

**SECOND**  
**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF BRITISH GUIANA**  
 CONSTITUTED UNDER THE BRITISH GUIANA (CONSTITUTION)  
 (TEMPORARY PROVISIONS) ORDERS IN COUNCIL 1953 AND 1956.

IN THE SEVENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF  
 HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II.

**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
**(HANSARD)**

**OF PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION**

FIRST SITTING

TUESDAY, 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 1958.

The first meeting of the Second Session of the Legislative Council, constituted under the British Guiana (Constitution) (Temporary Provisions) Orders in Council 1953 and 1956, was held in the Chamber of the Legislature, Public Buildings, Georgetown, on Tuesday, 9th December, 1958, at 2 p.m., with customary formalities and ceremonies. The proceedings were broadcast over Radio Demerara.

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.**

} *ex officio*

**The Honourable Dr. C. B. Jagan** — *Member for Eastern Berbice*  
 (Minister of Trade and Industry)

**The Honourable B. H. Benn** *Member for Essequibo River*  
 (Minister of Community Development  
 and Education)

„ „ **E. B. Beharry** *Member for Eastern Demerara*  
 (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).

**Mr. W. O. R. Kendall** *Member for New Amsterdam*

„ **R. C. Tello** *Nominated Member*

„ **F. Bowman** *Member for Demerara River*

„ **L. F. S. Burnham** *Member for Georgetown Central*

„ **S. Campbell** *Member for North Western District*

„ **A. L. Jackson** *Member for Georgetown North*

„ **B. S. Rai** *Member for Central Demerara*

„ **S. M. Saffee** *Member for Western Berbice*

„ **Ajodha Singh** *Member for Berbice River*

„ **Jainarine Singh** *Member for Georgetown South*

„ **R. E. Davis** *Nominated Member*

„ **A. M. Fredricks** *Nominated Member*

„ **H. J. M. Hubbard** *Nominated Member*

„ **A. G. Tasker, O.B.E.** *Nominated Member.*

**Mr. E. V. Viapree**—Clerk of the Legislature (acting).

**Mr. F. A. Narain**—Assistant Clerk of the Legislature (acting).

ABSENT:

**Mr. R. B. Gajraj**— on leave.

**PROCLAMATION**

BRITISH GUIANA

No. 7 of 1958

**PROCLAMATION SUMMONING A SESSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

By His Excellency Sir PATRICK MUIR RENISON, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Colony of British Guiana, Vice-Admiral of the same.

etc.,                      etc.,                      etc.

P. M. RENISON,  
Governor.

WHEREAS the Legislative Council was prorogued with effect from Saturday, the twenty-ninth day of November, 1958;

AND WHEREAS it is provided by subsection (1) of section 54 of the British Guiana (Constitution) (Temporary Provisions) Order in Council, 1953, that, subject to the provisions of subsections (2) and (3) of Section 54 of the said Order, the sessions of the Legislative Council shall be held at such times and places as the Governor shall from time to time by Proclamation published in the Gazette appoint;

AND WHEREAS it is provided by subsection (2) of section 54 of the said Order that there shall be a session of the Legislative Council once at least in every year, so that a period of twelve months shall not intervene between the last sitting in one session and the first in the next session of the Legislative Council:

NOW THEREFORE, in pursuance of the said section, I do hereby proclaim and appoint Tuesday, the ninth day of December, nineteen hundred and fifty-eight at the hour of two of the clock in the afternoon as the time at which a session of the Legislative Council shall be held at the Chamber of the Legislature in the Public Buildings, Georgetown, Demerara.

Given under my Hand and the Public Seal of the Colony at Government House, British Guiana, this 19th day of November, in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and fifty-eight and in the seventh year of Her Majesty's Reign.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

By His Excellency's Command,

IVAN H. SEELIG,  
Acting Governor's Secretary.

## SUMMONING OF SESSION

The Speaker directed the Clerk to read the Proclamation summoning the Second Session of the Legislative Council.

*The Clerk read the Proclamation, No. 7 of 1958, summoning the Session of the Legislative Council.*

## PRAYERS

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Legislative Council having been duly constituted, I will invite His Grace the Archbishop of the West Indies to read Prayers.

*Prayers were read by the Archbishop of the West Indies (the Most Rev. Dr. A. J. Knight, C.M.G.)*

## OATH TO MEMBERS

*The Acting Chief Secretary, Mr. Michael Somerville Porcher, took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance, after which he was welcomed by the Speaker.*

## MINUTES

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Minutes of the meeting of this Council held on Friday, 28th November this year have been printed and circulated. The question is, that these Minutes be confirmed.

Agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

## BRIEF SUSPENSION

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall now suspend this sitting in order that I may receive His Excellency the Governor and Lady Renison on their arrival. Members and invitees may wish, when His Excellency is inspecting the guard of honour, to go out into the gallery and look on—you are permitted so to do. I shall be grateful if Members and invitees will resume their seats in the Chamber before His Excellency enters.

The sitting is now suspended.

## GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

*Council resumed at 2.30 p.m.*

*His Excellency the Governor, Sir Patrick Renison, K.C.M.G., accompanied by His Honour the Speaker, entered the Chamber and addressed the Council as follows:*

Mr. Speaker, I am conscious as the Queen's representative that I am a part of the process of Parliament although I am not a member of our single House of Legislature. We have come to the end of our first Session. It has been a notable year for British Guiana, a year which will be remembered above all other reasons for the visit of Her Royal Highness the Princess Margaret. In my school at the end of every term on the last Sunday evening we sang a hymn:

"O'er the harvest reaped or lost  
"Falls the eve, our task is over;  
"Purpose crowned or purpose crossed  
"None may mar and none recover".

We have spent this first Session as in most new Parliaments finding our feet under the new dispensation, learning the responsibilities proper to Her Majesty's Government and Her Majesty's equally loyal Opposition. In Executive Council amid a mass of work I think we have been assessing soberly world realities in their relation to British Guiana. Now in this second Session we know that as a Parliament our task is never over; we must, Government and Opposition, go ahead, I hope in more sureness and understanding, with the absorbing duty of governing the country to the very best that is in us all.

