



British Guiana.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF THE INTERIOR

FOR THE YEAR

1960.

GEORGETOWN, DEMERARA, BRITISH GUIANA.

1961.

711

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Ministerial Buildings,
High Street, Georgetown.

August, 1961.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit hereunder my report on the administration of the Districts in the Interior for the year 1960.

STAFF

Mr. J.B. Bamford continued in office as Commissioner of the Interior throughout the year.

The Departmental establishment was made up of three District Commissioners, five Assistant District Commissioners, an Administrative Assistant, six District Field Officers, nine Clerks and three Typist Clerks together with various subordinate posts.

Rupununi District: Mr. E. M. Cossou served as District Commissioner until the 21st October when he left the district prior to going on vacation leave. He handed over to Mr. P. R. Hughes, Assistant District Commissioner until Mr. N. L. Franker assumed duty as District Commissioner, on the 7th December. Mr. V. J. Correia, Assistant District Commissioner, resumed duty from vacation leave on 7th August, 1960. He was promoted Assistant Secretary and transferred to the Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing on 8th October, 1960, and Mr. P. R. Hughes was appointed Assistant District Commissioner as from the 9th October, 1960.

North West District: Mr. N. L. Franker served as District Commissioner until the 7th September when he was seconded to act as Secretary to the Electoral Boundaries Commission. As a result, Mr. C.J.E. Barker, Assistant District Commissioner, was appointed to act as District Commissioner and Mr. M. L. Persaud, Class I Clerk, to act as Assistant District Commissioner.

Mazaruni-Potaro District: Mr. A.A.M. Learmond continued to serve as District Commissioner and F.C.R. Giles as Assistant District Commissioner throughout the year.

Upper Mazaruni Amerindian District: Mr. W. H. Seggar, Assistant District Commissioner, left the district on 10th February on vacation leave and Mr. G. C. Melville, District Field Officer, assumed charge of the district. He was recalled to Georgetown on 23rd March and was subsequently replaced in May by Mr. O.G.T. Marks. Mr. W. H. Seggar returned to the district on 26th September and resumed charge.

North West Amerindian District: Mr. F.B. Green, Assistant District Commissioner, continued

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The Honourable
Chief Secretary,
Public Buildings, Georgetown.

to be in charge of the district until 28th June when he was assigned special duties in connection with the Kumaka-Quebanna Land Settlement Scheme. Mr. R. G. Prasad was appointed to act in his place on 29th June. Mr. Green left the District on 26th August prior to proceeding on vacation leave.

Visits by His Excellency the Governor:

His Excellency the Governor, Sir Ralph Grey, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., O.B.E., visited Kaieteur and Mackenzie on the 10th and 29th January; on the latter occasion with H.R.H. The Princess Royal and Party; the operations of the North West Mining Company at Matthews' Ridge from 7th to 9th July; Bartica and surroundings and the Potaro from 19th to 22nd July; Orealla Amerindian District on 15th August, the North West District from 23rd to 28th August, and Lethem and environs and Boa Vista (Brazil) from 5th to 8th September.

The Commissioner of the Interior accompanied His Excellency the Governor on his visits and in addition made three visits to the Mazaruni-Potaro District, three to Orealla, two to the Moruca River, two the Rupununi District, one to Supenaam and Anna Regina, one to the Upper Mazaruni Amerindian District and one to St. Francis' Mission, Mahaicony Creek.

The District Commissioners and officers posted in districts made regular tours of their respective districts throughout the year.

FRONTIER RELATIONS

Relations between residents on this country's borders with Brazil and Venezuela were cordial throughout the year. His Excellency Senor Helio Araujo, Governor of the Rio Branco Territory, and a party of other officials made several visits to Lethem during the year. His Excellency the Governor, Sir Ralph Grey, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., O.B.E., accompanied by Lady Grey and party, including the Private Secretary, the Commissioner of the Interior and Superintendent of Polica N. Isaacs, travelled to Boa Vista on the 6th September on an official visit and returned on 8th September. The visit was received with much enthusiasm.

