



Eddie Seaga: 2,052 votes

SEAGA SAILS IN

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BY CARL WINT

West Kingston M.P. Edward Seaga rode to the leadership of the Jamaica Labour Party on a tidal wave of votes yesterday as the 31st annual conference of the organisation opened in private session at the National Arena.

Mr. Seaga who came off a two year leave to accept nomination for the top post polled 2,052 votes to his only rival — Southwest St. Andrew M.P. Wilton Hill's 97. Mr. Hill did not attend the conference the Daily News understands.

In a stunning upset attorney Frank Phipps defeated Ian Ramsay 1,472 votes to 550 to take the post of first deputy leader.

Up to conference time Mr. Ramsay was odds on favourite to be the number two man in the Party's hierarchy but this was not to be.

Both Bruce Golding and Edwin Allen were nominated for the post but they withdrew.

Five men sought to be elected deputy leaders. These were Pearnel Charles, Dr. H.A. "Marco" Brown, Dr. Neville Gallimore, Alva Ross and Trevor Levy. Under the Party's new constitution there is provision for three deputy leaders of equal status.

Indications were that Mr. Charles would not be seeking one of the positions but when the final figures were counted last night he led the field with 1,652 votes.

Dr. Brown polled 1,487 and Dr. Gallimore 1,167. Mr. Ross with 979 votes and Mr. Levy with 66 votes were "also rans".

Lady Bustamante, Miss Edith Nelson and Mr. Allen were elected by acclaim to be the three trustees of the Party.

Mr. Seaga spoke briefly to the conference and promised that the party and the BITU would be working closely together.

He noted that it was only the second time that the Party leadership was separate from the union. The first occasion was when the late Sir Donald Sangster served as First Deputy Leader under National Hero Alexander Bustamante who had retired from active politics.

Sir Donald did not last long as he died in 1967 and the top post was taken over by Hugh Shearer. After the 1972 JLP political debacle Mr. Shearer came under severe criticism for his leadership.

One party stalwart, Robert Lightbourne, resigned and later formed his own United Party.

Mr. Shearer also spoke briefly.

With Mr. Seaga heading the party speculations have already begun that the way seems clear to bring back Mr. Lightbourne into the JLP fold.

Today is a public session and begins at 9.00 a.m. It is expected that Party Chief, National Hero Alexander Bustamante will be present.