

Making a contribution

Senator Collis talks to Catherine Zuill

WHEN Senator Charles Collis was appointed temporary Minister responsible for Telecommunications in January this year, he realised the importance of reorganising Bermuda's laws governing telecommunications.

And less than a year after his appointment he was able to announce that wide-ranging new laws would come into effect at the start of 1987.

The hard work required for the Telecommunications portfolio is nothing new to the 54-year-old Bermudian who has over the years immersed himself in any number of Government jobs.

"I'm one of those people who believes that if one has something to offer, one has an obligation to make a contribution to the society in which one lives," said Senator Collis.

Formidable

And if that means working an average of 55 to 60 hours a week, then that is what he will spend to make sure the jobs are done properly.

Now Minister of Legislative Affairs, Senator Collis has a formidable working knowledge of Bermuda's laws through his job as a commercial lawyer and partner at the firm of Conyers, Dill and Pearman. His job as deputy chairman of the Law Reform Committee five years ago has left him at ease reorganising Bermuda's laws.

Following his announcement this week that the laws will come into effect in less than three months, Cable and Wireless announced its proposal to plug Bermuda into a sophisticated fibre optic communication system.

This came as no surprise to the Senator who is clearly excited by the projects this presents for the future.

He says it will give us the opportunity to develop other industries that require sophisticated technological equipment.

"This would put Bermuda at the very leading edge of technological development."

It also highlights a previous proposal for

a quango — quasi autonomous non-governmental organisations — that could develop Bermuda's technological environment.

Senator Collis likened the fibre optic cable to putting a road through the Amazon. Once it is there the potential to develop — in some areas as yet unknown — is enormous.

His Government appointments have often been of a commercial nature and in the past he has worked for the Bermuda Monetary Authority and has been President Chamber of Commerce.

But he was also a long-time member of the Development Applications Board and sat on the Treatment of the Young Offenders Commission.

While there is no obvious reason why Senator Collis will not continue in the public eye for a long time to come, he points out that most of his appointments are made by the Premier and his future in public service depends on that.

Even though he has been asked on many occasions to run for Parliament, the Senator has always declined because he does not feel he would be able to devote the time needed to deal with constituents needs.

He takes time off to travel, often combining work with pleasure. Every Christmas, he and his wife, Margaret, their three sons and daughter-in-law take off for Europe and a family skiing trip.

All his sons have decided to go into law — but with no coercion or pressure from their father, he insists. His eldest son John is currently at Conyers, Dill and Pearman while Graham is in chambers in London, England. The youngest son, Charles, is in his second year at the University of London.

"I'm very interested and proud that they are doing these things," said Senator Collis, adding that daughter-in-law Judy Collis, married to John, is also a lawyer.

"So we have a substantial family of lawyers," he said.

While in Bermuda, Senator Collis likes to play golf and go out on his boat during the summer months.



Senator Charles Collis: Proud and interested in family of lawyers

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