



# The State of Employment for Bermudians under the OBA Government

by Chris Furbert, BIU President

The Bermuda Industrial Union is on record in 2012 just before the General Election in December of 2012 saying that the One Bermuda Alliance (OBA) is going to be supporting business at the expense of everyday Bermudians. The OBA had said at that time the BIU was wrong.

However you can be the judge as to what has happen since once the OBA was elected in 2012.

**Term limits** - were eliminated in the first six months of the OBA Government

**Gaming** – The OBA promised a referendum on gaming however once they became the Government they changed their mind

**Work Permit Policy** – The OBA wanted to create a work permit policy that would allow persons on a work permit who have children, to allow them to apply for Summer Student jobs over Bermudian Children. This policy was later withdrawn after the Minister of Home Affairs received push back from the people.

**America's Cup** – The OBA Government used \$77 million of the tax payers money to finance the America's Cup, while seniors benefits have been cut, education benefits have been cut, etc; etc.

**PRC** – The OBA Government has exploited the “sleeping provision,” in the immigration policy that provides a path to allow about 1400 PRC's to apply for Bermuda status.

**Comprehensive Immigration Reform** – The OBA Government had made a commitment to comprehensive immigration reform but have not honored this commitment. The OBA Government instead appears to have adopted a process of piecemealing changes to immigration reform.

**Hiring Freeze** – The Government has implemented a hiring freeze in order to reduce the cost of running the Government. This is causing a problem in providing quality services in certain areas for example, Parks, the Postal service, Sanitation services and Public Transportation, all of which are under staffed and therefore cannot provide the quality services that are required.

The 2015 Labour Force Survey Executive Report that was released in January 2016 has highlighted some very concerning information.

The One Bermuda Alliance Government has been saying that they are putting Bermudians back to work you be the judge as to who they are creating

jobs for, based upon the report it certainly does not appear to be Bermudians based on the facts contained in the information that is being released by the Bermuda Department of Statistics.

On January 21st 2016 the Minister of Home Affairs in a written press statement says the following;

*“As you will recall, the Bermuda Job Board, which launched in November 2013, is an online, user-friendly platform available to Bermudians seeking employment. The induction of the Bermuda Job Board has significantly enhanced the job search process for Department of Workforce Development clients and the entire community. Likewise, it has assisted employers in indentifying qualified local resources”.*

*On page 2 of the press release the Minister goes onto say that “there will now be a mandatory field on the job board requiring employers to report on recruitment through the Job Board by responding to the question: “Have you hired a candidate for this position that applied via the Job Board?” This will enhance reporting on recruitment activity.*

If what the Minister's is saying is true, then why is it we do not see more Bermudians being hired? We are seeing the complete opposite because the employment numbers for Bermudians in 2013 were 26,316 and now in 2015 it is 25,813 this represents a decline of 503

jobs for Bermudians. The Minister clearly sees a need to strengthen the requirements going forward which is why he is making changes because he sees the gaps.

The OBA's election promises "we put forward our Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan to create 2000 jobs and restore confidence and opportunity to our troubled economy". The Plan was produced to answer the number one concern of Bermudians today, which is an economy that is no longer working for them.

When the OBA was elected in December 2012 the number of Jobs by Industry according to the Department of Statistics Facts Figures 2015, page 8, states there were 35,475 jobs in 2012 and in 2014 the number of jobs dropped to 33,475, a decline of 1,968 jobs. We still don't know the total number of jobs that declined in 2015. What we do know is the following;

## WORKFORCE BY STATUS

*"Notable job gains were reported among non-Bermudians in 2015. Non-Bermudian workers posted an increase of 5% or 377 positions for the year. In contrast, there was a 2% decline in the number of Bermudian workers with 413 jobs lost in 2015". (Page 4 of the 2015 Labour Force Survey)*

If you had any doubts about who the One Bermuda Alliance Government is concerned about when it comes to providing employment the numbers speak for themselves. The Premier The Hon. Michael Dunkley, or the Minister of Home Affairs, Sen. The Hon. Michael Fahy, will come out and denying this information but the facts are the facts, Bermudians and Blacks Bermudians in particular are being displaced in their own country.

## WORKING POPULATION (2014-2015)

You will notice from this section of the report that while there is improvement in some age groups there is a decline in others. This should be very concerning to us as Bermudians. The table below will show that the age groups between 16-24, 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 decreased by 396 people, however the age groups between 55-64 and 65+ increased by 423 for overall increase of 27 people.

