

A N N U A L R E P O R T

O F T H E

D I R E C T O R O F L A N D
D E V E L O P M E N T

F O R T H E Y E A R

1961.

C O N T E N T S

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MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES,

Vlissengen Road,

Georgetown,

30th March, 1962.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Department of Land Settlement established in July, 1954 and redesignated Land Development Department with effect from 1st January, 1959, was integrated with the Ministry of Natural Resources on 1st April, 1961.

Functions

2.1 This Division of the Ministry is responsible for the operation of various land development schemes, for advice as to suitable areas for development and occupation by selected farmers and for the co-ordination of proposals for such development in close consultation with the Departments of Agriculture and Drainage and Irrigation regarding the suitability and utilisation of the areas for the economic production of crops, size of holdings and such drainage and irrigation works as are required to be undertaken.

2.2 An important aim is to make more cultivable land available to small farmers and to encourage the production of suitable crops in order to increase the total production per head of the population. Certain major land reclamation and water control schemes in progress in Essequibo, Berbice and West Demerara, are intended to meet the need for more land, but it is also hoped to obtain quick results by improving and bringing into use a number of areas of Crown Land which are not being beneficially occupied in the rear of existing schemes and suitable land on the river banks.

STAFF

3.1 At 31st December, the staff of the Section, including the administrative staff of the various schemes, was as follows:-

| | |
|---|--|
| Principal Assistant Secretary | - Mr. A.D. Thompson. |
| Senior Superintendent, Land Settlement Schemes | - Mr. J.E. Mc Watt. |
| Mechanical Engineer | - |
| Assistant Secretary | - Mr. F.O. Emery (Ag.) |
| Senior Clerk | - Mr. S.N. Sharma |
| 7 Superintendents, Land Settlement Schemes | - Mr. D.A. Pile. - Mr. R.E. Chapman. - Mr. J.I. Brodie - Mr. N.G. Ouckama - Mr. C.A. Persaud - Mr. T.I. Douglas - Mr. J.R. Browman |

5 Assistant Superintendents,
Land Settlement Schemes

- Mr. J.A. Brassington
(Ag. Mechanical Engineer)
- Mr. L.P. Alleyne
- Mr. J.P. Cheong
- Mr. J. Ramphal
- Mr. W.O. Barnwell

3.2. Mr. F.O. Emery, Accountant, proceeded to the United Kingdom in 1960 to attend the 1960/1961 Overseas Services Course "B" at London University.

4. The Schemes under the control of the Section at 31st December, 1961 are scattered over the coastlands of the Colony. Superintendents are stationed on the following schemes:-

- Anna Regina, Essequibo Coast.
- Vergenoegen, East Bank, Essequibo
- Mara, East Bank, Berbice
- Black Bush Polder, Corentyne, Berbice
- Wauna-Yarakita, North West District.

The Charity/Amazon Scheme on the right bank of the Pomeroon River operated directly under a Supervisor who is responsible to the Superintendent in charge of the Scheme at Anna Regina.

5. These officers are responsible for the administration of the schemes and for the execution of maintenance and development works, expenditure and collection of revenue. The schemes are provided with the necessary staff for normal operation.

6. Technical advice on drainage and irrigation, agriculture, housing and public health procedures on all schemes is obtained from the appropriate Government Departments with which there is close collaboration.

7. Settlers Advisory Committees have been formed on schemes, Anna Regina Vergenoegen, Mara and Government Estates, to discuss the problems of the settlers, to promote good public relations and to serve as liaison between the officers in charge of the schemes and the settlers.

LAND DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

8. The Land Development Division at the end of 1961 controlled the following schemes -

| <u>Existing Schemes</u> | <u>Acreages</u> |
|--|-----------------|
| Anna Regina, Essequibo Coast | 4,918 |
| Vergenoegen, East Bank Essequibo | 3,595 |
| Government Estates, West Demerara (Windsor Forest, La Jalousie and Hague) | 3,846 |
| Charity/Amazon, Pomeroon River | <u>170.5</u> |

| <u>New Schemes</u> | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Onverwagt, West Coast, Berbice | 6,000 |
| Mara, East Bank, Berbice | 3,870 (approx.) |
| Garden of Eden, East Bank, Demerara | 1,200 |

Black Bush Polder, Corentyne, Berbice

27,000 (approx.)

Wauna - Yarikata, North West District

Anna Regina Land Development Scheme

9.1 This Scheme, situated on the Essequibo Coast about 12 miles from the steamer terminus at Adventure, comprised Plantations Reliance, Bush Lot, Henrietta, Richmond, La Belle Alliance and Lima. The commencement of the Tapakuma Project on the Essequibo Coast during 1961 resulted in the lands in the third depths of the estates comprising this scheme being incorporated in that Project and this reduced the acreage of the scheme from 9,541 acres at 31st December, 1960 to 4,918 acres at 31st December, 1961. The area is fully developed. The acreages allocated for agriculture and other purposes are as detailed in Appendix 1.

9.2 There are about eight hundred families on this scheme whose economy is based mainly on rice cultivation.

9.3 The tenants hold plots varying in size from 2 to 10 acres, but in keeping with the recommendations of Mr. F.A. Brown, steps were taken where possible to consolidate holdings to provide plots of not less than 10 acres in size. Most of the plots are utilized for rice cultivation. Cultivation plots are to be leased for a period of 25 years with a right of renewal for successive further periods of similar duration.

Agriculture

10.1 Throughout the year the supply of irrigation water was reasonable, measures to conserve water being employed to combat any serious problems of shortage encountered. The Spring and Autumn crops gave a total yield of 72,233 bags of paddy, of which 4,041 bags were Pure Line Seed Paddy produced for the Department of Agriculture. The British Guiana Rice Development Company Ltd continued to operate its modern multi-stage rice mill at Anna Regina and to purchase the farmers' paddy. Additional storage facilities and a new Dryer are in process of erection.

10.2 The following acreages were cultivated with paddy during 1961 as compared with 1960:-

| | 1960 | | 1961 | |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | <u>Acreage</u> | <u>Yield</u> | <u>Acreage</u> | <u>Yield</u> |
| Spring Crop | 945 | 9,045 | 1,350 | 12,150 |
| Autumn Crop | 3,940 | 80,397 | 4,411 | 60,083 |

11. Dairy Farming - An area of 152 acres was available for dairy farming in the first depths of Plantations Reliance, Anna Regina and Lima. A total of 525 animals was agisted during the year.

