

PJ takes his mandate

by MISHA LOBBAN

IT was a colourful affair which marked the swearing-in ceremony of the Rt. Hon. P.J. Patterson as Jamaica's sixth Prime Minister at King's House yesterday.

Over 3,000 persons were there.

Mr. Patterson led the People's National Party (PNP) to a record breaking victory last Tuesday, in the island's 12th general elections.

The impressive gathering on the lawns of King's House included representatives of the diplomatic corp, the judiciary, the Ombudsman, Custodes, civil servants, the academic community, the private sector, civic organisations, the labour movement, PNP supporters and other well-wishers.

The opposition was absent; but a defeated Hugh Shearer and former Prime Minister Michael Manley sent their apologies.

The Jamaica Military Band, Curtis Watson, Lorna Goodison and students of Dunrobin Primary School and Queen's Preparatory School enlivened the occasion.

Members of the Clergy prayed.

The ceremony began promptly at 5:00 p.m. without any hitches. Convocation was led by Roman Catholic Archbishop of Kingston, Samuel Carter, President of the Jamaica Council of Churches, after which the Governor-General, Sir Howard Cooke read the Instrument of Appointment.

Following this a dapperly cool Prime Minister Patterson took the Oath of Allegiance and the Oath for the due execution of his office.

Historic journey

He said, "today I embark with a mandate from the people to pursue a historic journey as one of humble origin who now occupies the highest executive office in the land."

The mandate from the people, he said, was one which rejected confrontation and required consensus and one which forbade alienation but cried out for identification.

It was a mandate which insisted on principle rather than political expediency; which sought unity and avoided divisiveness and made accountability paramount.

The mandate, he said, demanded that the quality of public service be improved and it asserted performance which would be measured by results and not overlooked by excuses. In addition, it was a mandate which called for a caring and civil society and for good governance that forbade waste, and promoted efficiency.

Mr. Patterson said the country was now poised for significant and secure economic growth which will permit his government to fulfill the basic needs and legitimate aspirations of the people for a better life.

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"We will have to secure greater levels of production and productivity. We expect increased investment activity from the private sector as bureaucratic obstacles are removed and the business-friendly environment flourishes," he said.

The Prime Minister warned

that the country must be geared for unprecedented levels of mobilisation in human development. He said education and training were a prerequisite for economic growth and social mobility and that the knowledge base and technical skills must be improved to allow the country to compete in the international community.



Junior Dowie photo
Prime Minister P.J. Patterson in a thoughtful mood at his swearing-in ceremony at King's House yesterday.