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Members of the Legislative Assembly

and Members of the Senate:

History-making is a phrase which comes all too easily to the lips. Nevertheless, this phrase may justifiably be used today. For to you will fall the opportunity and task of assisting at the birth of a new and independent nation with all the consequences which this entails for your people and for the world.

My Ministers are not satisfied with present Constitutional arrangements. They have informed me that they will cause to be introduced shortly in both Chambers of the Legislature a motion seeking immediate independence of the territory. My Ministers are convinced that independence is a ~~necessary~~ pre-requisite for the rapid economic and social progress which they conceive to be their main mandate.

In keeping with its policy of democratization, the Government intends to create a system in which people at all levels have a say in the management of their own affairs. To this end the Government intends to create strong and responsible local authorities sharing in the administration of their areas. In keeping with the degree of democratic control already achieved in central government, it has been decided that the franchise for local government elections based on property will be abolished and a franchise based on universal adult suffrage introduced. The Local Government Board will be abolished and its powers transferred to the Minister of Home Affairs. An Advisory Body on Local Government Affairs will be set up to assist the Minister. Financial assistance by way of grants and loans to local authorities will be continued. In the case of the Municipalities, elections will be held as early as possible on the basis of universal adult suffrage. In general, the Government's proposals as embodied in Sessional Paper No. 5/58 based on the recommendations of Dr. Marshall will be pursued and the Georgetown and New Amsterdam urban councils and the No. 52 - Moleson Creek District Council brought into being.

Land Registration to facilitate clear titles in Local Government and other areas will be speeded up and special attention will be paid to removing the present legal difficulties relating to the control and use of common lands.

My Ministers are reviewing the current development programme and considering proposals for its expansion to serve the primary aim of the Government's economic policy, namely, to end the scourge of unemployment and to raise living standards.

In order to achieve these objectives, my government feels that economic planning is essential. Such planning will be along sound theoretical and practical lines to ensure the socialist objective of an equitable distribution of the nation's wealth and the ending of exploitation of the human and natural resources of the country for the benefit of a few. The Government proposes to establish a planning unit and has sought the help of international experts in planning. The International Co-operation Administration, the agency of the United States Government that has already given such important technical help to the Development Programme has been asked for help of this kind. So too has the Government of India, which has had special experience in the preparation and carrying through of its own successive Plans. Professor Charles Bettelheim, a distinguished French economist, is at present conferring with my Government and giving the benefit of his experience with the Indian and other national Development Plans. We have sought help from the United Nations and from the Government of neighbouring Venezuela; and we have had helpful advice from time to time from visiting economists on the staff of the University College of the West Indies.

My Ministers are, however, anxious that the people themselves should play a part in planning. There is an old saying that he who wears the shoe knows where it pinches. Much thought has been given to this question and it has been

decided that the Regional Development Committees, which have been functioning recently, mainly as an adjunct of the Credit Corporation, should be asked to prepare plans for their areas. Citizens in the rural areas will also be asked to assist with the formulation and execution of such plans wherever possible on the basis of aided self-help projects. In the last four years aided self-help schemes have become an increasingly important element in social and economic development and the Government proposes to expand this movement to all rural communities.

When the planning unit begins its work it will urgently consider the present priorities in the Development Programme and will doubtless advise changes that will take account of the finances that can be mobilized, but it is possible now to indicate the main features of the Development Programme on which my Government proposes to embark.

#### Agriculture

Agricultural development will for some time be the mainstay of this country's economy. It is therefore proposed to pursue this development along three broad lines: Firstly, to expand the production of crops, livestock and fishery products now being exported with due regard to external market possibilities and trade and price agreements. Secondly, to produce new crops, livestock and fishery products for export; and thirdly, to encourage for reasons of nutrition and self-sufficiency, local production of foods which do not normally enter to any extent into international trade but which nevertheless tend to reduce imports of food in addition to providing farmers with a source of income.

