

New Platform OK'ed By Party Convention

At its first General Convention held Friday the Progressive Liberal Party adopted its platform for the year ending June 1954.

The following platform was adopted and is printed in full for general information with an accompanying statement.

A Statement From The Progressive Liberal Party

One of the characteristics of British democracy is that there are usually two major divisions of public opinion which find expression in organised political opinion which is indispensable to the smooth processes of democratic government.

Our parties serve to canalise the vote of nearly 33,000,000 electors and, in common with political organisations in other democratic nations, they define election issues, educate the voters, supply elective candidates, co-ordinate the activities of government, and when "out of office" and in minority status, provide continuous critical analysis of public policies.

With a deep sense of responsibility towards the Bahamas and its inhabitants, particularly in the Out Islands, a group of Bahamians met and united for promoting by their joint endeavour the first political party along British party lines—the Progressive Liberal Party.

Let us, therefore, at the outset recognise the essential, vital role the Progressive Liberal Party is destined to play in the affairs of the Bahamas in the years to come.

Our platform has been the result of weeks of labour and we now offer it to the people of the Bahamas for their consideration, and ap-

peal to them to support it as the first major step towards providing higher levels of prosperity and security for the whole people of the Bahamas, particularly those living in the Out Islands who have been so badly neglected for almost 300 years.

The Progressive Liberal Party is not a "big man's party." No party of so called big men can hope to succeed in this country. And no party composed entirely of small men, as the term goes, can succeed. The Progressive Liberal Party hopes to show that your big man and your little man, your black, brown and white man of all classes, creed and religions in this country can combine and work together in supplying sound and successful political leadership which has been sadly lacking in the Bahamas. The Progressive Liberal Party is a party for every man with a stake in these beautiful Isles of June.

Our critics are already at work disseminating false propaganda but let us say here that no amount of coercion in whatever form it appears will deter us from our ultimate aim of promulgating a New Deal for the backward people of New Providence and the Out Islands.

The cynic will be inclined to scoff at our party's platform. The believer in representative government cannot. To him the pledge of a party or its candidates are vital parts of the whole scheme of democracy.

The present members of the already established Executive Board of the Progressive Liberal Party are:

Messrs. H. M. Taylor, the Junior Member for Long Island in the House of Assem-

bly, chairman; J. S. Carey, vice-chairman; U. H. Knowles, second vice-chairman; William W. Cartwright, Junior Member for Cat Island in the House of Assembly, treasurer; Cyril St. John Stevenson, secretary-general; C. Pinder, secretary to Executive Board; Linden O. Pindling, Legal Advisor; Paul Farrington, Felix N. Russell, and Carl Bethel.

All party members holding a seat in the House of Assembly will automatically become members of the Executive Board.

A General Council will be formed to assist the Executive Board in formulating organizational procedure and policy. The general public will be accorded membership in branches of the party, which will be established throughout New Providence and in every Out Island.

We faithfully dedicate ourselves to the pledges we have made in our Party's Platform. Guided by these principles, with continued faith in Almighty God; united in the spirit of brotherhood; and using to the full the skills, resources and blessings of liberty with which we are endowed; we, the Progressive Liberal Party will courageously advance to meet the challenge of the future.

H. M. TAYLOR,
Chairman.

CYRIL ST. JOHN
STEVENSON,
Secretary-General.

October 21, 1953
Nassau, Bahamas.
Party Headquarters,
Preamble

The Progressive Liberal Party adopts this platform in the conviction that the destiny of the Bahamian

people is to build a country in which every citizen can obtain a higher standard of living with the promise of greater social and political freedom.

We chart our course under the leadership of the Progressive Liberal Party in the abiding belief that it is dedicated to the service of all Bahamians and not to a privileged few, and will prove its superiority over all other parties.

Ours is the Party which has taken on the responsibility to provide a better standard of living for farmers, fishermen, civil servants, and all other working classes of the Bahamas and to lead the Bahamian people to the greatest prosperity in their history.

Ours is the Party which promises to build on a solid foundation, a sound and stable economy, develop our agriculture and fisheries, re-invigorate our industries and introduce new ones, provide better roads, transportation and communications throughout New Providence and the Out Islands.

