

THE DEBATES

OF THE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF BRITISH GUIANA.
OFFICIAL REPORT

OF
*PROCEEDINGS AT THE TENTH SESSION OF THE THIRD
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.*

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

TUESDAY, 30TH MAY, 1944.

The Tenth Session of the Third Legislative Council of British Guiana was opened in the Council Chamber, Guiana Public Buildings, Georgetown, at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 30th May, 1944, with the usual ceremonials.

PRESENT :

The President, His Excellency the Governor, SIR GORDON LETHEM, K.C.M.G.

The Honourable the Colonial Secretary, Mr. W. L. HEAPE, C.M.G.

„ the Attorney-General, Mr. E. O. PRETHEROE, M.C., K.C.

„ the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDAVID, C.B.E.

„ E. G. WOOLFORD, O.B.E., K.C. (New Amsterdam).

F. J. SEAFORD, C.B.E. (Georgetown North)

„ J. A. LUCKHOO, K.C. (Nominated).

„ C. V. WIGHT, (Western Essequibo).

„ J. I. DE AGUIAR (Central Demerara).

„ F. DIAS, O.B.E. (Nominated).

„ M. B. G. AUSTIN, O.B.E. (Nominated).

„ J. GONSALVES, O.B.E. (Georgetown South).

„ J. B. SINGH (Demerara-Essequibo).

„ PEER BACCHUS, (Western Berbice).

The Honourable H. C. HUMPHRYS, K.C. (Eastern Demerara).

- „ C. R. JACOB (North-Western District)
- „ A. G. KING (Demerara River).
- „ J. W. JACKSON (Nominated).
- „ H. N. CRITCHLOW (Nominated).
- „ A. M. EDUN. (Nominated)
- „ V. ROTH (Nominated).
- „ C. P. FERREIRA (Berbice River).

Clerk of the Council : Mr. A. I. CRUM EWING (Acting).

Official Reporters : Messrs. H. A. GRIMSHAW and F. A. LEUBIN.

The Lord Bishop of Guiana read prayers.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held Friday, 19th May, 1944, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH.

The PRESIDENT (H.E. the Governor) Honourable Members of Legislative Council :

It is just a year since I had the honour of opening the 1943 session of this Legislature as constituted under the new Order-in-Council of April of that year which made certain important constitutional changes in the composition of this body. I had had every intention then to prorogue the 1943 session at the end of the calendar year and convoke the 1944 session early in the present year. Members will however, remember that it proved no easy task to complete the Budget before the end of December and even then only by holding several sittings extending

to midnight. I would wish to express again to Members the real gratitude of Government for making it possible to get through the business in time. Even so some legislation of the first and far-reaching importance touching, for example, agricultural credit, rice farmer's security of tenure, and old age pensions, could not be dealt with as was hoped in 1943 but will be given first attention in the present session. More immediate but not more important were certain steps touching finance held over into the present year and it took well into March to carry through the necessary procedure, some of it requiring resolutions which have not yet been formally taken. These were in particular substantial reductions of customs duties, abolition or reduction of certain categories of minor licences, with the converse of some increase in taxation of luxuries though amounting to much less than the reductions. A still more important act was necessary touching Income Tax, with an important step forward in putting direct taxation on a better footing in line with general policy not only in this country but generally in the British Commonwealth. The Colony had been committed to that

action as long ago as June, 1943, but in view of the strongly expressed desire of Members to give further study to details of administration, action in Council by ordinance was not completed until late in March.

The postponement of the opening of the new session has however had this advantage, in that it has made it possible to make the review of the year, which is now presented to Council, complete in regard to any statistics given and as to action before the end of the year, and it has also made it possible to record many important events of importance which round off the affairs of 1943. In particular, it has been the case that a number of plans and projects have been advanced notably and in some cases with almost final definition in the first quarter of the year. That has been the case in regard to numerous Development and Welfare projects concerning the financing of drainage schemes, rice expansion and social welfare planning. On the other hand, there was a serious set-back in grave damage to sea defence in one part of the Colony which is going to cost a substantial sum of money out of surplus funds. The meeting of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission in conference with representatives from all the Caribbean colonies, American territories as well as British, has been a very notable event of recent weeks, with most excellent augury not only for colonial development but also for the technique of international co-operation. I should like to record here the great and real interest that this Colony takes in this development of regional planning.