Sugar and rice remain our principal crops. For social as well as economic reasons, the Government wishes to substitute in increasing measure the growing of cane by co-operatives of local sugar-workers for the old system of growing sugar on plantations. A start has already been made

and the Government welcomes the sugar-producers' assurance of readiness to share in further development of cane-farming. The Government proposes to negotiate with them for the use for this ~~purpose~~ <sup>purpose</sup> of uncultivated plantation lands and of further lands now under cane.

In the case of rice, in addition to existing policies a new approach will be tried. It is recognised that the distribution of large tracts of land is not the only way of solving the needs of rice farmers. The farmer must secure the maximum output which his land is capable of producing. And having done so he must obtain the maximum share of the price which the consumer pays for his rice. He must recover all materials now going to waste and produce marketable by-products therefrom. He must also retain for himself the profits and interest charges which are now either being exported from the country or going into the pockets of middlemen. At present only 10% of the acreage of rice is under pure line seed and fertilisers are hardly used. The provision of these materials under a scheme whereby the farmer will pay when he sells his rice to the Rice Marketing Board, will be introduced. Other proposals include extensive training schemes to teach farmers how to get the best results from their tractors, the introduction of crop rotation, plans for the more efficient operation of the Rice Marketing Board, and the erection of multi-stage mills on a cooperative basis.

Growing of bananas on a large scale by cooperatives may provide a new export crop with great potentialities if proposals that the Government is now expecting from one of the best known American Companies in this trade are successfully carried through. The overcoming with expert help of former agricultural difficulties for this crop would provide a notable increase to our export trade as well as providing a new means of livelihood for large numbers of Guianese.

o Land Reclamation and Development.

Agricultural development on the coast will require an ever increasing amount of land and the Government will do all it can to push ahead with large-scale land reclamation schemes. It is hoped to secure assistance soon to make a start on Stage 1 of the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Lbary Scheme. This scheme which will cost \$40 million should provide effective drainage and irrigation for a quarter of a million acres of land. In the meantime the Government has secured financial and technical assistance from the United Nations Special Fund to carry out the pre-investment survey for the greater Canje Project. While these schemes, which will take several years to complete, are proceeding, the Government intends to carry out a large number of minor drainage and irrigation works so as to bring more land under cultivation.

The present land development policy will be continued. The Government intendsto pass the control and management of the land settlement areas to Local Authorities so that the settlers will take a more active interest in the maintenance of their public utilities and the development of community life. It is hoped to complete within the next year the distribution of land in the present land settlement areas and to give each satisfactory settler formal leasehold title to his land. The distribution of publicly-owned land will be vigorously continued and funds will be made available through the British Guiana Credit Corporation to assist farmers to develop their land. Security of tenure will be given to all who use their land beneficially.

Industrialisation

But while agriculture and land development on the coast must remain the primary economic objectives of government at this stage of development, it has also been decided to embark as quickly as possible on industrialisation and interior development. As in Ghana and India, the

Government proposes to establish industries wherever possible. The Government has particularly in mind a complex of industries based on rice, on wood and on bauxite. Some industries will be organized privately, some co-operatively, some publicly and some by a combination of these methods. The Government hopes that just as the acquisition and expansion of the Georgetown electrical undertaking were made possible by a package deal with contractors, suppliers of equipment and financiers that costs should be met in large part by profits earned after completion of the deal, so other industries may be financed in this way. There will continue to be room in British Guiana for private investors. The Government will make wise and proper use of the machinery of tariffs, licensing and quantitative restrictions to protect local products that are of good quality and are reasonably priced. A campaign will be launched to encourage the use of local products.

#### Trade and Marketing

One side of the coin is industry; the other is trade. Subject to any reasonable need to protect local products the Government intends to liberalise trade to permit imports from any source so that the country can benefit from purchasing in the cheapest market. The Government intends to seek new markets for our products particularly in the West Indies and South American countries. To protect the consumer there will be control of prices where it is considered desirable in the public interest and of hire purchase and credit sale arrangements to ensure that the rights of all parties are protected.

Marketing facilities to assist producers to sell their products on the most profitable terms are being reorganized and expanded to include areas not now served. Measures will be taken to associate both producers and consumers with the business of Government marketing.

