

29th November

Message from the Governor to the House of Assembly

"Governor's House, Barbados,
22d August, 1884.
It is passing by the 12th Clause of the Bill for the Amendment of the Apprenticeship Laws, under the age of six years, who become free on the 1st day of this month, notwithstanding the fact that they are already in many instances in the habit of a state of domesticity, that must risk their education at the hands of their former masters, and that the Government is anxious to secure the well-being of these children, and to the new laws which are now being introduced, the Governor deems it his duty to bring the important subject under the consideration of the House.
It is within the Governor's knowledge, that many humane Proprietors, anxious to do their duty, have been endeavoring to secure from the charge of maintaining these children, except as apprentices—have resorted to conditions, but there are many instances also, where the former masters, subject to conditions, have been found to have done nothing to their credit, and, as it were, have been making a profit out of the children, with only one day in the week to work on their own account, and sufficiently profitable in the hands of the Legislature to transfer some Law, that may operate equally for the benefit of the children, and for the benefit of the former masters, and for the benefit of the State.
"LIONEL SMITH"

True Copy
Ch. Darling
Printer

for the printer 4/2

W. 37, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

For Lionel Smith

Transmitting Copy of
a Message respecting
Apprenticed Children
and of the Replies
of the Council and
Assembly thereto.

3 Enclosures

Ms. 10. 19. 287
p. 10. 19. 287

**Message from Lionel Smith, the Governor of Barbados
to the House of Assembly**

Government House, Barbados, 1834

It appearing by the 18th clause of the Imperial Abolition Act, that the children of Apprentices under the age of six years, who became free as of the 1st day of this month, notwithstanding the provisions of the Act are likely in many instances to be reduced to a state of destitution, that most risk their existence at such

tender ages, either from the reluctance of their parents to apprentice their children until they attain 21 years of age, or from the unwillingness of their former owner to be encumbered with such children. The Governor deems it his duty to bring this important subject under the consideration of the Honourable House.

Glossary

House of Assembly = government of Barbados

Apprentice – somebody who is required by law to work for somebody else for an amount of time.

Destitution = poverty/ not having enough to survive

reluctance = not wanting to do something

Humane = kind/ compassionate

Proprietor = owner

It is within the Governor's knowledge that many Humane Proprietors, notwithstanding the Abolition Act, which absolves them from maintaining these children except as apprentices – have resolved to continue their protection to them to the same extent as when they were slaves without that condition, but there are many instances also, among 1100 children of this description, where their former owners object to contribute anything to their support and as it seems impossible that the parents of such children, with only one day in the week to work on their own account can sufficiently provide for them, the Governor appeals to the humanity of the Legislature to introduce some Law that may operate generally for their safe preservations until they are of sufficient age to contribute to their own livelihood.

LIONEL SMITH

This picture is not part of the document, but it shows a mother and child in Trinidad in the 1830s – why would mothers of young children be particularly worried about the apprenticeship system?

