

RUNWAY SETS LOCALS FREE

As we approach the precipice of celebrating this island's 50th anniversary of Independence from our colonial masters, the burning question is 'what have we really gained and at what cost?'

This question is posed against the backdrop of recent developments at an enterprise located at this island's lone airport in which the Government of Barbados is a major stakeholder.

Reliable sources indicated that one week ago, two key local management executives were unceremoniously relieved from their substantive posts in the areas of retail and finance after nearly a decade of yeomen service to the organisation. We further understand that the employees were informed by the General Manager (an Irish expatriate), in the presence of an unidentified white non-Barbadian female and a representative of the Barbados Employers' Confederation (BEC). Glaringly absent from the meeting was the local Human Resources Manager and a representative from the local Board of Directors.

Within a matter of hours, an internal memo (a copy of which we have obtained) literally went viral as news of the employees departure quickly spread. The memo sought to convey the impression that the savings from the above positions would allow for increases for temporary staff and better commission structures, both of which our sources indicated were long overdue commitments by the Company to the Barbados Workers' Union (BWU).

The recruitment process for the two newly created roles should engage the attention of the Board of Directors and the BWU. Will the posts be advertised internally or will this be yet another case of supersession?

The General Manager should also clarify whether there was an imposed deadline by the BWU for implementation of these long standing promises and how his \$500k+ annual compensation package is justifiable for the 'continued sustainability of the Company.'

In stark contrast to the situation of these two locals with dependents being placed on the breadline, the spouse of the General Manager currently holds a prominent position with a duty-free conglomerate on Broad Street. Interestingly enough, these two companies are DIRECT COMPETITORS – does the Board of Management/Directors of these two companies not share the public perception that this is a direct conflict of interest?

We now have one expatriate family with two jobs whilst two Barbadian families with dependents have none! It's Earley, but time will surely tell who Caves first!

PRECEDENCE

The current situation is not surprising given the Company's antecedents and is yet another example of our Government's inept policies on immigration and employment of expatriates. From the Company's inception in 2006 to present, the post of General Manager has been held by an expatriate. Our sources indicated that there has been an absence of succession planning and identification of a locally trained understudy for the General Manager position.

This is an indictment on the local Board of Directors and the Government of Barbados by extension. Given this travesty, what message are we conveying to the working class of this dear country of ours? Are our actions seeking to convey the impression that our locals are not good enough or on par with those who come to these shores to work? Clearly the success of Barbadians globally is sufficient to credibility silence this perceived myth!

What avenues are we creating for the upward mobility of our citizens? The success of our citizens mirrors the success of our economy and country for it is right here in Barbados that we reinvest the fruits of our labours unlike those who expatriate their funds elsewhere.

STRIKE UP THE BAND

"Strike up the band, let's go home" is the familiar broadcasting catch phrase of the illustrious Chairman of this Company. Will the Chairman publicly defend the Board's decision or will support for and development of local talent give way to personal gains (overseas trips, expensive bottles of liquor, dinner at fancy dining establishments, money?) Is there a new slant to his catch phrase – 'strike out the locals, let's send them home.'

Our founding Father of Independence in his mirror image speech of 28 May 1986, made reference to giving careful consideration to the appointment of responsible persons to statutory corporations – a true statement of merit which remains relevant to this date.

He further juxtaposed that 'no-one can really like another person unless they like themselves first. There are too many people in Barbados who despise themselves and their dislike of themselves reflects itself in their dislike of other people.'

How long Barbadians? How much longer will we allow this to go on?