

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

38th Annual Conference of the Barbados Union of Teachers

Almond Bay Conference Centre

Monday April 2nd 2012

Mr. Master of Ceremonies, Hon Ronald Jones, Minister of Education & Human Resource Development, Feature Speaker, Mr Desmond Browne Chairman Samuel Jackman Polytechnic, Mrs. Cecile Humphrey, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development, Mr. Laurie King Chief Education, Mrs. Joy Adamson Deputy Education Officer [ag], Mr. Walter Maloney, President of the NUPW, Trustees, specially invited guest, members, ladies and gentlemen, you have been welcomed to this the opening ceremony of the 38th Annual Conference of the Barbados Union of Teachers, I too want to add my greetings.

I am indeed thankful to the Almighty God for affording me the opportunity to be able to address the gathering at yet another Annual Conference. The Barbados Union of Teachers continues to put the welfare of our teachers at the forefront of our existence and I assure you that that will be forever our aim once it is under my leadership.

The past year has been pretty trying for teaching fraternity as the task of educating our nation's children was undertaken. Let me commend the teachers for the great job they continue to do in the despite the challenges which they face from day to day.

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

The Barbados Union of Teachers has embraced the social partnership, an arrangement which has served this country well and has been hailed worldwide as a model to emulate. The Union sees it as gross disrespect when decisions are made unilaterally even though the partnership exists. We are cognizant of where the power to make decisions lies, but in the spirit of the partnership it is only courteous that discussion are held with the BUT, case in point the recent changes to the school dates.

TEACHER TRAINING

The Barbados Union of Teachers continues to push for the training of its members. We must commend the Ministry of Education and the Erdiston Teachers' Training College for efforts to train our young teachers. The BUT hopes that this thrust will continue and that there will be fairness and transparency when the selection process is undertaken. We often hear about persons who slip through the cracks but the Union is of the belief that this training has been going on too long for the existing cracks not to be sealed. I believe there will come a time where teachers should enter Erdiston before they go into the classroom but at this time when we still have some untrained temporary teachers out there who still need to be trained, it will not be acceptable for any person to enter the college without being in the classroom. We need the Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development to be vigilant.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION TRAINING

The BUT would like to record that teachers who pursued the Associate Degree in Physical Education at the Barbados Community College have started training at Erdiston pursuing a Teachers Training Certificate in Physical Education, no longer will these teachers have to give up their PE programme in order to become a trained teacher. The BUT would hope that a similar programme for Music, IT and Art is in the pipe line.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT DOCUMENT

The Barbados Union of Teachers has a vision for education in Barbados. So much so that an exercise was undertaken to develop a collective bargaining document that will assist in the management of the teaching profession. The Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development ensured that schools were closed so the Union could have had zonal meetings with its members to peruse and discuss the document. Subsequently, the Union and the Ministry of Education met and went through the document which was then forwarded to the Ministry of the Civil Service. Up to this juncture we have not received any word from that Ministry. A recent reminder was send and the BUT looks forward to the start of the negotiations. Let me take this opportunity to commend the Ministry of Education& Human Resource Development for the enthusiasm and alacrity with which they approached the discussion of the document.

APPOINTMENTS

As with previous years, this year under review has yielded issues that have reoccurred. The area of appointments continues to fester and is reaching crisis levels. There are some 18 posts of Principal in the Primary system to be filled ,some 86 senior teacher assignments and some teachers who are still to be appointed following the changes to the Public Service Act. The Barbados Union of Teachers is calling for serious attention to be paid to this issue. At a recent quarterly meeting we were told that the Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development has been given the green light to advertised the positions of Principal in the Primary system and Senior Teacher assignments, the BUT is pleading with the Ministry to advertised these positions as soon as possible before more teacher who were acting retire. A similar call is made to the Personnel Administration to ensure that interviews are held without delay. On a positive note the BUT was informed that the green light has been given and some of the Early Childhood Coordinators have started receiving payment for the assignment which they have been performing for the past eight years. Thank you Madam PS.

TEACHERS SERVICE COMMISSION

Discussions have been ongoing for the past seventeen years relative to the establishment of a Teachers Service Commission and I can report that at our Quarterly meeting we informed that the Permanent Secretary will be taking responsibility for the process of giving birth to this entity.

MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT CARD

The Union's vision continued with the successful launce of our Membership / Discount Card. The response has been fair so far and those who have accessed the card are enjoying the benefits. We are constantly seeking to add more businesses to the group

and we hope that in these trying economic times that our members will try to save money through the discounts being offered at those businesses partnering with us. We will continue to urge members who have not yet secured their card to do so as soon as possible. The equipment will be available during this conference so you can call on Mr. Dwane Goddard and his team to get your card.