Pure Water Supply

12. Artesian well water is supplied to the ~~lowing~~ areas at Anna Regina and Reliance. The cost of maintenance was shared between the Public Works Department and the Land Development Division of the Ministry.

13.1 Thirteen houses were completed by settlers during 1961 and eleven were under construction at the end of the year. House lots are rented but may be purchased outright by settlers.

Assistance to Settlers

14.1 Building of houses by aided self-help means is encouraged as well as the construction of concrete houses under the supervision of Officers of the Housing Department.

14.2 A number of settlers built houses on their own with loans from the British Guiana Credit Corporation.

14.3 The facilities of the workshop at Anna Regina were made available to settlers who own agricultural machinery and other equipment requiring repair and overhaul. The cost of such jobs which is borne by the settlers is determined on the basis of a charge which takes into account the cost of labour and materials plus 25% thereon.

Development and Expansion

15.1 Five hundred and forty acres of land were cleared and allocated for the cultivation of rice, opportunity being taken in the process to consolidate as many holdings as were possible.

15.2 Equipment of Workshop - Maintenance and repairs were carried out on the Scheme's Machinery and on that of other Government Departments.

General

During the year a Secondary School was established by Government at Anna Regina, and offices were established by the Labour Exchange Section of the Labour Department and the British Guiana Credit Corporation. A new automatic Telephone Exchange also commenced operation during the year.

Proposals are under consideration for the establishment of an Air Strip at Anna Regina.

Cane Grove/La Bonne Mere Land Development Scheme

16. The Cane Grove/La Bonne Mere Land Development Scheme which comprises the estates formerly known as Plantations Cane Grove and La Bonne Mere is situated on the left bank of the Mahaica River and is the most easterly of the Plantations which receive irrigation water from the East Demerara Water Conservancy.

17. On 11th June, 1948, by Resolution, the Legislative Council approved of the establishment of a Land Development Scheme on these estates and also of the estimated expenditure to be met from the Development Trust Fund and the general revenue of the Colony for reconditioning the drainage and irrigation system and laying out the estates for land development purposes.

18. Plantation Cane Grove was purchased by Government for the sum of \$100,000 when the proprietors decided to abandon the estate as a sugar plantation. Plantation La Bonne Mere which was a rice and coconut estate was purchased for the sum of \$60,000,00.

19. The entire settlement embraces an area of 7,233 acres.

20. The lands have been allocated to 485 families whose economy is based mainly on rice cultivation, subsistence crops and dairy farming.

21. The settlers hold plots varying in size from 3 to 15 acres but, in keeping with the recommendations of Mr. F.A. Brown, steps were taken where possible to consolidate holdings to provide plots of not less than 10 acres in size. House lots are rented but may be purchased outright by settlers. Cultivation plots are to be leased for a period of 25 years with a right of renewal for successive further periods of similar duration.

22. On instructions issued by the Minister of Natural Resources on the 20th May, 1960, the Department moved out of Cane Grove Land Settlement on the 30th June, 1960.

23. The Drainage and Irrigation Department assumed control of Drainage and Irrigation Works and the Department of Agriculture the control of the coconut cultivation, dairy farms and pastures.

24. The Ad Hoc Working Party moved into Cane Grove to supervise the completion of surveys and issue of titles to the occupiers of plots. The area was declared a Local Authority, under the Local Government Ordinance Chapter 150, but would not be able to function as such until the titles have been issued.

25. This Division is still responsible for the collection of Revenue as the issue of leases had not reached finality at the end of the year under review.

Vergenoegen Land Development Scheme

26.1 The land Development Scheme at Vergenoegen was acquired in February, 1946, and comprises four estates, namely Vergenoegen, Philadelphia, Greenwich Park and Barnwell, with a total area of 3,595 acres. The acreages allocated for agriculture and other purposes are detailed in Appendix I.

26.2 There are 182 families on this scheme whose economy is based mainly on rice cultivation, subsistence crops, and dairy farming.

26.3 The tenants hold plots varying in size from 3 to 15 acres but in keeping with the recommendations of Mr. F.A. Brown steps have been taken where possible to consolidate holdings to provide the majority of settlers with plots of about 20 acres in size. To assist in achieving this, the communal pasture comprising 1,334 acres of crown land in the rear of the scheme was allocated to settlers for cultivation.

House lots of about 1/5 acre in size are rented to settlers who are encouraged to rear poultry and to cultivate garden crops. These may be purchased outright by settlers. Cultivation plots are to be leased for a period of 25 years with a right of renewal for successive further periods of similar duration.

26.4 During 1959 a Rice Mill operated by the Scheme was sold to settlers who formed themselves into a Co-operative Society known as Vergenoegen Rice Mill Co-operative Society Limited. This Mill is being successfully operated by the settlers.

Agriculture

27.1 Rice - A large portion of the area under rice cultivation continued to produce poor yields and the Autumn crop was further hampered by an attack of disease. The areas affected were inspected by technical officers of the Department of Agriculture and soil samples along with specimens were tested. The Plant Pathologist recommended extensive use of fertilizers and treated seed to safeguard future crops from pests and disease.

27.2 The following acreages were cultivated with paddy during 1961 as compared with 1960:

| | <u>1960</u> | | <u>1961</u> | |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| | <u>Acreage</u> | <u>Yield Bags</u> | <u>Acreage</u> | <u>Yield Bags</u> |
| Spring Crop | 1,152 | 12,278 | 1,043 | 6,136 |
| Autumn Crop | 1,593 | 16,177 | 1,896 | 17,848 |

28. Dairy Farming - Four and six stall communal byres for a dairy herd of 115 animals are maintained on the scheme, and complementary to these are fodder plots and exercise paddocks of one-third of an acre each.

29. Provision Farming - A total of 223 acres is allocated for provision farming.

30. Milk - The collection of farmers' milk which was being carried out by the Scheme was discontinued and the responsibility for the collection and disposal was placed on the farmers who have been carrying out these new responsibilities most satisfactorily.