The War has receded more and more from these shores and there is no longer that sense of awareness of potential danger which existed in 1942 and in 1943, though the economics of world-wide war continue to affect severely, and will continue to do so, progress locally in nearly everything. Meanwhile we are here waiting tensely and anxiously for the moment which

may see the commencement of the liberation of Europe, and yield to no part of the Empire in the earnestness of our prayers for the success of the Allied armies.

Early in the present year I was particularly glad to be able to announce that at long last the patriotic desire that this Colony should be represented in its own name in the theatre of active warfare by an overseas contingent locally recruited has been met. We will follow their fortune with special and personal interest. With that and with the numerous technical personnel recruited for employment in wartime industry, the number of Guianese serving abroad for whose enlistment this Government has been responsible is no less than 584. This is in addition to those individuals, either resident abroad or who have proceeded there since 1939, who have enlisted in various units of the Imperial Forces, a number which is estimated at some 70.

The first quarter of the year has also seen a number of important visits to the Colony. I was very glad to receive a good-will visit from the neighbouring Governor of the State of Para in Brazil, of four Members of Parliament who saw not a little of the Colony in five days, of a Commission investigating higher and university education, and we were particularly happy to receive the wife of the President of the United States of America on an official tour of the United States Bases.

These occurrences in the recent history of the Colony may therefore be properly added to the review of the year 1943.

In presenting this printed review of the year which is full and in places detailed, I do not wish to detain Council by reading the document, but to lay it on the table in accordance with the practice I have previously followed. I would wish, however, to address you rather more briefly on certain factors

which have been borne in upon me more and more during 1943 and to date, as of prime and essential importance in the immediate future, if that future for this country is to be bright and as we wish to see it.

The two major subjects to which I therefore would wish to address myself would be, firstly, that of rural reconstruction of the country districts of the coastlands and, secondly, that of the development of the interior.

I should perhaps preface one word on the functioning of this Council under its new composition over these twelve months. I have myself felt, and I venture to think Members also have felt, that we have gained by that change. A number of Government officials, for whose past services I must again express gratitude, have at least been freed of many hours of attendance at formal debates, but their services have been always available for discussion when required. I might comment that the burden on the three who are left and on myself has been correspondingly increased. Speaking for myself, I have often found it extremely difficult to give all the attention I should have wished to my duties as President of this Council, which is the first and most important and basic organ in the constitutional machine and administration of this country, and at the same time to carry the burden of detail of much executive work that comes to me personally. I am sure that my three official colleagues have felt the same.

The new composition of Council enabled us to extend the membership by nomination to representatives of sections of the community which we had reason to think had less than adequate representation on this Council. I would wish to congratulate these Members on the services they have rendered to us.

We have a major question coming in front of us in a few days, and that is the report of the Franchise Commission, which will be laid on the table on Thursday. I would remind Members that much of the action which the action on that report will entail will mean legislation by this Council under the terms of the constitution as amended last year. To what degree this Council as at present constituted can adequately pronounce on that will be a matter for rather careful consideration. I would wish to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Commission for their public-spirited work over this long period, and particularly the Chairman, the Deputy-President of this Council, for his tireless patience in management and to congratulate him on the result in a report signed with a single dissident only of the active membership of twenty-one.

It is scarcely necessary for me to address myself again to constitutional issues on which I spoke so fully a year ago. I would, however, repeat the sense of what I then said on the general aspect of these things. I said the progressive advances put through last year and envisaged again now are most sincerely to be welcomed. There can be no doubt whatsoever in these days and in these countries that we must push on with the establishment in full of the democratic order as the right kind of society. I said that it stands for faith and trust in the common man, implying participation and responsibility in the ordering of our own affairs. But that in itself it contained no divine principle and could only successfully live for the common good if sustained by reasoning men, adult in mind, and working to serve it with all their capacities. It cannot succeed if they betray their minds to the first caprices of emotional appeal or sectional or private interests. Nor if they are the slaves of the exploitation of the mass mind for evil. I said that the one thing that really matters is the complete and honest good-will

