

TALKING NOTES

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**YAMACRAW CONSTITUENCY**

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PLP MINI-RALLY, GAMBIER HOUSE

Party Leader

Deputy Leader

Chairman, Officers & Members of this great Party

Good evening!

Tonight we come together against the backdrop of some of the worst times we have ever experienced in the modern Bahamas. As a people we seem to be battered on every side by crime, social, moral, spiritual, political and financial decay. To hear some of the stories make your hair rise and I can tell you many of us are only making it because of the grace and mercy of Almighty God.

It's a good thing we know that in the midst of it all He is still in control and that He is working it out for us. It's a good thing we know that He will give us peace in the midst of the storm and it's a good thing we know that it's not "if" we are coming through, but "when" we are coming through, because come through we must and we will.

We are at a crossroad though, just like we were in 2002 and I don't know about you, but just like in 2002, I am tired of a "one man band" government. It is time to show this government once and for all that we did not trade colonialism for a dictatorship. We traded it for democracy, freedom from oppression and opportunities to make a better way of life for our children and we have come too far to turn back.

Over the course of the last three years, the government has been sending all sorts of mixed signals to the country about the economy. When they first came to office in 2007, they met our economy in a strong state, based on five years of fiscal prudence, an unprecedented influx of foreign direct investment, the calm and wise head of a caring Leader, the Rt. Hon. Perry Gladstone Christie and a hardworking parliamentary team.

Rushing to reap fruits that they did not sow, the FNM Government said, for the first time in our history, the economy of The Bahamas was "decoupled" from that of the United States. This clearly meant that the economy was such at that time, May 2007, that it could survive independent from that of the United States.

By the time the "stop, review and cancel policy" was finished with our economy and the global recession set in, the talk began to change, but yet in convention last November the cry was made, "I gat the money". The government continued to deny that things were getting worse. You heard phrases like, "we are doing better than many countries" or that we are "turning the corner", as recent as the mid-year budget in February this year, even after money flowed like water in the Elizabeth Bye-Election.

Now three months later, after the increased taxes put on our people in 2008, we are presented with a, no consultation, "tax and pain" budget that seems designed to wipe out the poor and middle income persons in our country by trying to make everything right one time, instead of incrementally or in phases.

Listen, believe me when I tell you we are experiencing some hard times. Just this week-end a young man was telling me about the fact that he lost his job, his house and his car. He is now living back home with his mom and he if God didn't bless him through assistance from others he would not have been able to have his clothes cleaned, his haircut or his face shaved to attend the funeral of a very dear friend.

Just today a young lady called who is working two days at a tourist resort and she wants advice as to how to set up a little business to supplement her income. You heard the Member for Fox Hill talk about the many requests for funds to assist with burying loved ones. There are thousands who have lost their jobs. There are thousands without electricity and water. There are hundreds who have been evicted from their homes and apartments. There are hundreds who have had their salaries cut. And in the midst of all of this there is a marked increase in crime affecting all of us, but particularly the most vulnerable among us – our children, our elderly, our persons with disabilities, and our indigent.

To top it all off, the organizations that could provide help are struggling for survival themselves.

So, your PLP team went to the House of Assembly to plead your case. We went to Parliament to put the case for those who did not have the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister and say, "we know we have to carry some of the burden, but this is too much one time. Can you adjust the figures like you are doing for some of the others?"

We went to parliament with recommendations as to what else could be done and where savings could be found. We went with amendments to restore funding to some of the items and increase funding to others to ease the burden on the poor. Our desire was to work with the government, but alas, it was not to be.

Like a boy who owns a pack of marbles and is being beaten at a game of marbles, stops the game by grabbing up his marbles up, the one man band, against the wishes of his team, approves the vote on the amendment, votes against it and then orders the closure of the debate to effectively silent the voice of the people.

Our forefathers fought valiantly against such tactics. We must do no less! Enough is enough! Our people are hurting, they are depending on us, and we must come to their rescue! When the time is right and it's fast approaching, we must vote them out! PLP!

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