

Tax Return Confusion

BETWEEN the end of April and the beginning of May 1998, the NBC broadcast a news item, stating that due to the fact that the Receiver of Revenue was extremely late in posting the various Income Tax Returns to enterprises and individuals, the Minister of Finance has announced that all tax returns only have to be sent in by July 31st instead of June 30, 1998. The latter date is the one that would have been due if the forms would have been posted timeously.

The Receiver of Revenue, Accountants and Tax consultants are all aware of this newscast, yet when I consulted the Receiver about this two weeks ago, they said that to date no official notification was received from the Minister and that they still regard June 30 as the deadline for the tax submissions, even though they were aware of the broadcast.

As the NBC is the only official link for a great number of our population in respect of tax matters it should be a reliable source of information. It is bound to happen that many taxpayers will incur penalties and interest as they

had faith in the accuracy of the newscast.

To date, approximately 55 per cent of all taxpayers have received their forms. On top of that the Receiver believes that a normal Salary-earner receives no interest on savings or does not have other income. The forms for ordinary tax payers do not accommodate such details.

On enquiry, I was told that these extraordinary taxpayers would have to apply for different tax status. As this will in all likelihood also take time I wonder how many taxpayers can submit their returns on time. Partnerships or taxpayers with more than one business can also not make use of the prescribed form as no consideration was given to this possibility. The Receiver has admitted these shortcomings to me. The new forms must have cost a fortune and the corrections and shortcomings will do so again.

I would appreciate it if the above points could be taken up with both the Receiver and the Minister of Finance, as it affects a major portion of our population. Enough is enough!

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