31. Pure Water Supply - Artesian well water is supplied to the housing areas on the Scheme.

Drainage and Irrigation

32. Reconditioning works were carried out on all drainage and irrigation trenches, dams and reserves, and several new boxes were put down to improve the control of water. Repairs were carried out to the drainage sluices at Barnwell, Philadelphia and Vergenoegen.

Assistance to Settlers

33.1 Housing - Towards the end of 1950 Government embarked on a rural housing scheme to assist settlers to build their own houses. Under this scheme houses were provided at an estimated cost of \$1,500: each. The settler was required to deposit one-sixth of this amount and he would then obtain a grant of one-third and be provided with a loan of the remaining half of the estimated cost of the houses. These loans were repayable within a period of twenty years at 5½% interest. Settlers erected 89 houses under this scheme which was suspended at the end of 1953.

33.2 Settlers were later encouraged to build houses by aided self-help means, and eighteen such houses in process of erection by settlers under the supervision of the Housing Department in 1957 were completed by the end of 1959.

Transfer of Settlement

34. During the year under review it was decided that the Land Development Division should relinquish administrative control of the scheme at the end of the year. This was put into effect and arrangements were made for the Drainage and Irrigation Department to assume control of the drainage and irrigation works and the Agriculture Department of the agricultural activities on the scheme. The Local Government Department is actively engaged in the formation of a Local Authority which when established would assume administrative responsibility for the area. The Local Authority cannot, however, be established until all the titles have been issued to settlers who are in occupation of the land,

and the Ad Hoc Working Party attached to the Lands and Mines Department will move into the scheme early in the new year to investigate the occupation by settlers, preparation of plans, and the issue of titles. Pending the formation of the local authority, this Division is responsible for the collection of Revenue.

Government Estates, West Demerara.

35.1 Plantations Windsor Forest, La Jalousie and Ligue, formerly sugar estates, were acquired by Government at Execution Sales during the period 1910 - 1912. The original proprietors were unable to pay the sea defence rates levied in those days and consequently the properties were sold to recover the outstanding amounts.

35.2 Government decided that the estates should be utilised to provide a means of livelihood for the people who became displaced through the closing down of a number of sugar estates.

35.3 The estates have a gross acreage of 3,846 acres and the acreages allocated for agriculture and other purposes are shown in Appendix I.

35.4 There are 450 families on this settlement whose economy is based on rice cultivation, subsistence crops, cane cultivation and dairy farming.

35.5 The tenants hold plots varying in size from 2 to 10 acres and where possible settlers are being encouraged to consolidate their holdings to provide plots of not less than 10 acres. Some of these holdings were leased to the people in 1915 for a term of 99 years at a fixed rental of \$6.00 an acre per annum, with right of renewal for a similar period but with no provision for revision of rental or payment of maintenance charges. A number of agricultural lots have also been leased for a period of 21 years at a rental of \$6.00 per acre per annum with the right of renewal and as any of the existing leases expire new leases are issued for a period of 21 years at a rental of \$15.00 per acre per annum.

Agriculture

36.1 Rice - This forms the main crop grown by the settlers and generally two crops are cultivated each year. A campaign against bad cultivation practices inimical to soil conservation was initiated in 1957 and the results have been encouraging. Many of the farmers were convinced that the loss of top soil from their rice lands was inimical to their interests and therefore readily adopted the practices which ensured better management of the land.

36.2 The following acreages were cultivated with paddy during 1961 as compared with 1960.

| | <u>1960</u> | | <u>1961</u> | |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| | <u>Acreage</u> | <u>Yield</u> <u>Bags</u> | <u>Acreage</u> | <u>Yield</u> <u>Bags</u> |
| Spring Crop | 2,105 | 30,628 | 2,077 | 19,830 |
| Autumn Crop | 2,105 | 39,995 | 2,095 | 37,401 |

37. Provision Farming - The provision farms totalling 353 acres were generally maintained in fair condition.

38. Cane - Seventy-four acres were under cane cultivation and the crop reaped totalled 1,135 tons of cane, as compared with 1,480 tons reaped during the previous year. The cane is sold by the cultivators to Plantation Versailles, West Bank, Demerara.

39. Dairy Farming - A communal byre is maintained at Windsor Forest and the Artificial Insemination Service continued to operate satisfactorily.

40. Milk - 1,881 gallons of milk were produced of which 1,380 gallons were sold to the Milk Pasteurisation Plant operated by the Marketing Department.

41. Pasturage - At Windsor Forest and La Jalousie the settlers own over 1,500 head of cattle. The maximum area available for grazing is approximately 470 acres, part of which is poor land. At Hague the area available for grazing is 186 acres. Of this amount approximately 24 acres were cleared of bush by machinery.

42. Pure Water Supply - Artesian well water is supplied to all Housing areas.

43. Housing - Hague Back Settlement. Permission to build new and repair existing houses was granted to the settlers at Hague Back in September, 1958. Several houses were built in 1959.

44. Transfer of Settlement - During the year under review it was decided that the Land Development Division should relinquish administrative control of the Scheme at the end of the year. With effect from January 1962, the Drainage and Irrigation Department will assume control of the drainage and irrigation works. The Local Government Department is pursuing the question of the formation of a local authority which should assume administrative responsibility for the area. The Land Development Division will however continue the collection of revenue until the administrative machinery for the area is worked out.

Charity/Amazon Scheme

45. A plot of land comprising 170.5 acres on the right bank of the Pomeroon River, known as Charity/Amazon was declared a Scheme in 1944. It is capable of useful expansion as a residential and commercial centre being the entrepot for the Pomeroon River District. The area was originally laid out into 35 agricultural lots and 140 house lots which are being rented under temporary agreements pending the issue of leases. It was decided that Charity/Amazon should be planned as a township to serve the Pomeroon River District and the northern end of the Essequibo Coast and a new layout has been designed for the area by the Central Housing and Planning Authority.

46. Pure Water Supply - Artesian well water is supplied to scheme.

47.1 During 1955 the Board of Directors of the British Guiana Rice Development Company, Limited, decided to exclude from the Company's operations the whole of the area known as Plantation (Onverwagt No. 27) on the West Coast of Berbice, comprising about 6,000 acres, which under an agreement with Government concluded in 1952, had been acquired by the Company for the purpose of expanding the area under direct mechanised cultivation by the Company.