Tourism

The Government recognises that the development of tourism can be a valuable adjunct to trade and industry and a comprehensive programme will be embarked upon. Special attention will be paid to internal tourism. Already concession fares for school children travelling to the interior have been approved, and such concessions will be extended.

Interior Development

It was once pointed out that the density of population in the coastal areas as far as present cultivable land goes, is already as high as in England and Wales. We must therefore increasingly turn our thoughts and our energies to the development of the interior. An interior road is essential and of this I will have something to say later on. The Government intends to develop suitable areas in the interior especially in the North West, Kopinang and Rupununi Districts by establishing settlements of families from the coastal areas. Development in these areas will be multi-directional so as to utilise fully all of the available resources - timber, minerals, agriculture and hydro-electric power. Loggers will be encouraged to use modern and efficient methods of timber extraction and will be given loans to assist them to buy equipment. A marketing pool will also be set up to assist loggers in grading and selling their timbers locally and overseas. At the other end of the scale, the Government has in mind an industrial complex which will make every possible use of our forest resources including the manufacture where feasible of pulp and paper and of wood alcohol, chip-board and charcoal.

The Mining laws of the country will be revised to take account of modern mining practices and modern developments in other countries in the regulation of mining and the securing for the nation of proper revenue and other benefits from the exploitation of its natural irreplaceable resources. Everything possible will be done to complete a thorough geological exploration of the country and to secure the wisest development of its mineral assets, particularly by ensuring that no large areas are held exclusively by any one enterprise for long periods without reasonable development.

#### Communications

The execution of such a programme of economic development depends on the successful / development of roads and other communications and of power. Although during the past four years much planning has been done in this field and as much work has been carried out as financial resources permitted, previous neglect means that large sums must be spent on the maintenance and improvement of existing services and the development of new ones. Steady progress with the permanent improvement of the Bartica/Potaro Road has resulted in the completion of thirty miles of good motorable road. Construction of the Parika/Bartica Road is



about to begin.

Thanks to the International Co-operation Administration there has been an expert appraisal of the economic feasibility of an interior road from Atkinson through Mackenzie and Kurupukari to Lethem and of the comparative advantages of this route and the Bartica/Potaro route. The Government will give urgent consideration to these reports and hopes to base on them an early application for assistance from the Development Loan Fund and further substantial progress with the opening up of the Interior.

The East Bank Road will be completed this year and men and equipment will then be moved to the Corentyne to rebuild that road, which has badly deteriorated as the result of poor initial construction.

Considerable progress has been made with the rehabilitation of the East Coast Road between Georgetown and Enmore and work will vigorously continue until the whole road to Rosignol is in good order. The effective improvement of the Vreed-en-Hoop to Parika road as a continuation of the Bartica/Parika road will be carried out as a result of the completion of the survey of the West Coast railway route. An immediate task will be the improved maintenance of the West Bank Road.

A third ferry ship is under construction (the second to be built locally by Sprostons Ltd) and another is planned so that other vessels may be released to give the Berbice River, the North-West and the Pomeroon faster and more commodious services.

It is the Government's policy to improve and expand its civil aviation services so as to hasten general development and provide cheaper air transport. To this end additional air strips will be built and the Government hopes to find means of centralizing the operations of B.G. Airways near to Georgetown and to develop quick air services to Essequibo and Berbice.

Power The report of the United Nations Consultant on our Hydro electric potential is awaited but in the meantime the British Guiana Electricity Corporation has completed plans

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for the expansion of its undertaking. Additional equipment is on order and rural electrification will shortly commence. It is hoped to start work on the hydro-electric schemes, in time to permit a changeover to cheaper power.

Sea Defences

Our sea and river defences will be reviewed in the light of the report of the Delft Hydraulics Laboratory whose services it will be recalled were made available through the United Nations Special Fund.

Monetary and Fiscal Policies.

