

50 years ago: Constitution proposals presented to district

By **Staff** · March 5, 2017

In the March 8, 1967 edition of the Caymanian Weekly, a precursor of the Cayman Compass, news from George Town included:

“At a public meeting in the Town Hall, George Town, on March 2 Miss Annie H. Bodden and Mr. A.B. Bush outlined to the constituents of George Town the proposals agreed upon by the majority of elected members of the Legislative Assembly for an advance in constitutional status for the Cayman Islands.

“Briefly these are: The number of elected members in the Legislature should be increased from 12 to 14, and there shall be no nominated members. An Attorney-General shall be appointed in order to divide the duties of the Government’s legal adviser from the Courts. An independent Speaker from outside the Legislature shall be appointed to replace the President, His Honour the Administrator. The composition of the Executive Council shall be changed so that there shall be five elected members instead of three, and no nominated members.

“In addition, the five elected members shall be given executive authority thus becoming the Member responsible for a specified portfolio, for example, ‘Agriculture and Natural Resources.’

“The Executive Council would continue to bear collective responsibility for the actions of its individual members working with the Heads of their respective government departments.

“Miss Bodden and Mr. Bush stated that they had opposed any change such as envisaged in these proposals because they had won their seats in a campaign during which they clearly stated that they were not in favour of constitutional change, taxation or gambling casinos. They personally had not changed their minds in any way but wanted to hear the will of the people of George Town on this important issue.

“After the two representatives had spoken, Mr. Bush asked if anyone else present would care to express their view.

“Nurse Beulah McLaughlin, Dr. R.E. McTaggart, Mr. E.O. Panton, Capt. Theo. Bodden and several others strongly opposed any constitutional change and several questions were asked and answered. No person present elected to speak in favour of the proposals and it appeared that the majority of the audience, approx. 150, were in support of the stand which Miss Bodden and Mr. Bush were taking.

“The main grounds for objection appeared to be the cost involved.”

the transfer of power from the Administrator to persons at present un-named who may be unfit and incapable of holding and using executive power, and the instability in the flow of investment, etc. into the island which may occur as a result of any form of internal self-government.

“There was a strong urge for a law to be introduced in order that a Referendum on this issue might be held, in which every voter would have an opportunity to express his or her views that the opinion of the majority might be made known.

“The meeting concluded with the decision that a petition against any change in constitution should be drawn up and circulated throughout the island before the next meeting of the Legislative Assembly.”

In the same issue, George Town correspondent Frances Bodden wrote:

“Mrs. George Beale is in the island once again and is having a happy time with her sister, Miss Nadine Speck.

“A group of visitors from Roanoke, Virginia had a happy time in the island during the past two weeks. They were Mr. Davis H. Elliot, well known to all us all as the Vice Managing Director of Caribbean Utilities Co. Ltd. who was here for business and pleasure, W. Duval Adams, Executive Vice President of David H. Elliot Co., L.Y. Cash, Vice President of Kentucky operations of David. H. Elliot Co. Inc., Charles P. Linsford Sons & Izard Inc. Insurance Brokers and Mr. and Mrs. Clem D. Johnson, who is a former president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and a world traveller and lecturer.”

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