Ours is the Party which promises to fight with all the strength at its command the introduction of Communism and other subversive elements in our country and to foster good relations between the various islands and peoples of the Bahamas.

We deplore the present economic state of the majority of the Out Islands and their inhabitants. We consider their plight to be a blot on the fair name of British Colonial administration which had jurisdiction over these islands for over 300 years, and we pledge to devote the greater part of our energies towards alleviating their economic distress.

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iating the suffering and poverty of these unfortunate people.

We reject the principle which is generally accepted that our Government exists for the benefit of a privileged few; we pledge to serve the interest of all and not the few; to achieve security and full production from local industries, farming and fisheries and full employment for all.

Principles

The Government is the servant of the people, and not the people the servant of the Government. Government must be administered economically and effectively and must constantly strive to raise the standard of living of the people. To this end we pledge our wholehearted support.

Commonwealth Relations

We declare that the imperative duty of every Bahamian is to foster trade, cultural and political relationship with the United Kingdom and the rest of the British Commonwealth.

Foreign Neighbours

We declare that along with the rest of the British Commonwealth, the Bahamian people must go forward hand in hand with the United States of America. We pledge full co-operation with that country and shall build a solid and abiding friendship with her.

We pledge ourselves to cooperate as far as possible with all other countries of the world in helping to promote trade, understanding and friendship.

Domestic Policies

The Party will be ever solicitous in keeping prices to as low a level as possible so that the necessities of life will be available to every Bahamian.

We shall enact housing legislation, carry out slum clearance and promote low rent housing projects.

We shall enact health laws that will eliminate the breeding ground for disease and crime.

The PLP pledges that strong immigration control will be enforced. That while welcoming the outsider who can contribute towards the economy of the Bahamas there will be no compromise on opposing the influx of foreigners who reduce the earning capacity of Bahamians.

The PLP believes that too many persons have been allowed to enter the Bahamas to take work from our people and that it will take a strong hand to control it.

Direct Taxation

The PLP sincerely believes that the current method of indirect taxation whereby the bulk of revenue is raised by custom duties is both unjust and inequitable. We believe that a carefully planned and properly devised system of direct taxation could and should be introduced to correct this injustice. We believe that a system whereby a man is asked to contribute according to his ability is far more beneficial to the Bahamas than the current system: All major countries of the world subscribe to this principle of political economy. It is therefore our pledge to embrace the opportunities of various direct methods of taxation, for example, an entertainment or a luxury goods tax and to explore fully and then introduce at the proper time a system of income tax that would relieve the poor man of some of his burdens and guarantee fair returns and profits for industry and private investors.

Balanced Budget

We pledge the introduction of good sound fiscal policies that will bring about a balanced budget.

We favour the elimination of nuisance taxes wherever possible, without upsetting the economy of the country.

Labour—Management

Relations

The rights of the working classes are interwoven

with the rights of the employers. They depend one upon the other. Both these rights will be protected under the PLP against exploitation, and consideration will be given for the general welfare of all. Every man is due a decent living and a decent wage and must be paid sufficient to meet the continual spiraling cost of living. To effect this every employer is due a good day's work.

Collective bargaining is regarded by the party as an inherent right to individuals, and individual or union strikes are considered a fundamental right. In this field the PLP will do all possible to promote good will, be impartial, prevent violence and demand respect for the law of the land by the parties concerned. We pledge ourselves to foster good relations between workers and employers and to introduce proper labour legislation for the mutual benefit of all concerned.

Housing And Social Services

We pledge ourselves to encourage the building of better homes everywhere, clearance of slums, and a low rental programme for the working classes. Under the PLP slums will gradually disappear and the standard of rented houses will be raised so that the mass of the population will advance towards a brighter and higher standard of living.

We pledge ourselves to do all in our power to assist the blind, the aged, the infirm, and those who cannot support themselves, and have no visible means of a livelihood by giving them a larger allotment of the necessities of life.

We pledge ourselves to do everything possible to establish medical clinics in all important centres in the Out Islands and to place medical facilities within reach of all.

