

Seaga quitting as leader of the JLP ?

POLITICAL SPECULATION was rife yesterday that the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Edward Seaga has indicated that he will not continue as Leader of the Jamaica Labour Party. Efforts by the Gleaner to get information on this development proved futile, as no one in the JLP would say anything.

What is factual is that contrary to some reports there has been no meeting of the Standing Committee of the JLP since the retreat which was held last week-end at the Sans Souci Hotel in Ocho Rios. The GLEANER has learned that if Mr. Seaga has in fact indicated his desire not to retain the leadership of the party, it has nothing to do with the unexplained decision by the chairman of the JLP Mr. Frank Phipps to withdraw his team of lawyers from the Folly Corruption Probe on Monday.

Political circles were humming since the last fortnight over the non-participation by Mr. Hugh Shearer and the B.I.T.U. in the islandwide demonstrations from January 8 to 10 which were spearheaded by the Nationalist Patriotic Movement and promptly supported by Mr. Seaga who returned to Jamaica only on the evening of January 7, and so did not take part in the planning. The demonstrations were widespread throughout the country and were joined by NWU represented workers at three Bauxite Companies, among many others.

The Gleaner understands that there have been many

voices raised among younger members of the JLP against the non-support of former Prime Minister Hugh Shearer, and against reports that he and the Prime Minister Mr. Michael Manley frequently breakfast together.

The political speculations is that Mr. Seaga has been aware of the views of a growing number in the party calling for unity and one leadership, and that accordingly he has laid down certain conditions which he believes should be met if his position as leader is to be tenable.

Neither Mr. Seaga nor Mr. Shearer were available for comment last night. Mr. Seaga became JLP Leader in 1974 succeeding Mr. Hugh Shearer, who had resigned.



SEAGA