

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana (Constitution) (Temporary Provisions) Orders in Council, 1953 and 1956).

Friday, 6th November, 1959

The Council met at 2.30 p.m.

PRESENT :

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

Chief Secretary, Hon. M. S. Porcher (acting)

Attorney-General, Hon. A. M. I. Austin, Q.C.

Financial Secretary, Hon. F. W. Essex, C.M.G.

} *ex officio*

The Honourable **Dr. C. B. Jagan**

— *Member for Eastern Berbice*
(Minister of Trade and Industry).

„ **B. H. Benn**

— *Member for Essequibo River*
(Minister of Natural Resources).

Janet Jagan

— *Member for Western Essequibo*
(Minister of Labour, Health and Housing).

„ **Ram Karran**

— *Member for Demerara-Essequibo*
(Minister of Communications and Works).

„ „ **B. S. Rai**

— *Member for Central Demerara*
(Minister of Community Development and Education).

Mr. R. B. Gajraj

— *Nominated Member*

„ **W. O. R. Kendall**

— *Member for New Amsterdam*

„ **R. C. Tello**

— *Nominated Member*

„ **L. F. S. Burnham**

— *Member for Georgetown Central*

„ **S. Campbell**

— *Member for North Western District*

„ **A. L. Jackson**

— *Member for Georgetown North*

„ **S. M. Saffee**

— *Member for Western Berbice*

„ **Ajodha Singh**

— *Member for Berbice River*

„ **R. E. Davis**

— *Nominated Member*

„ **H. J. M. Hubbard**

— *Nominated Member.*

Mr. I. Crum Ewing — Clerk of the Legislature

Mr. E. V. Viapree — Assistant Clerk of the Legislature.

ABSENT :

Mr. F. Bowman — on leave

Mr. E. B. Beharry

Mr. J. N. Singh

Mr. A. M. Fredericks — on leave

Mr. A. G. Tasker, O.B.E. — on leave.

The Clerk read prayers.

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MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 5th November, 1959, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredricks, has asked to be excused from today's meeting; I am also to intimate that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, may not be able to attend this afternoon, until at a later stage.

PAPERS LAID

The Financial Secretary (Mr. Essex): I beg to lay on the table the

Comments of the Financial Secretary on the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Colony's Accounts for 1957.

ORDER OF THE DAY

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME,
1960—1964

Mr. Speaker: We will resume the debate on the Motion, which reads,

"Be it resolved: That this Council approves of the schemes and allocations as set out in the Development Programme, 1960-1964—Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1959."

At the adjournment yesterday the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, was speaking. Perhaps he may wish to resume today.

Mr. Tello: At the adjournment yesterday I was trying to make the point that agricultural credit facilities in British Guiana were not comparable with those in the Islands of Jamaica and Trinidad, our neighbours, and that there was some doubt in the minds of Members as regards the policy of Government as applied to the ownership of land.

Just to refresh the memory, this is what I said about the Agricultural Credit Bank of Trinidad and Tobago:

"Under the Agricultural Credit Bank Ordinance Chapter 23 No. 5 and its subsequent amendments the scope of the Bank was considerably widened. The Bank was established for the essential purpose of extending credit, at low cost, to persons engaged in agriculture to free them from the burden of debt and usurious rates of interest and thus enable them to contribute to the agricultural development of the Colony while maintaining and improving their own holdings."

This Bank seems to have as its primary object the making available of development money at very low cost, and also making available money for those people who desire to own and hold their lands. I mentioned that interest was charged at 4% per annum on loans for a period not exceeding 15 years, while advances were granted for one year, but not for a period exceeding three years. That rate of interest is 1% or 2% less than that established by the British Guiana Credit Corporation, and I think that as this Government is endeavouring to offer what I call a very acceptable and admirable Development Programme, steps should be taken to equate principles relating to freehold ownership of land with those of some of our neighbours in the West Indies.

It would appear that an enlightened policy has been accepted throughout the West Indies. I would like to refer to the little Island of Barbados. It is known that late in the 19th century Barbados enacted legislation to make it a criminal act with a severe penalty for anyone to loan money at a rate of interest higher than 6 per cent. Since then Barbados has established what is known as the Sugar Industry Agricultural Bank and the Peasant Loan Bank, and I am reliably informed that these two Banks grant loans at an interest rate between 3% and 4½%. Again we see the picture of a Government anxious to assist as far as possible people who wish to own and develop the land. The Peasant Loan Bank came into being in 1936.

Section 7. (1) of the Peasant's Loan Bank Act, 1936, states:

"The Bank shall receive applications from peasant owners for loans for carrying on the cultivation of peasant holdings in this Island, and having duly considered such applications may make loans at interest in such amounts and to such peasant owners as they shall think fit."

Members will notice that the loans are restricted to agricultural pursuits. Seven years later when Government reviewed the position it was clear that there were many people who were in constant danger of losing their land because they could not pay off their mortgages out of the profits they made from their land. So that Section 7 of the 1936 Act was amended by an Act passed in January, 1943. Section 2 of this latter Act, No. 1 of 1943, sets out the following new subsection:

"(1) The Bank shall receive applications from peasant owners for loans.

- (a) for carrying on the cultivation of peasant holdings in this Island;
- (b) to enable the holder of a peasant holding in this Island to pay the balance of any purchase money owing in respect of such holding provided that such balance of purchase money does not exceed forty per cent. of the fair market value of the holding at the time the loan is obtained."

This is a step taken deliberately by the Government to secure the land in the interest of the land-owner, to secure his freehold ownership, and likewise, in the case of the larger island of Jamaica we find that they pursue the same policy of assisting the peasants to own the land. I have here a copy of the Report to the Government of Jamaica on Agricultural Credit, by K. J. Caverhill, F.A.O. Agricultural Credit Expert. On page 17 of the Report he writes:

"The purposes for which farm loans would be granted would include land purchase, development and improvement work and the purchase of stock and plant; seasonal advances should be available to assist with agricultural work, crop planting and harvesting."

