

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986 - 91

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 9th March, 1989

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 9.45 a.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour L. A. WEEKES, J.P., (Speaker)
His Honour J. J. PAYNE, (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A., (Econ.),
J.P., (Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)
Hon. H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
Hon. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B. (Hons.), (Minister of Health)
Hon. P. M. GREAVES, Q.C., B.A., (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Transport, Telecommunications and Immigration and Leader of the House)
Hon. E. E. GREAVES, B.A., Ed.M., (Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce)
Dr. R. C. HAYNES, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P. (Edin.), (Leader of the Opposition)
Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN, B.A., M.A., (Minister of Transport and Works)
Hon. M. A. KING, Q.C., LL.B., (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs)
Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, A.I.C., M.I.A.S., J.P., (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries)
Hon. N. K. SIMMONS, (Minister of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development)
Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN, B.Sc. (Econ.), (Minister of Housing and Lands)
Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M.
Mr. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.)

Mrs. M. BARKER-WELCH, (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development)

Hon. C. V. WALKER, (Minister of Education and Culture)

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE, J.P., (Chairman of Committees)

Mr. E. BOURNE

Dr. E. A. SIMMONS, M.D.

Hon. W. W. HALL, G.C.M., H.B.M., (Minister of Tourism and Sports)

Mr. C. A. NEBLETT, B.A., (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

Mr. R. L. MORRIS, B.A., Cert. Ed.

Mr. P. J.M. MILLER

Mr. R. P. BYER, LL.B., L.E.C.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B.

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is in session.

THE ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, it is now 9.55 a.m. and in light of the indication received from the Other Place to join them this morning, I move that this House do now proceed to the Senate Chamber to wait upon Her Majesty the Queen for the presentation of the Address of this House, and thereafter stand adjourned until Monday, 13th March, 1989, at 10 o'clock in the morning.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative and the House proceeded to the Senate Chamber.

ADDRESS TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN FROM
THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Mr. SPEAKER:

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

Whereas a Parliament was first assembled in Barbados in 1639

And whereas we, the Members of the Honourable the House of Assembly of Barbados, in Parliament assembled, cognisant that as early as the 18th day of February, 1651, the inhabitants of this nation declared through their Governor, Lords of the Council and members of the Assembly their independence of the Commonwealth of England, the rights and privileges of the said inhabitants being confirmed by the Charter of Barbados, which was made on the 11th day of February, 1652 at Oistins in Barbados

And whereas the maintenance of parliamentary government during the 350 years which have passed since the establishment of Parliament in Barbados constitutes an achievement unequalled for continuity in the Commonwealth of nations.

And whereas progressively through a limited franchise and later adult suffrage and the consequential democratisation of our institutions our nation has achieved and developed our independent existence..

And whereas our society, sustained through strength and unity, through our inheritance and acceptance of concepts and traditions of democracy and through a commitment to justice for all, faces the future resolutely and with an abiding faith under God

We welcome Your Majesty on this occasion once more and we present to Your Majesty our humble duty. We beg leave to express our great pleasure in celebrating the life of our Parliament in this its 350th year. Your Majesty has before now shared with us in this our land moments and events of achievement treasured by Your Majesty as by us.

We, the Members of the Honourable the House of Assembly of Barbados, in Parliament assembled, thank Your Majesty for the honour of your presence this day on the occasion of the celebration of this most historic event in the life of our nation.

Mr. Speaker presented the Address to Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. SPEAKER:

We, the members of your loyal House of Assembly, have had the privilege and pleasure of sharing with Your Majesty occasions of high distinction in your reign. We recall in particular the honour of Your Majesty's presence in this Chamber in 1977, the year of your Silver Jubilee.

Your Majesty generously informed the world on the occasion of your speech in opening the 1988-89 Session of the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland that you would share with us by your most gracious manifestation, your presence in Barbados, the celebration this year of the 350th Anniversary of our Parliament.

We are proud, too, to share with the President and other Honourable Senators the events of this morning and to have with them the advantage and opportunity of an Address to Your Majesty in this historic Chamber.

We congratulate the Senate on the distinction and grandeur of their Chamber manifested in, may I be permitted to say, a sensitively executed restoration of great quality.

We are happy that Your Majesty will, after these proceedings, fulfil one of our fondest hopes for today by a visit which you have graciously offered to make to our Chamber, an unique testimony to the constitutional firmament on which your inheritance so securely rests, and a supreme accolade to the Lower House of our Nation. We offer the assurance, were it needed, that we shall not then be in Session.

The 350 years of our Parliament boast at least one achievement unsurpassed elsewhere in that Commonwealth of Nations of which Your Majesty is Head. That achievement is continuity. Even the United Kingdom, where Your Majesty from a great number of willing countries in the Commonwealth which share our loyalty to you have chosen to have your residence, yields to our country in that.

The trauma of the Long Parliament of England was not ours. Our trauma was in the scars of slavery and indentured labour and the rigours of a society where that labour was plundered by wealth and that wealth was controlled by narrow landed and mercantile interests.

