramid

Industries – Mechanical and Electrical - Rodger Lewis The
Engineering Group – Civil and Structural Engineering -
Hammond Rahming

Veritas Consultants – Quantity Surveying Services -
John Michael Clark

The Total Approved Funding for this service is

\$1,174,542.50. The design was substantially completed in
April of 2015.

Stantec Consulting International Ltd was engaged to

provide a review of the documents to ensure compliance with the international standards.

Land Surveying works carried out by Clement Albury was completed in Aug of 2016. By Memorandum dated 6th March 2015, Permanent Secretary Colin Higgs advised the Officer of Prime Minister of the need to acquisition property in the area where the runway encroaches on property owned by “Cream Property Ltd”. This acquisition remains outstanding.

The following of contractors was approved for tender in June of 2015:

Woosley Construction

Larry Treco

Cavalier Construction

Buildex Construction

Brokell Construction (Brutenell Kelly)

NDC Construction (Nathaniel Bain)

FES Construction (Fletcher McIntosh)

In the Final Cost Report dated December 2015 Veritas

Consultants provided a recommended cost of

\$18,925,758.15 inclusive of Customs Duties for terminal

building and landside works. Approval to sit with the

recommended contractor Wooslee Construction to agree

the price was not received.

It is intended that the airside works will be completed as

a separate contract.

Approved drawing for the terminal building and landside

works are available for collection in Buildings Control.

If it is intended to commence the works there is a need to

review the design to ensure completeness and

compliance with the latest international standards and the agree the construction price.

So, Mr. Speaker, you have the truth. There are several conclusions:

First, members opposite did start the process for building the airport.

Secondly, Government does not own all of the required land, and had to compulsorily acquire the land that was needed for the runway, which they knew from 6th March, 2015.

I have come across no evidence whatsoever to suggest that members opposite took any steps whatsoever to acquire the land in the 21 months between August, 2015 and elections in May, 2017. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm in the clear. It wasn't me or this administration. Members

opposite dropped the ball on the Cat Island airport themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I could speak about a number of other multi million dollar messes that they created by wasting our money, but I promised to be positive in this debate.

Besides, dwelling on their follies would only depress us all, and if I waste time answering their false allegations I will be falling into their trap. So Mr. Speaker, let me move on to positive news:

Inagua School

Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise at the very outset that we propose to begin construction of the new school in Inagua this year. Nine years ago your FNM Government left money in the budget for a new school for Inagua. The PLP punished Inagua, but have no fear....YOUR FNM

Government cares. We will build that school in Inagua.

You see Inagua, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like

Doc said it would be!

BUILDING MAINTENANCE AND

CONSTRUCTION \$13,984,556 down from

\$15,850,972

Carry over projects

Government House Renovations and Restorations

Mr. Speaker, Government House is a neoclassical

structure that was built in 1806; hence it is more than two

hundred years old. In 1825 The Oriental Herald

described it as the best building of the kind throughout the

West Indies. There have been additions and renovations

through the years, with the last major renovation in 1940.

Obviously, it is long overdue for a complete overhaul if

we are to preserve this national treasure.

The project commenced in June last year during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic and amidst lockdowns and curfews. The project had a completion date of October 2021, which has now been revised to January/February 2022. The Contractor is optimistic that there being no other setbacks, that he is able to complete the project by December 31st 2021. At the height of the construction about sixty to eighty (60-80) Bahamians has been employed. This project has presented many challenges as the decay is extensive however, the results of all of our efforts will yield an extensively renovated and restored Government House that will make Bahamians proud.

Nassau, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it

would be!

Renovations to the Freeport Post Office, Freeport

Grand Bahamas

The Renovations and Repairs to the Freeport Post office began in October of 2020. The iconic structure on the Grand Bahama landscape had fallen in disrepair over the years and further impacted by numerous hurricanes, the latest being Hurricane Dorian.

To date, the roof has been completely repaired, all windows and doors have been changed to hurricane impact, and the structural works are nearing completion.

Outstanding works include, but not limited to, the replacing all mailboxes, new A/C chiller system, new restrooms, kitchenette, and a completely new modernized circulation desk.

Projected Practical Completion: September 2020.