I want to emphasize that the very first recommendation for the purpose of loans is the purchase of land, again giving the assurance of freehold ownership. Fortunately, the then Government of Jamaica did not allow that recommendation to fall on deaf ears. They accepted it, and in "Small Farm Financing in Jamaica", by C. S. McMorris, it is stated that the primary purpose of the People's Co-operative Bank is to purchase land, buildings and livestock.

So we see the complete pattern in the neighbouring Islands is the security of freehold ownership. In British Guiana the people as well as Members of this Legislature are not yet quite certain of the position with regard to Government's policy on land ownership, and I have taken this opportunity to invite Government to follow up this very interesting Development Programme with a positive statement on land ownership, preferably a White Paper from the appropriate Ministry.

On page 30 of the Development Programme, under the head "Drainage & Irrigation" it is stated:

"The present position regarding agricultural development on the coast is that out of approximately one million acres of land which are suitable for cultivation, subject to development, only 300,000 acres are at present cultivated."

That is the point I want to make—that at the end of this Programme—and I hope it will be a successful Programme—the expert advice to the Government is that it is estimated that some 200,000 acres of land will be available for cultivation, and some 10,000 families will benefit. On page 42 we find under the head "Land Development" it is said:

"The total acreage of all the schemes is likely to be about 55,000."

With some 255,000 acres of land being involved, and some 11,000 families being associated in some way with this Development, I feel that it is right and proper

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that this Legislature should be given a clear picture as to Government's future policy with regard to land ownership, and I am appealing to the Minister to give an undertaking that as early as possible he will submit to this Council a White Paper containing a clear statement of Government's policy with regard to land ownership, or a statement by a Member of the Executive Council — something positive that we can look at for guidance. We read in the Press from time to time of bounties of land being distributed to individuals and co-operatives, but I think the time has come when Government should make it clear to the people whether they can aspire to complete ownership of the lands which are now being distributed, so that they may inform their children whether they will some day inherit those lands.

This is not a laughing matter. I want to say that those legislators who made it their duty to make the position clear in the three major West Indian Islands have much more experience than the present elected Members of this Government, and I think we must look somewhere for guidance. I therefore feel that it is not wrong for me to refer to those three Islands which have made it clear that their preference is for freehold ownership of land. I am not saying that the Government must accept that, but whether it accepts it or not we have a right to know, and to have a positive policy statement from the Government on the subject.

I read in the Press that during a previous debate the Minister of Natural Resources said (I do not know whether I can rely on the infallibility of the Press) that Professor W. Arthur Lewis had expressed the opinion that leasehold was the better system, but if I read him correctly I think he said that he favoured leasehold for simplicity of control. Prof. Lewis said many other things in his various writings, and I recall that he also said that a better place

for British Guiana would be in The West Indies Federation in the interest of the entire region. While Prof. Lewis is an accepted authority I regard Mr. Caverhill, the F.A.O. expert on Agricultural Credit, as another authority, and he has said that one of the purposes for which farm loans are to be given in Jamaica is the purchase of land freehold.

I am appealing to all Members of this Council to join me in beseeching the Minister for a policy statement on land ownership. I am asking the Members, on this side of the Table, especially the elected Members, to demand it as their right, because it is most important for the success of this Development Programme.

I must again return to the question of credit. I pointed out yesterday that Jamaica had adopted the policy of distributing the administration of its credit facilities in small sections so as to expedite the granting of loans.

The Financial Secretary: I am very interested in this but I would invite the hon. Nominated Member to say whether the Jamaica organizations he quoted yesterday are Government organizations, or whether they are credit facilities provided by industry itself. I think he quoted the Citrus Growers' Association. Is that not a private organization?

Mr. Tello: I will read them to the Council. I am not saying that all of the organizations are run by the Government or are Government sponsored. I simply said what Jamaica was doing; I did not say the Jamaica Government. I said that Jamaica seemed to accept it as a speedy means of handling credits.

Mr. Speaker: You are not saying it is the Government of Jamaica.

Mr. Tello: No, Sir. I do not know how many of the organizations are Government sponsored. I will name them and probably the hon. the Financial Secretary will be able to recognize the

Government sponsored ones. They all explain how they are administered and how capital is raised. I am saying that what is written here is that there are several institutions dealing with credit. There are the People's Co-operative Banks, Co-operative Societies, Yallahs Valley Land Authority, the Agricultural Development Corporation, the Citrus Growers' Association, the Cane Farmers Association, the Christianana Area Land Authority and so on.

I am not advocating that we should have several institutions but I thought, from my experience of the Credit Corporation, the whole of the business of land seems to be bundled together under the administration of a few people. They are rather brilliant people, but they are human beings; and what is a known fact is that many of the applications for credit run into months and sometimes years of waiting for consideration. I am not saying that there is any wilful delay. All I am saying is that because of the structure of the Credit Corporation, that is the fastest they could work; and as we are embarking on this very important Programme, the Ministers of the Government should evolve some means whereby applications for loans can be dealt with much faster than was done recently and is being handled now.

I am again pressing the matter of interest on loans. Applications must wait several months and years for consideration. You cannot say that that is easy access for loans for any party. That is too long a wait. Before the loan is realized it is quite possible, and in many cases true, that the whole atmosphere—the whole climate—can be changed and a rather good bargain might not be worthwhile.

