

Report of the Women's League 1998-1999

Presented by the President Senator Jessica C. Odle

Madam Chairman, Chairman of the Barbados Labour Party, Members of the Executive, Guest, Comrades.

It gives me great pleasure to present the Report of the Women's League for the period 1998 to 1999.

The year started on a very busy note as we were a few months away from what has now become a historic general election.

As usual the Women's League rose to the occasion and assisted in every area of the Campaign. Our immediate Past President did a sterling job in co-ordinating specialist activities at Party Headquarters. I was able to assist the St. Michael Team as one of the Zonal Leaders, all in all the League gave tremendous assistance in their respective Constituencies.

At our monthly meetings held on the first Sunday of each month, we had guest speakers who informed and educated.

Of note would be the presentation of Ms. Sandra Husbands, "The Perfect Gift", which was designed to allow members to take a critical look at themselves, and their involvement and contribution in the various aspects of their lives.

Hon Hamilton Lashley informed on the activities and plans within his ministry, and urged members to feel free to inform the Ministry of needs within their Constituencies.

Ms. Lynette Eastmond from the Ministry of Industry and International Business was able to share with members the multi-faceted work of that Ministry, and how International Business in Particular impacted on the lives of the men women and children the Country.

Senator Patricia Thorington elucidated on her involvement and experiences as a female candidate, and encouraged women in general to consider the elective arena.

Dr. Eudine Barriteau from the Center for Gender Studies at the U. W. I. insightful presentation, on Women in Politics/Women in Political Leadership, focused on the Worth and Power of Women in the process.

The value- what do we bring? The Challenges - How to manage and to minimize limitations. Her information caused us to consider the Vision of the League. She urged us to be the gatekeepers of the constituency, to consider policy, and how it impacts. She urged us not to let our loyalty be taken for granted, to see our role as a national one which will benefit Party and Government. Our access to the power broker is crucial, in order for us share our on going vision. She restated that Women and Power and Power and Women go very well together.

Members also attended a number of Seminars and Workshops. These included Project Development and Proposal writing: The Seven Secrets of Successful Women, and a Seminar on the expansion of Breast Screening availability.

Overseas training included Proposal Writing and Fund Raising in Mexico, and Political Campaign Training at the University of Yale in the U.S.A.

Two members attended the Unity Labour Party-St. Vincent Women's Conference and took Fraternal

Greetings.

Fund Raising was high on our agenda this year. We have started a training fund to assist with training of members, and your assistance is needed. You will see some flyers in your Conference Packages advertising chairs for rent and please support our fresh and cool stall on the outside. Please remember women, once you are a member of the Party, membership to the League is automatic. Please come out and join the activities and benefit.

Special mention must be made of Comrade Chessel Rock, who spearheaded the general fund raising for the league. She also made trips to Trinidad and Washington D.C. to promote Barbados, through her culinary skills.

At Parliamentary Level, Comrade Pat Symmonds paid a return visit to Canada as a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and garnered information that will assist in the better function of the Parliamentary Library.

I went as a member of the Commonwealth Observer Group to the 1999 South Africa Elections earlier this year, and had the pleasure to attend and learn much from the C.P.A. 19 The Small Island States meeting and the 45 Annual Conference in Trinidad and Tobago. Comrade Billie Miller was demitting office, after serving three years as the Executive Committee Chairperson. The first Woman to hold that post.

The Women Parliamentarians play a significant role. The contribution of Comrades Billie Miller, Mia Mottley and Elizabeth Thompson must not go unnoticed. Comrades Cynthia Forde and Pat Thorington have played their role. Indeed we salute the collective effort of all the Barbados Labour Party Women Parliamentarians.

No longer should the Women of the League be seen only as the cooking crew or Dettol crowd. We take our place beside the strong men, where together, we focus on the one thing that channels us, and as our motto states. A Better Life for our People.