47.2 A part of this area had been cultivated during the three years prior to 1955 but the Company decided that the area previously utilised for mechanised cultivation was adequate for the attainment of its objective, and Onverwagt was accordingly handed over to the Land Development Division for use as a land development scheme. A scheme has been prepared for the layout of some 720 acres into homesteads of approximately 5 acres each to accommodate 144 families, each of whom will, in addition to a homestead plot, be allocated a rice plot of about 10 acres.

47.3 Details of the final arrangements for formally handing over the property to Government have not yet been concluded.

47.4 The whole area is suitable for the cultivation of rice and plots are allocated on temporary tenancy to selected farmers on a risk basis.

47.5 The acreages allocated for agriculture and other purposes are as detailed in Appendix I.

Agriculture

48. Rice - The following acreages were cultivated with paddy during 1961 as compared with 1960:

| | <u>1960</u> | | <u>1961</u> | |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| | <u>Acreage</u> | <u>Yield Bags</u> | <u>Acreage</u> | <u>Yield Bags</u> |
| Spring Crop | - | - | - | - |
| Autumn Crop | 5,200 | 40,670 | 5,094 | 59,736 |

49. Development and Expansion - Final plans for the full utilisation and occupation of the entire area depend upon the conclusion of arrangements, financial and otherwise, for acquisition by Government of title to the land and upon approval of proposals submitted for comprehensive drainage and irrigation of the area.

Marra Land Development Scheme

50.1 Location and background - This settlement is situated on the East Bank of the Berbice River about 25 miles at the end of the road from New Amsterdam. It comprises the estates of Marra, Germania, Vryberg, Schepmoed, L'Enterprise and La Retraite totalling approximately 3,870 acres and was selected in 1955 with a view to its acquisition by Government for land settlement purposes in keeping with the recommendations of the International Bank Mission and Mr. F.A. Brown regarding development of riverain lands.

50.2 Negotiations for its acquisition were concluded by the end of 1955 and a preliminary land survey was commenced during 1956 to determine acreage, etc., on which the agreed purchase price at \$50.00 per acre should be paid.

50.3 The report of the preliminary inspection of the estates disclosed that the dams and trenches, although in a fair state of preservation, were impassable and that the whole area was overgrown with bush of varying density, the majority being heavy bush. The land is high and lends itself to easy drainage. The soil varies from a sand-clay to a clay-pegasse mixture and is fertile. It is considered that the area is suitable for the cultivation of rice, coconuts (which was cultivated on this land by the early settlers) citrus leguminous fodder and grasses, and for the development of mixed farming on proper lines. Early records show that coffee was formerly grown on these estates.

51.1 Objective - The objective at Mara, as it will be in the case of future land development schemes, is not merely to bring more land under cultivation but to develop a contented farming community deriving full occupation and an improved and reasonable standard of living from the land, thus contributing towards the relief of unemployment and underemployment

51.2 In order to achieve this objective, it was decided that the allocation of lands to settlers should be as follows:-

- (a) where the main crop is rice each settler should be allocated 15 acres of rice land, plus a 2½ acre homestead upon which he will build his house, keep one or two cows, cultivate permanent and vegetable crops (other than rice) and raise poultry; and
- (b) farmsteads of 15 acres on which the settler will build his house, grow no rice, but cultivate vegetable and permanent crops, e.g. citrus, cocoa, and keep poultry and a limited number of dairy cattle depending upon the availability of a market for dairy products.

52.1 Development - On account of an acute underemployment situation existing on the lower Coentynne Coast which it was imperative to relieve as quickly as possible, Government decided late in December, 1956, to proceed with the reconditioning and development of these sections of Mara which could be more rapidly rehabilitated and put under cultivation by settlers.

52.2 Land clearing and excavating machinery, as well as aluminium buildings to serve as temporary quarters, were ordered, and work on reconditioning the drainage and irrigation system and clearing of land commenced early in January, 1957.

52.3 During the first half of 1957 it was not found possible to clear and level enough land to permit of holdings of the acreages referred to in paragraph 51.2 (a) being allocated to 46 prospective settlers selected in January, but in order to assist them in cultivating an Autumn rice crop, the area already cleared totalling 212 acres in the Mara section was allocated on a temporary basis in 5 acre plots at a nominal rental of \$5.00 per acre from which an average yield of 15.5 bags of paddy per acre was obtained.

52.4 During the latter part of 1957 additional machinery and equipment were obtained on hire from other Land Development Schemes to expedite the work of rehabilitation and development, and altogether by the end of the year approximately 750 acres throughout the North and South sections of Mara, Germanis, Vryberg and a part of South Schepmoed were cleared, 13 bridges and 11 kokers were built, 48.25 miles of dams cleared and reconditioned, including the main empolder dam in the rear of Plantation Mara, cum annexis, and 41.75 miles of drainage and irrigation trenches reconditioned and dug. In addition, an area near the public road and in the centre of the frontage of the property was cleared and levelled, and a workshop, office and quarters for staff were in course of construction.

52. 5 During 1958, an additional twelve families were placed on the land, making a total of fifty-eight. These were allocated at Mara approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ acre homesteads, and approximately $14\frac{1}{2}$ to 15 acre rice plots. The forty-six settlers selected in 1957 completed the erection of their houses during 1958, while some of the remaining twelve settlers completed theirs during 1959.

52. 6 For the 1958 Autumn crop 409.25 acres of rice were cultivated, but due to the occurrence of the disease known as "Blast" the yields were very low. Some farmers lost as much as 80% of their crop. Because of this, clearing of lands reserved for rice was suspended until such time as a method of successfully combating the disease was discovered. By the end of 1958 an area of 892 acres was cleared and made available for rice and 161 acres for permanent crops.

