
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION OF 1956-61

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 20th January, 1959.

Pursuant to the adjournment the House of Assembly met at 3.30 o'clock p.m. today.

PRESENT

His Honour Mr. K. N. R. HUSBANDS (Speaker); Mr. J. E. T. BRANCKER, (Leader of the Opposition); Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS, C.B.E., M.D., C.M., (Premier); Hon. M. E. COX, (Minister of Trade, Industry and Labour); His Honour Mr. L. E. SMITH, J.P.; (Deputy Speaker); Mr. F. L. WALCOTT, O.B.E.; Hon. R. G. MAPP, (Minister of Communications, Works and Housing); (Chairman of Committees); Mr. F. C. GODDARD; Hon. F. E. MILLER, (Minister of Social Services); Mr. E. St. A. HOLDER; Mr. C. E. TALMA; Mr. J. C. TUDOR, M.A.; Hon. D. D. GARNER, (Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries); Mr. H. A. DOWDING, M.B.E.; Mr. C. B. SEARLES; Hon. L. St. A. THORNE; (Minister of Education); Mr. T. W. MILLER; and Mr. G. E. S. STRAUGHN.

Prayers were read.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that the Minutes of the last Meeting are not yet ready for circulation.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY RE DEATH OF W. W. REECE, Q.C.

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any business before the House at this juncture, but I rise to ask the House to pass a Resolution in connection with the death of the late W. W. Reece which occurred a few days ago.

I think we all remember Mr. Reece as a member of this House. He was a man of a

friendly, affable and agreeable disposition who made friends outside of politics and outside of his profession, and he was able to maintain that friendship for quite a long time. As a member of this House, Sir, while he and I and most of us on this side of the Table were in different camps, yet he was always able to appreciate the point of view of the other fellow, and if and when he could go along with you and subscribe to your views, he did. We all know him in his old, breezy style sitting around this Table and although during those debates he was sometimes acrimonious, yet as soon as that debate was finished and we met outside this Chamber, the same old friendship was resumed.

As a Lawyer, Sir, I cannot speak with any authority and I leave that to some other member of the profession; but we know that he did in his own way maintain a strong, virile practice up until recent years when his health failed. So, Sir, on these points, I am asking this House to support me in this Resolution which I shall now move, and which reads as follows:—

“RESOLVED that the House place on record its profound sympathy at the passing of the late Walter Walton Reece, Q.C., a former Member of this House, and that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to his widow and relatives.”

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. BRANCKER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the passage of this Resolution.

It happens, Sir, that I came into contact of necessity with the late Walter Walton Reece not only as a legislator during the years when he and I sat in this Chamber together though representing different political ideologies, but in the rough and tumble of the Law Courts, and that, Sir, is a wonderful school to teach people how to row and argue, dispute and fight and yet

immediately after it is over, to be prepared to dwell and sit and drink together in unity. The late Mr. Reece, "Jubie" as we all knew him, and as he was even referred to from the Bench yesterday, was the type who carried no rancour, no malice, no spite, no vindictiveness and no spleen, and we all realised that as soon as the row was over and the late Mr. Reece had made a good show which was bound to satisfy his client, even though the result may be very adverse to that client, yet he was on the best of terms and the most admirable spirit of camaraderie to his opponent at the Bar.

He was a member of this House for the metropolitan parish and for the parish of Christ Church for many years. Like his father he was a member of what personally I will always regard as the best Inn of Court, the Hon. Society of the Middle Temple. His father, who, for many years was a member of this House, was beyond all doubt the most astute, the most shrewd, the most clever and the most profoundly learned Lawyer whom the British Caribbean has up to now produced. When he married into the Walton family and Mr. "Jubie" Reece whose loss we now mourn became an offspring of that family, you had Reece combined with Walton, Henry Walter Reece combined with the family of Sir George Walton, the result was Walter Walton Reece. He was essentially a good mixer, a most hospitable man, an extremely sociable type, a perfect cosmopolitan and the ideal Bohemian; so much so, Mr. Speaker, that the learned Chief Justice of Barbados who met him twelve days ago, yesterday came to the conclusion that he was one of the most hospitable men whom he had ever met, and whose hospitality he had already enjoyed though he had been in Barbados only twelve days.

3.50 p.m.

In that family, not only, Sir, was his father and uncle legally trained but his brother, Mr. Courtenay Walton Reece who I believe is now a Judge in Hong Kong and there is also his daughter, Miss Audrey Reece, who has had a distinguished academic career at the University and at the Bar, so that, Sir, there are five members of that legal family surpassing the O'Reilly's of St. Lucia who can only number three — Sir Lennox O'Reilly, Judge Harry O'Reilly and Mr. Guy O'Reilly, Q.C. — but the family to which Mr. W. W. Reece belongs is probably the largest, certainly the most eminent legal family of the British Caribbean.

It is a great pity that at this time particularly this Island should lose the services

and the legal acumen of Mr. W. W. Reece, because all of us in the profession regard and know him as the best authority in Barbados on that branch of the law known as local Government. The result is that now this new system is about to be instituted in Barbados we find that he who is universally acknowledged as the best authority on that branch of the law has been by God's will taken from us.