Pineridge, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Construction of South Andros All Purpose

Gymnasium – Phase 2 - South Andros

The Phase II of the Construction of South Andros All

Purpose Gymnasium began in January 2021. This

multipurpose structure will serve as a hurricane shelter, a

gymnasium for various indoor sports and recreation, a

center with classrooms for after-school programs and a

fitness Centre. When completed, it will be the largest gym

in the country.

To date, the exterior plastering of the building is nearing

completion, the metal roof, fire suppression, A/C

ductworks, electrical lines and plumbing works are all

being installed. The trenching of the foundation for pump and generator house has begun. Long lead specialty items have been ordered inclusive of hurricane impact windows and door.

Projected Practical Completion: Works are scheduled to be completed March 2022 at which time I look forward to seeing Mr. Picewell Forbes and new M.P. Kenneth Smith participating prominently in the opening ceremonies.

South Andros, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Renovations to the Office of The Prime Minister,

Harold DeGregory Complex

The Harold DeGregory Complex in Freeport, Grand

Bahama, which houses numerous agencies inclusive of

The Office of The Prime Minister, received extensive damage brought about by Hurricane Dorian. The roof of the building was damaged severely. Presently the upper roof of the building is being changed. The lower level roof has already been completed. The ground floor offices of the building were also was severely damaged due to flooding. Therefore, flood barrier shields will be installed at all entry doors to hopefully prevent such damage in the future.

Projected Practical Completion: August 2020. Grand Bahama, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Ministry of Tourism and Aviation Proposed

Renovation and Expansion of the LPIA Fire Services

Facility

This facility is critical for aviation safety, the construction of which consists of structural, interior and exterior repairs designed to withstand higher hurricane impact.

The improvements provide expanded Male and Female Dormitory spaces and a Truck Garage to accommodate the upgrade to the fleet of fire fighting vehicles.

Scheduled for completion in August 2021, a complete modernization of the electrical, plumbing, mechanical and communication systems are proposed for the facility.

Peter Outten and the other dedicated Firefighters, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Andre Rodgers Baseball Stadium

What a mess, Mr. Speaker. Members opposite started this stadium like many other projects, with unrealistic price estimates. Originally priced at approximately \$17

million, the completed stadium will cost almost twice as much.

- The overall project is approximately 60% completed.
- There are a number of outstanding civil design matters to be completed
- The Contractor is in the process of executing the
- work required to bring permanent power to the site.
- The preparation for the field construction has begun
- The Scoreboard, seating and Stadium Lighting
- have been ordered

Our upcoming baseball players, it's about YOUR

FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Ragged Island Multipurpose Center Phase 1

This is the Prime Minister's dream.....the most resilient building in the country that should resist winds in excess of 180 miles per hour. The building consists of modern classrooms; several residences for teachers; sporting

facilities; and a hurricane shelter. It will be an example of what modern schools in the family islands will look like, and is a tribute to the FNM's commitment to providing equality of education for all of our children no matter where they live.

The first phase of the Multipurpose Center involved the mobilization, demolition and setting out of the project.

The Project comprises of a school, teachers Residence, hurricane shelter, and community center. It's design to withstand hurricane force winds up to 250 mph and has a degree of solar power. Due to the remoteness of the island the project's mobilization cost is high. Phase 2

construction has commenced. Ragged Island, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

BRIDGE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

\$3,015,351.00

Carry over projects

Staniard Creek Bridge

Mr. Speaker, Staniard Creek is my home. Unlike many who have been in this place, I have ensured that the biggest need in my home community has been met. Mr. Speaker,

I'm not going to stand in this place and blame anyone else for what I woulda, coulda, shoulda do for my home when I had the chance to do it and did not. These bridges are the lifeblood of family island communities. Without them, people would have to take the boat to go to work or do their daily chores.

This project is nearing completion. The modern new bridge has been constructed and opened. The balance of

the works includes demolition of the old bridge, dredging of the Staniard Creek Channel and completion of construction of the concrete culverts along the main road from the Queen's Highway into Staniard Creek. Staniard Creek, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Little Abaco Bridge

The causeway that was constructed under the former administration fell into the water during hurricane Dorian.