The number of Blacks employed in 2014 was 17,315, and now in 2015 it is 16,469 a decline of 846 positions or a 5% decrease. You should also know Mixed/Other Races also declined by 188 positions or a 4% decrease. However over this same period Whites employed in 2014 was 11,816 and now in 2015 it is 12,766 a gain of 950 positions or an increase of 8%. (Please see Chart 1 and Chart 2 below)

**CHART 1**

WORKFORCE BY RACE					
Race	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015
Black	20,171	17,229 -2,942	19,165 1,936	18,128 -1,037	17,158 -970 -3,013
White	11,312	13,237 1,925	11,699 -1,538	12,385 686	13,390 1,005 2,078
Mixed/Other Races	5,814	5,192 -622	5,126 -66	4,862 -264	4,626 -236 -1,188
August 2015 - Labour Force Survey Executive Report					

**CHART 1** shows the changes in the working population by Race from 2010 – 2015. According to the 2015 Labour Force Survey Preliminary Report produced in August 2015 found on page 4 of that report. Please allow me to point out that in 2010 Blacks accounted for 20,171 jobs, however in 2015 that number has declined to 17,158 some (3,013) less jobs, Mixed / Other Races also declined over this same period by (1,188) less Jobs. However White's over this period have increased by 2,078 jobs.

## CHART 2

<i>WORKFORCE BY RACE</i>					
<i>Race</i>		<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>
<i>Black</i>		16,714	19,359 2,645	17,315 -2,044	16,469 -846
<i>White</i>		12,779	10,360 -2,419	11,816 1,456	12,766 950
<i>Mixed/Other Races</i>		4,907	4,778 -129	4,481 -297	4,293 -188
<i>December 2015 - Labour Force Survey Executive Report</i>					

**CHART 2** shows the changes in the working population by Race from 2012 – 2015. According to the 2015 Labour Force Survey Executive Report produced in December 2015 on Page 5 of that report. Please take note the changes in employment by Race in 2014 and 2015; Blacks declined by (2,890) Jobs, Mixed / Other Races declined by (485) jobs, while Whites increased by 2,406 jobs.

## MEDIAN GROSS ANNUAL INCOME FROM MAIN JOB(S)

The Median gross annual income in 2014 was \$60,295 and now in 2015 it is \$63,271 a 5% increase. How can this be possible when so many people are either on a wage freeze, out of work, or under employed? SO HOW

CAN THIS BE EXPLAINED? The Department of Statistics has explained this to say “The increase in employment earning was attributed to the rise in the number of workers earning \$235,000 or more per year.

The largest share of workers that earned \$235,000 or more was reported within the technical and associated professional occupations”. (Page 5 of the 2015 Labour Force Survey)

## CHART 3

<i>Workforce by Age Group and Median Gross Annual Income from main job</i>					
<i>Age Group</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>
<i>16-24</i>	\$ 21,887	\$ 25,335 \$ 3,448	\$ 33,786 \$ 8,451	\$ 28,375 \$ (5,411)	\$ 26,379 \$ (1,996)
<i>25-34</i>	\$ 62,145	\$ 61,437 \$ (708)	\$ 61,679 \$ 242	\$ 55,535 \$ (6,144)	\$ 61,971 \$ 6,436
<i>35-44</i>	\$ 77,442	\$ 72,296 \$ (5,146)	\$ 63,828 \$ (8,468)	\$ 68,760 \$ 4,932	\$ 72,456 \$ 3,696
<i>45-54</i>	\$ 63,013	\$ 60,652 \$ (2,361)	\$ 70,544 \$ 9,892	\$ 68,675 \$ (1,869)	\$ 66,252 \$ (2,423)
<i>55-64</i>	\$ 57,602	\$ 57,379 \$ (223)	\$ 64,481 \$ 7,102	\$ 57,739 \$ (6,742)	\$ 63,912 \$ 6,173
<i>65+</i>	\$ 36,242	\$ 34,995 \$ (1,247)	\$ 50,905 \$ 15,910	\$ 41,474 \$ (9,431)	\$ 40,513 \$ (961)

**CHART 3** What you should have noticed from chart 3 is that the Age Groups between 16-24, 45-54 and 65+ all their wages went down. This tells you that their earned income when it comes to their quality of life is being eroded.