Our people have always demonstrated great courage in the development of our society. That has fortified our people through the abolition of slavery, the destruction of the system of apprenticeship, the spontaneous emergence in 1937 of our thrust towards democratic expression, the Bushe Experiment of 1946 which offered some progress to self-government, the first election under adult suffrage in 1951 after several variations of limited franchise, the introduction of a ministerial system in 1954, the delivery in 1962 of our first true Budget expressing the will of our people through an elected majority, and our Independence in 1966 for which we tarried not long when the spirit of our people and that of our leaders unified in a demand for it.

The principles of the Bill of Rights and the Claim of Right were amply rededicated and celebrated in Your Majesty's presence and by Your Majesty last July at Westminster in the Tercentenary of the 1688-89 Revolutions.

The Bill of Rights was the genesis of the movement which has given us government by our Nation for our Nation and through our Nation, as our Constitution details.

Our Constitution, guarantees the fundamental rights and liberties of our Nation and of all others within our shores. But those guarantees are nothing if a society loses its balance or weakens them. We are happy in our society and for our society. We look to the future with courage and hope, assured of a vision and a consciousness that every man, woman and child encompassed within our society, our total environment, has, in our system, an opportunity of total development and achievement. We know that our society will give full protection to the weak, the handi-capped and the disabled, that we will give them strength through health, and will yield to none in our concerted efforts for a better life for all, and in the fulfilment of our desire for it.

That is the measure of our democracy. That is the reason for this year of celebration. Those thoughts indicate our wishes for the future. We have acknowledged and met the challenges of nationhood. I am happy to preside over a House of Assembly whose business is to respond to those challenges.

We could wish today for nothing better than the gracious presence of Your Majesty, for which we are so happy, and we look forward to even more frequent expressions of your right to be with us to whom you are so very welcome.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN GRACIOUSLY REPLIED
AS FOLLOWS:

Mr. President, and Members of the Senate; Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

Thank you for the Loyal Addresses you have just presented and for the kind words with which you have accompanied them. It is always a great pleasure to be in Barbados. I can truly say that I feel very much at home here. Other members of my family too are always pleased to come here to enjoy that generous hospitality for which this island and its people have long been famous.

I share your pride in this great occasion, and applaud the industry of all those who have worked so well and so hard to make your historic Parliamentary Buildings so attractive. Incidentally, they must be more comfortable and efficient for those who work in them.

Any nation which can boast of the continuous existence of a Parliament for 350 years has sure grounds for pride. As we have just heard, the Mother of Parliament began in its present form in 1265.

I joined in the 700th anniversary celebrations in Westminster Hall in 1965. That Parliament has therefore been in existence for rather more than twice as long as this one, but its history has not been untroubled.

In 1639, when the Assembly was created in Barbados, the King of England and the Parliament were shortly to become involved in a state of Civil War. Not until 1660, was the system of the Monarchy in Parliament restored, and the "Westminster model", on which so many Commonwealth Parliaments have been based, began to take shape.

The Barbadians who established their House of Assembly were a small band of expatriate Englishmen, who believed strongly in individual liberty and their right to worship God in their own way.

They believed that a self-governing system, formed according to these principles, would bring more order and comfort to their lives in an unfamiliar environment. But contained in their creation were the seeds of constitutional government and parliamentary democracy.

The concept of human rights, now enshrined in the United Nations Declaration, was in its infancy and was not, by any means thought to be of universal application. It was another two centuries before slavery was abolished, and the idea of some men owning others was condemned as abhorrent. In 1651, the declaration against the British Parliament issued by Governor Willoughby and the Legislature of Barbados, carried the statement of principle that no people can truly be free unless they can organise and choose the way in which they wish to govern themselves and their society.

From the Charter which was signed in the following year, Thomas Jefferson found inspiration, and borrowed some of its principles for the Declaration of American Independence.

We are all of us inheritors of our history, and this burden may sometimes confuse or depress us.

Through faith and goodwill we must use the errors of the past to redeem the present and safeguard the future. Courage, tolerance, humility and a willingness to share our blessings with others can make our world a better place.

Mr. President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker, and Members of the House of Assembly, on June 26 Parliament assembles in a Special Session to make an historic day in your land.

Not very far from this Chamber, has been identified as the site of the tavern where the House of Assembly started its business in 1639. Thirteen years later the historic Charter of Barbados was also signed at the Mermaid

Tavern in Oistins. It would appear that Barbadian hostelry of the 17th century had more to offer than mere hospitality.

This small nation is admired for many things, apart from its natural beauty and its world famous cricketers. Its people have a great passion for education and spend almost the largest part of their resources on the young.

Much concern is also devoted to the senior citizens, and those who are uncomfortably afflicted by disabilities of

various sorts. There is also a welcome upsurge of interest in Barbadian history and in the spread of an authentic culture.

Most significant of all your achievements, is the success with which you have nourished and brought to maturity, through many painful experiences, a constitutional system of democratic government, from which others have much to learn.

For these reasons I am proud and happy to be your Queen, and I pray that God may bless your national endeavours.

The House then adjourned.

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