We are now building a modern, resilient bridge for the people of Abaco. Construction of the bridge was on target until COVID travel restrictions delayed the arrival of the bridge manufacturers construction supervisor from the United Kingdom. It is anticipated that construction will proceed quickly thereon as all of the materials and

equipment for the erection of the bridge have been delivered to Abaco. Prime Minister, after Long Island, Spanish Wells, London Creek, and Staniard Creek, you will soon have another modern, iconic bridge to open in the family islands. Abaco, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

New Projects

Mr. Speaker, we are looking to initiate a few new projects with the funds that we have budgeted.

Repairs to Davey Creek and Millers Creek Bridges in North Andros (\$500,000.00)

Mr. Speaker, every time I travel into Lowe Sound I'm in fear. You cross Davey and Millers Creek with small bridges that looks as though they will collapse anytime. Urgent replacement is required. Lowe Sound, it's about

YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Repairs to Staniel Cay Bridge in Staniel Cay, Exuma

(\$250,000.00)

Mr. Speaker, there is a similar situation in Staniel Cay.

The causeway in poor condition and is suffering severe scouring to the foundations. Urgent repair is required.

Staniel Cay, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Replacement of Barretarre Causeway and Bridge

#1/#2, Exuma (\$5,000,000.00)

Mr. Speaker, we started our rejuvenation of Exuma with a

new dock in Barratarree, which is the gateway to the

Cays, and is critical for our tourism product. As you enter

Barratarree, there are insufficient openings in the

causeway to allow for the peak flow predations and

consequently, the concrete apron to the approach embankments have been damaged. It is thus proposed to install more openings in the causeway to allow for greater water flow under the structure. Barratarree, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

New Bridge north of Long Island Airport, Long Island
(\$1,000,000.00)

Mr. Speaker, during storm events, the runway of the Deadman's Cay airport and surrounding areas have severe flooding issues. The current culvert located on the Queens Highway, to the north of the airport is inadequately sized for these flood events. It is proposed to increase drainage capabilities by replacing the culvert with a bridge with a considerable larger opening. It is proposed to commence this project early in 2022. Long Island, it's about YOUR

FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

PORTS AND DOCKS \$7,621,888.00

Carry over projects

Stabilization of the Coast Road, Elbow Cay, Abaco

Mr. Speaker, we heard the member for Central and South

Abaco speak to this project, which is now completed,

and has prevented Elbow Cay from splitting in half.

Retention payments will be made in this fiscal year.

Elbow Cay, it is about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc

said it would be!

Dredging of channel between McCleans Town Dock

and Sweetings Cay Dock, Grand Bahama

This project involves the maintenance dredging of the

route channel between McCleans town dock and

Sweetings cay dock. A distance of approximately 28,800

feet. The contractor is A & D Gaitors Equipment Rock and Sand from Grand Bahama. The project cost is \$370,000.00 and the contractor has been mobilized.

Sweeting's Cay, it is about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Rock Sound Dock, Eleuthera

The member for South Eleuthera brought this project to our attention. He is passionate about his community, and we had to do it. As a result, Rock Sound now has a modern, deep water commercial dock, with a timber dock being completed as I speak. The works involved:

- Demolition and removal of existing deteriorated warehouse building.
- Installation of 429 linear feet of sheet piles to the mail boat dock

- Reclamation of 80 foot wide by 100 foot long of seabed.
- Construction of reinforced concrete slab area to the main dock area with capping beam with RO/RO ramp.
- Dredging of the seabed to the area in the front of dock wall.
- Installation of bollards, cleats, fendering systems and solar lights in the dock area.
- Construction of a new 12 foot wide by 220 feet long timber dock.
- Concrete repairs to the concrete approach side walls and slab surface to the timber dock
- Construction of timber gazebo shed and fish cleaning station.

Contract awarded in the sum of Two Million Eight Hundred and Thirty-Four Thousand Four Hundred and Ninety Dollars and Sixty-Seven Cents (\$2,834,490.67).

The concrete portion of the works are completed.

Contractor is currently working on the timber dock, gazebo and fish cleaning station. Project should be completed by the end of this month, and Doc will have another important family island project to open. For those who care about

Rock Sound, THANK HANK, and remember Rock Sound, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I have committed to the M.P. for South Eleuthera that timber the docks in J.C. and Tarpum Bay will be rebuilt. Like I said THANK HANK,

and I want Tarpum Bay and James Cistern to remember
it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would
be!

