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GUYANA

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

to the

National Assembly

Tuesday, 31st March, 1970

SECOND PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA

SECOND SESSION

1970

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Mr. Speaker:

May I congratulate you on your recent appointment to the Diplomatic Service of our country? My Government wishes to record publicly its gratitude and appreciation for the fine work that you have done as the second Speaker of our Independent nation of Guyana. You have witnessed the inauguration of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana which reflects in philosophical approach and proposed economic organisation the commitment of my Government to making the small man a real man.

The realisation of the concept imposes upon my Government the clear task of seeing that the institutional framework exists within which the Co-operative Republic may be given the opportunity to achieve maturity, a framework which must ensure that both human and other resources are mobilised and deployed in a way that will be conducive to the development and maintenance of a dynamic, efficient and productive co-operative sector in Guyana.

My Government intends to have reoriented those existing institutions which are essential to the co-operative sector, and to promote and assist in the promotion of new ones without which the Co-operative Republic cannot realise its fullest potential and meaning. All the necessary resources of the nation will be brought to bear in this exercise which is really one of national survival.

A new Ten-Year Development Programme is now being prepared by a team of Guyanese. The objective of this Programme is to create an economy structured to meet the needs and aspirations of the people of Guyana in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. Meanwhile, the Co-operative Division of the Ministry of Economic Development has been reorganised and is expected to be fully staffed very shortly. Five Senior Officers of the Co-operative Division will be responsible for ensuring that opportunities for viable productive co-operative undertakings are indentified in every sector of the economy: that the necessary human and other resources are mobilised, trained where necessary, and organised; and that the activities of such co-operatives once established are kept under constant review in order that guidance, assistance and encouragement can be given when necessary until the co-operative movement becomes self-sustaining and productive in terms of the national economy.

The Co-operative Bank

This House has brought into existence the Guyana National Co-operative Bank which has already won the confidence of all sections of the public. Since it opened its doors on February 24, 1970, some 2,000 depositors from all walks of life have made deposits.

My Government intends that the Co-operative Bank should function as a prime instrument for mobilising the financial resources of the Guyanese people, supplying credit to co-operative and other undertakings within the priorities of the National Development Programme. The objective is therefore to staff it with well qualified persons who will carry out professional analyses when projects come up for approval. As a matter of policy, the Bank having made sure of the soundness of a project, will provide in co-operation with other public agencies, in the subsequent course of the project, assistance and guidance aimed at ensuring its success.

Agriculture

In the context of both the expansion of co-operatives and the overall developmental thrust of the country great emphasis will be placed upon Agriculture. The year 1970 will usher in the green revolu-

tion in Guyana. Research and modern technology have identified a number of products that can really make Guyana rich agriculturally.

We are now in a position to push large-scale production of crops such as corn, peanuts, soya bean, citrus and coconuts.

The introduction of new rice varieties and of insecticides to control more efficiently the paddy bug has had a salutary result. Already the net profits for the first three months of the new crop year (October, November, December) are some 16 per cent higher than for a comparable period of the previous year. In about mid-1970 the Board will bring into operation its most modern reprocessing, refining and packaging plant, which is now in the course of construction. It is intended through the agency of the Guyana Rice Corporation to use profits to improve the yield and profitability of the rice industry by promoting research and improvement of farming and milling.

The Corporation will assist farmers directly with their production problems and issue credit to them through District Action Committees while engaging in educational programmes to raise the standard of husbandry and consequently the yield of paddy in the field.

The Rice Corporation has embarked on an extensive capital development programme of some \$40 million contributed to by profits earned by the industry and A.I.D. soft loans. This includes the erection of six paddy drying and storage centres, the establishment of a modern Research Station at Burma, the expansion of production of pure line seed at Tapakuma, Black Bush Polder and Burma, the recommissioning of the three Black Bush Polder rice mills, the bridging of the Mahaicony River and the provision of access roads to its modernised central mills. Pools of land clearing, ploughing and harvesting equipment will also be established.

