



Council Chamber 16th September 1834

The Legislative Council beg respectfully to acknowledge the receipt of his Excellency's message dated 25th of August last, in reference to the provision of the 18th clause of the Imperial Abolition Act respecting the children of apprenticed labourers under the age of 5 years, and requesting the introduction of a new Law to operate generally for the safe preservation of such children until they are of sufficient age to contribute to their own livelihood.

The Council, alternatively (?) considering the extension ... of the provisions made under The Abolition Act for the.... and care of them children, cannot withhold the ... of their surprise at the.... of this Communication from His Excellency. If the parents have felt reluctant to adopt the system of apprenticeship of their children to their employers (a mode of fixing themselves from the change) such reluctance has not been produced by any act or expectation of their former proprietors but must be attributed to the strong and impulsive manner in which His Excellency in all his personal addresses to the slaves, urged them to avoid the apprenticeships of their children and to exert their own industry to maintain their young offspring and as it seems to His Excellency 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, it is difficult to reconcile the forcible recommendations of His Excellency on this point with his conviction of the impossibility of their accomplishment, and however just the motives by which His Excellency might have been influenced to exert his strenuous.... against the adoption of infant apprenticeships; he has thereby defeated the benevolent intentions of the act.

The council are pleased to learn from His Excellency that he is aware that many Humane Proprietors have for a time promised a protection to the infants of their labourers and a further extension of their acts of kindness must depend upon the conduct of the Labourers themselves, so long as the active industry and good behaviour of the labourers are experienced so long will this course ensure a reciprocity of benevolence and kind treatment from the proprietors and it would be a most unsound course of policy for the Legislation to destroy a to the good conduct of the parent by any..... as an infant poor law, the likely result of which would be, on the part of the parents, an entire indifference to the interests of their Employers

Glossary

House of Assembly = government of Barbados

Legislative Council – part of the government of Barbados, make decisions about the laws.

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

Humane = kind/ compassionate

Proprietor = owner

Benevolent = caring/ compassionate