

'Tenacious' that's the word for the new GG

By Betty Russell

If one could use any one adjective to describe Florizel Glasspole, it should perhaps be "tenacious". This is best shown by the fact that he has consistently won a seat in Jamaica's Government ever since 1944, when Universal Adult Suffrage was first instituted. Today he has acceded to the highest position in the land — Governor General of Jamaica.

Like so many of Jamaica's veteran politicians, Mr. Glasspole began his political career in the 1930's. It is said that the plight of the poor sugar workers of Serge Island Estate (the first trouble spot in the labour crisis of the late 1930's,) motivated him towards trade unionism.

In 1938, he was working as an accountant. When the hunger marches and general political upheaval at the time further aroused in him a sense of dedication to help his people, and he left a reasonably comfortable job, and joined wholeheartedly in the labour movement.

Troubled years

At this time he was active in the formation of shop assistants into Jamaica's first trades union. This was the Clerks' Union which won the 45-hour week for shop assistants throughout Jamaica.

Indeed, Mr. Glasspole's name is associated with many and varying trade

unions: 'The Municipal and Parochial Workers' Union; the Jamaica Printers and Allied Workers' Union, and the Machado Employers' Union.

During the troubled labour years he was continually called to sit on many different boards such as the Government's Compensation Revision Committee; the Middle Class Unemployment Committee; The Wages Board, The Apprenticeship Board, and the Minimum Wages Board for Baking, Printing and Dry goods. One journalist has said that Glasspole can claim to be connected with more trade unions than any other West Indian.

Living example

Yet is more as a great educator that the Hon. Florizel Glasspole is known throughout the Caribbean. It is as Minister of Education that he is said to have made his greatest contribution, not only to his party but to Jamaica.

When free places in elementary schools rose from 1,600 in 1959 to 3,000 in 1961, Glasspole "revolutionized" education. He opened the doors of the secondary school to the peasantry, and destroyed the belief that the "prestige" schools belonged only to the "privileged".

It is significant that Glasspole should have contributed so much to education. He himself is a living

example of what the less rich can achieve through good education.

He received elementary education at Buff Bay Elementary School, then he attended the Central Branch School, and went on to Wolmers' Boys School.

Later in the 1940's his trade union activities brought him to the notice of the Labour M.P.'s of the British parliament who had come to Jamaica. They recommended him for a scholarship at Ruskin College, Oxford University.

Glasspole's tenacity of purpose can only be seen in his dedication and loyalty to his party, the PNP. From early on he was attracted to the philosophy and ideals of Norman Manley, who immediately after the working class upheaval of 1938, declared that Jamaica was in dire need of a Labour Party.

This attraction to Manley soon deepened into a deep loyalty and belief in the People's National Party — the party formed by Manley in 1939.

Valiant battle

Glasspole's political activities in 1939 show him giving active support to the "fighting barrister" — Mr. E. A. Campbell, who was then running for the Legislative Council. A measure of Glasspole's importance to the campaign is seen when Mr. Evans, Campbell's opponent, accused Glasspole in the press of "not playing

cricket" during the campaign, "as befitted an old boy of Wolmers."

As one of the few PNP members of the tiny opposition of 1944, Glasspole fought a lone and valiant battle for the opposition. One columnist, "Sinbad", summed him up as "one man fighting 22 men", as he tenaciously and fearlessly opposed the Bustamante Government.

If he fought for party he also fought for people. In 1945-46 he took up the case of "stranded recruits who had no money to pay their way home". He fought for Pan American workers, and got an increase in pay for subordinate staff.

By 1949 he had firmly won the hearts of his electorate. He was named the "Brown Bomber" (after Joe Louis, the then heavy-weight champion of the world). This time he became leader of the opposition.

When his party finally won the election in 1955, Glasspole became Leader of the House, and was given the Labour Portfolio. When Cabinet government came in 1957, Glasspole replaced Lloyd as Minister of Education.

It is fitting that as he leaves Parliament for a more exalted position he should see implemented the policy of 'Free Education' in Jamaica. It is the climax of a movement to which he gave a significant start.



Governor General Florizel Glasspole escorting Mrs. Glasspole into King's House yesterday. Behind are the Prime Minister and Mrs. Manley, Sir Herbert and Lady Duffus, Bishop Cyril

Swaby, Archbishop Carter, Brigadier Dunstan Robinson and Police Commissioner Jack Middleton.

