

Marriott's sculpture

By Norman Rae

On occasions of ceremony in the island, where there is need for the artist, thoughts turn to a very few names in each media. In matters of carving and sculpting, Alvin Marriott is one of these. An exceedingly skilled craftsman, he has worked on projects as diverse as the lectern and the crests of the West Indian territories set in the ceiling of the University of the West Indies' chapel, the aluminium statue of the athlete that stands at the main entrance to the stadium, and the recently unveiled bronze bust of Sir Herbert Macdonald also to be placed at the stadium.

Now Mr. Marriott has finished the modelling of a bust of His Excellency the Governor-General, Sir Clifford Campbell. He has taken time off to do this in between his continuing work on the national monument, the idea of which was conceived some years ago and which will take another year to eighteen months to complete. For the past two months, Mr. Marriott has divided his time between the monument and a temporary studio at King's House which in normal times is really one of the north guest-rooms.

There, in the steady northern light entering an enclosed balcony through glass louvres the clay has been steadily shaped into the likeness of its subject. The bust is conceived and executed in conventional representational style. Unmounted it stands just under three feet high and is carried out on a scale one-and-a-half times life-size.

Modelled in Jamaican red clay from the sculptor's favourite preparers, Aiken's Clay Works, it shows Sir Clifford dressed in a lounge suit, a handkerchief carefully displayed in the pocket and on his lapel the insignia of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. Sir Clifford being the St. John Ambulance Brigade's patron here. He is presented in serene mood.

At this stage, before the bust has been cast, it is not

easy to give an opinion on its ultimate success but it looks as if it will satisfy popular taste in public statuary. Whether the final result will be seen publicly depends on its eventual purchaser for the piece has not been commissioned as in the case of the Macdonald bust. It results from the sculptor's own wish to do it whilst the island's first Jamaican-born Governor-General still holds office.

Sir Clifford agreed to sit for the bust and fitted in five sittings in his busy schedule. Now that modelling has been completed, it only remains for it to be cast and doubtless, whether bronze or aluminium is chosen will depend to some extent also on the wishes of whoever acquires it. Having accomplished what he set out to do, Mr. Marriott returns to the massive task of the monument.

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National Library of Jamaica