GJB 16

Y-Fronts MP celebrated public sex act and singing

By Simon Walters and Jason Lewis

LABOUR MP Chris Bryant was under further pressure last night after claims that he performed indecent acts in gay nightclubs.

The 43-year-old politician is said to have celebrated Labour's 1997 General Election victory by pulling down his trousers and performing a lewd act in a London club while singing the party's campaign theme tune 'Things Can Only Get Better'.

In another incident, he is understood to have stood naked in a gay nightclub cubicle and allowing another man to perform a sex act on him.

Under the Sexual Offences Act, it is a criminal offence to commit an act of gross indecency if more than two persons take part or are present.

This remains the case despite the Government's scrapping of 'outmoded' laws.

Bryant, the MP for Rhondda, sat on the Commons committee guiding the new laws on to the statute book.

The new allegations follow last weeks disclosure in The Mail on Sunday that Bryant had sent a picture of himself wearing only Y-fronts, to a gay man he met on an Internet dating agency. Bryant also sent the man sexually explicit and obscene messages and arranged to meet him.

The new claims are likely to increase calls for Bryant, a highly ambitious Blairite who had been tipped for Ministerial promotion, to step down. He was called in by Labour Chief Whip Hilary Armstrong last week for what was said to be a 'serious talking-to'.

Labour chiefs last night refused to get involved. Asked to respond to the allegations of indecent behaviour, a spokesman at the party's London HQ said: 'The party's position on this story is that we are not making any comment.'

Asked if he had spoken to Bryant, the spokesman said: 'I have not been able to put the allegations to him.'

Asked again if he had spoken to the MP the spokesman declined to answer.

And asked if the Labour Party had a view about the MP's alleged behaviour, the spokesman said: 'I am not getting into a discussion on that.'

Bryant was unavailable for comment. Labour Whips say his fate must be decided by his local party. Last night there were growing signs that Labour supporters in Rhondda, which has a strong Methodist tradition, are increasingly concerned.

Elaine Barnett, secretary of Labour's Porth ward in Rhondda, said her branch would demand a meeting with the MP, a possible first step to his being deselected.

She said: 'I have been asked to write to the constituency secretary to ask that Mr Bryant be called before a full meeting of the local party to explain himself. We believe that he should be given an opportunity to defend himself as feelings are running high.'

The new allegations about Bryant concern two incidents in gay nightclubs. One occurred after the 1997 General Election in which Bryant stood unsuccessfully as Labour parliamentary candidate in Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, close to where he has been a curate of the parish church.

Attending by witnesses, Bryant pulled his trousers down at a gay nightclub in London and masturbated in front of others while singing 'Things Can Only Get Better'.

The other incident occurred after he was elected as a Hackney Labour councillor in 1998. Soon after, we do he went to The Block, a homosexual gay nightclub in Islington, North London. Inside were dark alcoves where some men would 'cruise' – jargon for trying to attract a partner – or behave indecently.

'He [Bryant] was standing in the club with his trousers down to his ankles, baring his own penis,' said the witness, who has detailed his allegations to an affidavit for The Mail on Sunday.

'He was inviting other men to perform fellatio on him. I saw other men stood naked in a gay nightclub cubicle and allowing another man to perform a sex act on him.

'He was standing in a gay nightclub cubicle with his trousers down and masturbating towards the back of the club in a dark area, away from staff, who did not engage in such activities.'

The witness added: 'He had a white shirt on and rolled it up, baring his chest.'

A series of meetings in Bryant's Welsh constituency has led to demands for him to be called to account over his conduct. The round of monthly meetings by the Rhondda Labour Party's 18 branches concludes this week and many of the

Pressure to quit grows with the revelation that MP who sent obscene e-mails broke the law by having sex in public

TRADITIONAL: A Rhondda Labour club

The Government has abolished the so-called 'outmoded' laws which prevented gay men from openly meeting other partners in public places and people do not agree or disagree with this reform!

Agree with the reform	49%
Disagree for fear of homophobic attacks	30%
Don't know	19%

Do you think the public has a right to know if an MP behaves in the manner of Mr Bryant, or does he have the right to privacy?

Public has the right to know	23%
MP has the right to privacy	67%
Don't know	10%

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