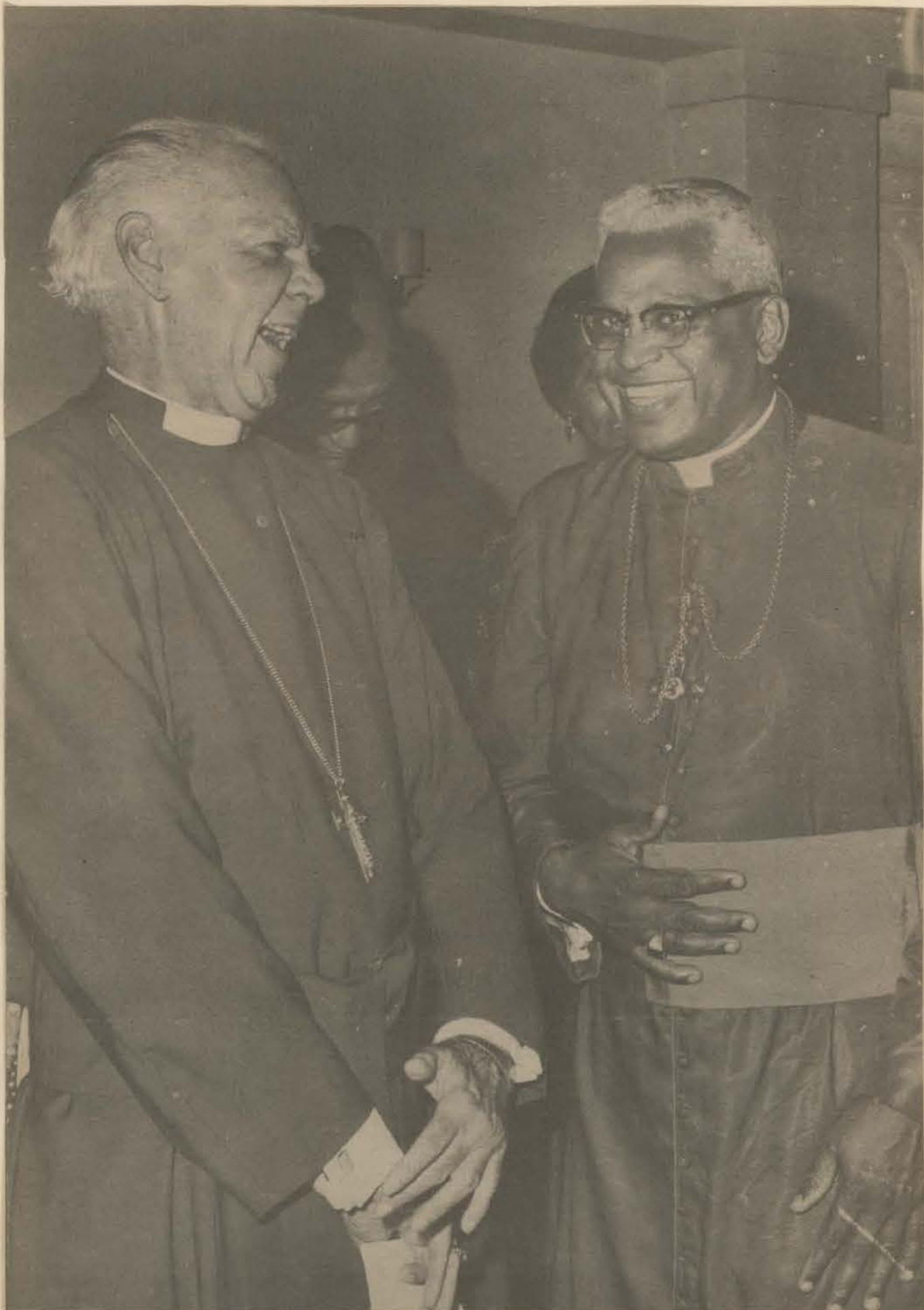
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Prime Minister Michael Manley congratulates the new Governor General. From left are Mrs. Glasspole, Mr. Glasspole, Lady Duffus, Sir

Herbert Duffus, Brigadier Dunstan Robinson, Police Commissioner Jack Middleton and Mrs. Michael Manley (partly hidden).



Roman Catholic Archbishop Samuel Carter (right) sharing a joke with Anglican Bishop of Jamaica Cyril Swaby at King's House yesterday.

Lots of respect but not much power

As the Queen's representative in an independent country, the real power which can be wielded by the Governor-General, in relation to the power of the Prime Minister for example, is minimal.

In most of his functions concerning matters of state, the Governor-General acts in accordance with the wishes of the Prime Minister or the cabinet of the day.

He has no control over the way he gets to the position of Head of State. The Governor-General is appointed by the Queen as her representative in Jamaica, but only after he is nominated by the Prime Minister.

The head of state has powers of veto under the constitution, but these can be exercised only as dictated by the cabinet of the day.

Although he appoints senators for both sides of the Upper House, the Governor-General does so on the advice

of both the leaders of the Government and opposition parties.

Paradoxically, under our constitution, it is the Governor-General who appoints the Prime Minister. The appointment is based on the Governor-General's confidence of the majority in the House — a fact which is determined outside the ambit of the head of state's operations, and through the party hierarchy.

In making the Throne Speech at the opening of parliament each year, the Governor-General says not what he feels, but reads a speech prepared by the Government.

Amid all this, the head of state is expected to be above and beyond party political matters in all he says and does in his tenure of office. Occupancy of King's House carries with it respect for impartiality.



Governor General Florizel Glasspole giving his inaugural address.

It's not Mitch's day

In the general celebrations attending the investiture of our new Governor General, there was one sad face: it belonged to Mitch.

Mitch? Yes, Mitch, the Glasspole family's dog.

He was left behind at the home on Wellington Drive when the new GG and his family moved into King's House.

Mrs. Glasspole and her daughter Sara Lou believe the separation was the best thing for Mitch.

"We are not going to be able to give him the kind of care and attention he is used to getting. We are going to be too busy," they said.

Mitch, a black labrador,

joined the family in 1969 when his former masters were leaving the Island. He will be joining another family soon. They are friends of the Glasspoles and Mrs. Glasspole is certain they will take very good care of him. But until then he walks alone at the Glasspole's Wellington Drive home.

In answer to a Daily News enquiry, Fifi Smith, Secretary to the Governor General, said that the only dog he remembers being at King's House was Sir Kenneth Blackbourne's.

According to unofficial reports, Sir Kenneth's dog was such a philanderer that he attracted crowds of disreputable friends.



Mitch, in happier days gambolling with Mrs. Glasspole and Sara Lou on the lawn of their Wellington Drive home.