As an advocate, Sir, I think it is safe to say that he was the most successful advocate at the Criminal Bar in Barbados in my time. Certain cases which apparently more distinguished Counsel refused to accept or would only accept on condition that the accused plead guilty, Mr. Reece accepted and no doubt due to his friendly style and the fact that he is "Jubie" along with his legal skill, decided that the correct verdict was one of not guilty. So, Sir, we must mourn the passing of this member of the most distinguished legal family in the British West Indies, and one who was essentially a human being and who cared for humanity even more than he cared for law. And, as he believed in God, we all will join in hoping and believing that his soul will rest in peace.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without contributing my quota to what has already been well said about the late gentleman. I think I am correct in saying that I happen to know the Reece family for over thirty years beginning with the late Henry Walter Reece and then "Jubie" as we called him. I agree with all the sentiments which have been expressed in respect of his political and friendly association. I have always found him a very friendly man and a man who though at times may be hurt yet did not carry that malice, hatred and vindictiveness which have been found in some others.

As a member of this House, it is true we were poles apart politically, but I think it is fair to say that he did make some contribution to the body politic of this country. In those earlier days when people like him got into the House when there was no question of party — although perhaps they all did agree on a policy without necessarily having a party — yet I must confess that some of his utterances and some of the support he gave sometimes to certain bits of social legislation was an indication that he was not a diehard Conservative, but a man with liberal views and one who was willing when convinced to do something to help the underprivileged.

Sir, I have pleasure and also regret in having to say a word on his behalf. I again

repeat that he was one who after serving fourteen years in this House of Assembly, losing his seat through no fault of my party but because he thought somebody else would have got the other seat, remained friendly and affable and I think persons like him have contributed something to the body politic of this country; therefore, we all would like to extend to his family our deep regret at the passing of this gentleman.

Mr. GODDARD: Mr. Speaker, I have known Mr. Reece when I was a youngster and he was at Harrison's College and I do believe that you were there with him. Apart from that, I have known the family of the Reeces for many years indeed and in recent years, Mr. W. W. Reece became my colleague in Christ Church. We campaigned together and we came to this House in 1948 which was my first entry into politics. He was a great campaigner. He knew how to campaign and he went into all stratas of society and was received by all stratas of society and he could speak to the very highest right down to the very humblest in the very shortest space of time. "Jubie" was very much liked for his affability to all. As was said by other hon. members, he could be in the greatest controversy in the House, he could be at daggers drawn with somebody else so much so that you will think he will not speak to the other fellow again, but as soon as he sat down having put forward his point of view — and he could put it very forcibly — he would be speaking to you friendly again and it was up to you to accept it in good grace.

Mr. Walter Walton Reece contributed a great lot to the politics of Barbados. He represented St. Michael for fourteen years and then he went into exile for a while, but he came back and fought again and re-entered this House in 1948. He lost his seat again in 1951, but that did not prevent him from coming back and fighting at other elections which he lost. He was a real fighter. I think he could be an example to many of us. "Jubie" whom I know as a politician, lawyer and the head of the Masonic Branch of the Scottish Lodge has contributed something to this country. The time is short and we have to cut our speeches now so that we may go to the Other Place but I do know that were it not for that, many other hon. members would have liked to say something in respect of him.

Sir, I wish to associate myself and my Party to the sentiments expressed by the Hon. Premier, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and

other hon. members who spoke in respect to the passing of this Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to associate myself with the noble sentiments expressed by hon. members on both sides of this House having known Mr. W. W. Reece as a member of this House and otherwise.

Hon. members will now declare their assent to the passing of this Resolution by standing in silence for one minute.

Hon. members of the House stood in silence for one minute.

At this stage the Acting Sergeant-at-Arms entered the Chamber and informed Mr. SPEAKER that His Excellency the Governor was in the Council Chamber and was awaiting the House.

Mr. Speaker and Hon. members in pairs according to seniority preceded by the Marshal bearing the Mace, proceeded to the Council Chamber, where His Excellency was pleased to deliver a Speech.
4.00 p.m.

His Excellency delivered a copy of his Address to the President of the Legislative Council and a copy to His Honour the Speaker of the House of Assembly.

PROROGATION OF THE LEGISLATURE

Mr. Speaker and other Hon. Members, preceded by the Marshal carrying the Mace cradle-wise, returned to the Assembly Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: On the last occasion on which it pleased His Excellency the Governor to ask us to await him in the Chamber of the Other Place, His Excellency was pleased to deliver the following Address:—

"Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly.

The Houses of the Legislature have been in Session since the 21st of January, 1958, and I thank you for the careful attention you have given to the many important matters which have been submitted for your consideration during the past twelve months.

I do not propose to review the many developments, legislative and otherwise, which

have marked the current Session. It is fitting, however, on this occasion that we should call to mind the inauguration of the Federal Parliament by Her Royal Highness The Princess Margaret on the 22nd of April last. This event, which was carried out with appropriate dignity and solemnity, was of particular moment to us all, and marked the beginning of what we all trust will be a great new era in the history of the West Indies.

I should also like to mention the meeting of the General Council of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which took place in this Chamber earlier this month. We hope that this was the forerunner of a meeting in the West Indies of the full Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly.

I thank you for the supplies which you have voted from time to time to meet the needs of the public Services.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

By virtue and in exercise of the powers in me vested by the Letters Patent of His Majesty King George V dated the 4th day of June, 1914, I now prorogue the Legislature and I order that it stand prorogued until Tuesday the 3rd day of February, 1959."

R. D. H. ARUNDELLE,
Governor.

20th January, 1959.

The Members of the House then separated, shaking hands with His Honour the Speaker as they left.

The House then stood prorogued.