On the question of low interest on loans, I do not know whether the Trinidad Government subsidizes by grants so that they are in a position to lend at 4%. I am not in a position to say whether, in the case of Barbados, there is a special programme of subsidies so as to make possible these low interest loans, but whatever it is I am asking

the Government to investigate it and see whether we, too, in British Guiana can find it possible to issue loans at the Credit Corporation, at least, between 3% and 4½% interest. I am making this plea because throughout the West Indies there seems to be a better position with regard to loans and interest charges on loans, the fact being that the peasant farmer can obtain loans at the rate of 4% or probably 3%.

While that is so in their case, we know British Guiana has had on its Statute Book a most liberal Land Acquisition Ordinance. I know that the provisions in this Ordinance make the price of land, I would say, most just as it relates to the purpose for which the land is needed. If I remember correctly, the price of the land would be related to the production value of the land, and the current market price would have no influence. This is a rather liberal and progressive Ordinance.

More recently, this Council was debating the Land Bonds Bill, and because of the Land Acquisition Ordinance and the Land Bonds Bill I feel that it becomes even more necessary for this Colony of ours to make loans available as cheap as possible so that the development of the land may be made easy and that there would be much better encouragement than there is today. I know there are many people who are not using their land, not through sheer neglect or lack of interest in the economy of the country, but because they have invested their last penny on the purchase of the land and because the commercial banks are not so interested in advancing money on a long-term basis for the development of land in the country. With other sources of credit the interest charges are so high that it is not economical for those poor would-be farmers to borrow money.

It is not in every case where a man does not use his land that it is done through sheer neglect. What I am asking the Government to do is to use all its powers and influence to make possible loans at a very low interest, and having done all this and having made money

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easily obtainable on economic lines, when Government has cause to resort to the provisions of the Land Acquisition Ordinance or to make use of the proposed Land Bonds Bill, Government's conscience would be free — that they have given the farmer and the peasant every opportunity of developing the land.

I read in the Press that the hon. Nominated Member on my left, Mr. Davis, said in a previous debate that it takes a considerable amount of money to develop land. Government has known that from experience, and I am again asking this Government to look into the matter of credit and interest and employ whatever means possible to bring down the interest charges to somewhere around 4%.

Mr. Speaker: You will not be much longer?

Mr. Tello: No Sir.

Mr. Speaker: The reason why I asked is because when you have finished I propose to draw hon. Members' attention to a particular rule. You have already taken up double the time; yesterday afternoon from 4.26 to a little after 5.00 and this afternoon from 2.36 right down to ten-past three. Go ahead!

Mr. Tello: Sir, I am sorry to take up all this time but I am just as anxious to finish. It is almost traditional when dealing with budgets.

At the second part of paragraph 20, the Financial Secretary writes:

"As regards entrepreneurship, certain recent outstanding successes in industrial ventures conceived by local business men are testimony to Guianese initiative and enterprise. Much more, however, needs to be done to meet the challenge thrown out by the Colony's varied potentialities."

I just read this paragraph to remind Government because in the next few days we shall be discussing the current

annual Budget and I hope that Government, in preparing their new taxation, would have in mind this sub-paragraph of page 5. Any taxation on new industries after the operation of one year or the recommendation of taxes on any old industry at a time when the climate is not best suited to it is no incentive to Guianese to venture to accept the challenge of the Colony's varied potentialities.

I would like to refer, as I did yesterday, to the matter of marketing, and I am not going to waste any time. It is seen that we will have an increase of 200,000 acres of land within this Programme. I feel that this 200,000 acres would bring about an increase of 66% of production, the control of floods would be responsible for another 16% and increased efficiency would be responsible for another 18%, so that there would be a new 100% impact on the local and foreign markets. That being so, I would again warn the Government not put off for tomorrow what might be done today with regards to marketing, and I feel that the Government might as well act at once.

I do not quite understand what is being done even when I read the following on page 27:

"**A11. Marketing** The Sugar and Rice industries are of sufficient size to deal effectively with their marketing problems. Other producers are assisted by Government through the Marketing Division of the Department of Agriculture which includes a Wholesale Fish Market and an Ice Plant and Cold Store.

The accommodation of the Marketing Division, Georgetown, is becoming increasingly congested and inadequate and it is desirable to provide immediately for its expansion . . ."

I cannot see that the expansion of the Marketing Division will solve our marketing problems, while it would solve storage problems. It is not fair to the general public that only Government should know what is planned for this Division, and I reiterate that it is necessary that this Council be treated with a

statement on the Marketing programme envisaged.

I have laid stress on this matter of land ownership policy, and I am asking Members on this side of the Council to join with me in my request to the Minister concerned for a statement of policy on Marketing which Government feels would ensure 100% improvement.

There are many encouraging features in this Development Programme. I am happy about the Agricultural Training Scheme, for example. In another place I tried to impress on the Government that while there was already such a development in Trinidad, there was no agricultural training facilities in British Guiana where soil testing techniques could be studied on the spot. I heartily commend Government for proposing the Scheme. I would like to place on record my appreciation of Government's allocation for urban housing and elementary and secondary schools, and for taking secondary schools to the rural areas, and also for its Amerindian development proposals. I leave the latter to the hon. Member for the North Western District, as he will probably deal with them. I am extremely happy about HS5 — "Malaria Eradication in the North West District, Pomeroon and Rupununi District", and HS6 — "Filaria Eradication" on a country-wide campaign basis. I think the Government's decision to continue Rural Self-Help schemes should be applauded. I am exceedingly happy to take my seat feeling very pleased with the Development Programme offered us, and I do hope that the humble suggestions I made will be given every possible consideration.

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mrs. Jagan): I think that at this stage it might be useful if I amplify some of the remarks made by the hon. the Financial Secretary in connection with those aspects of the Development Programme which fall within my Portfolio.