to pull together with the one aim of the greatest good of the greatest number. But there must be respected all interests and all minorities, and remember that it is very much easier to destroy than to build. That lesson again comes from responsibility. I said that we will not make a new British Guiana in a few years whatever constitution we have, but we all want to have our own full share in making it in God's good time. The immediate lesson is that we must go forward with continuous progressive advance and trial as fast as possible. No constitution can be regarded as fixed and perfect. In our stage of development it must be treated as flexible, to allow step by step for changes towards that end to which we all look forward, and that is self government of every unit of the British Commonwealth in its own affairs within the union which we value for common interest in world affairs.

In this immediate present I take this opportunity of recording my congratulations and my personal thanks to Members of this Council for services performed over the last twelve months.

I would revert to the two subjects on which I wished particularly to address you today, rural reconstruction and the interior.

With regard to the first of these, Members will remember that in January, 1943, I addressed a very comprehensive despatch to the Secretary of State on the question of the drainage and irrigation of the coastlands, as the essential foundation of all rural progress. That exposition met with an encouraging reception in London, and its prosecution in one form or another, in my view, should be the first active pre-occupation of the Colonial Government in succeeding years.

In that despatch and in others relevant, two prime needs of this country were stressed. One of these was

the securing of production from agricultural activities in spite of the two twin handicaps of recurrent flood and recurrent drought. The second, on which rather less was said, was that of the need of establishing standards of decent and healthy living on our coastlands. It would be in regard to the second that I would wish to say rather more.

Harsh judgment of the past of this Colony has been not uncommon, and I have heard not a little pessimism of its present and of its future. The former will help us not at all. Pessimism as to the present and future is unworthy of anyone who will take account of its numerous and various possibilities. Yet must we be realistic both as to the past and the present and the future. There are lessons to learn from Guiana's history which we would be very wise to take and keep to heart. The Province may be physically Magnificent but its social history is not, and that side of it can only be Magnificent if we make it so by human effort. We must realise that there is no easy task ahead, that much of it is necessarily of a pioneer character, and will require continuous toil and effort on first essentials, possibly to the sacrifice of some of the frills, and we must realise that is going to take a generation or more to secure.

I would like to revert for a moment to the hard things that have been said about this country and that sometimes are still so said. In a recent despatch to the Secretary of State I quoted three instances, two of which I repeat to you now, and from much read popular American authors of a type whose words are unfortunately too often completely swallowed.

The first is from a well-known popular book called "Van Loon's Geography." It is some years since I met Hendrick Van Loon, recently deceased I am sorry to say. He gave me a copy of his book but I did not then know Guiana and it is only

recently that I was tempted to look up what he has to say. This is what it is:—

“And finally there are three little European colonies in South America, the only remnants of the old colonial possessions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They are British Guiana or Demerara; Dutch Guiana or Surinam, and French Guiana or Cayenne. If the French had not chosen Cayenne as one of their penal colonies and if we did not see an occasional scrap of unpleasant scandal coming from that lost and unhealthy swamp and attaching itself right to the centre of our front pages, we would feel tempted to forget that the Guianas existed. Which would probably be just as well for they contribute very little to either the prosperity or to the sum total of happiness of the human race, and they are the living reminders of the day when the whole of South America meant but one thing to the visitor from over the seas—a rich storehouse to be plundered at will.”

The other is from a would-be authoritative American book on conditions in South America in the time of the war. It is “Inside Latin America” by John Gunther. It reads:—

“The Guianas are the most wretched and miserable areas in all Latin America. Unbelievably poor, unbelievably filthy. The U.S.A. has leased a base at Georgetown in British Guiana. Dutch Guiana is officially known as Surinam. In French Guiana, where disintegration has been rapid since the defeat of France, is the famous penal colony, Devil’s Island. In the winter of 1941, Dutch Guiana was occupied by U.S.A. troops under a joint agreement with Brazil.”