Lisbon Creek Dock and Burnt Rock Seawall, Andros

The construction works include:

- Removal of existing dock slab and replace with a new 8” thick reinforced concrete dock slab over the entire facility.
- Concrete repairs to the concrete bulkhead.
- Dredging of the seabed to the area in the vicinity of the dock and the approach channel.
- Provide marine bollards, cleats and fenders to the dock
- Construction of boat ramp for small boats
- Construction of seawall to the west of the site

due to serious erosion of the road.

- Construction and repair of seawall at Burnt Rock

due to serious erosion of the road.

A contract has been awarded for Two Million Three Hundred and Sixteen Thousand, Seventy-One Dollars and Fifty-Two cents (\$2,316,071.52) VAT inclusive. The contractor has been paid a mobilization payment and is awaiting issuance of an Environmental Clearance Certificate to commence work on site. Lisbon Creek, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

New Projects

Repairs to RBDF Ramp (East Bay Street), New

Providence (\$500,000.00)

The ramp at the RBDF facility on East Bay Street is in poor condition and provides inadequate depth for the safe

launch of vessels. It is proposed to replace the existing concrete ramp and undertake dredging in the vicinity. Due to the urgent nature of the project, it is proposed to commence the project in July 2021. I remind our Defence Force Officers, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Replacement of portions of Yamacraw Seawall and Road Renovations in Eastern N.P. (\$1,000,000.00)

The existing Yamacraw seawall has an insufficient height to prevent overtopping, even during normal weather conditions at high tide. This overtopping cause's considerable water and seaweed to be deposited within the road carriageway, creating dangerous driving conditions. It is proposed to increase the height of the wall and provide a wave deflection profile. It may be

necessary to provide either a concrete step/rock revetment to break the incoming waves at critical locations. As part of the project it is proposed to provide drainage and landscaping to enhance the area which is popular with locals for recreational activities. Yamacraw, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Repair to Marshall Road Seawall in New Providence
(\$500,000.00)

The seawall in the Marshall Road area of New Providence, is inadequate and during storm events the road floods causing dangerous driving conditions and flooding to adjacent properties. It is proposed to extend the seawall and also undertake repairs of existing seawalls where necessary. Drainage will also be provided.

Marshall Road, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc

said it would be!

Repairs to Murphy Town/Southside Dock in Abaco

During the passage of Hurricane Dorian, the timber deck of the dock was severely damaged. It is proposed to replace the dock. Murphy Town, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Repairs to Crown Haven Dock, North Abaco

(\$135,000.00)

During the passage of Hurricane Dorian, the timber deck of the dock was damaged. It is proposed to repair the dock and repave the dock area. Crown Haven, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Repairs to Lowe Sound, Red Bays, Nichols Town and

Conch Sound Docks in North Andros (\$950,000.00)

These timber docks have been damaged for many years

and the replacement/repair is long overdue. So, Lowe Sound, Red Bays, Nichols Town and Conch Sound, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Repairs to Bullock's Harbour Dock, Berry Islands

(\$2,500,000.00)

The main mail boat dock is in poor condition with no roll on/roll off (ro/ro) ramp and access is restricted due to the inadequate depth of the approach channel. It is proposed to undertake major upgrades to the facility with the provision of a ro/ro ramp, new sheet piled wall/bulkhead, reinforced concrete dock slab, provision of bollards/fenders and undertake dredging in the vicinity of the dock. Yes, Berry Islands, this is in addition to your beautiful new airport, so it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Construction of Dock in Black Point in the Exuma

Cays (\$2,500,000.00)

The main mail boat dock in Black Point is constructed of timber and is in a poor condition and there are a high risk of collapse. It is proposed to construct a concrete piled dock Also provided will be a ro/ro ramp with new timber docks for the use of locals and tourists. Once again Black point, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Repair of Graham Harbour Dock and Cockburn Dock in San Salvador (\$2,500,000.00)

The docks in San Salvador are in poor condition and upgrades are required to provide facilities that are adequate for the mail boat service that provide vital supplies to the island. San Salvador, it's about YOUR

FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

ROAD REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE -

\$20,831,115.00

Current Projects

Long Island Road Repairs and Carriage way

Rehabilitation. Project

Rehabilitation and repairs to approx. 5 miles of roads in central and north Long Island from the Airport to

Seymours and various sections in the south. The cost of the project is \$4.3 million, and the works have commenced.

