



FROM GORDON HOUSE

Houses of Parliament, Gordon House, 81 Duke Street, Kingston. Tel#: (876) 922-0200 Fax: 967-0064/1708 Website: <http://www.japarliament.gov.jm>

From the Clerk's Desk

Dear Friends:

As we enter the new legislative year, we need to look back at the work we have accomplished since the beginning of 2010.

First, I would like to highlight the ongoing improvements being made to our website. Copies of Bills and reports before either House can now be readily accessed from our website. In the near future, we expect to have our website adapting to better meet the needs of our users. We would appreciate your ongoing comments to help us to be constantly improving.

I would also like to thank the staff of the Houses of Parliament for their accustomed enthusiasm most recently displayed in the staging of events which are featured in this issue of the newsletter. The first such was the series of public consultations on the abortion policy review held across the island. Additionally, there were our Commonwealth Day 2010 celebrations and the Ceremonial Opening of Parliament. Let this legislative year be marked by an even deeper commitment to the work being done by the Houses of Parliament.

To the Members of both Houses, I pledge to continue to support your efforts and I look forward to working with you in this new legislative year.

Sincerely,
Heather E. Cooke, J.P. (Mrs.)
 Clerk to the Houses

New Parliamentary Session Begins



His Excellency Sir Patrick Allen, on the red carpet, prepares to enter Gordon House after inspecting the Guard of Honour. Chief of Defence Staff, Major General Stewart Saunders follows the Governor-General.

The 2010/2011 Session of Parliament opened on March 25 with the pomp befitting such an occasion. The Throne Speech, the highlight of the proceedings, was delivered by His Excellency Sir Patrick Allen, Governor-General of Jamaica. In his speech Sir Patrick highlighted the government's commitment to foster an economic and social environment that will see the transformation of the Jamaican society.

(For the full text of the Throne Speech, please visit the Houses of Parliament's website at www.japarliament.gov.jm)

Parliament Hosts Consultations on Abortion Policy

The Joint Select Committee set up to consider the *Report of the Ministry of Health, Jamaica, Abortion Policy Review Advisory Group* successfully staged three public consultations to further gauge the public response to the recommendations of the Ministry of Health (Jamaica) Abortion Policy Review Advisory Group. The consultations were held in Montego Bay, May Pen and Morant Bay. The opinions expressed by the participants are under review.

...Abortion Policy cont'd



Minister of Health and Chairman of the Joint Select Committee reviewing the abortion policy recommendations, Hon. Rudyard Spencer addresses attendees at the forum held at the Glenmuir High School in May Pen.

Bills Passed in 2009/2010

During the 2009/2010 Session of Parliament, the following Bills were passed into law.

- ✓The Conch (Export Levy) Act, 2009
- ✓The Appropriation Act, 2009
- ✓The Factories (Amendment) Act, 2009
- ✓The Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Act, 2009
- ✓The Income Tax (Validation and Amendment) Act, 2009
- ✓The Trade (Amendment) Act, 2009
- ✓The Sexual Offences Act, 2009
- ✓The Child Pornography (Prevention) Act, 2009
- ✓The Holidays with Pay (Amendment) Act, 2009
- ✓The Bank of Jamaica (Amendment) Act, 2009
- ✓The Customs (Amendment) Act, 2009
- ✓The Registration (Strata Titles) (Amendment) Act, 2009
- ✓The Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Act, 2010
- ✓The Government Securities Dematerialization Act, 2010
- ✓The Cybercrimes Act, 2010
- ✓The Terrorism Prevention (Amendment) Act, 2010
- ✓The Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) (No.2) Act, 2010
- ✓The Public Passenger Transport (Kingston Metropolitan Transport Region) (Jamaica Urban Transit Company Limited Third-Party Insurance Scheme) (Validation and Indemnity) Act, 2010.
- ✓The Public Bodies Management and Accountability (Amendment) Act, 2010.
- ✓The Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Act, 2010.
- ✓The Financial Investigations Division Act, 2010
- ✓The Casino Gaming Act, 2010
- ✓The Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) Act, 2010
- ✓The Independent Commission of Investigations Act, 2010

Brain Games: Final Results

You will remember reading in the previous issue that the Houses of Parliament had entered the JACISERA Brain Games competition. Our team performed creditably, placing sixth overall. Kaydian Smith and Tashana Alcock won the gold and bronze medals, respectively, in the *General Knowledge* section of the quiz.

