

# Govt Managers Fail To Respond To Queries

## *An open letter to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Basic Education*

I AM totally disappointed in the way some senior officials within the education ministry deal with letters addressed to their offices. I think officials deliberately ignore letters written to them. The aim of such letters is merely to seek answer to questions. In literate societies everybody knows that ethics are to be honoured. I think the same needs to apply when it comes to those employed by government. It is very sad to learn that some of our senior government officials display apathy in

this regard. It is high time that such officials be brought to book or even be replaced because they are not interested in executing their tasks efficiently and are thereby tarnishing the good image and reputation of the Government.

I have been confidentially briefed that disparities still remain untouched and consequently some principals and heads of departments at schools under the Ministry of Basic Education still suffer financially due to the apathy of those in power to redress con-

ditions of service. With the implementation of Wascom some drastic changes were brought in remuneration of teaching staff. As of 1 April 1996 all principals and heads of department with qualifications below the level of Category "C" were translated into salary notches lower than those of their counterparts in similar positions of responsibility. On estimate the difference could be in the vicinity of N\$40 000 per year.

I think something is amiss. Whether a principal has category-C quali-

tifications or not, he/she remains the accounting officer at that school. He/she has exactly the same amount of responsibility over everything taking place at his/her school. Was it really fair to them to be lower than their counterparts? This state of affairs just doesn't make sense to me. The affected principals and departmental heads brought their case to their bargaining agent namely Nantu. Not much was achieved and nothing was changed. These managers further delegated a spokesperson to

solicit their fate with the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture since 1996 but again nothing could be achieved. As of late, renewed efforts were launched with the Permanent Secretary's office but it seems to me that this office is either nonfunctional or those within it turn a blind eye to this sensitive case. What is so difficult about it? Why is the office of the Permanent Secretary not solving this irritating concern?

Please comrades, let us come out in the open

boldly and explain to the nation the reasons for not being forthcoming. I personally challenge the PS of the Ministry of Basic Education or anybody acting on her behalf if she might be out of the country at present, to tell the nation why this issue is still unresolved after a period of 5 years.

Could the PS also tell the nation why her office fails to respond to letters forwarded to her office? Do we really have to turn to industrial actions and demonstrations in order to solve problems? This is not a good thing for the image of the Education Ministry and the country in general. How can a Ministry take more than 6 weeks to respond to correspondence? The managers sent a letter to the PS on 5 September 2001. After a waiting period of 4 weeks a telephone inquiry was made about the letter. Officers within this office promised to look into the case and

come back. Up to now no one came back to tell whether the letter is being attended to. Various follow-up calls were made to the office of the PS response on the letter but unfortunately nobody could shed light on this letter. They acknowledged the receipt thereof. God alone knows why they don't respond. What kind of treatment is that? Let us please hear the response from the PS that the concerned group could find their peace of mind or seek further audience and assistance with those agencies/institutions that would be in a better position to help them getting their rightful share of the Wascom cake. I am very glad I was briefed about this way of doing things in Government. As a labour advisor, I will not rest until justice has been done to these managers.

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