

Disease killing reef off Baker's Bay golf course

ONE of the cornerstones of PLP policy under former Prime Minister Perry Christie, was the establishment of anchor projects as the spur for Family Island development.

Opening the 2005/06 Budget debate, Acting Finance Minister *Cynthia Pratt* told parliament: "It is generally accepted by economists that the country requires large-scale foreign investment or *mega projects* at least every three years. I believe we have done that several times over," she added.

On the basis of that *misbegotten view* that bigger is better, which the Christie administration rationalised as part of its "strategy of sustainable development", foreign investors with *more chutzpah than cash* were allowed to start selling their *pie-in-the-sky schemes* to gullible second home buyers.

Those anchor projects, most of which never got beyond the division of thousands of acres of scarified land into lots, *quickly collapsed* when the U.S. real estate bubble burst in 2008.

One that survived was *Baker's Bay* at the northern end of Great Guana Cay in the Abacos, but at what price to the environment. Photographs sent me by sources in Abaco show that the reef located less than *50 feet offshore* from Baker's Bay, and in direct line with the *golf course*, is showing evidence of *black band disease*.

The disease creeps very slowly over a head of coral in a *narrow band*, leaving behind only the bare white skeleton. Opponents of the Baker's Bay development warned against building a golf course (one already existed at Treasure Cay just 20 minutes away) because, they claimed, the *nitrogen runoff* from watering the fertilised course would flow into the sea and kill the reef.

Reefs, like the dozens of acres of *mangroves ripped out* to create the 220-slip marina at Baker's Bay, serve as the home and *breeding ground* for various species of fish. Nevertheless, the Christie government *ignored the warning* and allowed Baker's Bay to proceed, and Abaconians now have to live with the consequences.

As if Baker's Bay were not problem enough, prompting a protracted *court battle* by the Save Guana Cay Reef Association, an application is presently before the Ingraham admin-

stration, which is supposed to accommodate international flights, but looks pretty much as it did when I first went to Abaco nearly 40 years ago. Both the FNM and PLP governments should hang their heads in shame, given the fact that Abaco is the *third largest contributor* to the Public Treasury.

As my informant rightly pointed out: "That would mean that between Baker's Bay and Orchid Bay, there would be more than *500 boat slips* on 9 by one-quarter mile Guana Cay, which is insane."

Abaco has managed to avoid the booms and busts that have bedevilled other Bahamian islands because its growth over the years has been at a *more measured pace* and built on the *loyalty* of second home owners, rather than the *touch and go* of massive real estate projects.

Ironically, the biggest obstacle to Abaco's continued prosperity is the government itself. Not only is the FNM, like the PLP before it, now trying to shove *another over-sized development* down the throat of Abaconians, it can also take credit for the massive and prolonged *BEC power cuts* that have driven away hundreds of visitors (see below).

It is not that Abaconians are against development. They just expect it to be *environmentally sustainable*, at a slower pace and for the benefit of Bahamians. That is a point of view the government needs to absorb and apply to all developments in this country.

Raw Deal

FOR months Abaco has suffered through massive and prolonged power cuts by BEC that have driven away hundreds of visitors.

"What is happening with the electricity supply in Abaco is *inexcusable*," said Prime Minister *Hubert Ingraham*, who told the House that "*some people will pay* for that grossly negligent act of permitting the engines to run out of fuel."

Mr Ingraham should be pointing the finger at himself, as none of this would have happened if his government had not decided to *shift the location* of the new power plant from near *Snake Cay*, as was proposed by the former PLP government, to *Wilson City*, thereby delaying its construction.

According to government documents, the Snake Cay location was rejected because it would negatively impact a \$160 million "*environmentally friendly*" residential and resort project being proposed for the area. But those same documents have revealed that of the five sites assessed, Wilson City had the *most disadvantages* and, according to opponents of

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Booboo Prize

THIS week we see how misleading popular phrases can be when they are misused or misspelled.

①The Tribune's *Neil Hartnell*, referring to BEC's losses and various ways the Corporation plans to boost its finances, said: "When totalled up, they will get BEC barely *out of the black*."

In finance, we talk about getting *out of the red* (loss) and *into the black* (profit). This harks back to the days when positive numbers were recorded in black ink and negative numbers in red ink.

BEC is hoping its financial boost will get it out of the red, not *out of the black*. Therefore, Mr Hartnell should have said: "When totalled up, they will get BEC barely *into the black*."

②A Tribune press release about the launch of columnist *Yvette Bethel's* CD "Your Workplace Survival Kit" described Ms Bethel as "*one of the only* certified providers of Emotional Intelligence Individual and Business Solutions in the Bahamas."

You are either the *only one* or *one of several*, but you cannot be *one of the only*. This is not to be confused with Kerzner International's advertising slogan "The One and Only", which is technically redundant but correctly denotes exclusivity.

Ms Bethel should have been described as "*the only* certified provider of..." if this is indeed the case. If there are others offering the service, then she is simply "a certified provider of..."

③A story by The Guardian's *Inderia Saunders*, under the headline: "Bahamian named in cyber fraud", came with the following photo caption: "Basil Christie, national chairman of the Special Olympics Bahamas, has been *named* in an e-mail fraud which has gone around the world."

There is a difference between being *named in a fraud* and being the *target of a fraud*. If you are *named*, you are the culprit; if you are the *target*, you are the victim. In this case, Mr Christie