All these developments will require the stimulus and support of appropriate monetary and fiscal policies. The Government proposes to examine, with expert help, the possibility of regulating the supply of money in the public interest by means of a Central Bank and appropriate fiscal measures that will, while helping to secure a more equitable distribution of income among the people of this country, provide the national exchequer with additional funds for the public welfare. ~~Increased consumption will in turn stimulate production and lead to greater employment.~~

Education

While the Government is convinced that the present emphasis in development must be placed on projects which generate income and provide new jobs, yet social development will not be neglected. The Government realises that our human resources are our most precious national assets and that education can enhance the value of these assets. The Government aims at developing a national system of education which will provide equality of opportunity for all Guianese children to achieve their educational ambition and to share the educational facilities available, irrespective of position, race or creed. It is proposed to develop not only strictly academic education but vocational and technical education and a broad stream of cultural activities and adult education.

During this year 15,000 more places are being provided in primary schools and four more home economics and wood-working departments are being built. Secondary schools of the bi-lateral

type, in which instruction will be given in both academic and practical subjects, including agriculture and animal husbandry, will be established in the rural areas. The Government has in mind the location of such schools in the West Coast Berbice, East Coast Demerara and West Demerara areas. One such school has already been started at Anna Regina. A co-educational secondary school will also be provided in the Greater Georgetown area. The technical Institute is being expanded and the aim is eventually to train our engineers to the level of the United Kingdom National Certificate. A start will also soon be made at the Institute in courses for Commercial and Business Education while the courses in land surveying will be continued. Facilities for technical education will be expanded in rural areas where it is proposed to set up in each county a rural technical school to cater for pupils who have completed their primary education but have not gained or do not desire admission to secondary schools. Pupils of such schools will do a combined trade and academic course.

At the top of the educational pyramid university education will be made available to an increasing number of Guianese by the expansion of the loan scheme and by the local provision of courses which, with the concurrence and support of University authorities, will facilitate the obtaining of External Degrees in Arts by men and women living in British Guiana.

In any expansion of the educational system, teacher training is an essential element. Increased facilities will be made available for the training of more teachers at all levels. The University College of the West Indies will be requested to provide training courses for secondary school teachers and loans will be made available to teachers in secondary schools to further their knowledge and their training at overseas institutions.

As far as possible all new primary schools will be built and controlled by the Government. The system of dual control of schools will eventually be abolished. Financial aid to secondary schools both capital (for the extension of schools

and the provision of science laboratories and so on) and recurrent for the payment of teachers salaries will be continued and improved. The aim is eventually to provide free secondary education.

The curricula of all schools, primary and post-primary will be further adapted to suit local conditions and local writers will be encouraged to write text books and supplementary literature with a Guianese background.

The activities of History and Culture Week will be expanded, increased financial support given to the Arts, and Cultural exchanges promoted. It is proposed in cooperation with the agencies now in the field to develop adult education designed to foster a national consciousness and greater unity among our people.

#### Housing

Government will continue to press on with housing development. Construction of houses, for low income persons will be undertaken. The Government will continue to acquire more land for both rural and urban housing and will also consider the financing of low and middle income housing through investment and building companies which will be encouraged to develop such projects. Examination of such offers is being considered now. The Government will also encourage local authorities to take responsibility for housing and will provide more funds for self-help housing.

#### Social Security and Social Welfare

Much has already been achieved in the field of social security. Old Age Pensions and Public Assistance allowances were increased this year at the cost of about a million dollars. As a further step a comprehensive investigation will be made into the whole field of social security including a national scheme for old age and invalidity. The Government recognises the valuable work being done by voluntary groups.

A national Council for voluntary Social Services will be set up to advise the Minister for Education and Social Development. In this regard, special attention will be given to the needs of youth.

#### Labour Welfare Legislation

My Government recognises that strong militant trade unions are essential if the rights of the working people are to be fully protected and if they are to obtain from their employers just wages and working conditions. My Ministers believe that trade unions which have the confidence of the majority of workers in an industry or service should be recognised. It supports the principle of a poll in any industry where more than one union is seeking recognition or where no union is recognised. The Government is very conscious of the human and economic problems that result from increased mechanisation of the sugar and rice industries and from the reorganization of work on the waterfront and elsewhere and has taken steps to have them studied by experts provided by the University College of the West Indies. It is hoped that this study will help to provide solutions to these problems.

