

Major concern of year to come ...

Where to draw the line between people's rights, state's rights — Seaga

THE MAJOR concern of the year to come in Jamaica will be where to draw the line between the rights of the people and the rights of the state, says Leader of the Opposition Mr. Edward Seaga in his Christmas message to the nation.

The message reads:—

Christmas, is of course, essentially a spiritual season which commemorates the birth of Christ.

But it is also a Season which gives man the opportunity to fulfil himself as an individual, as part of a family, and as a member of a community. Exchange of personal gifts and brotherly greetings in the Xmas Seasons tell us this:

But this focus on man, or people, which occurs at Christmas time, tells us something else: it forcefully reminds us that the people, whether as many indi-

viduals or as community groups, are different from the State, and the State must never be allowed

to submerge them.

The State must never be allowed to grow so big and so powerful that the State will decide what the people will do and the people will do what the State decides.

The French philosopher Rousseau called the arrangement which balanced the rights of the State with the Rights of the people, the Social Contract.

In Jamaica today, we are searching for a new social contract between the State and the People; but in doing so a disturbing pattern has emerged in 1974 by which the Government of the State appears to be swallowing up the Role of its people.

In fact, it may very well be said that as we end 1974 on this uncertain note we begin 1975 with the prospect that the major concern of the year to come will be where to draw the line between the Rights of the People and the Rights of the State.

1975, therefore, could be described as the Year of the Constitution for it will be essentially a Constitutional struggle as to where we eventually draw this line.

Special powers

It is appropriate that the Opposition, for whom I speak, should raise this crucial question inasmuch as the Constitution charges the Opposition with special powers in respect of many of the most important provisions of that document.

And so long as our Constitution continues to make provision that an Opposition Part shall be charged as Watchman over the movements of the Ruling Party we shall continue to be able to wish each other a Merry Christmas and many Happy New Years to come.



SEAGA

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