52. 7 Although the spread of the disease "Blast" was arrested by spraying the 1959 rice crop with "Verdesan", it was decided that the utilisation originally proposed for the land described in paragraph 51.2 should be changed. In consultation with the Department of Agriculture, the final layout proposed is as follows:-

- (a) 1365 acres divided into holdings of approximately 15 acres each for rice cultivation;
- (b) 215 acres divided into holdings of approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres each for homesteads on which rice farmers allocated holdings as at (a) above will live, cultivate food crops and rear a limited number of livestock;
- (c) 1025 acres divided into holdings of approximately 15 acres each on which farmers will live, cultivate citrus, cocoa and food crops and keep a few milch cows;
- (d) 717 acres divided into holdings of approximately 12 acres each for cocoa cultivation;
- (e) 144 acres divided into holdings of approximately 3 acres each on which farmers allocated holdings as at (d) above will live, cultivate food crops and rear a limited number of livestock.

52. 8 At the end of 1960, 1495 acres of Rice Cultivation and Homestead Plots in keeping with (A) and (B) and 529 acres of farmsteads in keeping with (c) of paragraph 52.7 above were allocated. The survey and subdivision of the area (Farmsteads) for cocoa cultivation and the layout of the corresponding homesteads were completed.

52. 9 Early in 1961 applications were invited for the cocoa plots from interested persons, but the allocation of plots was held up pending the completion of a surveyor's plan for the area. Eleven new settlers were allocated rice land homestead plots which were surrendered by settlers. The farmsteaders continued clearing bush and cultivating their farmsteads, forty-five acres being put under citrus cultivation using plants supplied by the Agriculture Department. Loans under a Supervised Agricultural Credit Scheme operated by the British Guiana Credit Corporation with the assistance of the Agriculture Department were made available to farmsteaders during the year.

53. 1 Other Services - An artesian well has been sunk at Schepmoed for the supply of pure water to the farmstead and administrative compound. An overhead tank (capacity 19,000 gallons) for the distribution of potable water was installed during 1958, while installation of pumps was completed in 1959.

All the occupied areas in the Scheme have been provided with supply pipes.

53. 2 Limited electricity for administrative buildings, bonds and workshop is provided by means of an electric lighting plant. An additional plant was purchased during 1958 for emergency purposes.

53. 3 Workshop - The workshop handled most of the repairs necessary to keep agricultural machinery in the field.

54. General - Proposals are under consideration for acquiring and developing adjacent lands totalling approximately 282 acres, subject to the availability of funds, in order to extend the scheme.

Garden of Eden Land Development Scheme

55. The Garden of Eden Land Development Scheme is situated on the East Bank of the Demerara River about fourteen miles from Georgetown and embraces an area of about 1,200 acres.

56. The abandoned estate was acquired by Government during 1955 at a cost of \$75,000; in keeping with general recommendations made in 1953 by the International Bank Mission and Mr. F.A. Brown, Land Settlement Adviser, regarding the development of riverain lands of the Colony. Mr. Brown had further recommended that a pilot land settlement scheme should be launched on the lower reaches of one of the main rivers of the colony.

57. The land which is composed of soil types - clay, shallow pegasse, deep pegasse and burnt pegasse - is regarded as being representative of other riverain alluvial soils and, with the installation of proper drainage, suitable for pasture, forage crops, citrus, cocoa, ground provisions and most local crops.

58. Comprehensive proposals for the development of the area, costing altogether \$720,000 were accordingly prepared in consultation with the Departments of Agriculture and Drainage and Irrigation. These included proposals for drainage and irrigation, layout and utilisation and occupation of the land.

59. Work on the development of the area was commenced in 1956 when preliminary clearing of the land and preliminary drainage and irrigation works were carried out. It was anticipated that by the end of that year the main drainage and irrigation works would have been completed and that the front portion of the area which was planned to accommodate mixed, cocoa, citrus and special small farms as well as a community centre, would have been occupied. However, while the main drainage and irrigation works were virtually completed by the end of the year, it was not found possible to proceed with other development works for the reason that during the excavations, deep pegasse was discovered along the line of one of the proposed roads which made its construction impracticable from the point of view of cost. In the light of this situation, it became necessary to re-examine the proposals for the layout of the area which originally provided for the settlement of 47 families. New proposals approved provide for the settlement of 76 families as follows:-

53 citrus and mixed farming plots of approximately 7.5 acres each.

23 Dairy-farm plots of approximately 25 acres each.

/One plot

One plot has been allocated to the Department of Agriculture (for experimental purposes) and another to the Director of Education for the erection of a school.

60. On instruction issued by the Minister of Natural Resources for the Division to move out of Garden of Eden by 30th June, 1960, a resident Superintendent and staff were removed from the Scheme which was administered by an officer stationed at Headquarters in Georgetown.

61. During 1961 settlers continued clearing and cultivating their holdings, 137 acres being cleared and 81 acres planted. Settlers received assistance under the Supervised Agricultural Credit Scheme operated by the British Guiana Credit Corporation with the assistance of the Agriculture Department. Settlers surfaced the scheme's two main roads with burnt earth by self-help means.

Black Bush Polder Land Development Scheme

62. Details of the planning and execution of the engineering works of this scheme appear in the Drainage and Irrigation Section of the 1959 Annual Report, British Guiana. The Scheme provides for the allocation to each selected settler of a 2½ acre homestead plot on which the settler will live and produce food crops other than rice and a rice plot of approximately 15 acres.

63. In October, 1959, the then Director of Land Development was informed that his Department would not have administrative control of the area and that he would only be responsible for the supervision of the clearing of bush by Contract, the selection of settlers and allocation of the lands. In view of the fact that the Works at Lesbeholden were being completed by the Contractors ahead of schedule tenders were invited on the 14th November, 1959, for the clearing of bush in the South half of Lesbeholden.

64. Consideration of the land clearing tenders continued and on the 8th March, 1960, Government decided that the Land Development Department should proceed with the clearing of bush in the South half of the Lesbeholden Section of the Polder, utilising departmental machinery. Operations started on the 21st March, 1960, and at 31st May, 1960, 159 holdings were available for allocation and cultivation. On 5th April, 1960, the Department was given general administrative control of the entire Scheme until such time as a Local Authority can be established. Because of the good progress made by the Department in clearing the Southern portion of Lesbeholden the Government decided that the Department should clear the Northern portion instead of giving this work out to contractors as was planned originally.