As I see it, some of the special tasks of the year ahead fall under the following headings: the budget, preparation of a new development plan for 1960 to 1964; review of wages, salaries and conditions of service in the Government Services; review of Public Works organisation; the Constitution Committee; relationships with the Government Services; the solution of some of the problems of the rice industry.

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If I may elaborate briefly on these headings: I think the budget is not an easy one, although this year's out-turn, thanks to our rice farmers and our sugar farmers and the weather, is better than at one time we dared hope. I shall leave the presentation of the budget to the Honourable the Financial Secretary and give you no hints of what is in store.

In the preparation of a new development plan I, and I do not doubt all in British Guiana, have been much encouraged by the published statement of Mr. John H. Adler of the Department of Operations, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Mr. Adler spoke of a "remarkably promising picture of a healthy and vigorously growing economy". Mr. Adler, who has much experience of development programmes in many parts of the world, said "the growth in production and income of British Guiana over the last decade or so compares very favourably with that of the West Indies and the countries of Latin America and exceeds that of the under-developed areas of Asia and Africa by a very wide margin. In spite of a high rate of population growth which in itself is in part a reflection of growing material welfare, income per head of the population has grown by an annual rate of about 2½% . . . I have been informed about the Government's tentative development plan for the next five-year period. It would be presumptuous for me to comment on the programme in detail but from what I have seen it is clear to me that the top priorities have been correctly selected." In order to get new thought on old problems my Government hopes to arrange a review by a recognized economist of our detailed proposals for the next five-year period, before we take them to London.

As regards the review of our Public Works organization I confess that I am not altogether happy about our present methods of doing work. I think that some of our problems might be more quickly solved if everybody, from labourers to leaders, would always work as hard in the

service of the country as for himself and his family and personal interests. The country belongs to the labourer and the clerk and the farmer just as much as to the politician and civil servant and merchant and business man. Shoddy work by any of them damages and retards the country. To speak more widely than of Public Works alone, I have been very much depressed, in my hopes for the country, by some of the dishonesties and corruptions revealed this year at all levels. I think they are fatal to a small country; our only hope of high standing which leads to progress lies in a reputation for fair dealing, integrity and an honest effort to do our best at every level of endeavour.

The Constitution Committee, which is the whole of the Legislative Council, is now the focus of our hopes for constitutional advancement. But constitutions are not written only for political parties or legislative councillors. They are written for a whole country. Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom wishes to hear the views of everybody in British Guiana who will express them on where we go from here. I have been asked to forward those views to the Secretary of State together with the views of the Committee. Such views may be put forward as the Committee proceeds, through its individual members or through the Press, or they may be sent to me when the recommendations of the Committee, majority and minority, are known, to send forward to the Secretary of State with my comments and the Committee's report. May I mention that if only through wise argument and productive compromise some considered unanimity could be reached, the task of Her Majesty's Government would be the easier.

As a loyal civil servant who throughout his life has never wished to change his job, I have been very unhappy at the recent relationships of this Government with those who represent the Government Services. I am sure that we shall not progress very fast or far until those relationships are improved. I regard their improvement as a major task for 1959. I think they can be improved in

three main ways; firstly by correction of the main bones of contention in the structure and conditions of the Service; secondly by improvement of our procedures for negotiation with representatives of the Service;—as I have already made public we are busy studying, in consultation with the staff side of Whitley Councils, our conciliation machinery with a view to establishing methods of reaching final recommendations on matters in dispute which are quicker and more clearly impartial; and thirdly we can improve relationships by increasing the confidence of the Service in the Government of the country.

It is this third point which is the crux of the matter; there must be in the Service the recognition of the overall responsibilities of the Government, whoever it may be; there must be a mature disregard for politics. On the other side there must be full recognition by any Government in power of the vital importance to the country of the efficiency, confidence and impartiality of its Civil Service. Government must learn to use the ability which is patent or latent in the Service.

At all levels both in the Departments and in the Secretariat there must be the determination to give fair consideration quickly and to provide to everybody the example of a fair employer whose employees are well-treated, neither envied nor pitied by the public. May I say—and I speak with wider reference than to the Civil Service—I am and shall remain a believer in human beings and in individualism, the right of man to voice his view. But in this country there is too much automatic opposition, too little recognition that others may be in a position to know more and to have thought deeper, others who have wider responsibilities and who are trying equally hard to help the country.

To include the problems of the rice industry in this special catalogue may be selfish. I have been so interested in this industry and so sure that its efficiency is vital to the future of this country, that I summoned the Rice Committee to sit

under my own chairmanship. I pray that its report which is just being published may be of true help to the industry.

I asked the Members of my Executive Council, in keeping with the tradition of a "Speech from the Throne" to give me in outline from each of the offices or Ministries an account of the work which it is hoped to accomplish during the year ahead. I had intended to include in my speech the statements given to me by each office and Ministry to make clear, largely in their own words, the hopes and intentions for the new Session of the Members of Executive Council, who are together the Government of this Country.

But I find that there is so much of importance in those statements that to cut them down would be difficult, while to read them in full would extend the length of this speech to about one hour and a quarter. That would be a bad example to this Council and it is too long for me, whatever my audience may think about it. I have therefore had those statements reproduced as a typed annexure to this speech, and copies will be distributed to Honourable Members together with copies of my speech.

I hope that Honourable Members will read the statements and agree that they too should be printed as a Council paper. They provide a very good background for the coming consideration of the budget. But more than that, they provide in comparatively small compass a picture of the astonishing amount of work in which the Government, through its departments and agencies, is immediately and energetically engaged. There are people who envy Ministers their jobs and salaries; this record of work and responsibility should make them think.

You will find, for instance, a statement of what we are trying to do about unemployment; you will find one Minister's proposal to work towards an industrial development corporation, another's immediate plans for all the many sides of education, an outline of the Government's land policy and of legislation in prepara-

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tion to assist it, and the immediate plans of the departments who are directly concerned. You can find out what is happening about a new hospital for Georgetown, and why there is a delay in constructing a new East Coast Road. A glimpse is given of the extraordinary variety and complexity of modern government, and I think the glimpse reveals that the country is very far from standing still.

