

JAMAICA'S NEW PRIME MINISTER



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SANGSTER—long history of political service

Cleaner Political Reporter
JAMAICA'S new Prime Minister, the Hon. Donald Sangster, although the youngest-ever head of state in the island, has a long and remarkable political career.

In June this year, Mr. Sangster will complete 34 years of continuous public service in the island's political life. No other politician in Jamaica has such a record of long-term continuous elected service in the field of politics to the people of Jamaica.

Mr. Sangster, of course, is a member of an old political family, which has also produced the budding politician. Mr. Astill Sangster, the Prime Minister's cousin who made a good first showing in his election campaign in Central Westmoreland. Mr. Sangster's father was an historian and writer, in addition to being a penkeeper. His uncle was Mr. Peter W. Sangster, a member of the old Legislative Council. Other Sangsters were continuously members of the St. Elizabeth Parochial Board (now Parish Council), and the youthful Donald Sangster was elected to the St. Elizabeth Parish Council when he was 21 years old, on June

22, 1933. That was the start of his rather remarkable political career, remarkable in the sense that Mr. Sangster has climbed the political ladder step by step until now he is the top politician in Jamaica.

His political career has been remarkable also because of its continuity. And what makes it interesting are two facts. The first is that Mr. Sangster had to fight off a natural aversion of the people of St. Elizabeth to the name Sangster, created by his uncle. It eventually caught up with him when he lost the 1955 election to Mr. B. B. Coke; but he went on by a shift into Clarendon to continue his career in the House of Representatives.

In 1963 when he completed 30 years of political public service, the Political Reporter wrote this about Mr. Sangster: "As a politician, Mr. Sangster, has had a single-minded devotion to public service. He is the born politician, and he has been in turn Vice-Chairman, then Chairman of the St. Elizabeth Parochial Board, then MHR for Southern St. Elizabeth, then MHR for North-Eastern Clarendon. And from the moment he entered

the House of Representatives in 1949, he has been in the top rungs. First, he took over from Mr. Frank Pixley as Minister of Social Welfare and Labour, then at the death of Sir Harold Allan, Jamaica's first Minister of Finance, Mr. Sangster became Minister of Finance and Leader of the House of Representatives. After 1955, he was deputy Leader of the Opposition, and on the return to power of the Jamaica Labour Party (in 1962) he again became Minister of Finance. A few months ago he was named Deputy Prime Minister.

"But politics has not been all the life of Mr. Sangster. He has been a Scout Commissioner, the President of the St. Elizabeth Branches of the J.A.S., a trustee of the Munro and Dickenson Trust, the captain of the St. Elizabeth Nethersole Cup Team, a Lay Representative of the Anglican Synod and a number of other things.

"Finally he is now Vice Chairman of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and come next year he will be Chairman as decided by the recent meeting in Lagos, Nigeria.

"Mr. Sangster is not a spectacular politician of the brand of a Bustamante or a Manley, but as a politician he has few equals in Jamaica today. He is a Parliamentarian and certainly a key figure in the Government. Generally speaking Mr. Sangster has been a useful Jamaican, a possible future Prime Minister and still young enough to think of many more political years ahead."

There is little to add to that 1963 summation. Since then Mr. Sangster became acting Prime Minister. At international level he demonstrated Jamaican capability with great success at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference and at Commonwealth Economic Conferences. His activities in this field have earned him a highly respected name in Commonwealth circles.

Mr. Sangster, a bachelor, was schooled at Munro College, is a solicitor by profession, a penkeeper, an allround sportsman. On Wednesday, last week, he became Jamaica's second Prime Minister.