



REMARKS

BY

**THE HONOURABLE T. DESMOND BANNISTER, M.P.
THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

AT

**THE GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR
INAGUA ALL AGE SCHOOL**

FRIDAY, 11Th JUNE, 2010

6:30 PM

**ST. PHILLIP'S ANGLICAN PARISH
GREAT INAGUA**

SALUTATIONS:

His Excellency, Sir Arthur A. Foulkes and Lady Foulkes;

The Honourable Alfred Gray, Member of Parliament, MICAL
Constituency;

Dr. Preston Cunningham, Island Administrator;

Mr. Allen Cleare, Chief Councillor;

Mr. Joel Lewis, District Superintendent, MICAL
Constituency;

Mr. Glen Bannister, Managing Director, Morton Salt
Company;

Ms. Christine Williamson, Principal, Inagua All Age School;

Administrators;

Teachers;

Staff;

And most importantly are distinguished graduates

Good evening.

I wish to thank the administration of the Inagua All Age School for extending this invitation to me to attend this graduation ceremony. It always uplifts me when I can visit schools to celebrate with our students their achievements and also to commend teachers and administrators for the hard work they are doing to contribute to the overall success of our educational system.

I am also delighted also to be here with along with the Governor General, His Excellency Sir Arthur Foulkes who is a son of the soil of Inagua and a hero of the Modern Bahamas. I am certain that his presence here has made this occasion even more significant for our graduates and the wider community.

His legacy is one that should inspire you to offer service to your fellowmen and country and although people of this **ilk** are seldom in pursuit of rewards, it comes in the form of the gratitude of a people and an exalted place in history.

Our history reflects that His Excellency was a freedom fighter and an individual that fought along side others for us to enjoy the rights that all citizens of The Bahamas should have; and not just the minority because of wealth and colour of skin. It also shows that he was a gentleman who stood for principles and was not afraid to lose favour for them.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a rousing round of applause for your son of the soil and our Bahamian hero.

Newton Baker (1871-1937), a former Secretary of War once stated that, “A man who graduates today and stops learning tomorrow is uneducated the day after.” If you ponder this statement you would find that it has one simple message – Learning never stops, it continues for the rest of our lives.

Students, I admonish to always seek knowledge because it will enable you to make meaningful decisions that will impact you and those who depend upon you in some way or form. Your school's history records the fight to ensure that children received quality education as a basic right of citizenship rather than by the colour of one's skin.

It is therefore so disheartening to know how hard persons like Sir Arthur Foulkes fought so hard for Bahamian children to have access to secondary education and to know that many students today do not take learning seriously.

I am certain that you can recall that after Hurricane Ike passed in 2008, The Prime Minister went on record numerous times stating that this rebuilding of this school was a priority. It was with this sense of urgency that efforts were made to conduct the necessary repairs and construction to school so that a greater sense of normalcy could return and the disruption of your education could resume as soon as possible after the storm.

Your theme for this occasion, “**Achieving Dreams through Excellence in Education**”, requires you to apply yourselves in the classroom and to learn all that you possibly can. There was a time when many students used geographical isolation as an excuse to explain their shortcomings in education. This however, cannot continue to be the justification for mediocrity. There are many persons who attended this school who have gone on to achieve success both at the national and international level.

There are persons present Grade of Class of 2010 here at Inagua All Age School, have gone the extra mile to learn more, do more to distinguished themselves as part of the best and brightest in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Boys and girls, my message to you is not to see the person sitting next to you as competition but the students who you do not see every day. These students include students in New Providence, Grand Bahama, Abaco, Andros, Eleuthera and even in halls of international institutions.

For those who have completed the 12th grade, I trust that you have done your endeavour best in your BGCSE exams. Hopefully many of you would be successful in passing five (5) subjects with A-C grades including Mathematics and English so that can have access free tuition at the College of The Bahamas and assistance while your living expenses while you reside in New Providence.

I want you to know that many persons are cheering for your success because the future development of The Bahamas lies in your ability to lead and conceive ideas that will be solutions to reducing the national debt; stemming the crime wave and reducing the number of Bahamians afflicted with non-

communicable chronic diseases (diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure ect).

Continue to seek the path that will take you to where you can achieve your dreams through education. Congratulations to all – Grade 6 and Grade 12 as you celebrate your accomplishments and prepare for higher plateaus in life.