Sir, British Guiana is a country which prefers to advertise to its citizens and to the world its failures and fears and prejudices and antagonisms, rather than its achievements. Criticism is a national pastime. The country is a paradise for oppositionists. I am sometimes astonished that we ever succeed in doing anything. But we do, and, it seems, faster than most, if our own statistics and Mr. Adler's objective and impartial review are to be believed, as I know they are. I think it does us good from time to time to pause and take an over-all look at the exceptional amount of work in which this small country is engaged—and, taking the rough with the smooth, successfully engaged.

Remember that my speech and its annexures have hardly touched on activities of commerce and industry which are at least as busy in their own spheres as is Government in the public sector of the economy. Nor have been mentioned music and art and literature or athletics; the things of the spirit and of sport, which too I believe are growing.

We have our challenges and difficulties—we shall always have them; this will never be an easy country; we have our disappointments—occasionally our disgraces. But I too believe that the review which, with the help of my Ministers, has been given of all this work in which we are actively and eagerly engaged reveals a vigorous and expanding economy in a forward-looking country. It should be encouragement to a brave if critical people who always go on hoping, however hopeless their present lot. I believe that the increasing determination in the world to

assist under-developed countries can mean much to us if we shall have the faith and sense and stability to learn from our disappointments and mistakes and to convince and retain sound friends. People trust the people who trust them. People help the people they like and admire. Our future is yet in the balance. I pray that the disruptive forces of anti-colonial intellectual and emotional oppositionism with their political catch-cries and shibboleths, will dissolve before the realities of government in our geographical position. May they reform themselves in a chain reaction, like atoms bombarded in a nuclear reactor, into a Guianism throwing out in the place of heat the dynamism to carry forward this very difficult country to an honoured place in our Commonwealth of Nations.

If by a growing realisation of the comradeship of effort and integrity and mutual understanding, backed by visible achievement, we can establish a partnership and win the admiration of the West Indies, the United States of America, Canada and Great Britain, on whose confidence our future as an independent country overwhelmingly depends, I shall view the prospects of this country with more hopefulness and faith and balanced belief than some of the Jeremiahs who look balefully at the lost opportunities of the past rather than at the performance of the present and the possibilities of the future.

I now declare open the Second Session of this Legislature and pray for the guidance of Almighty God in the work which lies before us.

#### ANNEXURE

*Following is the annexure to His Excellency the Governor's speech, which outlines the programme for 1959 in each of the offices and ministries of the Honourable Members of the Executive Council.*

**The Chief Secretary's Office**, besides its continuing responsibilities for the Police and Fire Brigade and Government Information Services, will be most fully engaged in all the important Service matters which have been mentioned in the Governor's speech.

It is hoped that the programme of scholarships and study courses designed to qualify Guianese officers for professional and technical appointments will continue at its present level if resources will allow. A programme of Amerindian Development projects to be financed from Colonial Development and Welfare funds will be laid before Council for approval. The proposals include as in previous years rest-shelters, wells, trade stores and community development projects.

**The Attorney-General's Office**, besides its legal advice and Court work, is of course concerned in all the legislation which comes before this Council, including the various Bills which are mentioned under the Ministries. The Honourable the Attorney-General has however particularly asked to be mentioned three interesting pieces of legislation which will be brought before the Council. The first and most important is a Land Registration Bill which we owe to the excellent work of the Land Registration Committee. It provides a system of conveyancing in use in many parts of the Commonwealth which gives an indefeasible title to land; it provides a simple, expeditious and cheap means of transferring and otherwise dealing in land; it will include provisions for the granting of declarations of title to land which is now held under imperfect title; the system will exist side by side with the transport system; it will eventually ensure that a clean title is available for every square yard of land in British Guiana.

A second piece of legislation is proposed for shortening the procedure for summoning persons who commit minor traffic and other offences, and for dealing with them summarily. It will decrease congestion in the Courts and enable the Police to deal more effectively with the increase of minor traffic offences.

The Attorney-General is also engaged on hire-purchase legislation on the lines of that in force in Jamaica and Trinidad, as was requested by the Council.

**The Financial Secretary's Office**, in consultation with all the offices and ministries, is preparing the budget and the

development programme. It has no special individual projects to be mentioned on this occasion, but as always it has financial responsibility for all the work of the offices, ministries and departments.

**The Ministry of Trade and Industry** has the following programme for the Session :

(a) Consideration is being given to setting up a small organisation to deal with industrial analysis, planning and research and the general development of trade and industry. This organisation is intended to be the nucleus of an industrial development corporation, and will be placed in a position to give expeditious assistance and advice in connection with the establishment of local enterprises.

(b) The Industrial Development Advisory Committee, appointed in December 1957, has submitted its report and recommendations which cover a wide field of industrial development. They are now being examined by the Ministries concerned, and will be ready for consideration by Government early in 1959.

(c) Consideration is being given to amendment of the Companies Ordinance with a view to encouraging industrial development and it is hoped to introduce these amendments into the Legislative Council as soon as possible.

(d) The policy of protecting local industries and granting tax and other concessions to new industries will be continued so as to accelerate industrial development.

#### *Minor Industries Unit :*

This Unit is a branch of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Its function of promoting cottage industries has been extended to include also the promotion and development of light industries, and its complete re-organisation is envisaged to enable the Unit to operate more effectively on the expanded basis. The Unit has already established the nibbi furniture industry, and an export market is now being considered. Development of the earthenware industry is proceeding, and the indications are that this industry can be established on a commercial basis. Experi-

ments on coir have shown satisfactory results, and plans have been made for the production in the near future of brushes and brooms in commercial quantities, and for establishing the coconut fibre industry.