AMERINDIAN AFFAIRS

The 1960 Census figure for the Amerindian population is not yet available but it is estimated that the Amerindians now number between 25,000 and 30,000. They range from the primitive to the civilised, and it is the policy of Government to bring this minority group to a stage which will enable them to take their place with other groups in the general life of the community. They are thinly distributed, living mostly in places to which access is difficult and costly and the administration is faced with many difficulties in implementing this policy in view of limitations in staff and funds. One great difficulty is that a large number of Amerindians are content to continue their way of life and show little enthusiasm for change. To provide improvements requires a careful approach and sustained effort. In one area, at

...../ Orealla

Orealla, funds have been provided to establish a station with a resident District Officer. In the meantime, it was possible to have a Volunteer from the Voluntary Service Overseas Organisation stationed at Orealla in January, 1960 and his efforts have brought about marked improvement in several fields. An important problem facing the administration is the rights of the Amerindians in respect of land, and amendments to existing legislation are being considered.

Self-Help Schemes: In a number of areas, Amerindians have taken advantage of assistance given through self-help schemes and many projects have been successfully completed whilst others are under way.

Amerindian Rest Shelters: The new Rest Shelters at Mahaicony, Supenaam and Anna Regina were completed and put into use during the latter part of the year.

Trade Stores: The Lethem Trade Store erected its own building which was opened on 6th April. Cash takings for the year totalled \$90,885.19 including the amounts of \$11,297.74 and \$8,839.08 collected at the branch stores at Karasabai and Ishalton opened in 1959. These branch stores are satisfying the needs of the residents who no longer find it necessary to travel long distances or to go to Brazil to obtain supplies. Cash sales at the Kamarang Trade Store totalled \$64,531.71, an increase of nearly \$20,000.00 on the 1959 sales. The increase was no doubt due to the large number of people using the Kamarang airstrip on their journeys to and from the mining areas in the Ekereku. The residents of Sand Creek Village have opened their own store which operated successfully and made considerable progress during the year.

Trade: In the Rupununi District, the sale of cattle, tobacco and sundry items such as corn and farine belonging to Amerindians realised \$30,928.00. Many of the Amerindians worked in the balata industry but figures are not available as the balata is sold to the only operating company.

Training Centres: In the Rupununi District, tailoring and sewing classes were held at Massara and Awarawaunawa. Adult Education classes were held at Lethem and St. Ignatius and the scope was extended to include lectures on Health and Hygiene by Dr. Davis of the Unevangelised Fields Mission; the response was encouraging. In the North West and Pomercon Amerindian Districts, four training courses were held; one at Santa Rosa and three at St. Monica. The course at Santa Rosa covered gardening and at St. Monica there were courses in sewing and dressmaking, cooking and boat building. In the Orealla Amerindian District courses in sewing and dressmaking and carpentry were held.

Local Government: Village Councils formally established in terms of the Amerindian Ordinance, Chapter 58, were in operation at Ishalton, Klaurdarnawa, Sand Creek and Annai in the Rupununi District and Santa Rosa in the North West District.

Informal councils are operating and nearing recognition for official status at Achewib, Awarawaunawa, Maruranawa and Shea in the Rupununi District; Paruima, Waramadong and Jawalla in the Upper Mazaruni Amerindian District; Wakapau and Haimarakabra in the North West District; Kabacaburi and St. Monica on the Pomeroun River; Orealla on the Corentyne River and St. Francis on the Mahaicony River. In the Upper Mazaruni Amerindian District regular meetings of the Captains were held by the ~~Officer-in-Charge~~ to discuss general problems relating to the district as a whole. In the Rupununi District the Fourth Annual Conference of Captains was held at Potarinou on 10th December at which the Commissioner of the Interior presided. Formerly, the meetings consisted only of the Captains of the South Savannahs (Wapisianas), but on this occasion all of the officially recognised Captains of the North Savannahs and Karasabai (Makusis) attended. It was the first time these two large tribal groups were brought together to discuss their common problems. The meeting was a success and it was evident that any tribal feeling that might have existed in the past is disappearing.