65. Meanwhile the Minister of Natural Resources had made an announcement on 26th December, 1959, in the Press inviting Colony wide applications from land hungry, unemployed and underemployed persons for land within the Lesbeholden Section of the Polder. By 30th January, 1960, the closing date for the receipt of applications, the Director of Land Development had received 3,290 applications. Selection of Settlers commenced in February, 1960, by a Committee appointed by the Minister of Natural Resources under the Chairmanship of the Director of Land Development. By the 31st May, 1960, 159 selected settlers were allocated homestead and rice plots in Lesbeholden. Four settlers later surrendered their holdings. As soon as the settlers were placed in possession of their holdings they planted 75,000 bags of paddy were harvested. A further allocation of homestead and rice plots to 63 selected settlers was made in December, 1960, bringing the total allocation of homesteads and rice plots to 218 in Lesbeholden at 31st, December, 1960.

66. It should be mentioned, that in the light of experience gained it has been found necessary to investigate each application in detail before the applicant is interviewed by the Selection Committee which in turn makes recommendations to the Minister. The work of investigation is carried out by the Department.

67. Under the guidance of the Department for Co-operative Development settlers have formed Co-operative Societies to provide for financial assistance in the cultivation, transportation, storage and milling of paddy, operation of a shop, a station for the sale of fuel and lubricants and the acquisition, operation and servicing of agricultural machinery.

68. In the Community Zone area of Lesbeholden sites have been reserved for Local Government services, including Social Welfare and recreation ground. Sites have also been reserved for Churches and services to be provided by the Health, Police Public Works, Drainage and Irrigation, Co-operative, Education Post and Telecommunications and Agriculture Departments as well as for the various activities being undertaken by the Co-operative Societies. The plan of the layout of the Community Zone has been prepared by the Planning Officer, Housing Department in consultation with the Land Development and other Departments concerned. Similar action has been taken in respect of the Community Zones in the other three sections of the Polder.

69. In addition and outside of the Community Zone in Lesbeholden a site has been allocated to the Co-operative Society for a paddy storage bond and rice mill and another site to the Agriculture Department where a pure line seed paddy bond has been constructed.

70. A one man Police Post and a Pound for the detention of stray cattle have been established in the Lesbeholden Community Zone. The Department's headquarters have been established on the public road at Tarlogie, i.e. outside of the Polder and near the centre of the front of it.

NOTE. A colonial Development and Welfare Grant of \$304,689.60 for the development of the Lesbeholden Section of Black Bush Polder was approved under Scheme D 4228 on the 16th May, 1960, on the basis of 90% Colonial Development and Welfare assistance and 10% other sources.

72. On the 15th November, 1960, a Colonial Development and Welfare Grant of \$885,360 for the development of the remaining three sections was approved under Scheme D 4533 on the basis of 85% Colonial Development Welfare Assistance and 15% other sources.

73. During the year under review three Rice Mills were in process of construction in the Polder. The clearing of 2300 acres of bush was completed leaving 1380 acres to be cleared. The allocation of homesteads and rice plots to 915 new settlers was completed in April. This brings the total number of settlers to 133. Padi was cultivated on 17,874 acres. The Co-operative Societies experienced great difficulties in harvesting the autumn crop but with assistance given by the land Division of the Ministry a total of 139,359 bags of padi were reaped. The Department of Agriculture cultivated approximately 400 acres of pure line seed padi, which will be distributed to farmers. Several settlers have begun to cultivate their homestead plots and erect their houses. Permanent houses in the Polder now total 167 and there are 60 temporary houses in use. The digging of drains in the Community Zones at Lesbeholden and Mibikuri was completed while similar works in Joanna and Yakusari were almost completed at the end of the year. 621 rods of roadways were sheeted with brown sand and metalled in the Community Zones at Mibikuri, Joanna and Yakusari. At the end of the year the Government

School at Lesbeholden was almost completed while those at Mibikuri, Joanna and Yakusari were in course of erection. A deep artesian well was sunk, an overhead tank erected and pipe lines laid around the Zone at Lesbeholden. Shallow wells were sunk at Mibikuri, Joanna and Yakusari. Quarters have been erected for a Nurse-Midwife at Lesbeholden. Two new D-7 Caterpillar tractors with K.G. Rome Equipment were purchased during the year for clearing land bringing the number of tractors on the Scheme to 12 (2 D-7, 7 D-6 and 3 D-4). A Pound is operated in the Polder, at Lesbeholden and 4143 animals were impounded during the year. A new Redifon Receiving and Transmitting set was purchased and installed during the year.

Wauna-Yarekita Land Development Scheme - (North West District)
Background

74. In the North West District of British Guiana there lies an area of approximately 46,000 acres consisting largely of low sand-hills and lateritic formations capping a range of hills, and intersected by numerous small streams. In the West approaching the Amakura River, there is a wide belt of pegasse swamp and there are numerous other areas of pegasse swamp scattered over a wide area along the main rivers and streams. The sand-hills and lateritic part of the entire area comprising about 35,000 acres is separated from an established farming community and administration centre in the Mabaruma-Hosororo Hills to the North by 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles of pegasse swamp and, at present, the only means of access to this northern area is through the Wauna Creek.

75. Apart from a few Amerindians who occupy very small plots, the whole of the region is virtually uninhabited and this has from time to time been the subject of adverse comment. Except for the few established farms in the Mabaruma-Wonaina Hills, the traditional farming practice in the North West District is that of a shifting cultivation. Clearing and draining of the pegasse swamps along the rivers have been accomplished by costly empoldering works which have to be borne by the lessees only to be abandoned after five to ten years of cultivation because by that time the fertility of the pegasse land has declined to an uneconomic level. These difficulties have prevented the development of a progressive and stable community and from time to time requests have been made for Government's assistance with a view to provision of access and development of these hill lands.

76. Experience in the use and management of the sand-hill soil type has been accumulated from time to time by the Agriculture Department. The soil type is being developed in the Moruca area and on the Kunka to Ouebanna Project. Experimental plots were established at Wauna. Lateritic clay soils have been put into agricultural use at the Hosororo Experimental Station and by farmers in the district.