#### *Co-operative Development:*

The Co-operative Movement in British Guiana is now well advanced beyond the thrift stage. Thrift and Credit Societies will continue to finance the planting and reaping operations of their members and it is hoped that this year's good rice crop will restore the financial stability of many of these societies which have been adversely affected by last year's drought.

There is a continuing trend towards acquisition and development of agricultural lands through co-operative societies; about 7,000 acres of arable lands being thus secured this year. Many groups of small farmers are considering the possibility of introducing agricultural machinery to their farms by co-operative means. Attention will be devoted to developing these two phases of co-operative activity during 1959.

#### *Commodity Control Organisation:*

(a) Notification has been received of further liberalisation of dollar imports within the Sterling Area to be effective from January, 1959, and many additional items will be placed on Open General Licence. Details about these will be announced by the Ministry shortly.

(b) The policy in respect of the local allocation of dollars for trade purposes is being reviewed to allow a more liberal and equitable distribution of dollar quotas during 1959.

(c) Control of prices and distribution of goods, and control of imports and exports will be kept under constant review to effect relaxations whenever possible.

#### *British Guiana Tourist Committee:*

The recently appointed reconstituted Tourist Committee has started to function and is considering plans for the development of the Tourist Industry. Having regard to the beneficial effects a flourishing Tourist Industry can have on the Colony's

economy, Government will support as far as possible within the limits of its resources any feasible proposals for developing the Industry.

#### GENERAL

#### *Unemployment*

Accelerated agricultural and industrial development must necessarily relieve unemployment and under-employment. Some measure of relief has already resulted from increasing production of main industries, such as sugar and rice, from the development of other industries and the introduction of new industries, such as the manufacture of margarine, glycerine, biscuits, gin, beer, and nibbi furniture; from the preparations for the establishment of new industries such as the manufacture of particle board, alumina and manganese, and from the promotion of cottage industries. In the agricultural sector further relief has been and is being effected by making more and more lands available for farming, and extending land settlement schemes. Public Works are also contributing in some measure to affording relief. Government has the unemployment situation constantly in view and will continue its efforts to relieve, and it is hoped, ultimately to resolve it.

**The Ministry of Community Development and Education** has summarised its programme as follows:

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The necessary legislation to give effect to Government's proposals for Local Government reform as set out in Sessional Paper No. 5/1958 is being drafted and it is hoped that substantial progress will be made in 1959. The first stage will involve a revaluation of property, and draft legislation to provide for this will be published in the near future. In the meanwhile the Honourable the Minister of Community Development and Education is studying comments and suggestions which have been received from many quarters.

Further consideration is being given to the recommendations in Professor J. Henry Richardson's Report on Social Security, to see whether the country can yet afford to take the first steps in introducing a useful contributory scheme for old age and invalidity.



Arrangements have been made to continue the very excellent work started by Dr. Theo Vaughan in the promotion of community development projects, through the provision of a separate branch of the Department of Local Government under a senior officer styled Community Development Officer. Much valuable experience has been gained from the pilot projects at Crabwood Creek, Golden Grove/Nabaclis and Huis t'Dieren.

The Rural Aided Self-Help Scheme will be continued when funds from the Colonial Development Welfare allocations to this colony have been approved by the Secretary of State.

Provision on a limited scale has been made in the draft Estimates for 1959 to enable assistance towards the erection of community centres in the rural areas to be continued.

### *Education*

Education Estimates have been framed for 1959 to provide increased facilities for primary, secondary and post-primary education.

#### *Primary Education*

It is intended that during 1959 there will be an acceleration of the school building programme to provide more adequate accommodation in primary schools for children of school age throughout the colony. It is expected that, subject to funds being made available in the 1959 Development Estimates, the target of 20 to 25 new schools including extensions to existing buildings will be accomplished. In addition to our normal school building programme an application has been made to the United Kingdom Government for a grant-in-aid to provide 6 Home Economics and Handicraft Departments in 1959 for primary schools and, subject to the approval of Government's application for funds, it is proposed to build 2 such Departments in each of the three counties of Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo.

#### *Training of Primary School Teachers*

The Education Programme provides for an extension of the training of teach-

ers by a one-year emergency training scheme at the Government Training College. It is hoped that during 1959, 150 to 200 teachers will be undergoing training for service in primary schools throughout the colony which are very short of trained teachers. Government is still considering the best means for providing full training courses in the future.

#### *Revision of text books*

It is proposed to revise the text books in use in primary schools with a view to improving the pupils general knowledge of conditions at home and in the Caribbean area. This policy is in keeping with what has already been accomplished in some of the neighbouring Caribbean territories. Government has decided to appoint a Committee during 1959 to examine and advise on materials suitable for use as text books in our primary schools.

#### *Secondary Education*

It is proposed to build additional Science laboratories at Queen's College and Bishops' High School to meet the urgent needs of pupils desiring scientific education. The additional laboratories are intended to benefit mainly students coming into the schools at the fifth form or post fifth form stage from other secondary schools, the Government Training College for Teachers or elsewhere to do a two or three year course in Science subjects to the Ordinary Level of the General Certificate of Education.

#### *Grant-in-Aid to private secondary schools*

Provision has been made for special grants to private secondary schools for extensions and improvements to existing buildings and for the building of modest science laboratories. Government has also approved of a scheme for the training of teachers from private secondary schools for a University degree with an accent on Science subjects, and it is expected that three more scholarships will be awarded in 1959.

#### *Library Facilities*

Limited library facilities are now provided for primary schools with Colonial Development and Welfare assistance and

a grant in this connection has been approved in order to extend similar facilities to secondary schools. It is proposed to seek further assistance to provide library facilities for secondary schools in 1959.

#### *Secondary Education in Rural Areas*

It is proposed to establish in 1959 a secondary school to accommodate approximately 300 pupils in Essequibo.

It is pleasing to note that private enterprise has continued to be interested in providing educational facilities in rural areas. The Demerara Bauxite Company has already begun the building of a secondary school at Mackenzie to accommodate 150 pupils with a possible extension to 300 as the need arises. It is expected that this school will be opened in September, 1959. It has been designed for the teaching of Science among other subjects. The Lutheran Governing Body has proposals also for the extension of the Skeldon High School to meet the growing needs of the secondary education in that area.

