

B/W -

Tom Adams

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**CARIBBEAN LOSS**

Sudden death has removed one of the Caribbean's most imaginative and effective leaders in the Rt. Hon. J.M.G. (Tom) Adams, Prime Minister of Barbados.

The redoubtable leader of the Barbados Labour Party which was founded by his father, Grantley, Mr. Adams was to all appearances in the best of health. But a heart attack laid him low yesterday.

Only last month he was here in Jamaica as one of the elder statesmen at the Canada-Caribbean talks, and made an outstanding contribution to its success.

Though only 53, Tom Adams had already fulfilled the promise he showed when he won the coveted Barbados Scholarship, and went to Oxford in 1950 to read economics. A determined scholar and a far-seeing politician, Mr. Adams, as a student, threw himself into the politics of the UK on behalf of the socialist Labour Party, and studied law after graduating from Oxford.

He was early in the thick of politics in Barbados and brought a blend of the political technician with the gift for rhetoric inherited from his father, and with the charm and intellectual grace of his mother, the principal of a leading girls' school, Queens College.

Mr. Adams wielded the power of Prime Minister since 1976 with an easy yet calculated authority. He saw Barbados through some difficult crises of security, and economic near-disasters. A clever politician, he always sought the main chance for his party, and won re-election in 1981.

The partnership between him, a moderate socialist, and Jamaica's Prime Minister Edward Seaga, leader of the more conservative Jamaica Labour Party developed rapidly, and he showed his decisiveness when first he rescued the Government of Robert Cato of St. Vincent by sending Barbadian security personnel to quell an uprising in Union Island, and in 1983 cooperated enthusiastically with five of the Leewards and Windwards and Jamaica in assisting with the U.S. invasion of Grenada.

The Rt. Hon. Tom Adams was never afraid to take decisions — however controversial — in order to advance the cause of Barbados and the Commonwealth Caribbean, a cause which was to him indivisible. Urbane, witty and hard-working, his voice will be missed in Caribbean councils, and his influence within and outside the area has left a vacuum, most difficult to fill.

We grieve with his wife and family, and with the Government and people of Barbados. Their loss is the loss of the whole Caribbean.

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