

B/N -

SHERLOCK, Philip

Sunday 7/12/86

# PHILIP SHERLOCK — man

486

P. 11

## for all seasons



**S**IR PHILIP SHERLOCK is one of Jamaica's scholars. But not for him the dull and heavy recitation of intellectual gleanings. An outstanding speaker, he has the quick eye for humour, and his speeches and books reflect that kindly, sympathetic sense of humour. He does not laugh at people except perhaps himself: he laughs with Jamaicans and Caribbean citizens. For he loves Jamaica and the Caribbean.

He has been heard to tell of his early days as a student at Calabar High School. He says that the Principal was not confident that he Philip could turn a tune. So, that whenever distinguished visitors came to a special service of the school in the Chapel, the Principal would say, "Sherlock, you go behind the organ and pump it — for that is how you can serve!". A simple story, but it has held lessons for him. For Sir Philip has always excelled in any task that he has accepted.

He was an outstanding teacher at Calabar High School, then a successful Principal of Manchester Secondary. And he gained national recognition as Head of Wolmer's Boys' School. He then moved to the Institute of Jamaica as Secretary, following in the footsteps of the famed Frank Cundall. Then came the War, and the British recognition of the need for social welfare development.

Inspired by Norman Manley's vision in Jamaica Welfare, Sir Philip accepted a post as Training Officer at Jamaica Welfare Ltd., and worked with Dora Ibberson of Colonial Development and Welfare to organise social welfare training courses for young West Indians in Jamaica. Among the outstanding graduates of these courses were the Rev. Philip Potter, the retired Secretary-General of the World Council of Churches, and two of those about whom we have written, Odel Fleming and Sybil Francis.

Philip Sherlock believed like Bertrand Russel that the 'only valid nationalism is a cultural one.' Sir Philip believed that economic and political development were not sufficient gauges in themselves by which one could assess the growth of a nation. Educational development was just as significant or maybe far more lasting education, not only at the

P40

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF JAMAICA

08 11



*NOTE: This is the sixth in the series, HELPING TO BUILD THE NATION, by the Hon. Hector Wynter, former Editor of The Gleaner, and Miss Fay Davidson of the National Library. In this series, the authors give brief accounts of the lives of Jamaicans and adopted Jamaicans whose work and example have helped to build the nation.*

primary and secondary levels, but also at tertiary level.

## ● AT UWI

It was in the field of tertiary education that Sir Philip Sherlock made his greatest contribution to the Jamaican Society. He holds the distinction of being the first Jamaican Vice-Chancellor of the U.W.I., a further distinction is that he obtained First Class Honours in English by the External Route — a most difficult endeavour. By the year 1963 when he was appointed to the pinnacle of Caribbean intellectual life, he was a man with a deep understanding of the Caribbean society, its past and its present, as well as a man with great knowledge of the Caribbean. Professor Edward Baugh says of him, he was the "Prototype of the Caribbean man with the Caribbean vision".

Sir Philip's involvement in the affairs of the University began as early as 1944 when he sat on the Irvine Committee set up by the British government to look into higher education in the Caribbean. Sir Philip and Sir Hugh Springer of Barbados were the Caribbean representatives on the Committee. He went with the Committee on its travels in Europe and the West Indies and developed an even deeper knowledge of higher education. The Committee recommended the setting up of the University College of the West Indies at Mona.

In 1946 when Sir Thomas Taylor, the new Principal, invited Sir Philip to be Director of the Extra Mural Department it was in a sense an extension of the job he had previously been involved in as Education and Tertiary Officer to Jamaica Welfare Limited. As Education Officer, he moved out into the rural communities of Jamaica and he learned about the people and to respect their attitudes and opinions. He did not impose his wishes on them because he learned that 'good community leadership comes from good relationships! After gaining this intimate knowledge of the community, he was fully equipped to develop an approach to Extra Mural Studies which was relevant to Jamaica and the Caribbean. His Department, one of outreach, was the first Department established. For internal students did not enter U.W.I. until October 1948.

In 1955 he became Vice Principal of the U.C.W.I. and in 1959 he went to the Trinidad Campus where his task was to incorporate the famous Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad in the University College and to establish a Faculty of Engineering and one of Arts and Sciences to join with Agriculture.

All of his previous posts served as adequate preparation for his post of Vice Chancellor at the University of the West Indies which he held for six years (1963-1969). As Vice Chancellor he aimed at integrating the students, Faculty members and the outside community at large. He set the example by making himself

accessible to all. In 1967, two years before demitting office, he was knighted by the Queen.

## ● SCHOOL MASTER

It is interesting to note that Sir Philip Sherlock started his teaching career by accident. After graduating from Calabar High School in 1918, while waiting to take up a position as a Bank Clerk, he was invited by Mr. Price, Headmaster of Calabar, to fill a vacancy for three weeks. Philip liked it, and at the end of three weeks when he was asked to stay on, gladly did so. He remained at Calabar for six years, and as stated above, he then went to become Headmaster of Manchester Secondary School. But he stayed there only two years, after his efforts at expanding the school were thwarted. He returned to Calabar as Assistant Master for another three years.

In 1933 he was invited to take up the position of Headmaster of Wolmer's Boys' School — the oldest school in Jamaica, having been set up as a result of the 1729 John Wolmer Will. At age 30, he was the youngest Headmaster in the island. At Wolmer's he had a chance to be innovative. For one thing he realised the value of Physical Training, and so introduced formal P.T. classes to the boys. In 1936 Wolmer's won all the Sports trophies except swimming. 'Practical' Civics also became a part of the school syllabus. It was practical in the sense that it was not taught in a vacuum. Professionals like the doctor, the Town Clerk, etc. gave regular lectures to the boys.

With his customary broad-based outlook on life, Sir Philip demitted this office in 1938. He claims that he was becoming too autocratic and too much like a god. This he felt was not good for him as a person, so for his own personal development he decided to move on.

## ● INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA

Another of Sir Philip's firsts was becoming Secretary of the Institute of Jamaica. In accepting this position, Sir Philip was aligning himself with the whole movement at the time. The Institute had the wherewithal to easily forge the link between cultural and economic and political development in Jamaica. He himself gave lectures on Jamaican folklore and he also successfully staged an African Art Exhibition at the Museum. During his regime, with the dedication of Mr. Robert Verity, the Junior Centre came into being. This Centre became the foster home of the Arts in Jamaica, and Hon. Edna Manley, O.M., the foster mother. It fed children, who, in turn, grew up into culturally aware adults, and opened up the Arts to Jamaicans in general.