In December 2015 the Minister of Finance proposed an increase in land Tax that went into effect on January 1st 2016 below are some examples as

to how this new increase will impact your Land Tax Cost. You will notice that some of these examples that rate increases range from 32% to 103%

which directly impacts the working class people's bottom line once again, while the people who can afford to PAY get a break. (Please see chart 4)

**CHART 4**

<i>Property Example</i>	<i>Old ARV</i>	<i>New ARV Effective Jan. 1, 2016</i>	<i>% reduction in ARV</i>	<i>Old Tax Rate</i>	<i>New Tax Rate</i>	<i>Increase or decrease in dollars</i>	<i>% increase</i>
#1	16,800	14,100	(2,700) -16%	\$ 135.60	\$ 275.50	\$ 139.90	103%
#2	20,400	17,400	(3,000) -15%	\$ 178.80	\$ 358.00	\$ 179.20	100%
#3	22,800	19,200	(3,600) -16%	\$ 217.20	\$ 403.00	\$ 185.80	86%
#4	33,600	28,200	(5,400) -16%	\$ 490.80	\$ 745.80	\$ 255.00	52%
#5	36,000	30,000	(6,000) -17%	\$ 606.00	\$ 825.00	\$ 219.00	36%
#6	37,200	31,200	(6,000) -16%	\$ 663.60	\$ 877.80	\$ 214.20	32%
#7	40,800	36,000	(4,800) -12%	\$ 836.40	\$ 1,161.00	\$ 324.60	39%
#8	66,000	54,000	(12,000) -18%	\$ 3,102.00	\$ 2,865.00	\$ (237.00)	-8%
#9	123,000	105,000	(18,000) -15%	\$ 11,856.00	\$ 10,221.00	\$ (1,635.00)	-14%
#10	198,000	168,000	(30,000) -15%	\$ 29,106.00	\$ 25,401.00	\$ (3,705.00)	-13%
#11	198,000	159,000	(39,000) -20%	\$ 29,106.00	\$ 23,151.00	\$ (5,955.00)	-20%



# LEST WE FORGET - BELCO 1965



Brother George DeSilva



Brother Kenneth Paul



Brother Kerwin Ratteray



Brother Vivian Ming



## MEMBER BENEFITS

DISCOUNTS OFFERED TO BIU MEMBERS

- |                          |                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Union Gas Limited      | 5% off Mondays (cash only)     |
| • Grotto Bay             | 5% off of Famous Sunday Brunch |
| • Reefs Hotel & Spa      | 10% off Food services only     |
| • El Shaddai Florist     | 10% off                        |
| • ERU AT'ILE             | 10% off                        |
| • Island Construction    | 10% off Tires                  |
| • Newstead Belmont Hills | 10% off Hotel stay, Spa & Golf |

**Members must produce a valid membership card**

# Lest We Forget February 2, 1965

February 2, 1965, is a red-letter day in the annals of the BIU. It marked the climax of one of the Union's most celebrated disputes, when the police, and hundreds of workers clashed in what is known as the BELCO Riot. Basically, it was a recognition dispute between the BIU and the Bermuda Electric Light Company (BELCO).

The company then and now, owned and operated the one and only power plant providing electricity to the whole Island. Among its directors and shareholders were some of the Bermuda's most powerful and influential white men, including Sir Harry Butterfield, Sir John Cox, Sir Henry (Jack) Tucker, and Sir Bayard Dill. They along with BELCO's general manager, Llewellyn Vorley, were the company's representatives in negotiations. The BIU was represented by Dr. Barbara Ball, General Secretary, Eugene Blakeney, Assistant General Secretary,

Robert Johnston, President; Oattie Simmons, Union Organizer; and a delegation made up of electrical workers.

According to Ira Philip, author of "The History of the Bermuda Industrial Union", the principle issue in 1965 was union recognition for 87 outside plant employees who had recently organized into the Union. They comprised linemen, garage mechanics, drivers, labourers, maintenance personnel and others." At that time, BELCO's total staff contingency was 231 which included clerical and administrative staff.

"An application for union recognition was made in writing," wrote Brother Philip. "BELCO returned a negative response. Intervention by Government's Labour Relations Officer (LRO) Harold Chudleigh failed to alter the company's negative stance".

Brother Philip further explained.

