

B/N. SANGSTER, DONALD

SANGSTER

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Political Man of the Year

WE COME again to this annual exercise — picking the political man of 1962, the person who in the opinion of this column contributed most, good or bad, to the political developments in the island during the past twelve months.

This year, I choose the Hon. Donald Sangster, Minister of Finance, the *de facto* Deputy Prime Minister, and if the acclamation of his party colleagues means anything, the Deputy Leader of the Jamaica Labour Party.

This is the second time that Mr. Sangster has been chosen. He was Political Man of the Year in 1955.

And this year, he has been chosen again because of the significant role he has played in keeping the political image of the Jamaica Labour Party intact with all the circumstances conspiring against him.

As I have said before in this column, it is never the practice to choose for Political Man of the Year any of the two party leaders, because this would lead inevitably to the selection of either Mr. Manley or Sir Alexander Bustamante year after year because they tower so much over their colleagues and what they do is beyond doubt so much more significant to island politics than anything that is done by any other member of their parties. This year for instance the single greatest political event was the winning of the April election by Sir Alexander Bustamante which gave him the unique opportunity of becoming the island's first Prime Minister and of appointing the island's first native son as Governor-General. Last year it was Mr. Manley's decision to hold a Referendum.

There was little else of real political significance during the year but there were many claimants for the title. For instance there was Mr. Shearer, speaking for the island before the United Nations and taking up control of the Senate as Leader of Government Business. But Mr. Shearer did not make the real impact he could have made on the island's politics and it seems that he will have to make up his mind whether or not he will play a more positive role in politics and in the Government.

Then there was Mr. Florizel Glasspole

winning for the first time the No. 2 role in the People's National Party; but people who should know do not believe that this makes him the unchallenged heir-apparent to Mr. Manley and this is a situation which bears watching.

Then there was Sir Clifford Campbell becoming the island's first Jamaican Governor-General, but in the very nature of things, Sir Clifford can no longer be termed a politician. He is a Governor-General.

Mr. Sangster's real contribution to Jamaica politics during 1962 has been in the effective role he has played as the cornerstone of the Cabinet.

When Sir Alexander Bustamante appointed his Cabinet he included in it many diverse elements pulling in several directions. The strength of some of the elements — Mr. Eddie Seaga, Mr. Robert Lightbourne, Mr. Clement Tavares — was such that the public image of the Jamaica Labour Party as a free enterprise party could have been lost, and then the public would find it rather difficult to choose and judge between the Jamaica Labour Party and the People's National Party. A great disservice to Jamaica's politics would have been done.

It was left to Mr. Sangster to stand firm and calm in this welter of personalities and by his expressions to preserve the essential image of the Jamaica Labour Party, to express its philosophy and by example and some coercion to bend the other members of the Cabinet to an observation of that image so that by the end of the year a cohesive pattern had begun to emerge. The Cabinet does not now appear to be the hodge-podge of disparate elements it appeared to be in the first few months of its administration. It is emerging as a clear-cut and recognizable entity and this has been due to Mr. Sangster.

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Mr. Sangster has been in fact a rather remarkable politician. He has probably the longest unbroken history of active political activity of any politician in Jamaica. It stretches back to 1933 when at the age of 21 or thereabouts he became a member of the St. Elizabeth Parochial Board, now the Parish Council. Ever since then he has been in active politics, as Vice Chairman, then as Chairman of the Board, then as a member of the House of Representatives since 1949. In this respect, he has had a distinctive career. No sooner had he entered the House than he was recognized as the No. 2 Man in the Jamaica Labour Party, a position he has held since then. Then in 1955 when he lost his South St. Elizabeth seat, he regained his place in the House by winning the North-Eastern Clarendon seat that same year.

As things now look, it appears that the North-East Clarendon seat is his for as long as he wants it in much the same way that the Eastern Kingston seat is Mr. Glasspole's for as long as he wants it or South-Eastern St. Ann's is Dr. Lloyd's for as long as he should choose to stand for election there.

In his own party, Mr. Sangster has faced a lot of opposition but he has retained a lot of support. Last year when a move was made to replace him with Mr. Lightbourne, Mrs. Rose Leon (not now a member of the party as a direct result of what she did) and Mr. Clement Tavares master-minded a campaign that kept Mr. Sangster in his deputy's role. This year there was no need for any campaigns. The dele-

gates at the JLP's annual conference earlier this month were with Mr. Sangster to a man.

The result of all these developments is that Mr. Sangster now moves with sureness among his colleagues of the Jamaica Labour Party and he speaks with the authentic voice of that party, a voice which the public is now coming to realize is the genuine voice of the Jamaica Labour Party among the Ministers of Government. That he has managed to do this amid the boisterous and impatient claims of such ministers as Mr. Lightbourne and Mr. Seaga is a tribute to Mr. Sangster's personal character of patience and toughness and his political maturity born out of long years of experience.

And to top it all, he headed the Committee, after Mr. Manley, which planned the celebration of Jamaica's Independence. The job he did in this respect was good.

Another feather in Mr. Sangster's cap this year was in bringing to Jamaica the Vice Chairmanship of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, to which post he was elected in absentia by the delegates attending the recent conference held in Nigeria.

For all these things, Mr. Sangster elected himself to the title: Political Man of the Year, 1962.

B/W SANGSTER, DONALD

The year itself

THE year itself has been an eventful one for Jamaica. Independence, a first appearance at the United Nations, an unruffled approach to the Cuban crisis which could have destroyed our independence before it had properly begun, and a first and telling appearance at the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers.

Jamaica has got off to a good start a better start indeed than most of the other new countries of the world and everyone should realize that this has been so because of the inherent good sense of the island's politicians. Bad leadership on both sides could have produced a very bad year. Good leadership has given us a good start.

No difference

IN MY article last week in commenting upon a statement made recently by the Speaker, in itself a comment on a previous week's column, I made it to appear that the House (and of course the Senate) was not operating under any Standing Orders. I was wrong and I hasten to correct that error. The Constitution does provide that the Standing Orders of the present Parliament shall be the Standing Orders of the Legislature as existed before Independence until Parliament has adopted new Standing Orders fitting to its Independent Status.

But the error makes no difference to the conclusions I drew in that column since the column was argued on the basis that the Speaker and the House are operating under the old Standing Orders (the reference in which the error was made was an aside and not necessary to the article at all.)

What it does emphasize is the need for Parliament to get on with the job of providing itself with appropriate Standing Orders, fitting to its Independent Status and to the needs of proceedings in the House.

This is one matter in which Mr. Sangster, as Leader of the House, has been remiss. As I said, in a previous article, if members of the House won't do the job, then the Clerks of the House should be instructed to do it.

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