Commonwealth Day 2010: Science, Technology & Society

On March 8, 2010 the Houses of Parliament held its Commonwealth Day celebrations under the theme *Science, Technology and Society* in the Cleve Grant Building, Constant Spring Road Church of God. Our Commonwealth Day celebrations provided Jamaican youth with the opportunity to showcase their talents, not only their dramatic and musical flair, but also their scientific and technological acumen. The youth participated in all aspects of the day's activities.

Young scientists from Jamaica College, Kingston Technical High and the University of the West Indies were joined by exhibitors from the National Council on Science and Technology and the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA). The exhibits were informative and demonstrated the scientific potential available in Jamaica.

The day's proceedings were viewed by senior parliamentary officials and members of staff from the Houses of Parliament, members of the diplomatic corps, students and members of the public. We look forward to seeing greater participation by Members in next year's event. The activities were funded by a grant from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

Rest in Peace Rex



Former Chancellor of the UWI, Sir Shridath Ramphal, signs the Houses of Parliament guest book under the watchful eyes of Mrs. Heather Cooke, Clerk to the Houses. Also featured in the photo is Sir George Alleyne, Chancellor of the UWI (left).

Parliament remembered the late Prof. the Hon. Ralston "Rex" Nettleford, Vice Chancellor Emeritus of the University of the West Indies (UWI) during the sitting of the House of Representatives on February 16. Members of the House paid tribute to the late professor before suspending Standing Orders to allow non-Members to pay their respects.

Professor Nettleford was lauded by former Prime Ministers, the Most Hon. Edward Seaga and the Most Hon. P.J. Patterson, Professor Sir George Alleyne, Chancellor of the UWI, former UWI Chancellor, Sir Shridath Ramphal, and the Hon. Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda.

Co-operation at Work

The Houses of Parliament recently benefitted from the strong bonds between Parliaments within the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). Three members of staff took advantage of training opportunities sponsored by three CPA member countries. As a result, these individuals are better equipped to carry out their duties.

Miss Kaydian Smith, Legislative Counsel, attended the International Training Programme in Legislative Drafting held at the Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training, a division of the Lok Sabha in New Delhi, India. The five-week long course,

Co-operation...cont'd

Which was funded under the Indian Technical and Economic Programme, lasted from mid-January to mid-February. As a result of her participation in the course, Ms. Smith says that she will "be better able to draft Private Members' Bills and to correct or amend Bills that are drafted by private practitioners where they do not comport with proper drafting style."



Miss Gibson (right) converses with Dr. Malcolm Jack, Clerk of the House of Commons (left) at a reception held for the delegates participating in the seminar at Westminster. Jamaica's Deputy High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Mrs. Joan Edwards (centre) is also in the photo.

Miss Cheryl Gibson, Assistant Clerk, participated in the *59th Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practice & Procedures* hosted by the UK Branch of the CPA and held at the House of Commons, London. The aim of the seminar was "to provide a forum for Members, Clerks and Serjeants at Arms to explore parliamentary practice and procedures within the Westminster legislature framework." Ms. Gibson reports that the part of the course she enjoyed most was the constituency visit to Edmonton in north London.

Mr. Ralph Montague, Fourth Clerk/Personnel Officer, attended the *Parliamentary Staff Development Workshop for the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region* in Antigua. The workshop was hosted by the Antigua and Barbuda CPA Branch and ran from March 21-25. Mr. Montague stated that the workshop has helped to strengthen the ties among regional Parliaments and provided the opportunity for further sharing of ideas. **END**