

NOTES FROM FRED MITCHELL MP

FOX HILL

House of Assembly

Nassau

Debate on the speech from the throne

30th May 2012

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Speaker let say it is a privilege to second this resolution and I do so.

In doing so, I want to congratulate you on your elevation to this post. I look forward to a return to fairness and decorum in the House of Assembly. I have no doubt that you are well equipped for the job. Knowing your family and antecedents as I do, we justifiably expect great things for you stewardship of the House.

We have won a great victory and the PLP represented here its 29 members are a mix of the seasoned and the new. It is a chance at renewal, a fresh start at getting our country back on track.

In my last statement before the end of the campaign, I said that I hope that with the PLP back in office, that would mean the end of the Ingraham era of bitterness and nastiness in politics. Alas, the snake of nastiness and bitterness is still with us and it looks as if he will not die quietly but his head must be crushed.

The former Prime Minister misled the country when he announced on the night of the general election that he was not going to take up his seat. In deed he did take his seat. Last week, he came dressed in his monkey suit and swore allegiance. For a moment, I thought that maybe a modicum of decency would obtain. But alas it was short lived, for a few minutes later the man who was our king for 15 years, could not stick around to hear the Governor General that he caused to be appointed to read the speech from the throne. Instead, he snuck out of the House like a thief in the night.

Yet hours later and perhaps while the House of Assembly was still meeting, he was giving interviews with the press, issuing his mixture of ad hominem insults, and bitter bile and trying to rewrite history.

Let us be clear. He has left this country in shambles. He is a bitter man.

He has a nerve.

Two issues I immediately want to take issue with. He told the press that the PLP could not help but be incompetent. If we were on the basketball court, they would say your ma is incompetent. When the truth is known, and people ask school children how you spell incompetent in the not too distant future they will respond INGRAHAM.

You think to yourself, when is this big grown man going get over the bitterness of his birth and childhood experiences, are these things that cause him to be so bitter and angry and contemptuous of the people which he leads. When you read the interview, and his final speech to his party that he abandoned as if it were dead cat on election night, it is a charter for selfishness and megalomania. I, I, I. He says the words that

he accepts responsibility for the loss of his party but on the night when he was needed to shore up the troops, he announces fellows I am gone.

The country cannot see the back of him quickly enough. We need to be rid of him and his nasty brutish ways. His boorishness and sleight of hand politics with crude one liners passing for public policy.

As I was walking to the House yesterday, as I sat in the funeral of the late Al Jarrett yesterday, I thought how I love this town Nassau. It is a small town in a small country. I say that in this small town one of the joys is that everyone knows your name. You can stand up on Bay Street in Nassau if you are looking for someone you want to talk too and wait for fifteen minutes and that person will pass by. It is one of the reasons I like living here. I feel free and able to walk the streets of the town without interference. This speech from the Throne is dedicated to keeping life that way in this country.

But we will lose it all if we are unable to solve crime and unemployment and even though people think that Foreign Ministers are always away, I know o two foreign ministers going about the normal business of citizen who ended the murder victims of crime in their societies. So it is always on my mind like most societies.

We have promised to break the back of crime and we will do our best to do so starting from day one.

Assembled on the team are a group of young men and women, full of energy and ideas. I have some advice for them if they will have it. Indeed I said to my colleagues yesterday that the former Prime Minister had better pray that those of us who are more seasoned stick around for a howler because believe me there would be no mercy or forgiveness in some quarters and we have to counsel restraint, such is the anger at the abuse which the Member of North Abaco visited upon this country.

What should have come from him was a total and abject apology for his conduct. The way he ran the House of Assembly, the disrespect he showed his colleagues and the public servants who worked for him, the hundreds of people that he sent home summarily and without conscience. His behavior to us during the five years. His conduct just last week, sneaking out of the house like thief in the night. Imagine that is the last time the House and the nation will see him as an MP and a Prime Minister after 15 years as a Prime Minister, only one of three this county has ever had one of whom is dead and he sneaks out of the House like a thief in the night.

I would recommend to those who have not read it or seen the movie, the Emperor Jones. It is uncanny how that play written in 1920 shows us how people who come from humble beginnings can so forget themselves and descend into a megalomania that causes them to mistake their good fortune for divine right.

My ambitions in this Parliament and with regard to this time I have in office are much wider and deeper than anything that I have ever wanted to accomplish.

I want to leave this Parliament and its members much better than when I came.

I want the Parliament to be the real legislative arm of the government, properly controlling the executive. That members of parliament don't have to hustle to make ends meet. That they are properly supported and I pledge to work to do so.

I said many times in this place in the last session that I do not like the physical environs here. They are too intimate. There is not enough privacy here and no place for staff and members to properly do their work.

Members have to be properly supported in staffing and in allowances and remuneration which will not be possible in our time but we must set the pace for the future.

I would like the place to be more efficient. I make the comparison of the time the Brits spend on the budget with hundreds of billions of pounds and us with just one billion dollars.

Some advice:

The neutrality of your approach to governance to serve all. Invoke Martin Luther King's content of your character.

The story of the treatment of the six young men who were sent looking for jobs in Fox Hill and how they were treated by their potential employers. The question of youth employment.

Fox Hill: the community centre, fixing those homes and jobs for the men and women. Making the community safe. Fox Hill Day/Emancipation Day celebrations.

Being elected does not make you a genius. Do not fall into that era. The pendulum swings and swings quickly.

I intend to do all that I can not in my lifetime to sit on the other side of the House.

Kalis must come back to Eastwood, never forget where you came from.

A time fro silence says Proverbs

The pledge on BTC, reaffirmed by the Prime Minister today.

The importance of the image you have for yourself and that you try as best you can to control that image.

The return of decorum to the House. The fascination with the hats of the ladies on opening day.

The rules of the House and its conventions that should be observed. My views on dreadlocks and tattoos.

My portfolio:

Immigration. Bahamianization. Being in the space occupied by my mentor Loftus Roker. In pledged to strictly enforce the law. But there is this conundrum of revenue vs. enforcement. We will cut thru that Gordian knot.

Illegal immigration is one thing. But the question of legal immigration must be addressed. Ask the question why in this day in age should any

bank in domestic banking be headed by a non Bahamian. I want the answer to that question.

Why are workers being brought in to do dry wall construction.

In foreign affairs, to let the region know that after five years on pause The Bahamas is back in business.

People voted for change: not victimization but if people wanted it the same way, it would have remained the same. My experience as a minister before. Not going to let it happen again.

Remind Ingraham of his saying that you have to be prepared to live with what you decide when you are in Government when you are in opposition.

The concluding story is that of the man who spoke to me: he said “ I like that. You all are Pindling’s boys! ”

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