Education

It is the belief of the PLP that any person with a high education will be able to carry out his duties in life better than a person with a

average education and will therefore become a better citizen; we therefore pledge a higher standard of education for New Providence and the Out Islands; an improvement in the standard of teachers; better buildings and equipment for schools and improved residences for teachers; facilities for organised games and sports wherever possible, and a wider curriculum for schools.

For those teachers who devote time after their normal working hours to teaching high-school subjects to pupils above the elementary grades we pledge a fair remuneration to augment their salaries commensurate with their extra work.

The PLP maintains that every Bahamian is entitled to the benefits of a good high school education, so we approve of extended Government aid to all high schools offering equal opportunities to all Bahamian boys and girls, and filling the proper educational requirements.

We also believe that while it is the duty of the Government to enact and enforce educational legislation, it is the responsibility of parents to see that their children are educated in a school of their choice.

Veterans

We agree that these Bahamian men and women who by sheer luck are not lying near the battlefields of the world, should be accorded the following concessions and we pledge ourselves to use our best endeavour to this end:

Employment according to their capability and adaptability.

Decent housing for those who are unable to build or purchase a house at prices they can afford to pay.

Medical care and hospitalisation of a better standard than is now provided.

Supplies of new uniforms periodically or when necessary.

A bigger grant for funeral expenses.

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Out Island Farmers And Fishermen

Knowing that the Out Island farmers and fishermen are the object of neglect we, the PLP, pledge ourselves to initiate a NEW DEAL for the Out Islands which among other things will provide in due course greater opportunities for these people which will enable them to expand their activities and production. This will be accomplished by obtaining for them:

Soil conservation aids.
Farm credits.
Low rentals of land.
Protection of reasonable market prices.

Assured sale of products by subsidising surplus crops.

The PLP knows that the Out Island Produce Exchange is in need of complete re-organisation. Produce is purchased by the Exchange only in saleable quantities and is sold in competition with the local vendors either for a profit or even sale. The establishment of the Out Island Produce Exchange has only added another dealer in the market. It has not:

- (a) Given any incentive to increase production in the Out Islands.
- (b) bought surplus crops unless they were actually saleable.

Boats arriving from the Out Islands can still be found at the docks with surplus produce which cannot be sold immediately. Many cases happen where these products are dumped overboard or taken back to the owners on the Out Islands, resulting in:

- (a) loss of interest for increased production or yield.
- (b) smaller acreage put under cultivation, and
- (c) loss of confidence in a Government that encourages them to increase their acreage and yield without finding a market.

The PLP therefore will

assure the Out Island farmer that no products will be returned to him but all surplus crops will be subsidised and purchased by the re-organised Produce Exchange and every effort for encouragement, and assistance will be given him for increasing his acreage and production.

The policy of the Out Island Produce Exchange will be changed to meet our pledges.

We hold that the livestock and cattle industry can become one of the most profitable industries in the Bahamas, if the farmer is given encouragement to expand his activities. We take the view that these Islands can produce enough meats to supply the entire community and that the money used for the importation of this commodity from other countries can better be used to expand the local industry and provide a marketing organisation.

It is the purpose of the PLP to use every means to:

- (a) expand the livestock industry
- (b) encourage the farmers to raise more and better livestock and cattle.
- (c) promote better pastures, and
- (d) guarantee these farmers an assured stable market for their meats.

The PLP realises that the Out Island farmer and fisherman cannot survive much longer without some economic aid and that this aid should not be handed out in times of distress only, as a dole or relief, but should be a planned long-term policy which will eventually do away with the necessity of relief grants. The PLP pledges itself to do everything possible in establishing a long-term policy of improvements in the Out Islands economically and otherwise, which will make the inhabitants a strong, happy and independent people.

High Cost Of Living

We pledge ourselves to exert every effort to reduce the cost of living to the lowest possible level and to:

- (a) Foster and encourage

by all means at our disposal increased production.

- (b) Progressive reduction in the cost of government through elimination of waste and duplication
- (c) Subsidisation of local industries to provide an incentive for greater production and efficiency
- (d) Balancing the Budget.

