

# House honours Seaga for 40 years as MP

**OPPOSITION LEADER** Edward Seaga yesterday reflected on his involvement in Jamaica's politics during a special session of the House of Representatives which recognised his 40 unbroken years as a MP for West Kingston.

Mr. Seaga also pointed to the danger of corrupt use of political power and bad economic management based on petty politics.

"One of the worst things that can happen to us in political life is to believe power is an end in itself," Mr. Seaga said.

He said that through his experience he has seen how the country has and can go wrong by putting political populism above the national interest and operating on the basis that "the end justifies the means".

Turning to the economy, Mr. Seaga said he wanted to see a reversal of the pattern of economic policy which saw political parties abandoning the programmes of their opponents when they get into office.

"We must do everything - and I mean this sincerely - to find out why this is part of over development and we must try to eradicate it so there is smooth transition on a continuous path of growth," he said.

He also commented on the ignorance of the rich and powerful in the society about the way people in the inner city live. He said it was ironic that it is the people in these areas that had give international recognition to Jamaica through music and the arts, yet they have been prevented from participating fully in all areas of the society.

In his remarks, coloured with anecdotes and light humour, Mr. Seaga kept his colleagues laughing as he recounted his life at Wolmer's Boys and Harvard University in the

United States and traced the road he walked to end up as a politician and MP for West Kingston for the past 40 years.

His service to West Kingston makes him the longest serving MP in the history of Jamaica's Parliament and one of the longest serving anywhere in the world.

The marathon Parliamentary session, which lasted more than three hours, saw MPs from both sides of the House reminiscing on their first encounters with Mr. Seaga and recalling various experiences to demonstrate his various qualities.

Prime Minister P.J. Patterson, in his tribute read by Tourism Minister Portia Simpson Miller, saluted Mr. Seaga as a worthy political opponent.

Mr. Patterson, who is off the island leading Jamaica's delegation to a United Nations conference in New York, said that no one has ever been able to lightly dismiss the views and the political manoeuvrings of Mr. Seaga.

"We have always had to take him seriously," the Prime Minister's message said. "You may disagree, you may not like what he has to say but you have always to give serious consideration to every word he utters and every move he makes."

MP for Central St. Catherine Olivia 'Babsy' Grange who moved the motion calling on the Parliament to pay tribute to the Opposition Leader for his four decades of service said Mr. Seaga had played a significant role in harnessing the talents of the people in West Kingston.

"Edward Seaga is both an icon and an enigma in Jamaican society but for the people of West Kingston, he is the wind beneath our wings," said Ms. Grange who herself grew up in the West Kingston area.



**RUDOLPH BROWN** Staff Photographer

Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) Leader Edward Seaga, enters the chamber of Gordon House, Duke Street, Kingston yesterday to be honoured for his 40 years as a Member of Parliament. Looking on from left are: Valerie Curtis, Derrick Smith, Mrs. Carla Seaga, Ronald Thwaites, Abe Dabdoub and Babsy Grange.