



14 January 2011.

The Hon. Clive Edwards has been appointed as Tonga's Minister for Revenue Services and Minister for Public Enterprises in the new Cabinet early in the year.

PROFILE

William Clive Edwards OBE (born 11 January 1934) is a Tongan Cabinet Minister and former Deputy Prime Minister of Tonga. He is a member of the People's Democratic Party and currently serves as Minister of public enterprise and revenue services.

Life and Education

Edwards was born in Kolofo'ou, Nuku'alofa, Tonga. He was educated and was first dux at Tonga High School where he was the first local student to pass NZ School Certificate from Tonga. He was a student of Auckland Grammar School in New Zealand in 1953 where he gained NZ University Entrance. He studied law at the University of Auckland and practiced in both New Zealand and Tonga before returning to Tonga permanently in 1994.

Legal career

As a lawyer, Edwards was heavily involved with protecting the Pacific Islander community in New Zealand when New Zealand society was strongly anti-immigration. During the 1970s and 1980s there were a series of infamous dawn raids when Police and Immigration officials would raid houses of the Pacific Island community almost at random and arrest men women and children for deportation. His office, then in Mt Eden, Auckland, was the largest sole practitioners legal office in New Zealand and he was famous for never turning away a client who actually could not pay. He was a founding member of the United Church of Tonga in New Zealand and was a substantial fund raiser. He has been the Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the church since its inception.

He was personally responsible for legal battles with Immigration in New Zealand that changed the face of the immigration law in New Zealand and subsequently became a model for modern international immigration law. His spirited and tenacious defences of thousands of immigrants in New Zealand resulted in thousands of Island people lawfully gaining residence and ultimately citizenship in New Zealand. His work undoubtedly enriched New Zealand society and second and third generation Pacific Island families now play prominent roles in New Zealand's cultural, business, professional and sporting life.

In Tonga and New Zealand, Edwards was well known in the Appeal Courts and at trial as a lawyer he gained acquittals for many people who would otherwise have wrongly gone, without his help, to prison. In New Zealand alone, he has conducted 24 murder cases with only 1 conviction and all manslaughter cases he trialled were acquitted

Cabinet Minister

In 1996, Edwards was appointed to the Tongan Cabinet (and therefore the Tongan Parliament) by His Majesty, Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, and served as Minister of Police, Prisons & Fire Services, and Deputy Prime Minister.] As a Cabinet Minister and under his Oath of Allegiance to the King of Tonga, Edwards was an opponent of democracy, banning the Times of Tonga newspaper, ordering surveillance of pro-democracy meetings,] and taking civil action suits against 'Akilisi Pohiva and other democracy activists for defamation.

In 1996 Pohiva and two Times of Tonga journalists, Kalafi Moala and Filokalafi 'Akauola, were found guilty by the Tongan Parliament of Contempt of Parliament, in a matter relating to then Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Lord Tevita Tupou published publicly by the Times, causing them to be jailed for 30 days. Edwards was responsible, in his capacity as Minister of Police and Prisons, for their incarceration. The three were later awarded US\$26,000 for wrongful imprisonment. He was the Government spokesperson on all matters in relation to protecting His Majesty, Taufa'ahau Tupou IV. He was Government spokesperson on the passing of media laws which saw the Times of Tonga banned from the country in 2003 as a seditious publication, but the ban was overturned by the Supreme Court. Later in 2003 he laid a defamation complaint against the Times of Tonga after it published an article questioning his use of police housing.

In 2004 Edwards was sacked from Cabinet by Prime Minister Ulukālala Lavaka Ata after the collapse of Royal Tongan Airlines. Edwards later claimed that he was unfairly sacked for

opposing the government's one airline policy and for plotting to overthrow the government, in contrary to his sworn Oath.

Member of Parliament

Following his sacking Edwards became a critic of the government and became a founding member of the People's Democratic Party. He contested the 2005 election, but failed to win a seat. However, he was subsequently elected as a People's Representative for Tongatapu in a by-election following the appointment of Feleti Sevele to Cabinet. As a people's representative, Edwards advocated democratic reform, and criticised the practice of appointing MPs to cabinet, arguing that it was a way for the government to silence its critics.

In 2005, he produced a Manifesto which outlined the Constitutional Amendments that were required in the Tonga Law to affect Democratic Change in Tonga. This document would commence the legal debate required, and it provided the road map which assisted Prime Minister Feleti Sevele and his Government to become proactive in the establishment of Royal Commissions and to allow Parliament to enact the necessary changes. Amendments to the Constitution have been encouraged, approved and finally assented by His Majesty, George Tupou V which will enable democratic elections to take place for the first time in Tonga's history on 25 November 2010, whereby the people will elect the majority of 17 members to the new Tongan Parliament of 26.

In 2007 Edwards was charged with two counts of sedition in relation to the 2006 Nuku'alofa riots. This was later reduced to a single charge of uttering seditious words. The trial has been repeatedly delayed, Despite the charges, Edwards was re-elected at the 2008 election. Finally in May 2010, the sedition charges against him were dismissed.

In 2010, Edwards announced that he would be promoting a private members bill to abolish whipping and the death penalty.

Edwards stood for the seat of Tongatapu 3 in the 2010 elections, but was unsuccessful. Following the election, he was appointed to Cabinet as a Minister outside the legislature, holding the portfolios of public enterprise and revenue services.

ENDS

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