

Refusal to appoint Deputy Governor an insult to TCI

Former Deputy Premier of the Turks and Caicos Islands Lillian Boyce says Governor Gordon Wetherell's decision not to appoint a native Deputy Governor as required by the Constitution is a blatant insult to the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

And she has called on British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and officials of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to instruct Governor Wetherell to do what is constitutional and morally right and move swiftly to appoint a local Deputy Governor.

"The reason which the Governor offered for not appointing a Deputy Governor is quite lame and extremely ridiculous and it amounts to a serious insult to the intelligence of the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands and absolute disrespect to all of us," Mrs. Boyce said.

"It is wrong to the core and it is sad, and it really tells you how the British think about us as a people. If we remain quiet about this, the British will continue to treat us Turks and Caicos Islanders as they like, with scant respect. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land and it clearly makes provision for a Deputy Governor, and in those circumstances the British Government and Prime Minister Gordon Brown really should be insisting that Governor Wetherell leads by example and that he follows the letter of the law and do what is right.

Boyce said that by not appointing a Deputy Governor and keeping the situation under review, Governor Wetherell is essentially saying that there is not a single person in the entire Turks and Caicos Islands who is fit and proper to be appointed to that post.

"We must not let that false impression go forth about our country, so we must collectively correct and reject the Governor's decision in the strongest possible manner. This has nothing to do with partisan politics. This is about patriotism. This is about standing up for our country and advocating what is right. We must let the entire world know that our country has a wealth of persons who are well-qualified, capable and suited for the post of Deputy Governor and we must also let them know that Governor Wetherell's decision in this matter is another classic example of how he continues to misjudge, misrepresent and mistreat the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands," Boyce said.

Mrs. Boyce, a former Minister of Education, Minister of Health and Minister of Home Affairs, said the British Government exposed their strategy and plans for the Deputy Governor position when they announced a few months ago that the former Governor of Bermuda Mark Capes would be coming to the Turks and Caicos Islands to replace Martin Stanley as Chief Executive later this month.

“Basically all they are doing is moving Mr. Capes from being the Deputy Governor of Bermuda and transferring him to being the Deputy Governor of the Turks and Caicos Islands, but allowing him to use the title of Chief Executive,” she said.

Mrs. Boyce called on the church, the private sector, civic leaders and the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands in general to speak out against this matter and about any and all injustices that are being imposed them by the Governor, his advisors and his Interim Government. She said that since the Governor took over in August, the economic situation has become worse in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

“We have a situation where businesses and people in this country are hurting badly, but who’s looking out for them? Civil Servants are not being paid on time and more and more people are sinking into poverty. But who’s speaking out on their behalf? What are the British doing about it? Who’s standing up to the Governor? Our people have become too silent. This is our country and when the British leave, we all still have to live here. We therefore must not allow ourselves to be intimidated by anyone to the point where we seem paralyzed, or where we are afraid to speak out in our own country. Based on what has been happening in this country, we must realise now more than ever, that we have to come together as a people in a spirit of national unity and work toward taking back our country,” she added.