"Following an intensive public relations campaign in the media initiated by the Union, the company offered to hold a ballot provided that all of its 231 employees, including supervisors, participated, with the stipulation that the Union had to get sixty percent 'yes votes' in its favour before the company would grant recognition."

"This proposal drew a resounding 'NO' from the Union, for three main reasons: First, it flew in the face of the democratic process, in that recognition votes were ordinarily determined by a simple majority. Second, the company practiced unacceptable racial policies. For instance, its locker rooms, toilets and wash-up rooms were assigned on race and signs were posted to ensure that no one made any mistakes."

At the end of the thirty-four days, the BELCO strike culminated in a





bloody riot described by Brother Philip as follows "...The police were attacking the west-gate picket line. Some of the pickets were defending themselves against an extremely aggressive police force. Johnston (Robert) was being arrested; he passively cooperated, in accordance with previous union instructions. Some picketers were bloody and looked confused, as they wandered about the road trying to find their bearings. At the same time a police van was being overturned and someone appeared to be trying to set fire to the leaking fuel."

Brother Ottiwell Simmons has also written on the BELCO strike, and in his book "Our Lady of Labour – Dr. Barbara B. Ball". Brother Ottie summed up the BELCO strike as follows:

"Following the February 2 disturbance, much time was taken up with mediation and reconciliation. These discussions were headed by the Governor. Also, the Company (BELCO) was busy forming its own in-house union, this

time with the complete cooperation of its inside-plant employees. The new union was named the Electrical Supply and Trade Union (ESTU).

Brother Ottie explained that through mediation, a settlement was reached within three days in an attempt to return the Island to normalcy. There were two principal points by the parties:

- 1 There would be a secret ballot of all 130 Company employees, and if the results indicated a 51% majority for either union (BIU or ESTU), it would determine recognition and sole bargaining rights to the successful union.
- 2 Seven of the former Company employees, namely Raymond "Jackie" Durham, Clarence "Sparrow" Trott, Ronald "Eight Balls" Trott, Llewellyn "Bird Bean, Bridge Webb, Hubert "Hubie" Spence, and John Mello would be made redundant and would receive a substantial severance

pay based on length of service".

"It must be noted that the only satisfaction that the BIU achieved out of this agreement was the fact that for the first time the Bermuda Electric Light Company would be unionized, although neither the Union officials, nor the members were in any way pleased," wrote Brother Ottie.

On May 14, 1965, a supervised secret ballot took place at the Company's premises. The final result was that the ESTU received 137 "yes" votes, the BIU received 94 "yes" votes. This result reflected the composition of the strikers and the non-strikers. Since that day, the BIU, in spite of several efforts, has never had any success in organizing the BELCO workers, except the St. George's branch which continued membership with the BIU. The ESTU is still in existence today and has sole bargaining rights, even for the eighty-seven employees who sacrificed so much as members of the BIU.



# BACK TO THE PLANTATION??

*Is this a hint OR is this the best plan the OBA can come up with for our people?*

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**TUESDAY, JANUARY  
19th 2016 - Headline: -**

**“DUNKLEY: LOOK TO  
FARMING FOR WORK.”**

This article should be an insult to every Bermudian that is awake!

The Premier of Bermuda is suggesting that Bermudians struggling to find work should look to traditional industries that have serviced the Island for decades for employment, insisting that farming and hospitality sectors could provide opportunities for those willing to diversify.

SO to all our **QUALIFIED** Bermudians, young and not so young, with all your schooling and degrees, you should know that the OBA Government is in many ways telling you, you will never be good enough to work in **CORPORATE BERMUDA.**

Since when has **FARMING** been close to the TOP of one of the major 16 Industries that employ Bermudians? If anything, it falls in the bottom four showing figures in 2013, that only 274 were employed in the Industry of Ag/Fish, Forestry/Fishing and Quarrying.

MAYBE...options of Traditional Business in Hotels, Restaurants.... but **FARMING!!**

**IS THIS THE BEST THE  
PREMIER CAN COME  
UP WITH?**

“I would like to see families and communities get more involved in farming. There is land available and there are community gardens.”

Is this a suggestion that government will be giving or loaning out land? For persons to turnover profits and become self sufficient? Would think NOT!

**THE OBA TRACK RECORD SPEAKS FOR ITSELF....  
IT IS NOT YOUR INTEREST THEY  
ARE LOOKING OUT FOR! THEIR TIME IS UP!!**