The Civil Service

We favour an efficient and well paid civil service. We pledge ourselves to support the rights of the civil servant for a fair and living wage in return for efficient service. Encouragement of and remain in the civil service and to expect a reasonably pleasing service to the general public. Equipping and training more and more civil servants in their respective positions so as to improve the general standard of efficiency.

Civil And Political Liberties

We pledge ourselves to extend the franchise to women, as is in force in certain other parts of the world. To enact legislation to improve the voting rights of Bahamians and a further extension of the franchise to all men.

The PLP does not agree that the seven-year term of the House of Assembly is in the best interest of the people of the Bahamas. The party pledges to strive for a reduction of this term to five years.

The party also promises to consider an increase in constituencies and seats in the present House with a view to providing better representation for the people.

The PLP subscribes to the proposition that all men are born equal. It is therefore our belief that all Bahamians must have the right to live, the right to work, the right to vote, the right to worship as he sees fit, the right to take part in the administration of his government, and with full and equal protection under the existing laws. We call upon the Bahamian people to sup-

port the Progressive Liberal Party in guaranteeing the following basic and fundamental rights to all Bahamians.

The right of full and equal political participation.
The right to equal opportunity of employment.
The right to security of person.
The right of equal treatment in the Civil Service of the Bahamas.
The right of peaceful assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of the press.

The PLP will most strongly fight to obtain an Appeal Court so that all persons will have equal opportunity of appealing from the Supreme Court if he wishes to do so. We will also work toward the attainment of a written constitution that will give Bahamians a greater control over the administration of the affairs of the government, striving ultimately for self-government within the British Commonwealth.

The City Of Nassau

We agree that the time has come for the City of Nassau to form a Corporation that will take care of its own utilities. At the present time the cost of electricity, water, sewage, telephones, etc., are all borne by the general public and it is a source of dissatisfaction in the Out Islands. The PLP is opposed to the people of the Out Islands having to pay for public utilities used exclusively for the benefit of the people of New Providence. We pledge to introduce legislation that will effect this change and establish the Corporation of the City of Nassau.

The Out Islands

The PLP feels that our Out Islands are neglected in more ways than one. There are no subsidies for any of the industries, the farmers are left to shift as best they can in rain and drought for themselves their public utilities are considered a waste of money and little or no ef-

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fort is made for their resuscitation. We feel that the time has come for the Out Islands to rouse from their lethargy and change this state of affairs. We feel that our brothers in the various islands must not be treated as outcasts. The PLP pledges itself to eradicate these wrongs and help the Out Islands to find their rightful place in the Bahamian economy. We pledge ourselves to encourage industries and production, make the farmers feel that they are not alone in the battle for subsistence, maintain public utilities where they exist and to expand their services, to see that all necessary public roads, wharfs and buildings are properly maintained. The PLP asserts that they have a broader outlook on the Out Island situation and that these islands can be made more productive.

We pledge ourselves to see that good roads are constructed in various islands, and that a larger share of the revenue of the Bahamas be allocated for the following purposes:

- (a) Comfortable and adequate transportation between the Islands and Nassau.
- (b) Good roads through each island for transportation between settlements.
- (c) Adequate docking and landing facilities where necessary.
- (d) Proper telegraph, telephone and postal communications.
- (e) Health facilities as can be afforded.
- (f) Good schools and teachers.
- (g) Improved industries.
- (h) Better and more modern farming facilities.
- (i) Increased crops and means of preserving same.
- (j) Guaranteed market for surplus crops.

Communism

The PLP condemns com-

munist and all other forms of totalitarianism along with their propaganda overseas. The PLP shall fight it wherever it shall dare to raise its head in our islands by all means at our disposal, and principally by improving the economic and social structure of the Bahamian people. We pledge ourselves to fight all organisations that are undemocratic remembering also that each and every Bahamian is entitled to the guarantee of free speech, free press and honest political activity.

This is our platform.

These are our principles.

They form a political and economic policy which will guide our party and our country.

Under them and with the guidance of Divine Providence we can proceed to higher levels of prosperity and security, under them we advance to a better and fuller life and develop sound leadership in Bahamian affairs which will demand the respect and admiration of all.

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