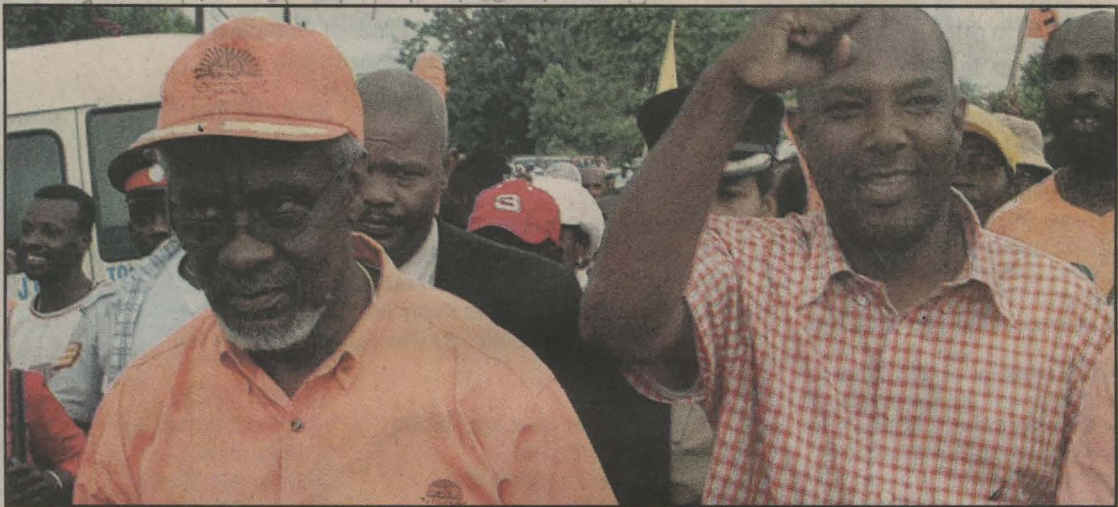


EXAMINING THE PATTERSON LEGACY

BEN PATTERSON, PERCEVAL JAMES



Former Prime Minister P.J. Patterson and Member of Parliament for Eastern Westmoreland (left) walks through the constituency with Luther Buchanan, who is running for the seat.

Life after PJ

Adrian Frater
News Editor

WESTERN BUREAU:

FOR THE first time since 1967, the name P.J. Patterson will not be appearing on the ballot paper for a parliamentary election in the Eastern Westmoreland constituency, which he has represented as Member of Parliament for over 28 years.

In fact, except for the 1980 General Election when educator Euphemia Williams surprisingly beat him, Mr. Patterson has been the dominant force in Eastern Westmoreland politics, winning the seat with a garrison-like majority for the People's National Party (PNP) on several occasions.

Mr. Patterson, whose tenure as the PNP's constituency chairman for Eastern Westmoreland started in 1967 and only recently ended with his retirement from active politics, was highly revered by his constituents. Many pundits are now predicting that he is going to be an extremely hard act to follow.

STRONG PNP TERRITORY

"Eastern Westmoreland has remained strong PNP territory because of the work done in that constituency by P.J. Patterson, which is seen by many as second to none," said noted political analyst Shallman Scott. "Consequently, P.J.'s positive legacy does not only include his non-confrontational political style, but that he has also set a fine example of a consummate constituency representative."

In rating Mr. Patterson's performance as Member of Parliament, Enfield Primary School teacher Sharon Hamilton, who holds the former Prime Minister in extremely high regard, recently told *The*

Sunday Gleaner that he was both an exemplary Prime Minister and Member of Parliament.

"His handiwork is everywhere. We have good roads, we have light and water, we have factories, schools and even a major hotel," said Diana Drummond, a secretary from the Bethel Town area of the constituency. "I have no reservation about giving Mr. Patterson a full 100 per cent for his performance as MP."

MASTERING THE BEAUTIFUL ROAD NETWORK

In going through the constituency, residents on both sides of the political divide have credited Mr. Patterson for mastering the beautiful road network they now have, the new water supply system, which recently came on stream, as well as the new Sandals Whitehouse Hotel, which has brought tourism to hitherto an agriculture and fishing-dominated constituency.

For those persons who think Mr. Patterson could have done better, there seems to be a general feeling that he could have done more in the creation of employment opportunities.

"While I have to praise him for what he has done in creating proper roads and training opportunities, I would be a lot happier if he had done more to ease unemployment among the youths," said Alecia Kerr, a casual worker of Chester Castle. "I think he could have done better, especially in handling crime, which is out of hand."

As the JLP's Don Foote and his PNP counterpart Luther Buchanan prepare for Wednesday's by-election, residents of Eastern Westmoreland are already bracing for life after P.J. Patterson.

"Mr. Patterson was a very good MP and we are just hoping that his replacement will measure up to his high standards," said Lance Brown, a fisherman of Whitehouse. "We just have to wait and see."