Water Supplies: Wells have been completed in nine villages in the Rupununi District and work proceeded steadily on the construction of others. Windmills, overhead tanks and pipe lines are now being installed with funds provided in the 1960 - 1964 Development Programme for the continuation of this work. The improvement of their water supply has made a great contribution to the health and welfare of the residents. The Government Geophysicist-Hydrologist visited the district in November and investigated the possibility of boring wells by water jets which would be less costly than the methods now used.

Health: In the Rupununi District, the health of the Amerindian population could not be considered good because malaria was still prevalent. The same can be said of parts of the North West District, particularly the headwaters of the Barima and Barama Rivers. However, arrangements were well in hand to make supplies of medicated salt available to residents in the Interior Districts, as a protection against malaria. In the North West District, tuberculosis appeared to be just as serious a threat to health as malaria and active measures are needed to restrict the spread of this disease.

Land Development: In the North West Amerindian District, the population had been estimated at 2,000 but was disclosed by the 1960 Census to be nearer 4,000. Here, the residents live on small overcrowded islands in swamp lands with their farms in areas far from their homes. However, there is a main ridge between the Moruca and Waini Rivers which makes available some 25,000 acres of land for agriculture. For access to these lands some $22\frac{3}{4}$ miles of roadway is being built from Kumaka on the Moruca River to Quebanna on the Waini River. The first five miles and a branch road from mile 4 to Kamwatta were built as aided self-help schemes. All of the lots laid out, in both sections, have been taken up and a fair

amount of clearing and planting has been done. Work on the construction of the road under the Development Programme commenced in July 1960 and clearing and grubbing of the road had reached 16 miles from the Kumaka end at year end when 248 lots had been marked out by a Surveyor.

In the Upper Mazaruni Amerindian District a start was made in October on two schemes under the 1960 - 1964 Development Programme. A road trace from Kamarang Mouth to Waramadong was cut, and a start made on clearing 1,500 acres near Paruima to establish a cattle pasture.

AGRICULTURE

In the North West District the general pattern of agriculture has changed little during the past few years. There was a certain amount of concern towards the end of the year on account of the poor prices offered to farmers for their crops. Markets made available through the North West Co-operative Society or hucksters were poor. Coffee dropped from 45 - 49 cents per pound offered for the 1959 crop to 26 - 29 cents per pound for the 1960 crop. Oranges dropped to as low as 75 cents per hundred Grade A.

Meanwhile, activity on the technical side was concentrated on the fight against sclerotium disease and on fertiliser trials on coffee, cocoa and citrus. Efforts proved quite successful, but much remains to be done. There was an upsurge in 4-H Club activity and two new clubs were formed at Morawhanna and Barabuina. A 4-H Achievement Day held in December proved to be very popular, and it is hoped that much progress will be made in this way.

Mazaruni-Potaro District: Other than around Bartica, and at a few scattered farms in the mining areas, there was not much agricultural activity in the District. It is understood that an Agricultural Superintendent will be posted in the District early in 1961 and it is hoped that he will be able to stimulate more interest in agriculture. All round progress was made in the farming areas around Bartica, particularly in the planting of citrus trees and poultry rearing.

During the year fish was obtained in fair quantities from Georgetown, and one fisherman financed by the Credit Corporation obtained good quantities of fresh water fish from the Upper Essequibo.

The 4-H Movement continued to grow in the Bartica area. A seminar was held during the year and the Achievement Day Programme was a success.

Rupununi District: Cattle ranching is the main agricultural project in the District around which almost everything else revolves. The population is comprised mostly of Amerindians whose agricultural occupation is growing subsistence crops, corn and farine for the cattle ranching industry. Tobacco is also grown and a fair amount

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was shipped to Georgetown during the year.

4147 head of cattle were slaughtered at the Lethem Abattoir during the year and shipped by air. 3959 carcasses were consigned to the Georgetown market and 111 and 77 carcasses were shipped to Martinique and Cayenne respectively.

North West Amerindian District: In the Moruca River area, copra production totalled 270,000 pounds, an increase of 125,000 pounds on the 1959 production. It is interesting to note that the recovery of copra from coconuts increased from 20 pounds per 100 nuts to 31 pounds per 100 nuts. The increased production and better yield is probably due to good weather and to the drive made some eight years ago to increase coconut cultivation in this area. This drive has continued and has been intensified since lands were made available on the Kumaka-Quebanna Scheme.