Hinterland Development

During 1969, my Government appointed a Committee to examine the question of settlement in, and development of, the hinterland of Guyana. That Committee has since submitted its report and after careful consideration of the recommendations contained therein, my Government has decided to establish a Hinterland Development Corporation which would have responsibility for promoting, encouraging and co-ordinating settlement and development in the hinterland on the basis of existing Amerindian and other settlements there, and the formation of new communities. The legislation necessary for the establishment of the proposed Hinterland Development Corporation will be introduced in the current session of Parliament.

Apart from the existing Amerindian settlements, communities will be established and /or expanded and developed principally in five hinterland areas - the Matthews Ridge-Arakaka-Kaituma area where my Government is in the process of converting and expanding a hitherto mining community into a dynamic and thriving community based on agriculture., forest exploitation, light industry and agro-industry; the Madhia-Tumatumari-Konawaruk triangle in the Mazaruni-Potaro region, where there is a hydro-electric installation with a present generating capacity of 1,500 Kilowatts, and where exist some of the richest soils found anywhere in Guyana; the Moco-Moco valley and the Marudi valley in the Rupununi region where there are also considerable acreages of good agricultural land; and the New River triangle on our border with Surinam.

Amerindian Development

The Report of the Amerindian Lands Commission has already been tabled in Parliament and has been discussed with the Amerindian leaders. My Government has considered the representations made by the Leaders in respect of the Report, and the agreement with these will form the basis of a programme for changing the largely subsistence-type of economic activity which has characterised the Amerindian communities in Guyana into viable productive activities. There will be emphasis on marketable produce and the social and economic upliftment of this section of our population and its rapid and effective integration into the rest of the society and into the general effort and thrust in respect of hinterland settlement and national development.

Water supply and certain infra-structural works will be necessary in the establishment of settlements in the Hinterland. In a number of these - Matthews Ridge, Kaituma and Tumatumari, for example, electricity, roads and water supply already exist and need only to be expanded and improved. My Government feels confident that through co-operatives and self-help, much of this infra-structure can be put in by the communities themselves, and consequently proposes to encourage such activity.

The objective in Hinterland Development, is the establishment of self-supporting communities based on social and economic activity and contributing to the development of Guyanese, the Guyanese economy, and the Co-operative Republic.

Roads and Communications

Work will be undertaken this year on the proposed road to link the coast of Guyana with the southern region of the country and

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ultimately with Brazil. The Road Location Survey and mobilisation to start construction is near completion. With the help of patriotic Guyanese, including students, Members of Parliament and Government Ministers and officials, construction will commence on the portion of road from Allsopp, a point along the Bartica-Potaro Road, 35 miles south of Bartica to a point opposite Gluck Island.

The West Demerara Roads will be rehabilitated this year and the Corentyne Road completed.

There will be implemented the \$17 million plan to expand Guyana's telecommunications system over a period of two years providing several thousands new lines.

The Civil Aviation services will be improved by the provision of additional Air Traffic Control facilities, the establishment of an Aeronautical Information Service, the complete re-equipping and rehabilitation of the Control Tower, the provision of navigational aids and aeronautical communications equipment and the extension of the parking apron at Timehri.

To facilitate both hinterland and international air traffic, non-directional Beacons will be installed at fifteen locations in the country over the next four years. Communications equipment will be strategically located for use by the Civil Aviation Department, the Meteorological Department and the Guyana Airways Corporation and a number of airstrips will be improved for all weather operations.

Water Supply

My Government is conscious of the problem of water supply especially on the coast and is now pursuing a programme directed at alleviating that problem in phases. Within six months the more thickly populated areas of the East Coast and East Bank of Demerara and New Amsterdam will be served with new high capacity wells and plans will be finalised to bring for the first time a potable water supply of quality to the township of Wisnar-Christianburg-Mackenzie. During this session legislation will be submitted to this House for the establishment of a National Water Board.

