

The Bahamas Achieves a Quiet Revolution as Its First Black Government Takes Hold

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Special to The New York Times

NASSAU, the Bahamas, Jan. 21—A quiet revolution has been achieved in these resort islands as a Negro Government has taken office this week to end three centuries of white rule. The impact has been nil on the tourists who have packed Nassau's hotels, but the changeover seems to have touched the heart of every Negro citizen. Lynden O. Pindling, a 36-year-old Negro attorney, lined up two swing votes to break the 18-18 deadlock in the House of Assembly between his Progressive Liberal party and the United Bahamian party. Sir Ralph Grey, the British Govern-

nor, invited him to form a government.

This made Mr. Pindling the first Negro Prime Minister. His Government, made up entirely of Negroes, took office last Tuesday, replacing the United Bahamian party.

Out on the street, in the straw market, in the shade of awnings, in the taxicabs, in the restaurants and in every other place where the Bahamian Negro could be asked about his political views, the mood was immense exhilaration.

"Now it will be our time," said a woman cab driver. "Now

we will have a Government for most of the people, not just for the white ones."

But will it be better? The question sobered her as she thought of it and answered judiciously: "Yes, it will be better."

In the first week the margin of Mr. Pindling's control appeared to be secure. His first postelection recruit was Randolph F. Fawkes, president of the Bahamas Federation of Labor and the only member of the Labor party elected to the House of Assembly.

Eleven years ago he and Mr. Pindling were elected to the

House of Assembly together, Speaker when the House convened on Feb. 9.

and they collaborated in the leadership of a general strike in 1958. They split in late 1958 on Mr. Fawke's proposed labor legislation.

"We're back together again,"

Mr. Fawkes said of Mr. Pindling in an interview this week. He responded immediately when he was invited to support the Government, he said.

The other Assembly member who switched allegiance is Alvin R. Braynen, who has resigned from the United Bahamian party but has not joined the Progressive Liberals. Mr. Braynen, a Caucasian, will be elected

Speaker when the House convened on Feb. 9.

The United Bahamians had backed another man for his seat in the election last week and he said he felt he owed no loyalty to them.

Mr. Pindling will go into the Assembly with 19 sure votes to 18 for the Opposition, and with a Speaker who will vote to support him in the event of a tie.

The Negro party takes office as the economy is sailing smoothly. A spokesman for the Government said this week that there is virtually no unemployment, but Negroes dispute this. "A bellboy here in this hotel

may get \$17.35 a week," said

Mr. Fawkes, who is resigning his union job to become Minister of Labor and Commerce, "but he has to pay 50 cents for a loaf of bread."

Negroes make up 84 per cent of the population of 145,000. Here in Nassau the contrast between the life of the Negro and that of the white is overpowering. Many Negroes live in a section known as Over the Hill was not large, but an air of excitement gripped it. This was served by outdoor toilets and supplied with water from a community tap in the street. By no means all the white residents are millionaires, but

they live well. And the homes of millionaires ring the island along the fringes of some of the most beautiful beaches in the world.

Yesterday Mr. Pindling went to Windsor Field, the airport, to greet dignitaries and guests aboard an Eastern Air Lines flight that marked new service to the Bahamas.

The crowd, mostly black, see the short man who heads the Government, put it, "There is he, that's our mon."

The New York Times

Published: January 22, 1967
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