It's important for us to appreciate that asphalt roads take longer than sand seal roads, so I ask for Patience Long

Island. You will soon have the highest quality roads

possible as you prepare for the construction of your brand

new airport. Yes, Long Island, it's about YOUR

FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

ELEUTHERA ROAD REPAIRS AND CARRIAGEWAY REHABILITATION PROJECT

Reconstruction of 15 miles of roads in various sections of the QHW across the island in hot mix asphalt. The project cost is \$11.1 million. The project is over 75% completed.

Once again Eleuthera, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Abaco Seawall and Carriageway Rehabilitation works.

The works include construction of approximately 1500 feet of insitu concrete gravity retaining wall with 4 feet wide concrete slab walkway adjacent to the seawall.

Scarifying or milling of the existing damaged road surface (highway) and replacing with a double sand seal

layer where applicable. The contract costs are \$1.27 million and, works are now approximately 50% completed. Abaco, once again, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Black Point Exuma, Road Repairs and Carriage way Rehabilitation

Much needed repairs and reconstruction of over 3 miles of roads in Black Point at a cost \$1.5 million. The project is now substantially completed. Black Point, once again, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

EXUMA ROAD REPAIRS AND CARRIAGE WAY REHABILITATION. PROJECT.

This is another road project being part of the Family Island

Programme. It involves ten (10) miles of road rehabilitation from the Airport to the town centre including isolated repairs in other sections of the island.

The project budget is \$8.04 million with a duration of twelve (12) months. Exuma, once again, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Tarpum Bay Road Repairs and

Carriageway Rehabilitation – Eleuthera

Repairs to existing roads in the Tarpum Bay Settlement of South Eleuthera, at a cost of eight hundred thousand dollars

(\$800,000.00) as well as Governor's Harbour and Hatchet Bay in pearrock and sand seal. The work will begin shortly.

Tarpum Bay, Governor's Harbour and Hatchet Bay, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Harbour Island Road Repairs and Carriageway

Rehabilitation- Harbour Island, Eleuthera

Reconstruction and repairs of 6 miles of roads in Harbour

Island in pearrock and sand seal. The project cost is two

million, seven hundred thousand dollars (\$2.7M). The

contractor has mobilized to site with works started on first

week of May 2021. Expected completion is December

2021. Yes Harbour Island and North Eleuthera, just like

Spanish Wells, which has their new bridge and road, it's

about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Grand Bahama Road Repairs and Carriage way

Rehabilitation. Project

Reconstruction of approximately eight (8) miles of road in

East, Central and West Grand Bahama. The works will be in Hot mix asphalt at a cost of \$6.1 million. The works are now 30% completed. Once again Grand Bahama, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Design of Gladstone Road Improvement Project

(From JFK Drive to Carmichael Road)

Gladstone Road in its present form is a three (3) mile long, single carriage. Due to the high volume of traffic and conflicts that it sees on a daily basis, it is functioning well below its design level. The Ministry has engaged the JV team of Engineering & Technical Services Ltd. and Parsons to deliver a design for and monitor the construction of the upgraded corridor. When the design is completed the corridor will be converted from a single carriageway to a dual carriageway. This carriageway will

compose the following:

1. four 12 foot travel lanes, two in each direction.
2. a central median that not only houses street lighting, but also, drastically reduces opposing movement conflicts.
3. the improvement of the six major junctions to enhance safety and traffic movements.
4. improved drainage;
5. properly designated and designed bus lay bays and shelters

Currently we are about 60% completed with the design work. Yes Carmichael, Tall Pines, Southern Shores and Golden Isles, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Completion of Twin Lakes Subdivision Project

(\$692,360.26)

The project is substantially completed, and the roadways are being used for its intended purpose. It is expected to be completed by end of the summer. Yes Killarney, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Village Road project (\$7,141,788.80)

The condition of the single carriage way Village Road (Between East Bay Street and St. Andrew's Drive) has deteriorated over its 20 plus year lifespan. The Ministry of Public Works is desirous to rehabilitate this roadway, improve its level of service and install critical power and water infrastructure upgrades in conjunction with