The Government wishes to improve and extend the present labour laws to give greater protection to workers. It will continue to encourage the establishment of strong, independent and democratic trade unions free from outside control and will also consider the need for the establishment where necessary of wages councils and advisory committees. The Government proposes to introduce legislation which will seek a reasonable reconciliation of the need for trade unionists to enter, for organizational purposes, the private lands of employers where employees live with the proper rights of such employers in respect of such lands. The Government also contemplates legislation that will better balance the public interest with the reasonable rights

of workers in Essential Services and that will provide for the better control of trade union finances.

### Health

With valuable help from the World Health Organisation, much has already been done over the last four years to improve health and hospital facilities. The present network of cottage hospitals and health centres will be extended to include still more rural communities. An environmental sanitation campaign has already begun. This programme aims at general sanitary improvement in the rural areas and in particular to provide sanitary facilities at rural schools and to help with the training of Guianese in public health administration, health engineering, and other aspects of public health. These include laboratory techniques, pure water development, leprosy control, public health nursing and a number of related matters.

It is intended to reorganise the public health service and to revise health legislation so that greater attention will be paid to the real public health issues of milk, water and meat control. The control of housing will be handed over to the local authorities.

A new food and drug law to give better protection to consumers from inferior and dangerous products as well as false advertising is in the process of preparation.

With expert help from the International Cooperation Administration, improvements will continue to be made in the working of the present inadequate hospitals. A suitable site has been reserved for a new Hospital in Georgetown, some preliminary planning has been done and the Government hopes to be able to get such professional advice and financial help as will enable it speedily to provide the much-needed new Hospital in Georgetown as well as effecting improvements in hospitals elsewhere.

Government proposes to end fee collection of medical officers in due course and a start has been made with the creation of a new non-fee collecting district in the Essequibo Islands. The ultimate aim of government is a national health service patterned on the United Kingdom model.

### Pure Water

Pure water is an important element in any health programme. The annual expenditure on pure water supply is now nearly treble that of the pre-1957 period and the government intends that this pace should be maintained until the goal has been achieved of a water tap in every home. My Government will introduce legislation to enable the creation of a Corporation to control the supply, distribution and conservation of pure water.

### The Public Service

The Government must look to the Public Service for the successful carrying-out of these plans and it does so with confidence, although it appreciates that the execution of a development programme as here outlined will put a specially heavy burden on the whole Service. The Government is aware of the need, within the limit of the finances at its disposal, to improve the remuneration of public servants, including the Police, and teachers in primary schools. This has been the subject of enquiry by the Guillebaud Commission and the Government is urgently considering the recently published Report of that Commission. My Ministers are also sensible of the urgent need to expand training facilities for Guianese so as to complete Guianization as quickly as possible.

### Conclusion

These are the main features of the programme on which my Government is now embarking and although they are no more than is necessary to make such an immediate improvement in the prosperity and well-being of British Guiana and its people as all desire and as is reasonably possible, they will require more money than can at present be foreseen, even with the help we have received from Britain through Colonial Development & Welfare payments

and Exchequer loans and from the International Co-operation Administration and from Specialized Agencies of the United Nations.

We need large loans interest-free or at low rates of interest so that, if skilled staff can be procured, we can begin a wide variety of projects simultaneously. The assault on poverty must be on a massive scale and on many fronts. It is only in that way that our economy can begin to expand; at present we are barely keeping pace with the increase in our population. If we are to move forward into the phase of rapid and self-sustaining growth, it is essential that substantial funds be found further "to prime the pump". The interest of friends in North America has been aroused and the Premier has been invited by the President of the United States to call upon him during the Premier's forthcoming visit. The Canadian Government has invited the Premier to make an official visit to Ottawa. It is to be hoped that from these contacts and from the presentation of our circumstances, our needs and our aspirations that will be made then and in the future, help will flow.

It will be the earnest aim of my Government in carrying out all its policies to maintain for all people the freedoms enshrined in the present Constitution.

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