Members will observe that the health programme, which will call for \$893,000 for the five-year period, includes some new and interesting projects. We have given a great deal of thought to the health programme for 1960-1964, and I think, quite rightly, the greatest emphasis has been put on preventative medicine, in the belief that it is a far wiser policy to spend more on prevention so that the final bill for curative medicine will ultimately be less.

In this respect, Members will notice that there will be a continuation of the Health Centre programme which began this year, and the 1959 plans for health centres include 24 structures. These will not be completed this year, and will run into 1960. However, in addition to the 24 structures—which are already budgeted for and which, of course, are not shown here—we have put in an extra number of 10, which we feel will complete the network of health centres throughout British Guiana. With the addition of these health centres either a midwife or a health visitor will be stationed in the area. She will reside in the building. The basic services provided for will include measures against diseases, and inoculations against polio, typhoid and smallpox. Educational work will be done at the health centres and maternity and child welfare clinics held. Some of the administrative work in connection with sanitation will be done there also.

What is even more exciting is the environmental health sanitation which is going to improve greatly our health position in British Guiana. In the environmental health sanitation programme, hon. Members will note, British Guiana is collaborating with W.H.O. and U.N.I.C.E.F. On examining the environmental sanitation programme one might find it dull having to read about abattoirs, sewerage disposal drainage trenches and the like, but anyone who knows the health problems of British Guiana must be aware that most of the diseases come from conditions of very poor sanitation and of inadequate water supply.

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A survey of sanitary conditions in British Guiana disclosed that 18,000 families either lack any means of excreta disposal or are in need of replacements. This programme will provide for some 12,000 latrines using the most modern techniques, methods which W.H.O. has worked out in many under-developed countries such as British Guiana. Special attention has been paid to the high water table in British Guiana, and a special type of raised latrine has been designed. These will be raised on concrete blocks and placed about two feet from the ground. A number of them will be used in rural schools.

In fact, there will be a two-pronged attack on poor sanitation in rural schools. Many country schools do not have proper sanitation and running water where children can wash their hands. Many school children remain on the school premises from morning until afternoon, taking their mid-day meal in the vicinity of the school. Provision will be made to bring our country schools up to date in this respect.

Members will recall that last year we put in the Estimates provision for two new posts within the Medical Service, one being Sanitary Engineer and the other Health Educator. This is to be effective from 1960, so that the plans to have a local person trained as Sanitary Engineer and another person trained as Health Educator can get started. This country has never had a Sanitary Engineer, and he will be a welcome addition to the staff of the Medical Services. He will be concerned with the improvement of sanitation throughout the country. The question of health education and the appointment of a Health Educator are important aspects of the environmental health programme. Hon. Members who have gone into the subject will appreciate that health programmes in the past have been weak, in that we have never had proper educational campaigns going hand in hand with health improve-

ment projects. This has been unfortunate, but it will soon be remedied.

For example, we expect in a matter of a month or less to begin a National Polio Preventive Campaign. To properly carry out such a campaign persons especially trained in the field of health education should prepare the ground work, so that the campaign would have the full participation and understanding of the people of the country. With a Health Educator and a team equipped and trained in health education and the techniques, the winning over of goodwill, assistance and understanding could be properly attained.

In the past we have not had this advantage, so that much of our health educational work has just dragged along, for the simple reason that we have never had the proper personnel. The officers in our Medical Department have had so many other responsibilities and so much work to do that they could not devote the time and attention necessary for health education. For the Environmental Health Sanitation Programme a Health Educator from the World Health Organisation will come to British Guiana and will guide and help to train the local counterpart appointed in this Colony.

Food sanitation is also a very important aspect of our Environmental Sanitation Programme. Twenty new slaughter-houses will be erected throughout the countryside. I need not remind hon. Members that the handling of food, and in particular the handling of certain fresh foods that can be the source of disease, is not properly controlled, meat being one of our most apparent problems. Many of our villages have no slaughter-houses.

Animals are slaughtered and skinned, and even sold under the most shocking conditions. Anyone can go along the roadside, as all of us have done, and see carts carrying meat along the dusty roads — meat uncovered and

exposed to dirt, flies and contamination. We certainly get our share of disease from these unhygienic conditions that exist. There will be this expenditure of money in the establishment of 20 new slaughter-houses, and additional sanitary inspectors trained in all aspects of control of food and food sanitation will be working in that field.

I may mention that aside from the Environmental Sanitation Programme the Medical Department and the Ministry are at the moment preparing new legislation which should come into effect some time next year, dealing with Foods and Drugs. This will give further protection and provide further control of the sale and distribution of foodstuffs. Most experts in British Guiana feel, as I do, that at the moment we do not have adequate and proper control of food, and for that reason we have more disease than we should have.

Another aspect of our Environmental Sanitation Programme will be the control of waste disposal. At the moment the only good systems of waste disposal in British Guiana are in our urban areas where there is control of such disposal. It is proposed in this programme to institute a system of dumping of refuse in a controlled manner to prevent the breeding of insects, rats and vermin, which will allow for the reclamation of many acres of low-lying land. In other words proper waste disposal can have the double effect of properly disposing of waste and using that waste to fill in land and get the greatest benefit from it.

I feel confident that the Environmental Sanitation Programme which has been so well worked out by our experts will be well worth the expenditure which we are asking this Council to provide. I doubt that we will hear any objection to this expenditure of money which will go a long way. We have recently had the very good news in our discussions with the W.H.O. on this subject, that they will probably be willing to add to our En-

vironmental Sanitation another programme for the expansion of our pure water supply. Hon. Members will note on page 52 of the Development Programme that an amount of \$2.8 million has been set aside for pure water supply. Actually it is in the Public Works sector of the Programme.