#### *Post-Primary Education*

The Government Technical Institute proposes to extend its curriculum to provide for the training of surveyors and for training for junior technical posts in the various Government Departments. It is also proposed to spread technical training in rural areas by the establishment of preliminary craft courses wherever possible. The curriculum of the Carnegie School of Home Economics will be widened to provide for the teaching of English subjects, Child Care, Civics and Art. It is also proposed to spread the teaching of Home Economics among adults in rural areas to keep pace with the establishment of additional Home Economics Departments in primary schools in rural areas.

#### *General*

As a result of the encouraging response to a Guianese History and Culture Week which was held in October of this year, Government has decided to repeat this educational project in 1959 on a larger scale, and it is hoped to encourage

more youth groups and other voluntary bodies to take part.

Books and Art exhibitions for the benefit of children attending Primary and Secondary schools will be encouraged. Provision is being made also for Physical Education and organised instructions in sport for school children of age groups who can benefit most from this type of school activity.

**The Ministry of Natural Resources** has ambitious and wide-ranging intentions for our development and the strengthening of our economy.

It is proposed to introduce the following legislation during the coming Session:

- (i) *Amendments to the British Guiana Rice Producers' Association Ordinance, 1946 and the Regulations made thereunder.*

The object of the amendments is to improve the operating efficiency of the British Guiana Rice Producers' Association and to provide a greater degree of representation for the rice farmers.

- (ii) *Amendments to the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance, 1956.*

The purpose of this legislation is to provide improved security of tenure for tenants under the Ordinance and to correct certain defects in the existing Ordinance.

- (iii) *The Small Holdings Bill.*

The objects of this Bill are to provide for the secure lease of small holdings to good farmers, to ensure that Colony lands which have been developed at the public expense are occupied beneficially and to prevent fragmentation and aggregation of small holdings.

- (iv) *The Land Bonds Bill.*

This Bill will seek to authorise the payment by land bonds by the Government for its purchases for settlement and development of land which is not beneficially occupied.

- (v) *Flood Control, Drainage and Irrigation Legislation.*

The Drainage and Irrigation Ordinance 1940 is designed to provide for the administration of small areas on the coast which have been empoldered from time to time. In view of the comprehensive schemes now being undertaken and in preparation for Flood Control, Drainage and Irrigation of the Whole Coastal Area, it is proposed to introduce legislation suitable for the administration and control of these major schemes.

### *Land Policy*

The Government will give first priority to its programme for the development of land that is presently not beneficially occupied and for its allocation, on lease, to farmers. The "Land Settlement Department" will be re-designated the "Land Development Department". This change in name is designed to reflect the changing emphasis being placed on the work and objectives of this Department. In addition to the task of settling people on the land, the Department will be charged primarily with the responsibility to find and develop suitable lands for allocation. In order to expedite the development of the lands, it is proposed to obtain a large increase in the amount of machinery available to government for land clearing operations and for the construction of drainage and irrigation works.

The Government has increased its target for the development and allocation of lands. The terms and conditions of Crown Land Leases are being revised.

### *Agriculture*

The Government proposes to consolidate and stimulate still further the progress achieved in the sugar, rice, livestock and other agricultural industries. In addition, it hopes to increase the tempo of agricultural development on two broad fronts. Firstly, expansion of production of agricultural commodities which are imported, at present, but which it is considered can be produced profitably by local farmers. Secondly, the fostering of crops with favourable export possibilities.

Coconuts fall into both categories. It is the intention to encourage farmers to put more land under coconut cultivation annually. 70,000 seedlings will be produced by the nurseries of the Department of Agriculture and distributed to farmers. Loans will be available for rehabilitating old estates and to encourage new ones. The implementation of a land settlement scheme for Amerindians on some 30,000 acres of hill country in the Moruca area will also have an important effect; greater attention will be paid to the control of pests and diseases and the use of fertilisers and selected seedlings to increase yields. The Department of Agriculture will begin research on other oil bearing plants such as sesame and the oil palm.

Other efforts in this field of substitution of imports and the attainment of self-sufficiency will include the fostering of crops such as peas, beans, vegetables, and condiments which are imported in large quantities.

The dairy industry will be expanded still further in an effort eventually to replace imports amounting to some \$4 million annually. But emphasis will be placed on reducing costs of production, by the use of more efficient breeds under the Dairy Expansion and Artificial Insemination Schemes; improved management of cattle; the cultivation of more nutritious grasses; and stimulation of consumption of local milk.

The rice industry will continue to be enlarged, through the distribution of suitable additional lands on the coast, improvement of drainage and irrigation facilities, increased supplies of pure line seed padi; loans to farmers; continuation of duty free concessions on fuel; a colony-wide scheme for the control of pests and diseases; continuation of research work to discover higher yielding varieties, and better methods of cultivation; and rationalisation of rice milling, including the installation of modern multi-stage equipment in small mills and the greater use of existing central mills.

Perennial crops, notably cocoa will be encouraged on the river banks. Already

Bookers are giving noteworthy attention to this crop by establishing some 1,000 acres on the banks of the Demerara, Canje and Berbice. This crop will be fostered also on the Government Land Settlements at Mara and Garden of Eden and on private farms. There is hope that cocoa will be of major importance to the future economy of British Guiana.

Citrus will also be expanded, and it is planned to produce some 1,000 acres of lines at Mara.

It is hoped to move a step nearer the establishment at the Central Agricultural Station of a Farm School to train young agriculturists, which will also offer short refresher courses for adult farmers.

#### *Lands and Mines*

Since August 1957, 18,822 acres of undeveloped Crown Lands have been allocated. It is proposed to increase this allocation in 1959.

#### *Mines : Bauxite*

The industrial recession as a result of the world wide over-supply situation of aluminium seems to be passing in the United Kingdom and North America, and the apparent rising trend in business is encouraging for sales of metal grade bauxite during the coming year.

