

Seaga promises to deal with 'issues not personalities'

West Kingston M.P. Edward Seaga on Tuesday attended the House of Representatives for the first time in his new role of Opposition Leader -- and gave his "unqualified assurance that any genuine attempts from the Government in respect of the maintenance and improvement of conditions which make for political peace will meet with our firm and unequivocal support."

In a tribute to former Opposition Leader Hugh Shearer he said:

"We on this side are extremely gratified to see that he has chosen to remain within the parliamentary system and that he will continue to make both his skills and his great capacity as a parliamentarian available to us."

Referring to Prime Minister Michael Manley's congratulatory

statement to him last week Mr. Seaga said: "I would have been far more gratified to know that within the House the words of the Leader of the country would have carried the weight and responsibility that one would expect those expressions to carry among the more active and vocal supporters who had gathered outside."

The Opposition Leader said he did not intend to rebuke those who were responsible for the sordid affair which resulted in assault on one Member and damage to property of another. The public condemnation meted out was sufficient testimony as to how the country feels, he said.

Mr. Seaga said the Opposition did not intend to destroy any of the bridges of consultation which had already been built by the Opposition and the Government

under previous regimes.

The Opposition, he promised, would honour those areas of statutory consultation between Prime Minister and Opposition Leader provided under the Constitution.

Dual standard

"We should hope and do hope that the Government will make the genuineness of its expressions of interest in political peace more evident to the country....." he said.

Mr. Seaga suggested that there seemed to be developing in the country a dual standard of justice.

"We have taken note of the fact of certain abuses which have resulted in the loss of life and the loss of property among supporters of this side of the House."

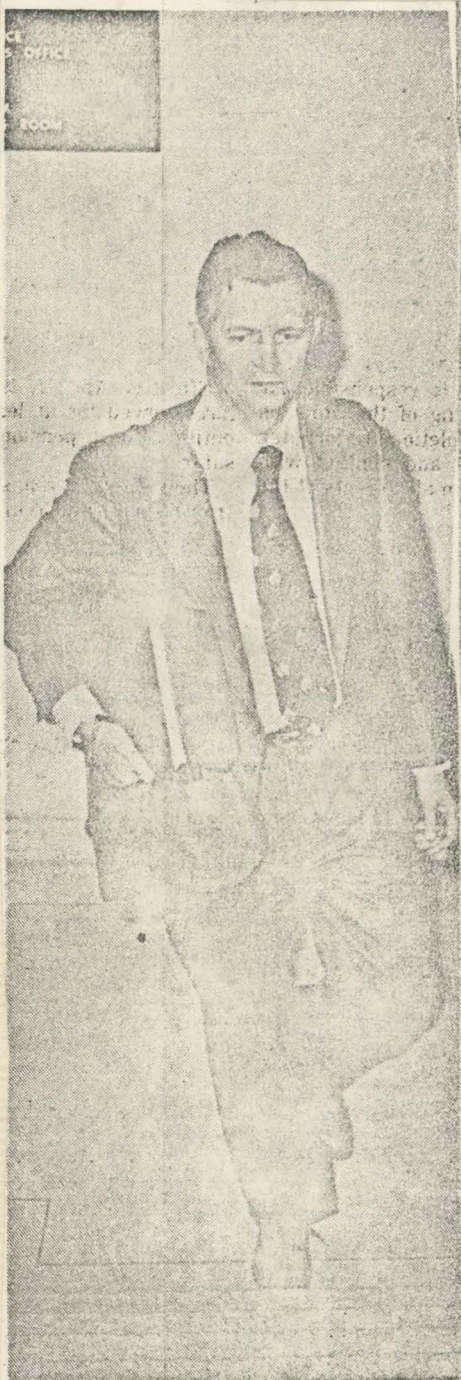
Those abuses, he said, had not met with the type of justice which should have been applied.

To drive home his point, Mr. Seaga referred to the destruction which was holding a memorial service for a 90 year-old supporter of the JLP who was murdered in political conflict in the lower section of St. Andrew.

Mr. Seaga reiterated that the Opposition would be dealing with issues and not personalities.

"On this side of the House I have already issued my own views, which I expected to be respected and that is that no politician shall be abused."

National Library of Jamaica



Edward Seaga enters Gordon House Tuesday for the first time as Leader of the Opposition.