Quite recently we have had a Ministerial change of portfolio in which the subject of water supply has been moved over to the Ministry of Health. This is something which I had been most keen on ever since I assumed responsibility for Labour, Health and Housing. I have always felt that pure water supply is a health problem and not merely a mechanical problem to be solved by engineers in the Public Works Department. My anxiety to see an improved water supply in this country linked up with the solution to our health problems has finally reached the stage where it has been recognized at last that water supply is a health and sanitation problem. W.H.O. seems interested in assisting us in our programme, and quite possibly we may find in our Five-Year Development Programme that we will actually have a greater pure water supply programme than the one proposed in this Development Programme.

I think that is wonderful news for British Guiana, because for many years our pure water supply programme has been moving at such a slow pace that it has been unable to solve the problem of our increasing population. No one will deny that a great deal of disease in British Guiana, a great deal of the ill health of our country communities in particular, comes from the fact that people are still today, in 1959, drinking water dipped from wayside trenches. If hon. Members visit the countryside, as I do, they must have seen women dipping their buckets into trenches daily, and using that very water to cook food, wash kitchen utensils and to serve as drinking water for all the members of their family. So it is not surprising that this country has a high incidence of intestinal diseases.

[MRS. JAGAN]

We can only eradicate such diseases by improving our sanitation and water supply. I feel that the money we are spending in this programme will be money well spent for this purpose. No country can allow its people to drink filthy or contaminated water, or to allow its people to live under insanitary conditions.

I want too to discuss the other two important aspects of our Preventive Health Programme which involves the expenditure of some \$82,000 on malaria eradication and some \$105,000 on filaria eradication. Only this morning I was in conference for three hours with a gentleman, Dr. Bye, who has been sent by W.H.O. to examine our filariasis problem. I was extremely impressed with Dr. Bye's comprehensive examination of our filariasis programme, and in his exhaustive study of our problem he has given great praise to the work that Dr. Adams and his group have done so far in the eradication of filariasis in this country. However, a great deal more work will have to be done in that direction. It has been noted that it is the chief cause of morbidity in British Guiana, and thus requires the greatest attention. It has been estimated that between 20 and 25 per cent. of the population is infected with filaria. In the pilot schemes that have been conducted fairly recently some 30,000 persons have been given blood examinations and have been treated with special drugs. The degree of success which this pilot project has achieved is reassuring, and gives promise that if sufficient attention is paid in the next five-year period to the control of this deadly disease we may succeed in eradicating filariasis from British Guiana.

In our discussions we have seen the need to set up a special unit of the Medical Department devoted to the study and treatment of filariasis. I am indeed hopeful that we will get the assistance we hope to get from the international organisations. There is a great deal of opinion that British Guiana may be one of

the best countries in the world in which to study certain aspects of the disease in order to arrive at improved methods of eradication and treatment.

Malaria, we may say, is an old problem. We cleared this country of malaria sometime ago and we are to spend money on it again. The facts are the same. In certain areas of British Guiana, particularly in the North West District and the Pomeroun, we find that malaria has flared up again, and there are cases that have been reported.

I can remember sometime ago having discussion with some Malariologists who came from W.H.O. to discuss this same plan for which we are seeking money today. One of the doctors, a prominent Malariologist from Venezuela, confirmed that there is malaria on the border between Brazil and Venezuela, and he said that both countries were very much concerned over it.

As regards malaria, Dr. Courtney, an expert on the disease, advised us that we should carry on the campaign; and it is on the basis of the examination by the malaria experts that we have put in this Programme the sum of \$82,000 for malaria eradication.

I might mention something about the water programme. Members might note, at page 52 of our Development Programme, that the work for pure water supply would be divided into three sectors. The first will be areas where there is no water supply at the moment, and the sum of \$1,328,500 is to be spent in that sector; the sum of \$759,500 will be spent in the areas with water supply but with poor or no distribution.

One of our problems, of course, is that if you have a good well in the area and there is no means of carrying that water to the various people, human nature being what it is, some individuals will not walk even a quarter of a mile or more to fetch the water. It becomes a burden and the distribution of sufficient

pipelines then becomes a necessity. The third sector will be the areas with a good supply but because of the increasing population there will have to be improvements and further extensions.

I cannot help making a few remarks at this stage, keeping in mind what my hon. Colleague, the Member for North Georgetown, said when he terrorized this Council with the prediction that British Guiana's tuberculosis population would jump sky high because of our dusty roads. Unfortunately, the hon. Member is not really conversant with medical problems otherwise he would not have made such a silly statement.

I, of course, fully agree with his remark that dust is a nuisance. It is one thing to say that dust is a nuisance, but we must be cautious not to confuse dust with disease. I wish to point out to hon. Members — and I have made frequent trips to New Amsterdam — that you will not get tuberculosis from the dusty roads.

In our medical development programme there are two other items which are not, strictly speaking, preventive but which are necessary adjuncts. They are improvements to two of our country hospitals — the Suddie and Lethem hospitals. In the Suddie hospital at the moment there is a terrific overcrowding of beds in the Maternity Ward. It has no proper Labour Room and no Nursery for newly born babes. In the proposed extension to the Suddie hospital there will be facilities for more maternity beds, for an up to date Delivery Room and an Antiseptic Nursery Room. It is felt that these are necessary additions for one of our rural hospitals which, at the moment, has difficulty in coping with the work under present conditions.

All of us are disappointed at the inability of the Development Programme to include an amount for a new Georgetown Hospital. My Ministry has been working, for a very long time, on plans for a new Georgetown Hospital hoping that the money would be available in the

1960—1964 Programme. After a full examination of all the *pros* and *cons* of this somewhat controversial subject we arrived at the conclusion that the answer to many of our medical headaches, at the moment, would be a new hospital to be situated in the City of Georgetown.