77. Both soil types can be used successfully for agriculture but it is essential that soil conservation and anti-erosion and anti-leaching measures must be adopted, particularly on the sand-hill soils from the inception of occupation. The use of fertilisers is necessary to supplement the soil nutrient resources. This is important for permanent agriculture especially on the sand-hills. Assuming that the recommended agricultural practices and precautions are adopted, these soils are expected to support the following crops:- cocoa, citrus, coffee (including the superior robusta variety) fruit - notably avocado, vegetables, rootcrops and plantains and legumes, including peanuts. Livestock should do well since grass e.g. Wynne grass and other fodder legumes e.g. Kudzu thrive on the sand-hills.

78. The development of the hill lands of the North-West will do much to improve the situation in that area where living conditions of the farming

/community

community have, if anything, deteriorated in recent years notwithstanding a period of comparatively favourable prices for crops and an improved transport service. The expense of building up and maintaining fertility on the brown sand hills is expected to be less than with the pegasse swamp where cultivation has taken place in the past in preference to the hills because of ease of access and transport by water.

Pilot Project

79. It is proposed as a first step to build a narrow road across the $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of pegasse swamp, existing between the 35,000 acres of sand-hill lateritic land and the administration centre in the Maburuna-Hosororo Hills, and to establish a pilot project over 1,000 acres in the sand-hills for the cultivation of cocoa, citrus and other crops. Approximately 50 families will be settled in this area.

80. The development of the Wauna-Yarakita area will provide a considerable quantity of produce for export and also augment the needs of local consumers generally, and should lead to further development towards Arakaka and beyond. Again, the new developments in mining by the African Manganese Co. Ltd., in the Upper Barima River have increased the demand for farm produce and should favourably affect land development.

81. A scheme totalling \$189,000 was approved under Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme (D 4790) and Work commenced in September, 1961. Details of the proposals for development of the area are still being worked out.

Development Works

82. By the end of the year under review, a reinforced concrete bridge was constructed over the Wannaina Creek and the clearing of a 20 ft wide tract, for the farm road to Yarakita, was completed for a distance of 4 miles. Approximately $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles of this clearing have been stumped to enable its use by vehicular traffic. The erection of a greenheart prefabricated house for use by the Superintendent of the Scheme is nearing completion.

FINANCE

FINANCE

83. Recurrent expenditure on the Department as a whole for the year under review amounted to \$407,744 as compared with \$489,655: for the previous year.

84. The following statement sets out the revenue and recurrent expenditure for 1961 for the various settlements:-

| | | <u>OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE</u> | | <u>REVENUE</u> | | <u>EXPENDITURE</u> | |
|---|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|--|
| | | | Collectible | Collected | Total | | |
| | | | | | Collectible | Collected | |
| | | \$ | \$ | | | | |
| Existing Settlements | Current | 86,000 | 35,878 | | | | |
| Anna Regina Land Settlement | Arrears | 30,754 | 22,281 | 5,159 | 91,434 | | |
| | Current | 42,555 | 16,453 | | | | |
| Govt. Estates, West Dem. | Arrears | 9,258 | 7,492 | 23,945 | 38,461 | | |
| | Current | 42,000 | 4,065 | | | | |
| Vergenoegen Land Settlement | Arrears | 84,235 | 20,749 | 24,814 | 38,949 | | |
| | Current | | | | | | |
| Vergenoegen Rice Factory | Arrears | 2,410 | 2,169 | 2,169 | N I L | | |
| | Current | 48,389 | 18,621 | | | | |
| C.G./L.B.M. Land Settlement | Arrears | 37,833 | 4,902 | 23,523 | 3,405 | | |
| | Current | 6,600 | 3,278 | | | | |
| C/ Amazon Land Settlement | Arrears | 5,256 | 1,742 | 5,020 | 8,952 | | |
| | Current | 40,000 | 10,724 | | | | |
| Onverwagt Land Settlement | Arrears | 15,058 | 9,261 | 19,985 | 42,249 | | |
| | Current | | | | | | |
| | Total | 430,348 | 157,124 | 157,615 | 223,450 | | |
| <u>New Land Settlements in process of development</u> | | | | | | | |
| | Current | 11,000 | 779 | | | | |
| Garden of Eden Land Settlement | Arrears | 5,299 | 1,753 | 2,532 | 12,427 | | |
| | Current | 32,500 | 4,611 | | | | |
| Mara Land Settlement | Arrears | 23,224 | 3,356 | 7,967 | 69,277 | | |
| | Current | 268,500 | 18,001 | | | | |
| Black Bush Polder | Arrears | 19,061 | 6,921 | 24,922 | 22,877 | | |
| | Current | | | | | | |
| | Total | 359,584 | 35,421 | 35,421 | 104,581 | | |

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE
OF AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY

| <u>Settlements</u> | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| | Current | 83,639 | 45,794 | | |
| Anna Regina Land Settlement | Arrears | 289 | 52 | 45,846 | 71,738 |
| | Current | 8,000 | 7,729 | | |
| Vergenoegen Land Settlement | Arrears | 14,400 | 1,439 | 9,168 | 7,975 |
| | Current | - | - | | |
| C.G./L.B.M. Land Settlement | Arrears | 24,514 | 47 | 47 | N I L |
| | Current | | | | |
| | Total | 130,203 | 55,061 | 61 | 79,713 |

85. A comparative statement of revenue and expenditure for the years 1960 and 1961 in respect of the operation and maintenance of settlements and of agricultural machinery is provided in Appendix II.

86.1 Expenditure on the operation and maintenance of the settlements at Anna Regina, Cane Grove-La Bonne Mere, Vergenoegen, Charity/Amazon, and of Government Estates, West Demerara, exceeded revenue by \$45,740 as compared with \$81,526 in the previous year. In this connection it should be stated that the actual revenue due from these settlements during the year under review amounted to \$205,544 of which \$77,804 were collected and \$127,740 remained as arrears to be collected during the forthcoming year.

86.2 In considering the present unhealthy financial position of the existing settlements at Anna Regina, Vergenoegen, Cane Grove and Government Estates, West Demerara, account must be taken of the fact that these settlements which were abandoned estates when taken over by Government were established mainly as social assistance schemes to provide a livelihood for persons more or less destitute who were then residing thereon, and considerable financial assistance has been essential. In addition to an increase in labour costs rentals are relatively low, therefore it is difficult to establish these settlements on a self-supporting basis except as a long term project. However, the principle that land settlements should be economically self-supporting has been accepted as the ultimate objective, and to this end stricter credit control has been introduced. This apart, rice land rents at Anna Regina, Vergenoegen and Government Estates, West Demerara (Lot 'C'), were increased during the year 1957 to the level of rentals chargeable under the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance, 1958, and similar increases were brought into effect during 1958 at Cane Grove Land Settlement.