Electricity

My Government is committed to the progressive electrification of the entire country. The Corentyne area will shortly be tackled. The Electricity Corporation has recently taken over the supply of electricity to the Bartica area. In keeping with the programme of development

of the Hinterland, my Government has reactivated the hydro-power plant at Tumatumari and the Madhia Tumatumari-Konawaruk triangle and environs will be served. Within weeks my Government will have completed the electrification of Mabaruma, North West District, where a co-operative society will purchase in bulk and sell power to the residents. Work has started at Annai to supply electric power and within weeks the capacity at Lethem will be extended to cater for increasing need.

Youth

My Government's emphasis on the mobilisation of our youth in consonance with the overall national programme of increased employment and Hinterland Development, continues. The Youth Corps is expanding rapidly. Its first graduates are now settled in various parts of the Hinterland or absorbed as skilled citizens in various sectors of the economy. Its annual intake now includes young women and has more than doubled. Within the near future, the Corps will be providing a significant number of settlers with an agricultural, technical and co-operative orientation fit to contribute to Guyana's overall development.

Meanwhile a committee headed by a Guyanese sociologist is carrying out a Youth Survey. On the basis of this survey, it will be possible to amplify and amend where necessary some of the details of the present Youth Programme.

Training

The Programme of Development and the emphasis on co-operatives have called for fundamental changes in the educational structure both in terms of philosophy and content. Most of these changes have been forecast by the White Paper on Education of 1968, but in addition to this my Government, following the recommendations of a special Committee on Education and Training in the Co-operative Republic, is now embarking upon a programme of Training and Education for the Co-operative Republic to be carried on at several levels within the schools, the University and Adult Education groups. As of this year, the formation of Co-operatives in all schools will be arranged with the aim of ensuring that eventually every school will be exposed to the practical experience of running a Co-operative. The University of Guyana is drafting a Programme of Studies so that the study of Co-operatives will be a compulsory course offered at the University - this year will see the first Vacation Co-operatives Course run by the University.

Henceforth all Guyanese given loans or scholarships for higher education by my Government will be required to study at the University of Guyana unless they are pursuing courses not offered by the University. In addition, no professional qualification will be awarded after 1970 unless the awardee has completed successfully a course in Co-operatives.

Meanwhile, the emphasis on technical education continues and this year will see the completion of the Technical Institute at New Amsterdam to offer training in crafts and in technology up to the General Technical Diploma level. The technical flow pattern has been restructured so that there will be more emphasis on Technical Education at primary school level, right through secondary school and eventually to the University of Guyana where the newly established Division of Technical Studies will be training sub-professionals to meet the need that exists within the system for this type of trained personnel.

Meanwhile curriculum development committees have started work so that we may, with the maximum speed, make such changes within our curriculum as are needed at this and future stages of our country's development.

Foreign Affairs

On the wider international scene my Government will continue to be guided by the principles of non-alignment which have been the foundations of its foreign policy.

The year ahead will see a major effort by the uncommitted countries to achieve, through their solidarity, an influence otherwise denied them by the physical realities of super-power politics.

Through the presence of the Prime Minister at the meeting of non-aligned States due to be held in Addis Ababa later this year my Government will make its contribution to the effort and to the achievement of these objectives.

Within the narrower but more intimate circle of the Commonwealth Caribbean my Government will maintain its commitment to the cause of Caribbean unity and will initiate and support policies designed to promote its achievement.

At the forthcoming meeting of Commonwealth Caribbean Heads of Government and in all appropriate regional discussions, my Government will urge an acceleration of the programme of Caribbean

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economic integration and an acknowledgement of the concomitant need for constitutional arrangements which will secure the end of a metropolitan presence in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

Whether in the Caribbean, in the Commonwealth or in the world outside, my Government continues to be concerned at the steady drift towards a world racial confrontation, and will devote its energies and its influence towards securing respect for human dignity everywhere, but more especially in those remaining enclaves of bigotry where prejudice and discrimination continue to hold sway.

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THE GOVERNMENT PRINTERY, GEORGETOWN.