Bahamas

Power and Light (BPL) and Water and Sewerage

Corporation (WSC). To this end the Ministry of Public

Works engaged in a tender exercise for the procurement of a Design and Build type Contract to develop detailed design and construction of the identified works. Yes Village Road and eastern New Providence, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Proposed Windsor Field Road & Airport Industrial Park Intersection

The intersection is to be widened with a turning lane in order to alleviate the congestion and improve general safety that occurs due to frequency of trucks turning into Airport Industrial Park, eliminate the likeliness of overtaking occurring near intersection due to queuing of vehicles. Western New Providence, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Mr. Speaker, while I'm referring to Windsor Field Road,

let me reiterate the comments of the member for Freetown
about our

AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME

Great Harbour Cay Airport Landside

The GHC Terminal is approximately 75% completed and is scheduled to be completed by October 2021.

Great Harbour Cay - runway, apron, carpark &

Lighting upgrades

With the contract for the new Terminal Building, the airport runway, taxiway, apron and carparks need to be upgraded. The project started in June 2019. The original budget for the project was \$3.4 million, however additional funding in the amount of \$5.9 million was approved for the runway RESA and strip improvement to meet ICAO standards. The project completion date is now

set for the Last quarter of 2021. Great Harbour Cay, as I said earlier, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Rehabilitation and repairs to the Runway at Bimini

International Airport- South Bimini

Mr. Speaker, I'm so proud of the member for West End and Bimini. She is seeing the total reconstruction of the 6500 feet runway with addition of a new turn pad in hotmix asphalt in Bimini. The cost of the project is \$5.6 million with a duration of 9 months. The project is progressing well with the temporary runway completed and works to the existing runway to start in two weeks.

Long Island International Airport - Deadman's Cay,

Long Island

A new terminal building is currently out to Tender.

Tenders are due back by the end of the month, and it is anticipated that a contract will be awarded in early August for construction to commence in September 2021. The civil works is part of the overall project for a new airport which will involve extending the runway to 6500ft, and raising it substantially to prevent flooding. The civil works cost is estimated at \$10 million. Long Island, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Mr. Speaker, the airport in Exuma has been tendered and the ground-breaking ceremonies concluded, so Exuma is well on its way to having a spankadocious brand new airport. North Eleuthera, you are next. So Exuma and North Eleuthera, it's about YOUR FUTURE just like Doc said it would be!

Mr. Speaker, I did not get to speak about the Glass Window bridge, or about the planned repairs to the Thomas A. Robinson Stadium, or the planned Traffic Control and Management Centre. I will speak to them on another occasion.

As I come close to my conclusion, Sir, I wish to advise that

I have attached to the notes of my contribution, a chart outlining the more than 2,500 projects that the Ministry of Public Works has engaged in over the past four years.

That's more than 600 projects each year Mr. Speaker. I apologize for not going through the document today for this Honourable House....it's 63 pages long. The work that we have done speaks for us!

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Speaker, I close this contribution by giving thanks for the Big Fisherman, AKA the member for Garden Hills. You have truly made a difference everywhere that you went. In Education, in Road Traffic, and in the Public Service. We all owe you much, as do tens of thousands of Bahamians. You are leaving with your integrity and legacy intact. Enjoy your retirement.

Sir, it is also my honour to wish all of the fathers and fathers to be in this Honourable House and throughout us beautiful country a blessed Father's Day. This will be me first Father's Day where I can't actually touch my father. However, I'm grateful that I had a real father, who made a positive difference in the lives of his children. He and me late mother are my two heroes, and I only hope that men will step forward and be fathers to their children, not mere

sperm donors.

On a personal level, I'm grateful that my father was blessed with a long life. I'm also grateful that he touched so many lives; taught so many thousands of children; and was an exemplary example. Knowing him, right now he's up there lecturing the angels on their department.

Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to serve as Deputy Prime Minister has been a tremendous honour. I'm grateful that the Prime Minister appointed me to serve in his Cabinet and as his Deputy. I look forward to the opportunity to serve in the second Minnis Administration, and I am honoured to confirm that the good people of Carmichael support this budget.