

# Her quiet influence is far-reaching

INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA  
WEST INDIA REFERENCE LIBRARY

**I**N recent times, as well as in the past, we have had some fine examples of women by whose help and inspiration husbands have been able to find themselves and even become famous.

Sir Winston Churchill has attributed a great deal of his political success to the unfailing support and guidance of Lady Churchill. One thinks, too, of the parts played by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Mrs. Clement Attlee and Lady Eden who, by their own personalities have built up for their men the tremendous goodwill that is so essential in a politician's life.

This type of woman's influence might not be evident to the casual observer (it ought not to be, really) particularly if the woman in the case is the rather diffident quiet dispositioned type of person as is Mrs. Florizel Glasspole, wife of the Minister of Labour in Jamaica's Government.

Hers is not the dominant personality that would win for her the title of "the power behind the throne". While not pretending to be a leader she does not accept the role of being led. Indeed, she is quite capable of making her own decisions and by her quiet charm gets her point accepted. Her husband admits quite readily that on many occasions her quiet persuasion has steered the course of his somewhat turbulent political life. She believes in doing things and not blowing her own trumpet.

Mrs. Glasspole's political beliefs are, naturally, her husband's; it could not be otherwise, but she is not blind to possible pitfalls and it is her self-appointed duty to show her husband any vital error of judgment.

Her early life follows a pattern familiar to us here in Jamaica. She began life as Josephine Kinlocke, the second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Courtney Kinlocke of Victoria Park, Fyffe's Pen, a quiet St. Elizabeth district within easy distance of the capital town of Black River. She grew up in comfortable circumstances on her father's property, enjoying the healthy outdoor life that one would have expected her to enjoy there.

When the family resources began to dwindle, the property was sold and the family came to live in Kingston.

Mrs. Glasspole is not at all certain that her early education fitted her for the role of a politician's wife. She lived a sheltered life; she did not have the benefit of communal school life as her father provided his daughters with a home tutor, and for the greater part of her early life she lived away from the public view.

Like most people, too, she has had her disappointments. Her ambition to take a course in nursing was thwarted by her father's opposition; it was not in Josephine's nature to oppose her father's will. However, she had developed a skill in needlework, an inheritance from her mother, and when it became evident that she had to earn a living, she turned to the one thing she really knew well.

Not that she had to fend for herself for any length of time. Within a couple of years in Kingston she had met and married Florizel Glasspole who was then a fledgeling accountant, and gave little indication of his political aspirations. That was in 1934.

Mrs. Glasspole has established a reputation for good dressmaking and smart personal dressing; she specialises in designing her own dresses and those of her many customers. She has not created what one could reasonably call a dressmaking establishment, but she has quite a number of customers who have remained faithful throughout these many years. Now, she has had to curtail this phase of her activities, as such an absorbing job is not compatible with the many engagements of a Minister's wife.

Mrs. Glasspole likes the social work in which she is engaged in her husband's constituency of East Kingston. In this respect she is fortunate to have had a course in Social Welfare work, which included a study of juvenile delinquency.

When her husband was awarded a Trades Union Scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford, in 1947, she accompanied him to England and studied social work at Nuffield House, Oxford. The knowledge and experience gained by this course have proved a valuable asset now that she is called upon to serve on various committees.

She is chairman of the Busy Bee Committee, a group of workers in East Kingston dedicated to raising funds to help the needy youth in that community. She was one of the seven members of the committee who recently selected the 75 Jamaican girls for domestic service in Canada. She is also a member of the executive committee of the Housecraft Training Centre, an organisation which trains girls for proper domestic service.

Life in the Glasspole household has not always been

as serene and calm as the foregoing survey would seem to suggest. When it is remembered that before becoming Minister of Labour, Mr. Glasspole was a rather militant trade unionist, caught up in the unending problems of workers and striving fearlessly for a satisfactory solution, it will be realised how much he relied on his wife for the type of support and understanding a man must have if he is to maintain his high ideals.

Mrs. Glasspole remembers very clearly the Mental Hospital strike called by the Trades Union Congress of which her husband was the General

Secretary in early 1946. For the duration of the strike her house was the canteen which supplied meals to the strikers. On occasions like these she has to infuse strength into a tired husband.

She remembers, also, when another big strike, led by her husband, lasted until Christmas Eve, thus preventing any sort of Christmas preparation in the home. In all the general election campaigns since 1944 she has been an active field worker for the People's National Party.

She used to be very keen on playing bridge; Mr. Glasspole, however, doesn't like the game, fearing perhaps the dubious fascination which bridge holds for its players. She enjoys dancing and seabathing immensely. She is an enthusiastic church worker attached to the Coke Methodist Church.



MRS. GLASSPOLE

She is always a friend of the under-privileged. After the 1951 hurricane Mrs. Glasspole spent endless days and nights assisting her husband in rehabilitation work in his constituency—feeding the destitute and organising the distribution of clothing.

Mrs. Glasspole shares her husband's interests in poultry rearing, gardening, travelling and cricket. There was a time when her poultry farm had over 300 birds and when her flower garden was a delight to see all through the year.

Now there is not so much time to spend on these hobbies, but she still maintains a small garden. Her only travelling outside of Jamaica was that trip to England in 1947, a trip from which she derived great benefits. Although she is no connoisseur on the art of cricket, she does know the difference between a

INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA  
WEST INDIA REFERENCE LIBRARY