Progress of construction on the alumina plant at Mackenzie is proceeding on schedule and Demerara Bauxite Company, Limited hope to put the plant into operation in 1961 with the full planned capacity of 220,000 tons of alumina per year.

Twelve new bauxite mining leases were issued recently, seven to Demerara Bauxite Company, Limited incorporating former leases and embodying the terms agreed on under the Alumina Agreement, and five entirely new leases to Reynolds Metals Company.

#### *Gold and Diamonds*

The outlook for gold is not very good in view of the difficulties being experienced

by our major producer, British Guiana Consolidated Goldfields Limited.

Small scale production from Cuyuni which boosted gold production for 1957/58, is also expected to taper off due to the quick exhaustion of the relatively rich but small deposit in the Akaiwong field.

The total diamond production comes from the small worker, or porkknocker, whose operations are most affected by weather conditions. Average annual production over the past 5 years was 30,000 carats, and it is anticipated that future production will conform closely to this figure for some time to come.

#### *Manganese*

The first shipments of manganese ore from the North West were originally scheduled for early in 1959, but although work has gone ahead on the initial phase of developing the mine, the main construction works covering railroad, loading station and waterway will not be completed in time for this, although they are proceeding well.

#### *Oil*

During mid-year 1958 a marine seismic survey of the entire area of the continental shelf offshore of British Guiana was carried out, and it is hoped that the results will soon be made available to Government and that they will prove favourable.

#### *Radio-Active Minerals*

The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority have established a small office and laboratory in Georgetown with the intention of encouraging the search for radio-active and strategic minerals in British Guiana, and their main programme will extend over the next two years. A geologist who has specialised in modern prospecting methods to search for radio-active minerals is stationed in British Guiana and is working in co-operation with the Director of Geological Survey. An intensive prospecting campaign for radio-active minerals and beryl will continue during 1959.

One licence to prospect for radioactive minerals in a favourable locality was issued recently.

### Surveys

Work on Topographical Surveys continued throughout the year with emphasis on the production of maps from Aerial Photographs. The Colony was again fortunate in obtaining, through Colonial Development and Welfare Funds, the services of a flying Company to undertake Aerial Mapping of the interior of the Colony.

A total coverage of 7,000 square miles has been reported obtained by the Company, and it is hoped that another Contract will be entered into during the coming year to carry on the good work.

### Drainage and Irrigation

It is anticipated that the Main Works of the Boesasië Extension project will be completed in 1959. The completion of these works will mean that the whole coastal area between the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers will now have flood control, main drainage and irrigation facilities. This is the first step in development of unoccupied land in this area, and it is estimated that approximately 40,000 acres of land not beneficially occupied can be developed. Internal irrigation and drainage works in these areas have still to be undertaken.

Satisfactory progress is being made on the Black Bush Polder, and it is anticipated that the first rice crop could be reaped from part of the area in September, 1961. This Scheme will make productive an area of some 27,000 acres.

The Government have also taken steps to ensure that final proposals, detailed plans and estimates for the Modified Tapakuma Project will be ready in 1959 so that construction can begin in 1960. This scheme covers the area of some 30,000 acres between Annandale and the Somerset/Berks Canal on the Essequibo Coast.

Investigational surveys will be continued in the area between the Mahaica

and Berbice Rivers, and Engineers will commence their investigations and designs for the future major works necessary to provide flood control, drainage and irrigation for this large coastal area.

It is also intended to push forward with many miscellaneous minor schemes designed to improve drainage and irrigation facilities in areas already partly developed, and to bring many relatively small areas into production in various parts of the Colony.

### Forestry

The prospects for the forest industry for 1959 are encouraging. The export market for new export timbers, other than greenheart is good, and there is likely to be an expanding trade, particularly with the West Indian territories. Both the Plyboard factory and the Columbian Corporation's wood pulp project are said to be making good progress. The former is expected to go into production in the early months of 1959.

In addition to the normal duties of the Forest Department as the manager of British Guiana's Crown Forests, the Department will, during 1959, increase the area of Caribbean pine plantations. These plantations are, in fact, a large-scale experiment in the utilisation of the extensive but hitherto barren white sand area of the Colony. The introduction of the Caribbean white pine, if successful, will enable British Guiana to replace the large quantity of imported soft woods by a local product.

The Central Timber Manufacturing Plant of the Department is approaching an economic turnover capacity. It is proposed to increase the operating capital of the plant in order to take advantage of the encouraging export trade, to which reference has already been made, and also in order to increase the plant's turnover to enable it to be fully self-supporting.

### Land Development

As indicated previously, from 1st January, 1959, the Land Settlement Department will be redesignated the Land Development Department. Its primary

function lies not only in bringing more land under beneficial occupation, but also in development of family-size farms and the dependent farmers' community.

With this objective in view for the past two years the Department has been engaged in the rehabilitation and development of some 3,800 acres at Plantation Mara *cum annexis* on the East Bank of the Berbice River, and in the development of 1,000 acres at Plantation Garden of Eden on the East Bank of the Demerara River. Already at Mara some 58 settlers have each been placed in occupation of  $17\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land— $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres of which are for homestead purposes and 15 acres for rice cultivation, and a further batch of 45 settlers will shortly be selected and allocated 15 acres each for farmstead purposes.

Land development proposals for the coming year provide for the continuation of the existing Mara Scheme, for the completion of the Garden of Eden project, and for the implementation of improvement and expansion works at existing Land Settlements at Anna Regina, Vergenoegen and Cane Grove. In addition provision has also been made for acquiring additional land-clearing machinery in order to expedite land clearing operations; for the acquisition, empoldering and layout of some 5,980 acres comprising Plantation Onverwagt *cum annexis* on the West Coast of Berbice; and, for preliminary drainage and land clearing works to be undertaken in respect of new land development projects which will ultimately result in a total of approximately 24,655 acres being brought under beneficial occupation in areas North and South of Mara *cum annexis*, Crown Lands in rear of Plantations Kortberaad and Plegt Anker, East Bank, Berbice, and Crown Lands between Jackson and Moleson Creeks on the Corentyne River. Proposals for the development of large acreages of land which are not at present beneficially occupied, and which are commanded by the Boerasirie Project are at present under examination by the Departments of Agriculture and Drainage and Irrigation and this Department. During the coming year the Department proposes to examine the Black Bush Polder

area with regard to preparation and lay-out of the lands with a view to settlement beginning towards the end of 1960, as it is anticipated that the major development works at present in hand will be completed by the end of 1961.

