

The dynamo who wed her boss

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LONDON:

"IT GOES like this," said Lady Bustamante, in her dress of many greens. And she sang the first verse of "Hail to the Lord's Anointed."

She sang softly, so no one else could hear. She sang softly. And she sang beautifully. It was moving to hear.

"It's my favourite—with 'The Church's One Foundation,'" she told me. "I love hymns. I like to play them on the piano. I like jazz too, but I couldn't play it."

Then: "I suppose I could if I tried, but I don't get time. I've less time now than ever."

She was referring to her marriage on September 7, to Sir Alexander Bustamante, 78-year-old Premier of Jamaica. They were wed four hours before they flew to London and the Prime Ministers' Conference.

"It looked as though we decided suddenly," she said.

"We planned it months before, but we didn't want a fuss so we waited till the last moment."

Lady Bustamante has black hair in a bun and is 45. Before

September 7, she was, to all Jamaica, Miss G. (short for Gladys Longbridge), famed as Sir Alexander's secretary for 25 years and for once having dared police to attack him,



LADY BUSTAMANTE

saying: "You will have to shoot me first."

She did not talk about shooting at our interview, but about shorthand. "I used to do 150 words a minute. I still do 100.

"I type very fast, between 80 and 100 words a minute." The world record over an hour

her boss

BY MERRICK WINN

is an average of 147 words a minute.

The talk shifted to career women, then to marriage.

"I love children," said Lady Bustamante. "I have 53 god-children. They call me God-Jie.

"I have no children of my own, but I'm not mourning. I believe in destiny. Everything happens for the wisest purpose. You must take life as it comes."

All the time her spectacles tapped on her knee. She said: "I am shy, but never sad. I keep on the go.

"That's the secret of happiness. I think. You must keep on the go."

Lady B ("that's what they're calling me now") has a sense

of humour. "My salary stopped on the day after my wedding. My husband will need another secretary. I shall appoint her."

Finally, Lady Bustamante talked about equality for women, which she firmly believes in. And then she told me she had insisted on promising to "obey" in her wedding ceremony.

"A wife should always obey her husband. That's one of the secrets of being happily married."

A consistently likeable woman. No more inconsistent than any other career woman who, when someone proposes, says "Yes".

Lady Bustamante said it. "Immediately. The first time he asked me."

—EXPRESS

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