During the year the cultivation was expanded by 70 acres. 5496 selected coconut seedlings were distributed by the Department of Agriculture between January and September. 901 seedlings were sold from September to December as it was decided that the issue of free coconut seedlings should be discontinued, as a bonus was being paid on coconut cultivation.

The yield of coffee was good, but low prices have discouraged farmers from increasing production.

FORESTS

Balata production was maintained at a normal level in the Rupununi District.

In the Mazaruni-Petaro District the total production of timber was 2,806,137 cubic feet with greenheart accounting for 2,441,577 cubic feet, as compared with 2,828,096 cubic feet and 2,544,346 cubic feet of greenheart in 1959. There was an appreciable drop in production by Messrs. B.G. Timbers Ltd., but this was largely offset by increased production by other operators. There was some increase in the production of species other than greenheart and this may be attributed to the unavailability of good greenheart stands within the economic reach of operators and also the action being taken by the Forest Department to popularise other species. Production figures for greenheart from the large concessions in respect of 1959 and 1960 were as follows:

	1959 c.ft.	1960 c.ft.
B.G. Timbers Ltd.	1,402,713	1,149,173
Willems Timber and Trading Co.	414,906	434,840
Charlestown Saw Mills	166,230	235,283.

The Columbian Corporation ceased activities at Tiger Creek early in September in respect of its proposals to manufacture wood pulp and at the end of the year there was no indication as to the future prospects of the undertaking.

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In the North West District, overall timber production for 1960 totalled 494,595 cubic feet as compared with 540,602 cubic feet in 1959. The main timbers produced were crabwood and mora. The production of mangrove bark totalled 70,000 pounds which was a marked increase over the production in former years. Dalli logs continued to be exported to Surinam, where they are used in the manufacture of plywood.

MINING

- General: The entire production of gold and diamonds for the Colony came from the Interior Districts. The total production from the three Districts was 101,003.92 carats of diamonds and 2,364 ozs. 08 dwts. 19 grs. of gold, as compared with 62,328.49 metric carats of diamonds and 3,448 ozs. 02 dwts. 18 grs. of gold in 1959.

Mazaruni- Potaro District (a) Gold. The total production for the year was 1052 ozs. 11 dwts. 20 grs. as compared with 2462 ozs. 18 dwts. 15 grs. in 1959. There is little hope of an increase of any consequence unless spectacular finds are discovered or the price of gold is increased. At Tumatumari, nearly all the effects of the B.G. Consolidated Goldfields were removed and the buildings and compound now have a derelict look.

(b) Diamonds: The Kurupung continued to be the main source of diamonds but recovery is now more difficult and many miners have gone to the new areas in the Eping and Ekereku. At Eping there have not as yet been any rich finds but in the Ekereku on the Cuyuni River, 6,500 metric carats valued at \$325,000 were declared. The total district production was 98,608.36 metric carats as compared with 27,140 in 1958 and 58,082.69 in 1959.

(c) Stone Quarrying: There was little change in the stone quarrying industry. Only the larger quarries were able to operate successfully. The Government Stone Crushing Plant at Makouria provided a ready avenue for the disposal of stone from many of the quarries which supplied a total of 24,659 tons of boulders.

Rupununi District (a) Diamonds: The recovery of diamonds was 2,384.26 metric carats as compared with 4,190.08 metric carats in 1959.

(b) Gold: The recovery of gold was 106 ozs. 12 dwts. 19 grs. as compared with 70 ozs. 4 dwts. 5 grs. in 1959.

North West District (a) Manganese: During July, shipments of manganese ore to Trinidad commenced from the North West Mining Company's Workings at Matthew's Ridge. The production rate was so favourable that it was hoped to be able to put a second ship on the run by 1961. There is no doubt that this is one of the most important mining ventures in recent times, and it is providing employment for several hundred people.

(b) Gold: The only gold mining of any importance was that of Mr. W. Baird in the Baramita area

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and his operations accounted for almost all of the total district production of 1,205 ozs. 04 dwts. 18 grs. as compared with 914 ozs. 09 dwts. 17 grs. in 1959.