### Geological Surveys

The Geological Survey Department is now up to full strength and during the coming year twelve geologists will be engaged in the geological mapping and mineral exploration of the Interior of British Guiana. During the past two years three Guianese have taken honours degrees in geology at British Universities on Government Scholarships, and have been appointed to posts of Assistant Geologist. Another Guianese who took an honours degree in physics and a post-graduate degree of Doctor of Philosophy in geophysics has been appointed Geophysicist-Hydrologist.

The principal task of the Geological Survey, in addition to their usual search for minerals, will be to prepare a new reconnaissance geological map of the whole Colony. Such a map is essential to serve as a basis for modern scientific prospecting methods such as airborne geophysical prospecting and geochemical methods, and its preparation is being pushed forward as a matter of urgency. One geologist will have the special task of advising the small workers engaged in exploiting the alluvial gold and diamond gravels in the Interior. In order to keep in touch with them he will be stationed in Bartica, where an office will be maintained by the Geological Survey, and he will tour the alluvial workings once each year. The Geophysicist-Hydrologist will be engaged on a survey of the artesian basin which underlies the coastal areas of British Guiana, and which is tapped by the wells of the Pure Water Supply, and he will also advise on questions of mineral search in the Interior.

The process of centralizing the Geological Survey in Georgetown, which was begun in 1957, will be completed during the year. A new wing is being added to the Headquarters building in Brickdam and the essential housing accommodation

is being provided in a block of flats to be constructed on the Cummingsburg Market site. The money for these buildings comes from a grant under the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. The object of centralizing the Department is to increase its efficiency and to provide more attractive conditions for geologists and their families. The fruits of this policy are already apparent as resignations from the Department, frequent in the past, ceased during the past two years, and only one geologist has failed to renew his contract.

In accordance with the policy of centralization a well-equipped laboratory is being built up in Georgetown and a senior post of Chemist-Petrologist has been created and filled. The public is being encouraged to bring minerals for identification and an efficient service of assays and analyses will be available for the mining community. The library and drawing office are also being strengthened by new appointments.

The Government's policy is to utilize the money already allocated from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund to build up the nucleus of a fully integrated Geological Survey Department which will provide the services so necessary to a developing community from the point of view of mineral search and exploitation, water supply, soils, materials and foundations for engineering projects, and general education.

**The Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing** has added the following statement to the programme :—

*Labour*

Government has taken steps to bring about an improvement in the conditions of the workers in the Timber, Aerated Water, Garment and Printing Industries, and in Watchmen's and Domestic service. The results of Wages Councils and Committees which have been set up this year should be received during 1959. It is proposed early in this session to introduce legislation making amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance which in certain respects will go further than the recommendations of an Advisory

Committee which earlier this year examined the problem. Amendments are also contemplated in respect of the Labour Ordinance, our basic labour legislation and the Trades Unions Ordinance, to bring them more in line with the provisions of certain International Labour Conventions which set minimum standards for the protection of workers' rights. Under examination is the question of access to work places by trade union representatives when performing tasks of organisation.

Regent events have shown that our legislative machinery in respect of services considered essential to the life and health of the community is in need of overhauling. We are now reviewing our machinery and procedures, and amending legislation will no doubt result from this exercise.

Sugar Industry Labour Welfare legislation, at the request of the Committee responsible, is likely to be before the House early next year.

*Health*

An ambitious health programme is contemplated for next year, embracing both the preventive and curative aspects of health. We are now awaiting the Secretary of State's approval of funds to proceed with the construction of Cottage Hospitals at Mahaicony, Leguan and Leonora. These will be supplemented by some twenty-five Health Centres to serve communities along the coast and up the rivers. In many cases the land has already been provided free of cost by enterprising and public-spirited Local Authorities.

The function of these Health Centres will be to bring better health services to the people. They will provide anti-natal and post-natal clinics, infant welfare, dispensary and public health services and health education, which are bound to be reflected in an improvement in the health of the rural communities. This ties in with an accelerated scheme for midwife training which has already begun and is an urgent need.

Rural areas will also benefit from a scheme for the training of Dental Aides who will do simple dental work under

supervision, and so relieve the fully trained Dentist for preventive work. In this, as in other matters, the Government has had invaluable help and advice from the World Health Organisation. The World Health Organisation has promised further assistance in solving our health problems and we have every reason to hope that they will participate in an Environmental Sanitation Programme under consideration for 1960. This programme includes a safer sewage disposal system in rural areas to replace the existing arrangements which are both an eyesore and a health hazard.

Steps are proposed next year to combat both *Filaria* and *Poliomyelitis*. The first step of a national anti-filaria campaign was begun this year and will be stepped up next year to bring this disease under control. On the best advice available we are making provision next year to immunise against polio the pre-school population who are the chief carriers of the disease and who also suffer the worst ravages of the disease.

Leprosy legislation will be before the House early next year.

As Honourable Members know, we have had under consideration for some time plans for the construction of a new Hospital for Georgetown. The estimated cost was nearly fourteen million dollars. The difficulty of raising funds on the scale required appeared to rule out any prospects of implementing this project in the immediate future. Alternative proposals were already in hand for carrying out a programme of improvements to the existing hospital when hopes of the new hospital were revived by a fresh approach to the problem. Government is now actively examining the possibilities of building a new Georgetown Hospital on a deferred payment plan with modifications which would bring the cost substantially below the original estimate.

It is too early to say how the negotiations will work out, but all concerned are hoping that a new hospital can be built at a cost and on terms which this Government could afford to include in its development programme.

