

On civil service

IT is only when we the civil servants are well-informed about the ethics and responsibilities of civil servants that the majority of staff members will be able to adjust themselves to the ongoing restructural problem.

It is obvious that the progress of any country is seriously jeopardised when the civil servants are not well informed about the ethics and responsibilities of civil servants.

In his address during the workshop organised for permanent secretaries at Gross Barmen, the Right Honourable Prime Minister, Comrade Hage Geingob, emphasised the following:

- * queues at government offices;

- * the need for permanent secretaries to assess people's feelings about the quality of service they receive;

- * terminally bureaucratic offices;

- * sense of commitment and dedication;

- * the use of the telephone;

- * recruitment, promotion and responsibility and accountability.

It is my personal understanding that civil servants must be acutely conscious of the crucial role they play in achieving government objectives of bringing about peace, orderly development and prosperity to the country. Obviously, we can only achieve this through the act of creating awareness and through individual commitment.

All the remarks made by the Prime Minister reflect the daily occurrence in individual ministeries. Some permanent secretaries decide to be exclusive and some are so dismissive that they are no longer in contact with their staff in particular and the public in general. Some resort to so much secrecy that they are not aware as to which information is confidential and which is not.

As a member of the civil service, I am quite convinced that we have much to learn, but be assured that we will not be able to change for the better or analyse the situation if we are not well informed and understand

the ethics and responsibilities that govern our profession or calling.

It is against this background that I congratulate the office of the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister himself for having organised and addressed the recent informative and educational workshop for permanent secretaries. This was democracy in action.

The Prime Minister spoke of assessment of public feelings. This is an important point, but how can one assess people's feelings if one has adopted the concept of being exclusive? It is through socialisation that one can effectively assess the staff and the general public's feelings towards one's performances.

As civil servants we should always remember that whatever we say, do, and whatever our objectives are, it is the civil service unity of action which make up the chain of development and if one of the staff break down in terms of thinking, initiative and creativity, in spite of the strength of other remaining members of the chain, this chain will cease to be active.

According to E M Debrah, 'civil servants are highly respected persons who at all times are supposed to exhibit a sense of dedication to their duties and absolute respect for the rules'.

Civil servants are the ambassadors and mirrors from which the image and wishes and aspirations of the government and the people of the country are reflected.

It is imperative to say that the concept of being exclusive, indecisive, dismissive, rude and impolite is incompatible with democracy, peace, progress and a healthy working relationship. There is therefore, a need for more seminars similar to that held at Gross Barmen. We have much to learn in terms of individual commitment, accountability, responsibility, initiative and loyalty. It is only when we believe in the concept of assessment of public opinion and our own performances that we can, in an affirmative voice, assure the Prime Minister that queues at government offices will be a thing of the past.

N MUSHELENGA