When I first went into the Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing and examined the proposals for a hospital, I found that the plans were much too elaborate for a country as poor as British Guiana. They were, obviously, for a country of some wealth. In the meantime, I have been working along with my Ministerial Staff and the Medical Staff to trim it down as much as possible and to bring the total cost of a public hospital somewhat in line with what this country can afford. Those who may have studied the proposals for a hospital in Georgetown will recall that the idea was to build a hospital on the northern compound of the present hospital site. The method of construction would be more expensive than building it on a new site, for the reason that there will be a progressive pulling down of buildings and putting up of buildings.

The new hospital which had been proposed prior to my advent would have been the type of building which would be very costly to a country such as British Guiana. We have eventually worked out and designed a hospital which has cut the original estimated cost by several millions, building on a new site and horizontally, so that the same number of square feet of space would be obtained at a lower cost. All of these points have been examined quite carefully and preparations have been going on up to this moment. Members will remember that the hon. the Financial Secretary had referred to the Secretary of State's announcement that the Programme would be reviewed in 1962, and there might be some possibility of adding, at that stage, the two larger projects — the Georgetown Hospital and the East Coast road. And in the dispatch from the Secretary of State mention was made that

[MRS. JAGAN]

plans for these two projects should continue; so we have taken these words at face value and will continue with plans for these projects in the hope that in a few years' time the financial position will be improved.

I have heard criticisms — the usual song and dance — from the other side of the Table like the old dance hall entertainers. They have not changed their footworks in the last few years. They are singing the old song that the Majority Party favours only one section of the community. This, of course, is all said with a certain tilt of the voice so that one would imagine that some sinister programme is going on — that one section of the community is being put at a disadvantage, because certain people represent constituencies outside the City, whereas other sections are not. We heard the same thing when the Electricity debate was going on. I presume that the hon. Members who would supposedly be spiting that section of the community would be spiting themselves because most of the Members live in the City and will suffer or enjoy whatever exists because the emphasis in this Development Programme is on the economic sector. Too much emphasis cannot be put on the social sector, when people have higher annual incomes or as our national income rises people will be in a better position to take care of many of their social needs without being dependent upon the State for such requirements. I daresay most people would wish to do that.

In the housing programme for 1960 — 1964 the sum of \$5 million will be spent on housing and, according to the plan which we have in mind, that amount will be largely spent on urban housing. How that could be understood or construed as being a sinister effort to harm the residents of Georgetown, I cannot understand? We are anticipating the construction of some 2,000 buildings which no doubt will be in Georgetown.

In the proposed housing programme we hope to scale down the overhead cost of construction — something which crippled the previous programme — and to make available apartments at a lower rental than in the previous period. The decision to build \$17 apartments was not wholly realistic because we have found that a great many people of the working-class find it difficult to pay that rental. If all goes well, we will be building a type of apartment which will be rented at a figure lower than \$17. We hope to continue our self-help housing drive and to go on with some hire-purchase houses. At the moment we are examining certain proposals from a private concern which has made offers to the Government concerning building on a deferred payment basis. One or two of the proposals look quite attractive.

The question of credits for rural housing is one which will be examined and developed more fully. At the moment some money has been set aside for loans for rural house-building. I do not know if all the Members on the opposite side feel that rural housing in this programme will be at the expense of urban housing. Two Members who spoke on this subject seemed to be suggesting this, and perhaps their views are not worth replying to. Credits for low-income house-building cannot easily be applied to urban housing. These are suited to rural areas where one does not find so many problems attached to the acquisition of house lots.

We hope, in connection with the problem of land acquisition for house lots, to be able to work out something with the local authorities and this will include a system of credits. Some of the \$6 million which is set aside for lower income housing by credits cannot be equated to the \$5 million for outright building. The return from the investment or the loans obviously is much quicker. In the latter case, 15 to 20 years is a long time to wait for the recovery of capital expenditure.

I hope I have not taken up too much of hon. Members' time, but I felt it was necessary to explain some aspects of the proposals for health and housing which perhaps might not have been fully understood.

Mr. Kendall: I have no desire to prolong this debate, and in making my contribution, I want first of all to compliment the Financial Secretary on the White Paper he has produced: he is fast becoming a better writer than he is a speaker, and I hope that in due time he will be asked to write an economic history of British Guiana which will be of value to investors. Although the Programme is interesting and 60% of the funds will be allocated to agriculture, which is supposed to be an economic proposition, I still feel that because one-fifth of the population of the urban areas will be contributing to money being borrowed, they should have something, whether economic or social, which would improve the standard of living in those areas.

I would like to bring to the attention of Government some of the major omissions from this Programme — of things which it was said would be included. I am sorry the hon. the Minister of Communications and Works is not here, for the first omission I wish to mention concerns the Telecommunications building in New Amsterdam, my constituency. It was agreed that in this new Development Programme moneys would be allocated to construct the Telecommunications building and provide new equipment, but today we find New Amsterdam being the only important population centre to which the new telecommunications system does not extend. Automatic exchanges have been put up at Bartica, Mackenzie, East Coast, Demerara. The Minister knows that equipment for New Amsterdam has been prepared and ready for shipment, but no building is there. I do not know what the Minister's explanation will be.

Next, the Fire Brigade at New Amsterdam, was promised a new building in

this Programme, but nothing is provided for it—at least I cannot but see it in these estimates. The need for adequate fire protection was felt two years ago when the promise was made. I do not know whether the Government has in mind providing for it in the Recurrent Estimates.

It is unfortunate that the East Coast road has been given "second priority" and will not be considered until 1962. The Government should realize that a good bit of the production of rice takes place between Georgetown and Rosignol and there is a lot of pressure on the road by way of the transportation of rice. If the Government is unable to find the necessary funds to reconstruct the whole road — although there was an allocation in this respect, which is omitted from this Programme — then the Government should decide to carry out some permanent work at least on a portion of the road now, and over a period of years, with work being done in sections, we would have a good road on that part of the coast.