(c) Diamonds: The recovery of diamonds was 11.3 metric carats as compared with 34.27 metric carats in 1959.

LABOUR

The labour force in the Interior continued to be engaged mainly on mining and forest activities. Relations between management and labour were generally harmonious.

HEALTH

Facilities were maintained for medical treatment at the Public Hospitals at Bartica and Mabaruma, each under the charge of Government Medical Officers. The Dispensaries at Mahdia, Enachu, Acquero, Lethem and Kamarang River Mouth were also maintained under the charge of Government Dispensers. The Dispensers at Mahdia, Enachu and Acquero made regular tours of these districts. The Mobile Health Unit in the North West District continued to do very useful work, although transport difficulties tended to curtail this useful service. Funds were provided in November for the purchase of a new boat but up to the end of the year construction had not yet started and a hired boat was used.

MAGISTERIAL AND POLICE

(a) Magisterial: The District Commissioners of the Mazaruni-Potaro, Rupununi and North West Districts continued to serve as Magistrates within their respective districts. Presiding over Courts at Lethem, Annai, Good Hope and Orinduik, the District Commissioner, Rupununi, disposed of 60 Criminal and 7 Civil Cases. The District Commissioner, Mazaruni-Potaro, presided over the quarterly sittings at Tumatumari, Mahdia, Issano, Enachu and Kurupung and disposed of 255 Criminal and 10 Civil Cases. The District Commissioner, North West, held monthly courts and disposed of 4 preliminary hearings, 242 Criminal and 18 Civil Cases.

Courts were held monthly at Bartica by the Magistrate from Suddie.

(b) Police: In the North West District, Police Stations were maintained at Mabaruma, Morawhanna and Arakaka. It is expected that the last named station will be removed to Manthew's Ridge early in 1961. The Commissioner of Police visited the District from 2nd to 5th November.

Rupununi: The Commissioner of Police visited Orinduik and toured the North and South Savannahs.

Mazaruni-Potaro: Police Stations were maintained at Bartica, Tumatumari, Mahdia, Issano, Enachu and Kurupung with outposts at Winiperu, Oranapai and Apaiqua. An outpost was established

at Two Mouth, Kurupung, and during December patrols were sent to Kamarang and Ekereku.

REVENUE

Revenue collected at the Offices of the District Commissioners and the Sub-Wardens at Mahdia, Enachu and Orinduik compared with 1959 figures, was as follows:

<u>District</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>
North West	\$ 25,918.14	\$ 27,635.80
Mazaruni-Potaro	112,895.50	96,624.35
Rupununi	10,491.06	12,670.51

PUBLIC WORKS

The Interior Department continued to assist by supervising and accounting for works undertaken by the Public Works Department in the Rupununi, North West and Upper Mazaruni Amerindian Districts. In the Mazaruni-Potaro District, the Public Works Department did not require this form of assistance.

(a) Buildings - In the Rupununi District the Public Works Department Overseer's Quarters, Lethem, the District Field Officers' quarters at Ishalton and Karasabai, the Public Works Department's Stores at Lethem, an office for the Agronomist at St. Ignatius and the Police Station at Annai were completed. The quarters for the Agricultural Officer and Senior Police Officer at Annai were partly completed.

In the Mazaruni-Potaro District, a fairly large programme of reconditioning of buildings was carried out and "minor works and improvements" included improvements to the school at Mazaruni Prison and the removal of the dispensary from Kamakusa to Kurupung. The removal of buildings from the Lands and Mines Station at Kamakusa to Enachu was also carried out.

In the North West District: Four new buildings for the Agricultural Staff at Hosororo and Acquero were completed and several buildings reconditioned.

(b) Roads: In the Rupununi District, general maintenance was done on roads throughout the district. Work on the Saurab Creek crossing was held up pending the receipt of a D6 Tractor.

