

1975

of authority and functions — the very essence of leadership — came easily to Bustamante. In fact, his willingness to let his Ministers run their own show and make mistakes — in good faith — helped to make his very firm rule tolerable.

Alexander Bustamante could never be made into a bureaucrat. For one thing, it is doubtful that he ever read anything long — be it book or document — in his life. It was his ears which provided the significant entrance into his mind, together with his observation of the expression on the face of the person who was dealing with him. This was in marked contrast to his cousin Norman Manley, who had a tremendous appetite and capacity for the written word and points of detail. Bustamante readily admits that he gave every encouragement to his lieutenants to speak their minds and to disagree with him, but when he thought it necessary to draw the line he would remind, "You have disagreed, now I have the last say. I object to all you have agreed to. Now goodbye."¹¹ A published anecdote recounts that when he became Prime Minister in 1962, the practice in Cabinet was for Ministers to present written submissions on matters on which they wished to have Cabinet endorsement. After Bustamante had asked from the senior Ministers as to the implications of particular proposals, he would announce his decision. This practice did not meet with the approval of one Minister who suggested that the democratic thing to do would be to take a vote. "Vote?" queried Sir Alexander. "A vote? Very well, we will have a vote. Those in favour say 'aye', those against, 'no'. Eleven ayes and one no — me — the no's have it, negatived; next matter."

Bustamante's intuitive trust in people who worked with him extended to his signing an important letter, after it had been read back to him by his Permanent Secretary (civil service head of a Ministry) or someone else working for him. In a sense, therefore, Bustamante lived by his memory, and in this Gladys Longbridge Bustamante played a critical role as his private secretary and confidante, and this role did not end when she became his wife. She was his "memory bank", so to speak.¹² In discussions, Bustamante would turn to her incessantly — "What was the sum of money we provided for that road in Lionel Town, Lady B?" — and such was her memory that she would recall what had been done three or four years previously. "What was the name of that man who came to see me last year when I was in New York, Lady B?" and again the name would be recalled. Gladys Longbridge Bustamante was therefore the complementary but unobtrusive other member of the team who made a tremendous contribution to the way in which

Bustamante was able to perform. He often expected others who worked with him to perform in the same way. One of Jamaica's very distinguished civil servants recalled that his telephone would ring, and it would be a summons from the Prime Minister. There would, however, be rarely any indication of what the Prime Minister wanted to see him about or wanted to discuss. On one occasion he protested to Bustamante's Secretary, pointing out that he would much prefer to be able to consult his files before giving advice that might be required. Apprised of this by his Secretary, Bustamante replied that he had no intention of letting his administrative officer know beforehand what he wanted to discuss as he was more likely to get the truth if he took him by surprise, rather than allowing him to have an opportunity to think up a story or invent an explanation.

It is one of the paradoxes of William Alexander Clarke Bustamante that the very autocratic and egocentric tendencies which gave rise to his personalism or patriarchal rule also enabled him to satisfy the institutional requirements of leadership, namely, the ability to see the enterprise as a whole, to make decisions, to delegate and to inspire loyalty. He tended to see himself as belonging to all classes and all constituencies in Jamaica. This helped to sustain his sense of fairplay. He was a man of action who took decisions readily and there was never any doubt as to who was boss. In most emergent nations, the relationship between the political executive and the career civil service, constitutes a potential source of continuing tension. Jamaica has been no exception.¹³ Yet, as far as Bustamante was concerned, his intuitive and unorthodox approach to administration led him to rely upon his civil service aides to do the administrative spadework and provide him with advice, and as a rule he enjoyed excellent relations with them. He demanded loyalty and he gave the same.

For almost three years, then, the J.L.P. governed Jamaica, led by an acting Prime Minister and a semi-retired Prime Minister. In February 1967, however, at eighty-three years of age, Sir Alexander Bustamante announced his intention not to run for office in the forthcoming elections. The electorate, however, gave him a happy send-off by returning his party to power with an increased majority of thirty-three to twenty. In February 1968, Members of Parliament officially paid tribute to the patriarch of Jamaican politics. Some of the more perceptive and significant of the tributes paid to him came from the Leader and veteran Members of the Opposition. Florjzel Glasspole recalled how in 1959 he assured Bustamante that the P.N.P. would win the General Election but expressed