

Sir Randol's Pension

Editorial The Nassau Guardian

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Although they chose not to vent their resentment publicly, family members of the late Sir Randol Fawkes reportedly had to be persuaded to allow the Government to honour the "Father of Labour" with a "state funeral." Evidence of this surfaced on Wednesday when scores of Bahamians turned up at the House of Assembly after 10 a.m. to view the body of the man who was eulogized yesterday as "a remarkable and outstanding Bahamian whose contributions to the nation will live on in the annals of Bahamian history."

The day before, it was announced that the body would lie in state in the foyer of the House from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, the day of the funeral. But persons who showed up at the House around 10 a.m. on Wednesday were disappointed to discover that the body was not there.

A story in yesterday's *Nassau Guardian* noted that the original plans for the viewing of the body were changed because the family had refused the Government's offer of a state funeral. It was only after a meeting with members of Sir Randol's family that an agreement was reached to allow the "state to provide all the trimmings in keeping with protocol, and the family to coordinate the funeral."

If members of Sir Randol's family are indeed peeved at the Government, their anger is quite justified. Since his death, the accolades and tributes recognising Sir Randol's astronomical contributions to this country have come in torrents, yet not so long ago he had to fight like the dickens for a more-than-well-deserved pension. And what he eventually was awarded was far from being commensurate with his contributions to the nation.

Granted, it may well be that legally the pension awarded to Sir Randol was within the parameters of what is paid for the number of years that he served as a member of Parliament. But Parliament is where the laws are formulated and put in place, and in the case of Sir Randol, a clear case could certainly have been made for special consideration to be given by passage of a resolution or whatever measure was needed to provide him with a decent pension.

It is only after his death that the vast majority of the Bahamians under the age of forty are discovering just what a towering figure he was in this country at a time when there were not that many black men with the requisite courage to fight for the rights of the masses and risk incurring the vindictive wrath of the white oligarchy that controlled this country.

They knew that he helped to break the deadlock that brought the Progressive Liberal Party to power in January 1967, but very few of them had any knowledge about his tireless efforts as a union leader to win dignity and respect for the workers of this country. The tributes paid by labour leaders at his funeral only barely scratched the surface as to what his true contributions were to the labour movement in this country.

But it is not too late for the Free National Movement Government to do what the former Progressive Liberal Party Government should have done a long time ago: give this great Bahamian the respect and honour he deserves. However he chooses to do it, Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham should make it a priority of his Government to ensure that Sir Randol's widow, Lady Jacqueline, receives the benefits that her husband justly deserved.

Coop's Corner

Age is one featured by a "domination of capital." In the past, including the not so recent past, labour was the fulfillment of human dignity; it enabled people to be themselves. Features of today's society, dominated by so-called "globalization," include increased technology, instantaneous communication and intense competitiveness. The upshot is reduction in salaries so that goods can be introduced into the global market at a competitive rate. Pride in one's work is now replaced by intense anxiety and employees, still seeking fulfillment, take and keep a job at all costs. Capital is simply concerned with competitiveness. Those who have lost jobs and are unable to obtain employment or those endemically unemployed experience hopelessness. They turn to God, hence the increase in church membership in the "West."

He highlighted key 20th Century problems:

- Increase in unemployment among youth.

JUNKANOO TALKS

Let's

Two worlds exist on within the annual Junkanoo parades. One is the highly complex and intense world of group competition, and the other is the spontaneous and carefree world of 'Scrap.' The increasing pressure of the first has sent increasing numbers of people into the second.

Consider the 'scrap' experience!

Your life is full and you are involved in many activities. Junkanoo is something that you focus on at Christmas time, and those people who start making costumes way before the Christmas season are taking all the fun out of it.

December arrives, the evenings get cool, and the old familiar sights, sounds and smells of the season begin to assault the senses. Gradually the joy and excitement begin to take over. The pace of life quickens, and tasks increase with seasonal demands: gift-wrapping, baking, decorating, and social events.

You make it to Christmas Day. Then the talk turns to Boxing Day, and the old familiar feeling comes surging back. You have to be on Bay in the morning.

But the parade is now only hours away. What do you do? Exactly what hundreds of other Bahamians do every year. You make the 'sudden' decision to rush 'scrap.' It does not matter if you actually arrived at this decision at the beginning of December; you are still going to wait until Christmas Day to prepare your costume. Is there another way?

The real excitement starts from the moment you grab the scissors and an old newspaper, and intensifies when you carefully lift your dry Junkanoo pants and shirt out of the oven that has just been vacated by the Christmas turkey. Once the sun sets Christmas night, that costume will be with you wherever you go; there is no risking 'getting leave.' This is your annual catharsis,

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