In the Mazaruni-Potaro District, development work on the Bartica-Potaro Road was continued. By the end of the year the first twelve miles had been widened, shaped and sections of it provisionally sealed with a light coating of sand and colas. A further six miles approximately have been cleared and shaped. Portions of the work are now being given out on contract. General maintenance along this road and the Issano Branch Road kept the roads at a good standard and a quicker rate of progress by vehicles is now possible.

In the North West District, the Hosororo Swamp section was thoroughly resurfaced and sealed

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as were hill sections in the Mabaruma Area also.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications to the Mazaruni-Potaro District included a thrice weekly Steamer Service between Georgetown and Bartica for passengers and cargo, a thrice weekly Air Service between Bartica and Georgetown for passengers and a thrice weekly air service between Georgetown and Tumareng for passengers. Weekly lorry services provided a link for passengers and cargo between Bartica, Potaro and Issano, Mazaruni. From Issano a contractor continued to operate a launch service connecting with the mining centres on the Mazaruni River.

In the Rupununi District, which is entirely dependent on air communications, B.G. Airways (Govt.) maintained scheduled flights by passenger and cargo carrying planes throughout the year.

In the North West District a weekly Steamer Service continued to be provided by the Transport and Harbours Department. Privately owned sloops also made frequent journeys transporting stores and sawn lumber. As from June, the monthly plane service was discontinued through lack of support. Frequent charter flights from Georgetown were made to Sebai at the instance of the North West Mining Company.

In the Upper Mazaruni Amerindian District, which is entirely dependent on air communications, the first Dakota landing was made on the newly constructed all weather airstrip at Kamarang River Mouth on 7th February. Altogether 159 Dakota landings were made carrying 788,947 pounds of cargo and many passengers from 10th February to the end of the year. Hundreds of flights were made from this airstrip by the B.G. Airways (Govt.) Grumman plane and privately owned light planes transporting stores and men to the diamond area in the Ekereku, Cuyuni River. The development of this newly discovered diamond field was greatly facilitated by the completion of the Kamarang Airstrip.

POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mazaruni - Potaro - In December, an additional radio-communication channel to Georgetown was added to the single one in existence since the opening of the Automatic Telephone Exchange at Bartica. The single channel was frequently cut of order and was unable at certain times of the day to cope with trunk calls. The additional channel was a welcome improvement.

Postal, radiophone and telegraphic services were maintained at Bartica, Mahdai and Enachu.

Rupununi - Radio communications were maintained at Lethem and at Orinduik. Radio transmitter-receivers with power plants were received for Ishalton and Karasabai and were ready for installation at the end of the year. Details of business conducted at Lethem and at the largest agency, Annai are

	<u>Postal Business</u>		<u>Savings Bank</u>	
	<u>1960</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1959</u>
Annai \$	5,031.24	5,411.32	\$ 847.00	1,295.76
Lethem	207,483.29	189,063.72	8,400.36	11,282.32

North West District - Postal, telegraphic and radio-telephone services were provided at Mabaruma. Postal agencies were operated at Morawhanna, Arakaka, Port Kaituma, Matthews' Ridge and on the Mobile Health Unit.

Radio-telephone communications was available from the District Offices at Kamarang and Acquero and during the year this was extended to Orealla.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Regional Development Committees and their sub-committees met regularly during the year in the Rupununi, Mazaruni-Potaro and North West Districts.

MISSIONS AND EDUCATION

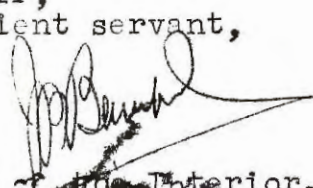
North West District - There were 27 schools in the district, all being run by the Anglican and Roman Catholic bodies. The general standard of education remained low, chiefly due to the lack of suitably qualified teachers who can be obtained only from outside the District. Only a few qualified teachers are willing to go to the District because of the unsatisfactory living conditions obtaining.

Rupununi District - With the exception of the Government School at St. Ignatius all the schools are run by the Missions. In general, the standard of education showed some improvement.

Upper Mazaruni Amerindian District - There were four schools run by the Missions and one Government School at Kamarang Station.

I should like to record my thanks to the entire Staff for their loyal co-operation throughout the year.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,


Commissioner of the Interior.

The Honourable
Chief Secretary,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.