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing referred to the Suddie Hospital. Apart from the improvements that are necessary there, I wonder whether she is aware that the Doctor in charge is a retired gentleman, over 70 years of age? Although he has done well, I think we should have a more energetic surgeon there, and I hope she will bear that in mind, because I understand that this Government in its wisdom has the over-riding authority above others in the matter of the transfer of personnel in various Government Departments.

This programme is an interesting one. I support some of the items contained in it, but there are others which are mere words, such as the statement that it is the intention of the Government to diversify the economy of this country by starting certain industries which will help to bring about such diversification. But I know as a fact that the Government's main purpose is agriculture, and as the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello,

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said, whether we can sell our agricultural products or not is not Government's business. Time will tell how well Government is getting on in that direction.

I wish to refer to a matter which is not on the Development Programme, but inasmuch as the Minister of Health has stressed how her Department has been able to get aid from the United Nations and other bodies, I should like to say that I read in the newspapers, where incidentally most of Government's business can be seen, because we do not have many meetings of the Legislative Council, that there has been a decision to spend \$277,000 on a survey of the approaches to the Georgetown harbour.

I did not see any mention of the Berbice harbour, and I am wondering whether the omission is wilful. In the same way as it is proposed to spend \$277,000 to investigate whether the depth of water can be increased by a few feet at the Demerara bar, an effort might be made to get the same United Nations agency to survey the Berbice bar. It is the only harbour in the county of Berbice which is the most important agricultural centre in British Guiana. The Berbice river provides the only harbour which belongs to British Guiana in that County; the Courentyne river belongs to the Dutch. If the Berbice harbour is dredged it will no doubt reduce the economic value of the port of Georgetown, but "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof".

I ask Members to forgive me for being somewhat parochial in my contribution to this debate, but other Members have advanced points which I support. As I remarked when the hon. the Financial Secretary was not in his seat, I think he has shown in this Development Programme that he is a better writer than a speaker, and although I have not been able to get a spare copy of the document, I hope it will be publicised in such a manner as will enable people abroad to read it.

Your Honour has placed a time-limit on Members. I do not know whether it is because of the entertainment we had a few hours ago, but I am not going to take up my full time. I have indicated to Members what I consider wilful omissions in the Development Programme; and I wish to tell the hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing who, by the way, is the only Member of the Government to explain the purpose of certain items on the Programme concerning her portfolio, that I will continue to dance the way I am dancing until she and her Government are able to prove to me that there is no discrimination in certain proposals which have been put before the Council.

Mr. Campbell: The last speaker hinted about a time-limit. I am always brief and to the point. The first thing I want to say is that I commend the hon. the Financial Secretary on the plan he has presented. It looks wonderful, but I would like to see the proposals not only written down but implemented. It is the custom nowadays for countries to formulate 5, 7, or 10-year plans. I think it is our second five-year plan beginning from 1960, and a sum of \$110 million is to be allocated to various projects. Like my Friend on my right (Mr. Kendall) I have to be parochial; I have to say something about my constituency.

This country is divided into nine sections, six of which are known as coastal districts. The coastal districts have always been given priority consideration. I was very interested in seeing for the first time provision made in a Development Programme for the purpose of preparing or making accessible 30,000 acres of land in the North West District. This is a move in the right direction. From time to time in this Council I have said that the future of British Guiana lies more or less in its hinterland. I have always said that there are great possibilities in our hinterland from the point of view of mineral, cattle and agricultural production.

When we compare the development of the interior with that of the coastal strip and consider an allocation of \$150,000 for the purpose of bringing 30,000 acres of land in the North West District into cultivation, I would like somebody, perhaps the Financial Secretary, to tell me what it costs to develop 30,000 acres of land along the coast with our drainage and irrigation schemes and our fight against the Atlantic ocean. I have a few figures which indicate that the cost per acre in the North West District works out at about \$5, as against hundreds and perhaps thousands of dollars per acre on the coastlands. But the question has been psychological all along. The politicians in the City have always been thinking about the coastal strip; they have never thought about developing the hinterland. This is a good beginning, but not enough.

On page 42 of the Development Programme, under the head, Land Development, it says:

"It is proposed to spend during the Programme period \$7,100,000 (excluding the cost of drainage and irrigation) on Land Development Schemes in areas which are scattered along the coast and up the river banks. The total acreage of all the schemes is likely to be about 55,000. A breakdown of expenditure between schemes and the amounts allocated for machinery and equipment and preliminary investigations is given below".

An examination of the schemes proposed shows that on Scheme L8—Interior Areas—it is proposed to develop only 700 acres in the interior at an estimated cost of \$250,000. The rest of the schemes are along the coastal strip which will take up the bulk of the \$7,100,000.

The last occasion on which we were discussing the Land Bonds Bill in this Council, a certain hon. Minister said, in commenting on what I said before, that it is well-known that the sand reefs of British Guiana are not fertile. I disagree with that. It is true that we have got white sand belts, and I agree that they

are somewhat infertile, but they could produce cocoa, coffee, coconuts, etc. However, we are not talking about that now. I am talking about the dark sands within 20 or 30 miles from the Coast, in the riverain areas, which are easily accessible.

A certain member of the I.C.A. travelled to the North West District some weeks ago and looked around at the land there. He told me that he was impressed with two crops—peanuts and black peas. He said the two items compared with similar ones found in any other part of the world. Officers of the Department of Agriculture are carrying out certain experiments with the soil there and they are satisfied, in the short time they had started, with the success so far achieved. This gentleman also said that the two items, as well as Irish potatoes which he had seen growing there, are wonderful money crops. Well, there are thousands of acres, perhaps more, of this dark soil above the level of the sea, which can be easily reached. I am glad that a beginning has been made to tap the hinterland with an allocation like this, and I am sure that the scheme would be successful.