### *Housing*

The deferred payment plan may also offer prospects of financing a continuing housing programme for persons in the lower income groups. Discussions are now in progress to this end with certain overseas interests, but here again the negotiations have not progressed to the stage where it is possible to give Council definite information.

Unless these prospects materialise, the Government will be unable to afford to continue the present programme on anything like the existing scale. By early next year all the funds—fourteen million dollars—allocated in the Development Programme for housing will have been exhausted. From this amount some 3,200 houses will have been built. This is still far short of the housing needs of the community, but is as much as the Government can afford at this time without further outside help.

Amendments to the Greater Georgetown Plan are in progress—and should be brought into effect during next year.

The Ministry of Communications and Works is no less full of ideas and intentions which it has summarised as follows:--

### ROADS

#### *Georgetown—Rosignol*

(i) Detailed designs and specifications with tender and contract documents for reconstruction of the Georgetown-Rosignol Road as proposed in their Project Report which was recently submitted, are expected to be delivered by the Consultants early in 1959. The specifications are being prepared in a manner which will permit of reconstruction of the road in sections and the progress of the works to be carried out will depend on the availability of the necessary funds.

(ii) The cost of reconstructing the entire roadway to specifications modified so as to effect economies without reducing the standard envisaged by the Consultants is expected to be approximately \$28 million, of which sum very little is available from Development Funds in the present Development Plan.



(iii) Work on the reconstruction of the East Bank Road will continue as planned during 1959 and it is hoped that this work will be completed early in 1960. The equipment in use will then be diverted to the Corentyne Road. Because of limitation in trained supervisory staff and mechanical equipment available, it will hardly be practicable to do more than to carry out maintenance and limited improvements on that road and on the roads in West Demerara and Essequibo Districts. The improvements envisaged include efforts to overcome the dust nuisance which is the subject of so many complaints from built up areas along the roadways.

(iv) It is expected that a start will be made on the preparation of the Parika-Makouria roadway at the Makouria end (where the new stone crushing plant is already in operation).

(v) Work on improving the Bartica-Potaro Road will be continued. Location surveys to establish a route for the extension of this roadway to the Rupununi District, on which useful progress has already been made, should be completed during 1959.

### *Sea Defences*

The comprehensive programme of construction and reconstruction of sea defences in various parts of the coastal area as started in 1954, will be continued in order to afford adequate security for considerable areas of agricultural land.

### *Pure Water Supply*

Plans are being made considerably to increase the rate of progress in providing supplies of piped water in areas now handicapped by need for this important service and in improving the limited supplies now available to growing communities in many areas.

### *Railways*

(i) The railway system will continue to be maintained at as high a level of efficiency as is possible during 1959. The permanent way is expected to be in a satisfactory condition and further minor improvements are planned. The need of replacement of some of the rolling stock

in use is being examined in the light of considerations regarding the future of the system, particularly of the Georgetown-Rosignol railway.

### *River Transport*

(i) The keel of one of the new ferry vessels on order, which is intended for use on the Demerara River and is to be named "Makouria", has recently been laid in Scotland by Messrs. Ferguson Bros., who built the M.V. "Powis". This vessel is expected to be delivered during 1959. The other vessel, which is to be named "Torani" and will be used on the Berbice River, is to be built locally in the shipyard of Messrs. Sproston Ltd., where a quantity of steel for use in her construction has already been received. At least one other vessel, a small tug for addition to the Transport and Harbours Department's fleet, will also be built for Government by Sproston Ltd.

(ii) Work on the reconstruction of the ferry terminals at Georgetown and Vreed-en-Hoop will be begun early in the year.

### *Post and Telecommunications*

The extent and efficiency of our postal services continue to expand.

As has been announced recently, the large new building in Brickdam which is to house Georgetown's modern automatic telephone exchange, offices, stores and workshops, will shortly be handed over by the contractors. Engineers will arrive early in 1959 to draw and joint the underground cables in the ducts now being laid down. The construction of suitable buildings to house automatic exchanges to serve the rural areas, and of radio towers to link them and other outlying areas with Georgetown or New Amsterdam by V. H. F. radio circuits, is already making good progress, and efforts are being made to have the entirely new telecommunication system put in use by the end of 1959. At this time more local staff will have returned from the United Kingdom, having been trained in various aspects of this modern system.

### *Electricity*

Negotiations are being pursued with the Demerara Electric Company to define

agreeable terms of a new franchise. It is hoped that the way will be cleared in the coming year for arrangements to be made regarding the purchase and installation of additional plant and equipment to meet the growing demand for electricity, not only in the City but also in the rural areas.

The present position in which consumers may have to suffer interruptions in the service and the requirements of developing enterprise cannot be met is, however, likely to continue during 1959.

The Government has also been examining with its consultants the prospects of hydro-electric or nuclear power in the future.

#### *Airways*

Steps are being taken to provide increased air services within the Colony.

#### *Broadcasting*

A second broadcasting service will shortly be inaugurated by the B.G. United Broadcasting Company Ltd.

#### *Television*

It is possible that in 1959 a television service will be introduced in a part of British Guiana.

### REPLY TO HIS EXCELLENCY'S ADDRESS

**Mr. Kendall:** Your Excellency, the pleasant duty has again fallen upon me

to say thanks to you, Sir, on behalf of all the Members of Council for the very informative Address you have just delivered in opening the Second Session of this Legislative Body.

There is much to be gained, Sir, from the observations you have made concerning some of the many problems facing this country, and I hope all Guianese will try to approach this challenge of the new year with courage and determination.

You said, Sir, that your Address and the statements of the Ministers will be printed and circulated to Members. We thank you very much.

*His Excellency, accompanied by His Honour the Speaker, left the Chamber for the Committee Room, preceded by the Marshal. The Speaker, preceded by the Marshal, returned to the Chamber shortly afterwards.*

### ADJOURNMENT

**Mr. Speaker:** I wish to ask Members and invitees to be good enough to remain until His Excellency the Governor and Lady Renison have cleared the gallery.

This Council is now adjourned to a date to be fixed.

Council adjourned at 2.55 p.m.