NAPSAC

A few years ago we came to this meeting having to explain the deficit that NAPSAC found itself with. The Barbados Union of Teachers entered into discussion with the National Sports Council and developed a vision for NAPSAC. Every since then NAPSAC has improved tremendously and is now being hailed as the number one sports meet in the island. Financially NAPSAC is on firm ground and plays an integral part in the funding of the athletic team which represents Barbados at the Caribbean Union of Teachers bi-annual games. I must commend the committee which oversees and executes the plans for NAPSAC for the terrific job they are doing and will continue to do. The future of our athletes looks very bright as we all observed the tremendous performances of the athletes on the “sub-standard track” at the National Stadium. Some eighty zonal records and seven meet records were set during the games this year and this speaks volumes for our athletes and the teachers behind the athletes.

The Barbados Union of Teachers will continue to ensure that this avenue is provided for our young students to showcase their athletic ability. As a Principal, I call on my fellow Principals to give the necessary support to the students at your respective schools. I have seen the benefits of what that high level of support can do for those children. I

know some of us focus on the academics but the enhancement of self-esteem and self-concept can be facilitated through the performance of the students at NAPSAC. School takes place at the National Stadium for Hillaby Turner's Hall during the Zone Meet and the Finals. I urge fellow Principals to do the same. I must again commend the Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development for their involvement in NAPSAC. They too have seen the importance of this meet to the overall development to our students. Those of you who would have attended the meets and the semi-finals and final would have enjoyed the atmosphere which was electric. The drums kept the students and spectators on their feet and the music in between races was very well received. This has all helped to make NAPSAC the product it is today and I don't foresee any changes of that aspect anytime soon. The drums will continue to roll. Thanks to all the other sponsors who have made NAPSAC the success it has been and will continue to be.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Ladies and Gentlemen the Barbados Union of Teachers continues to have a vision for education. The Union believes that if quality education is to be a hall mark of Barbados' Educational System, then our teachers must be on the cutting edge to deliver that quality education. Yearly we provide professional development workshops for our members however, at a meeting last year in St. Lucia the BUT was made aware that the Canadian Teachers Federation was conducting some Summer Institutes throughout the OECS and had subsequently done a Pilot in Jamaica. Discussions were entered into with CTF, with the hope that this initiative could be rolled out in Barbados. The Barbados Union of Teachers is pleased to announce that the Summer Institute will be

conducted in Barbados in Summer of 2012 through 2015. The Institute is scheduled for July 16 to 27, 2012 and will consist of four modules. These are:

Early Childhood Education

Differentiated Instruction

Authentic Assessment Practices

Reading and Literacy

This institute will be opened to 100 principals, senior teachers, teachers and officers of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development has endorsed the programme and are partnering with the Barbados Union of Teachers to execute the Institute. The personnel from CTF visited Barbados and met with the Barbados Union of Teachers and our Trinidad and Jamaica counterparts to share information and finalise details for the Institute. Deighton Griffith Secondary School has been identified as the venue for the Institute, additionally four co –tutors from Barbados have been selected to assist the tutors from Canada. Application forms have been sent to schools via the Ministry of Education& Human Resource Development email platform and can be accessed on the Barbados Union of Teachers website at www.butbarbados.com.

HOTERSAL PROJECT

The Waterford project is still on stream. We have had to ensure that all will be well as we move forward in these trying economic times. The infrastructure for Phase 2 will commence shortly and thereafter the construction of the town houses should start.

Ladies and gentlemen the Barbados Union of Teachers continues to serve its members the best way we know how. There are still some outstanding issues with the Ministry of Education but let me state for the record that some of these issues which were outstanding for a long period have been resolved. This is as a result of an undertaking by the new PS who made a promise to the Union to remove some issues from the quarterly meeting agenda and that promise was kept. The BUT will continue to engage the Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development in discussion to have all the issues resolved. As I said earlier we believe that the social partnership should be fostered as much as possible and therefore we pledge our support to the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations. The BUT will continue to advance the traditional approach to the industrial relations process. The BUT will not be dictated to and we certainly will not dictate to anyone. Thirty-eight years ago we made the decision to stand on our own and I intend to follow that mandate slavishly. The BUT will continue to carry out our responsibilities as effectively and honestly as possible while ensuring that the rights of our members are not compromised and that the conditions of work are acceptable to all our teachers.

OUR CONFERENCE 2012

The theme "Today's Vision for Education Ensures Tomorrow Reality" has been chosen as there is a need for us in education to be able to articulate what is our vision? Is it to produce a workforce of graduates who depend on the state for employment? There by increasing the wage bill or do we have a vision where we want our educational system to produce graduates who are entrepreneurs who can earn foreign exchange and reduce the unemployment statistics? I am not the guest speaker, these are my

questions, I am sure that our guest speaker will present us with much food for thought, I eagerly await his presentation.

I look forward to an enlightening and exciting conference.

Master of Ceremonies.

Karen Best

President

Barbados Union of Teachers