The scheme mentioned here is on the south-eastern part of the North West District near the Pomeroun. There is the beginning of a roadway between the Marouka and the Waini and the land is on both sides of the proposed roadway, and anything can develop there under the guidance of the Department of Agriculture. At the other end, towards the Venezuelan border, there are many rivers going towards the hills. I can call some of their names,— strange names — the Aruka, Araua, Wauno, Kaituma, Sebai, Warapok and Barama. All are leading to sandy hills.

Besides the growing of economic and cash crops, livestock cattle can also be reared. Six different types of grasses have been experimented with and the

[MR. CAMPBELL]

agricultural people there say that the grasses were very good cattle fodder. The North West District can raise all the cattle, not only for its own consumption but for "export" to Georgetown and to the West Indian Islands. In other words, a wonderful agricultural community can be set up there, as well as diversification can be practised. There are ideal lands for that.

I have to commend again the Government and the Financial Secretary, on behalf of the Amerindians, for the allocation of \$358,000 for the development of Amerindians. That is a good sum to start with. During the debate on the Budget I propose to deal more fully with the various items. The money allocated for improving the roads connecting the Amerindian Villages in the South Savannahs, I think, will be wisely spent because this is a 'cattle country' and you need roads and bridges to cross the creeks.

I see there is a token provision of \$100,000 for the development of other interior areas. It need not remain as a token provision. It can be used economically, to get more lands in the North West District under the plough. However, the hon. the Financial Secretary has done a wonderful job in preparing this Five-Year Development Programme and I am going to give the other side of the Table my support.

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to compliment the hon. the Financial Secretary. I am not going to say, like one of my hon. Colleagues, that his written word is better than his spoken word because, it is my opinion, that what he said amplified, to my mind, what was so well written in this Programme of Development for 1960-1964. And again he has developed a very charming way of putting it over to the Council; and I suspect, even if it is not palatable, it will go down well.

I would like, perhaps, at the risk of repeating myself, to refer to what I have said in this Council previously, that is, you cannot properly go forward without the proper backing or guidance of an economic planning unit. I have said so before and I would like to reiterate that statement with all the emphasis that I can possibly muster. I think it is very important that I should stress what I now feel is a great omission. For years we have been having Budgets put before this Council for acceptance, but now we are going to have a Five-Year Development Programme which envisages the expenditure of \$110,000,000 with a further possible \$25,000,000 increase, and if one is to read rightly, we have not had the backing with that force that we should like to have so as to be certain that these plans are in the best interest and can be put to the best economic use of the country with proper emphasis as to priorities and the like.

The Government may be likened to a boat with an undoubtedly competent captain and crew, but that boat, having arrived at the bar, insists on having a pilot take them into port, the captain recognizing the value of a pilot at this stage. I find this reflected in paragraph 33 of the White Paper, where it is indicated that the advice of an economist had been given some attention by the Government before the financial talks in the United Kingdom last August, when this Development Programme was presented. I quote:

"Mr. K. Berrill, the Cambridge Economist who had visited the country and carried out an investigation had assumed that the revenue would increase at the rate of 6 per centum and had calculated that, on current rates of interest, borrowing which would be necessary to finance a Programme greater than \$135 m. for the period 1960-1964 would put Government finances in the late 1960's and 1970's under a breaking strain. He hoped that it would prove possible to find finance for a Programme of \$110 m. and recommended that the Programme should be so phased that after a review early in 1962, it could be expanded from \$110 m. to \$135m. if later estimates then showed that to be possible".

Although in that passage the words "had assumed" were used, I would prefer to think that it is more a "reasonable expectation", seeing that economic investigation and planning have been applied to this Programme. A planned programme gives rise to more competence on the part of those people carrying it out, and to the creation of a better economic climate.

You might have a series of projects with estimated revenues attached to them, and from time to time it might be regarded as necessary to push project "A" instead of project "B" because of the calculated results; or maybe because of political considerations. The Members opposite are politicians, and we have to face the fact that, in practice, political considerations apply and the Government decides in which direction the next step should be taken in a Development Programme. Still, one must wonder if it will be wiser to "push" the Tapakuma Project to an earlier completion than that of say, the Mahaica - Mahaicony - Abary Project, in view of the desire to increase the production of rice through better drainage and irrigation. The Member for Eastern Demerara remarked yesterday that before one can judge whether we have rice for the outside markets, one must have a surplus at home. I agree with that, and while I concede that we did not get the desired price for rice last year, I feel that with the backing of good drainage in the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary area, we should be going in the right direction and we must continue to proceed cautiously and surely.

The biggest disappointment in this Programme has been the complete ab-

sence of any reference to rural electrification in the White Paper. A few years ago I heard the Development Secretary himself say that rural electrification was to be carried out almost immediately. It was almost a *fait accompli*, and about \$300,000 was actually spent on it, as the progress report showed.

Two nights ago I was passing through Belfield. I saw a shop which had more lights than the others, and it must have been for that very reason that a number of people gathered leisurely at that shop. The meaning of it struck me very forcibly. It does not matter how much more land in the rural areas you open up in order to relieve the unemployment situation, if you do not put such amenities as electric lights and electric power in the rural areas, there must be a certain amount of dissatisfaction and people will be attracted to the bright lights of Georgetown. They will continue to come into Georgetown and some of them will get into trouble or get mixed up with some sordid business.

Touching on drainage and irrigation, I see on page 16 of this comprehensive document that for 1960-1964 the sum of \$34,580 is allocated.

Mr. Speaker: You are going now to another item, would you like to continue when next we meet?

Mr. Davis: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: The clock is striking five, and we shall take the adjournment now, until Wednesday next, 11th November, at 2 p.m.