

B/N - Cooke, Howard

● Profile of Howard Cooke:

THE NEW G. G.

B/N Cooke,
Howard

By Calvin Bowen

HOWARD FELIX HANLAN COOKE, C.D., is the new Governor-General of Jamaica. He has been chosen by the Government, with the approval of the Queen, to be Her Majesty's Representative in this country; and he assumes his new and powerful responsibility today when he takes the formal Oath of Office.

Following the precedent which has been established since Jamaica became an independent nation, the new 75-year-old Head of State has been appointed from the ranks of the country's parliamentarians. Like Sir Clifford Campbell and Sir Florizel Glasspole before him, he has been an active politician, with a proud 50-year career of service to his country in this area of activity.

His entry into politics began in 1938 when he was one of the foundation members of the People's National Party. He started his active political career in 1958 when he was elected to the Parliament of the Federation of the West Indies, serving in that capacity as a representative of St. James. He entered the Parliament of Jamaica in 1962, winning the seat for north-western St. James under the banner of the P.N.P., and served as an M.P. until 1980.

His activity in public life and in the affairs of the nation was to see him doing duty as a Cabinet Minister, holding at various times the portfolios of Education, Labour, Social Security, and the Public Service. This was during the P.N.P. term of office as Government between 1972-80.

During this period, he also rose high in the hierarchy of his party, serving as a member of the Executive and rising to the prominent position of Chairman.

His political status underwent a change in 1989 when, on the return to power of his Party in the General Elections of that year, he was selected by his party to become a Senator. That change brought with it additional honour when he was appointed President of the Senate, the position from which he now goes to take up residence in Kings House.

BORN IN THE LITTLE DISTRICT of Goodwill, in St. James, on November 13, 1915, Howard Cooke is a proud son of his native parish. After tuition at elementary and private schools, he completed his education at Mico College (where he trained to be a teacher) and at London University.

Schooling done, he started adult life by entering the teaching profession for which he had prepared himself. He taught at Mico College and Practising School, was headmaster at Belle Castle All-Age School, in Portland; at Port Antonio Upper, and at the Montego Bay Boys School in his own home town.

As he distinguished himself in this field of endeavour, he gained the respect and admiration of his superiors as well as his colleagues in the schoolroom; and was an active and vocal member of his professional body, the Jamaica Union of Teachers.

His outstanding contribution to the educational system in Jamaica was crowned with his election to the presidency of the J.U.T., a post which he filled with distinction during that term of office.

When circumstances dictated that he leave active politics, he decided to enter the business world, in 1982. He became a member of the insurance industry, and worked assiduously in the field, gaining a deserved reputation as a diligent worker and a top producer which, added to his own personal suavity of manner, made him a highly successful Life Underwriter.

As he rose to prominence in this field also, he became one of

the senior executives of ALICO Jamaica, and held office as Branch Manager in Western Jamaica, operating out of his headquarters in Montego Bay.

BUT TEACHING AND POLITICS AND BUSINESS did not entirely engage his attention or occupy all his time and interest. He was active in church life as well, as a dedicated member of the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman (Presbyterian), in which he has held the positions of Senior Elder and lay pastor.

There is also Howard Cooke, the family man. Married for over 50 years to the former Ivy Sylvia Lucille Tai, he is the proud father of two sons and a daughter. One of his sons is a Judge of the Supreme Court of Jamaica — his namesake Howard Cooke Jr.

A man of wide and varying interests, the new Governor-General lists among these a love of Music and an affinity for Sport, notably cricket and football. He has served on both the Jamaica Cricket Board and the Jamaica Football Association. Cultural affairs also attract his attention, he has been active in the Scout movement, and he is a Freemason, having held office in the Lodge.

For his contribution to public life, particularly in the field of Politics, he was awarded the national honour of the Order of Distinction, in the rank of Commander. The Howard Cooke Highway in Montego Bay is a permanent monument to his role in the development of Jamaica's second city.

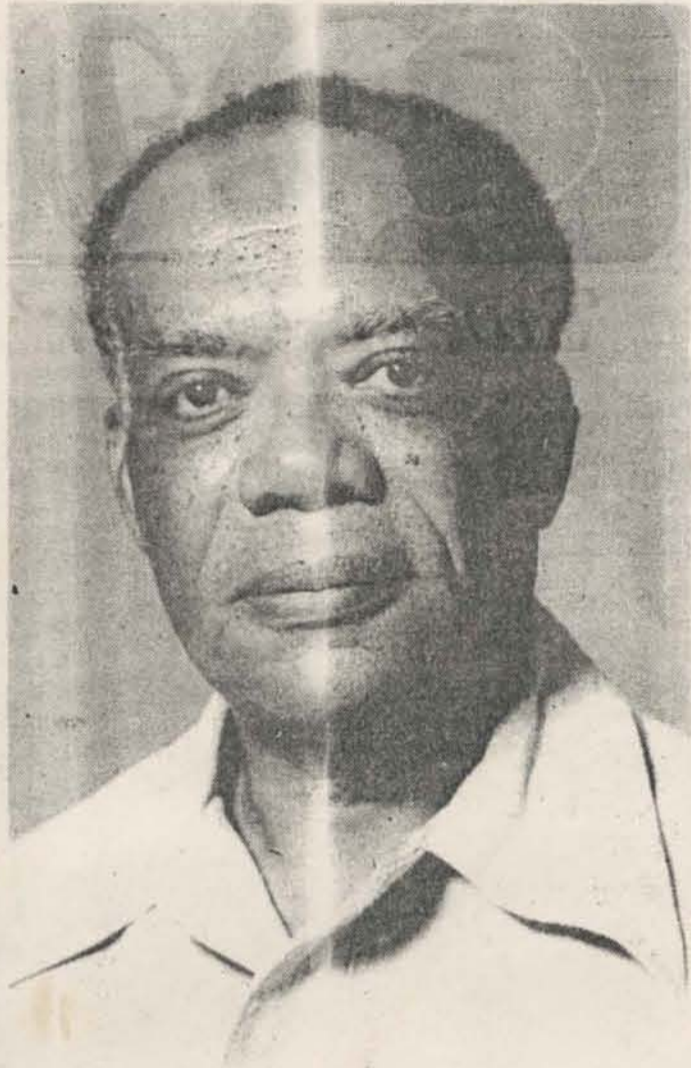
ALL THESE CREDENTIALS — experienced legislator, outstanding educator, successful insurance executive, leading churchman, model family man, music lover, sports administrator — the new Governor-General brings with him to the highest office in the land. He follows in the footsteps of two distinguished Jamaicans, and gives promise of living up to the lofty standards of performance set by these two predecessors of his, and which will be a stern challenge to him.

But, like Sir Clifford, whom he follows by going from being President of the Senate to Governor-General, it will be for him to grow in the job, to shed the mantle of partisan politics and to put on a new cloak of impartiality and objectiveness.

Like Sir Florizel, who was his colleague Minister, it will be for him to become a symbol of unity for all Jamaicans, breaking down the barriers of divisiveness and tribalism, and setting an example of leadership that rises above political considerations, concerned only with what is best for Jamaica and the national interest.

Generally regarded as the first choice for the post, Howard Cooke takes with him to Kings House the best wishes and heartfelt prayer of the nation that he will prove the right man for the job, one who will hold even the scales of goodwill and fairplay, and who will make his fellow Jamaicans proud that another of their nationals has been considered a fit and proper person to be the nation's First Citizen. *

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THE HON. HOWARD COOKE



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
At the Mandela sitting (right)

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