87. At 1st January, 1961, loans made to settlers in previous years representing advances to tenants, agricultural machinery hire charges and loans for the construction of houses totalling \$91,956: were outstanding. Repayments during the year amounted to \$2,623:-

88. Development expenditure incurred during the year amounted to \$347,508 as compared with \$278,082 in the previous year as follows:-

| | 1960 | 1961 |
|---|---------|--------|
| 1. <u>Improvement and Expansion of Existing Land Settlement Schemes.</u> | | |
| <u>Essequibo Estates (Anna Regina)</u> | | |
| Extension of Rice Cultivation. | 46, 666 | |
| 1. <u>Improvement and Expansion of Existing Land Settlement Schemes -</u> | | |
| <u>(C.D. & W. Schemes D 3682 and 3682 A)</u> | | |
| <u>Essequibo Estates (Anna Regina)</u> | | |
| Improvement of Drainage | | 948 |
| Layout of Residential Area | | 1, 803 |

| | 1960 | 1961 |
|--|----------|----------|
| | \$ | \$ |
| Development of Provision Farm Lands - Third Depth | | 9, 343 |
| Development of Second Depth Devonshire Castle Walton Hall | | 13, 924 |
| <u>Cane Grove - La Bonne Mere Land Settlement</u> | | |
| Improvement of Dairy Farm Area | 3, 663 | |
| Extension of Cultivation Savannah Area. | 13, 399 | |
| Metalling of Streets | | 323 |
| Improvement of Drainage- Greenwich Park | | 5 |
| Surveys | | 629 |
| <u>Charity/ Amazon</u> | | |
| Extension of Market Shed | | 37 |
| 2. <u>Development of Garden of Eden East Bank Demerara (C.D. & W. Scheme D 3187</u> | 30, 639 | 19, 499 |
| 3. <u>Development of Pln. Mara Cum annexis East Bank Berbice C.D. & W. Scheme No. D 3188 A and B</u> | 69, 413 | 54, 347 |
| 4. <u>reliminary Investigation re Suitability, etc.</u> | 363 | 2, 457 |
| 5. <u>Development of Black Bush Polder - Lesbholden (C.D. & W. Scheme D 4228)</u> | | 13, 618 |
| 1. Capital | 47, 604 | 133 |
| 2. Other Charges | 2, 013 | N I L |
| 3. Personal Emoluments | 4, 068 | |
| 6. <u>Development of Black Bush Polder - Mibikuri, Joanna Y-kusari (C.D. & W. Scheme D 4533</u> | 60, 254 | 225, 442 |
| Total | 278, 082 | 347, 508 |

Conclusion

89. I desire to record my appreciation of the loyal services rendered by the office and field staff and to state that I received full co-operation from other Government Departments with which this Division of the Ministry had to work in connection with the development and improvement of new and existing land development schemes.

Sgd. A.D. Thompson
Principal Assistant Secretary,
Land Development Division.

APPENDIX I

Approximate Allocation of Acres on Settlements
for Agricultural and other purposes.

| Use | Anna Regina | | Government Estates | | Vergehoegen | | Onverwagt | |
|--|-------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1960 | 1961 | 1960 | 1961 | 1960 | 1961 | 1960 | 1961 |
| Rice Cultivation | 4431 | 3940 | 2105 | 2105 | 2043 | 1785 | 5200 | 5200 |
| Ground Provision | - | - | 353 | 353 | 223 | 223 | - | - |
| Cane Cultivation | - | - | 74 | 74 | - | - | - | - |
| Mixed farming | - | - | - | - | 1004 | - | - | - |
| House Lots | 180 | 180 | 201 | 201 | 53 | 48 | - | - |
| Dairy Farming | 152 | 205 | 40 | 40 | 166 | 155 | - | - |
| Pasturage | - | 779 | 656 | 656 | - | 1334 | - | - |
| Miscellaneous | 115 | 626 | 417 | 417 | 106 | 50 | 800 | 800 |
| Undeveloped | 40 | 3811 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total Ac- reage of Settlement | 4918 | 9541 | 3846 | 3846 | 3595 | 3595 | 6000 | 6000 |

APPENDIX II.
Comparative Statement of Revenue and
Expenditure for the years 1960 and 1961.

| Settlement | Revenue | | Recurrent Expenditure | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | 1960 | 1961 | 1960 | 1961 |
| <u>Operation and Maintenance of Land Settlements</u> | | | | |
| Anna Regina | 85, 636 | 58, 159 | 94, 727 | 91, 434 |
| Government Estates, West Demerara | 13, 603 | 23, 945 | 36, 410 | 38, 461 |
| Vergenoegen | 23, 227 | 24, 814 | 44, 805 | 38, 949 |
| Vergenoegen Rice Factory Co., | 245 | 2, 109 | | |
| Cane Grove-La Bonne Mere | 60, 556 | 23, 523 | 83, 417 | 3, 405 |
| Charity/Amazon | 3, 343 | 5, 020 | 8, 532 | 8, 952 |
| Onverwagt | 32, 500 | 19, 985 | 34, 333 | 42, 249 |
| <u>New Settlements in Process of Development</u> | | | | |
| Garden of Eden | 301 | 2, 532 | 10, 371 | 12, 427 |
| Mara | 7, 047 | 7, 967 | 66, 615 | 69, 277 |
| Black Bush Polder | 20, 355 | 24, 922 | | 22, 877 |
| <u>Operation and Maintenance of Agricultural Machinery.</u> | | | | |
| Anna Regina | 79, 003 | 45, 846 | 80, 487 | 71, 738 |
| Vergenoegen | 28, 801 | 9, 168 | 20, 593 | 7, 975 |
| Cane Grove La Bonne Mere | 4, 017 | 47 | 9, 365 | N I L |
| TOTAL | \$358, 634 | 248, 097 | 489, 655 | 407, 744 |