

Rattray on Seaga: 29 OCT 1979

COMPLETELY OUT OF ORDER

National Library of Jamaica

Justice Minister and Attorney General Karl Rattray has termed as "completely out of order" addresses by Opposition leader Edward Seaga to audiences in the United States" in the terms in which he did".

"The effect of his words must have created the impression among certain sections of the American society, that Jamaica is an unstable country on the brink of a military revolution, subservient to foreign control and repressive of the human rights of its people", the Minister said.

In a nationwide broadcast on the role of the Opposition last night, Mr. Rattray said: "This completely false picture is damaging to our image as a people and a nation and could attract dire consequences affecting our national sovereignty and our international economic and diplomatic relationships."

He said the record "totally contradicts the false impression Mr. Seaga has been trying to create at home and abroad about the diminishing human rights and the abandonment of the democratic process in Jamaica."

He gave examples of steps taken "in deepening the democratic process and the concept of equality before the law", and noted that examples are there "for the present Opposition to follow."

PRESSURES

Declaring that's "the only means by which a Government can be legitimately changed in Jamaica is through the ballot box in democratically held elections," he said "the use of force by an Opposition in its pressures on a Government in order to accomplish the Government's overthrow is illegal and subversive activity."

"Therefore when the Opposition begins to talk of the "overthrow or underthrow" of the Government and to lay the basis for inciting civil disruption, and even foreign intervention, it is time for serious public analysis of the role of the Opposition."



Seaga



Rattray

He outlined the procedure by which the Leader of the Opposition is appointed noting that the party which forms the Opposition "is seen at all times as a possible alternative Government when the time comes for a democratic choice to be made . . . the Opposition is therefore invested with a primary interest in the peace, order and good Government of the nation."

DEPLORED

"This being so," he said, "any behaviour or action on the part of the Opposition which is disruptive of the peace, order and good Government is outside the context of its constitutional role and must be severely deplored."

The "spate of sensational allegations . . . without one shred of evidence" was against the interest of peace order and good Government, he said and noted too that the Opposition was acting "outside the spirit of the constitutional role of the Opposition" by "bad-talking" the nation on foreign shores and insulting Heads of States.

On the question of elections he said that the Opposition cannot force the Government to call elections at a time considered by the Opposition as favourable to its own chances "that option never rests with an Opposition."

The Justice Minister said it appeared "manifestly sinister" to him that Security Forces "are the prime targets for opposition attacks at this time."

"One can see a clear trend that the Opposition has resorted to confrontationist methods in its efforts to undermine critical State institutions and consequently the peace order and security of the nation."

Commenting on the call for a Police Services Commission, Mr. Rattray said: "We have no doubt in our minds that it is totally and absolutely wrong to propose that the Police Services Commission and the Public Service Commission should be appointed in a manner which would give more authority to institutions not invested with authority by the people. He said the aim of the call is to "create the inability for the Government to govern and it fails to understand its role as an alternative Government in the future."