



SEAGA QUITS AS J.L.P. HEAD

Jamaica Labour Party Leader Edward Seaga resigned on Monday because he did not have "the necessary co-operation to succeed".

His resignation was delivered to party secretary Bruce Golding who yesterday said "the officers of the party have met and considered the letter and have asked Mr. Seaga to withdraw his resignation".

Mr. Seaga said: "I have indicated that I am willing to do so only if outstanding problems are settled and a new commitment is made to the party by those members who, for one reason or another, are not now giving full support and co-operation.

"I wish to make it clear that I have no personal problem with any member of the party; but to the extent that certain persons either do not fully participate or sap their strength in inter-personal problems, the party loses their co-operation and the effectiveness of the leadership suffers".

Mr. Seaga said he had made it clear on more than one occasion that under such circumstances he would not be prepared to continue as leader. "It is against this background that I have taken the regretted decision to resign."

Mr. Golding confirmed that Mr. Seaga "has put forward certain proposals and stipulations, which if met, will persuade him to change his mind".

"The standing committee of the party is considering the matter", he said.

At Press time last night the standing committee was still in session.

One effect of the resignation of Mr. Seaga was a flood of telegrams into the JLP Belmont Road headquarters yesterday. Reports are that over 2,000 telegrams came in from various parts of the country.

There were also cables and telephone calls from overseas. All were seeking information as to the reasons for Mr. Seaga's resignation and also calling on him to reconsider the decision.

Scores of people were at the JLP headquarters yesterday and last night and there was talk of a solidarity demonstration to take place today.

It would embrace supporters of Mr. Seaga from the Jamaica Association of Hegglers, Nationalist Patriotic Movement, Young Jamaica and the Women's Freedom Movement.

But what of the BITU? Supporters were heard saying there would be no support from that quarter as the union was "full of comrades".

BITU boss Hugh Shearer was involved in union negotiations yesterday and last night had gone to Hayes in Clarendon where another union matter was brewing. Today he is scheduled to speak at the South St. Elizabeth Medical Complex in Junction.

Mr. Seaga took leadership of the JLP in November 1974. He had been on leave of absence at the time although he still functioned as Opposition on finance. At the time he said he would be writing three books. The books have not been written.

He became leader of the party after supporters became disenchanted with Mr. Shearer who was Prime Minister when the party was thrashed by the PNP in the 1972 general elections.

In 1976 the JLP under Mr. Seaga suffered an even worse defeat at the polls and since then have not contested any elections.

Yesterday the West St. Andrew constituency wrote asking Mr. Seaga to reconsider his decision "at a time like now wherein all the people of this country are looking forward to you as the only salvation to our problems, as the next Prime Minister of Jamaica.

"The country desperately need you and only you alone can lead us out of the peril we are in." It was signed by president Adassa Rowe, vice-president Elouise Sterling, secretary Valerie Clarke and treasurer Rupert Smith.

Another letter bearing four signatures came from the Port Workers in the BITU section at Port Bustamante. It said: "The portworkers of the BITU at Bustamante Port are all in tears and grief over the news-cast on RJR about your resignation as Leader of the Opposition and of the Jamaica Labour Party".

They "lovingly ask that you reconsider and withdraw your letter of resignation".

Both Young Jamaica and the

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Women's Freedom Movement issued statements expressing shock at Mr. Seaga's resignation. Young Jamaica expressed its solidarity with Mr. Seaga and its confidence in the leadership of the party.

In the same vein the WFM called on the standing committee of the party to persuade Mr. Seaga to change his mind by "dealing decisively with the proposals and stipulations put forward by Mr. Seaga".

It added: "The time has come when the BITU and other organisations must wake up from their dormant state and give active support to the leader and the JLP so that we can rid the country of this corrupt and incompetent Government".

Only Wednesday night BITU boss Hugh Shearer spoke at a fund raising dinner in the South St. Andrew constituency. He said the task now "is to rescue the nation from the strangling grasp of the present Government "by every legal and constitutional effort possible and to put the country's affairs in the management of the JLP".

He impressed on the audience

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the need for them to get themselves registered.

In November last year the JLP and the BITU decided to approach national issues from a common policy base.

And as the tension mounted in the party yesterday an angry mob of over 40 attacked the Youth Community Training Centre Old Students Association office at 18 Belmont Road, next door the JLP headquarters. The office was stoned and posters were torn down (including one of National Hero and JLP founder Sir Alexander Bustamante).

Two female workers of the Jamaica Federation of Democratic Youth and Jamaica Youth League were also assaulted. After the incident Youth and Sports Minister Hugh Small, SDC chairman Martin Afflick and Leroy Cooke visited the offices.

Before that Devon Carter who was preparing for a meeting with executive members of the Old Students Association fled from the mob. They were shouting "si one a de spy bwov dey". There was also talk of Fidel Castro and Cuba.

Friday, January 26, 1979

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