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Presented by JIS
4/6/69

1967

MINISTRY PAPER NO: 29

JAMAICA FESTIVAL

The Jamaica Festival has a strong national basis, and national competitions, festivities and ceremonials continue to be its three main features.

Competitions:

The competitions include music (classical, folk, popular and original composition), speech, drama, fine arts, the writing of poetry, essay, play and short story, culinary arts and photography. There is also a crafts competition and a Miss Jamaica beauty contest, the winner of which participates in the Miss World Contest. This serves as a valuable means of promoting Jamaica abroad. In addition, for the Festival Street Parade Grand Gala, there are competitive entries of sponsored floats, costumed queens and costumed groups. Last year there was a marked increase in the number of participants, with evidence of a higher standard of performance.

For the first time, winning festival plays will be published as an added incentive in the literary field; original Jamaican poems are being set to music and used as test pieces in performances. The most consistent area of original work in music is in the popular and mento section. The popular and mento music competition has the added advantage of encouraging creativity, as it gives local musicians an opportunity to compose and launch their own works.

The Culinary Arts Competition is one of the most successful subjects in the Festival. This competition has resulted in a deeper understanding and appreciation of food preparation and service. The sweet-potato and citrus which were highlighted as the special foods last year had a tremendous response both from amateurs and professionals, and nearly 500 recipes were submitted. Two pictorial publications featuring some of the exotic and delectable prize-winning and other dishes have been published.

Costumed Groups and Queens gave designers and others an opportunity for portrayal of themes based on "things Jamaican". The selection of a Costumed Queen was a new feature of the Festival in 1966.

Festivities

There is increased spontaneity and participation by the general public in the Festivities Section which includes village functions, parish band wagons, street concerts, street dances, street parade and grand gala.

Ceremonials

The Independence Anniversary Parades and Salutes by the

/Jamaica

Jamaica Defence Force and by Uniformed Organisations are well received. The Jamaica Defence Force, including the National Reserve, have developed a pattern of three simultaneous Anniversary Parades: one in the Corporate Area and two in the Parishes. Custodes, Parish Councils and Uniformed Organisations, assisted by Juvenile Drum Corps, usually arrange for the Parades in the other 10 Parishes.

Participation of Business Community

The contribution and active participation of the business sector in providing each incentive awards and sponsorships has increased. In 1966 their cash awards alone totalled £6,000, an increase of £2,000 over the previous year.

Responsibilities of Festival Office

The increasing responsibilities which devolve on the Jamaica Festival Office are many and varied and entail full-time work on planning the annual syllabus, field organization, float and costume decorating materials sales service, literature, training, talent placement and co-ordination with business and other private contributors.

Future Organisation

A Jamaica Festival Committee has now been appointed, and this Committee, along with the already established autonomous parish and zone committees, should help to consolidate the development of the past four years and should result in co-ordinated expansion of the movement. The parish committees are represented by their chairmen on the Jamaica Festival Committee. Parish Festival Committees elect their own leaders and their organizing sub-committees to deal with the local aspects of the Festival.

The Festival continues to expand, and has an ever-widening appeal to all age groups and to all sectors of the Jamaican society.

Ministry of Development & Welfare
Kingston

M.P. No. W90/88/01

6th June, 1967.