Observe that that was written as late as 1941. “Wretched, and miserable, unbelievably poor, unbelievably filthy.” Now that cheap journalism is not only unkind but untrue, as any visitor to Georgetown, or should we say Mackenzie, would surely admit. It is always very easy to pick out black spots in every country or in the history of every country, not excepting the home country of these writers, and make play with the wretched and miserable picture in some parts in condemnation of the whole land. But the fact remains that there is not

smoke without fire, and it is the height of folly in spouting about this Magnificent Province or El Dorado to shut our eyes to conditions that have been believed—and with justice believed—to have existed and perhaps still to exist in this country, which we cannot but contemplate with the deepest sense of regret. I might even say shame and humiliation. In rightly resenting the journalistic effusions of glib writers, who so often do not visit the objects of their criticism, we should not forget the beam that may be in our own eye. Even if we think that much of it is in the past we should examine very carefully before we begin to hope that our country is wholly free of these reproaches.

I should like to take one criterion and base it on the old adage that the greatest wealth of the country is in its breed of men and in their healthy increase. From the angle that I have just mentioned there is much, in the past of Guiana, even the immediately recent past, and which affects the present and future, that can only be viewed with grave regret. Let me hasten to say in preface that there is one brighter side to it I believe and that is that Guiana has turned the corner, but it has just turned the corner in these last fifteen years.

I am somewhat surprised that this matter has not received greater attention. I have worked through a number of Registrar’s reports and looked at figures for each year right back over 100 years and more. The plain fact seems to me to stand out that there was no natural increase of population whatsoever up to twenty or so years ago. There was a regular decrease in resident population and figures were only maintained or rose owing to immigration. In actual fact the resident population was dwindling and that owing quite clearly to a high disease rate. It is true that a hundred years ago the population was under 100,000 and that eighty years later it was almost 300,000. But there had been

340,000 immigrants. The census of 1841 gave a total of 98,000, in 1921 there were almost 298,000, an increase of 200,000 or 200%, yet in these years there had been immigration of about 340,000. In other words, by 1921 there was a population substantially less than the total of immigrants alone over the preceding eighty years. A population which should have been about 440,000 had the immigrants even maintained their numbers without natural increase but without decrease, was under 300,000: and even if allowance be made for those who left the country, *e.g.*, returning to India, the balance is still something like 70,000 on the wrong side. There is only one conclusion, death from disease in unhealthy conditions. As long ago as 1848 when a parallel was wanted by the historian Macaulay to indicate the unhealthy and insanitary conditions in long past centuries in English towns, that parallel was found in the coast lands of Guiana, presumably as the extreme example known; and Macaulay wrote of a time when "men died faster in the lanes of our towns than they now die on the Coast of Guiana." That was written in 1848 but the condition remained for decades.

Now that is a reproach of history that we should not forget nor be sure that it is all dead and done with. Throughout the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth the years when the death rate exceeded the birth rate were numerous and often by large margins; take years after yellow fever was ended,

Year	Birth rate.	Death rate.
1891	30	39
1895	24	33
1907	28	36
1910	27	34

culminating in 1919 and 1920, the influenza years, with birth rate 25 and death rate 40. Without going further into this sad record it may be said that the same picture

as I have read in the reports can be shown as regards the several and individual racial sections of the community.

Let us follow the census reports for fifty years; a population of 252,000 in 1881, soon after which yellow fever ended, had only increased to 278,000 in 1891, to 300,000 in 1901, and dropped back to 296,000 in 1911; in spite of heavy immigration in those decades: and in 1921 the figure was under 298,000. Even in 1931 the population figure was less than that recorded for 1917.

That the corner has been turned, I think we can prove from an examination of the recent year figures from 1931—1943; 313,000 to 364,000, an increase of 51,000 in 12 years. That is a subject for gratification. Nevertheless it seems to me that we have got to consider the present and future planning against the background of this past, and appreciate that though there has been vast improvement in some parts of this country, for example, Georgetown, there are still great areas in which the old bad conditions still apply. We have just got to face the facts that Guiana over a period of many decades had a very bad reputation and that that reputation was, in part at least, earned, and secondly that the social development of the country has not been that of healthy colonisation in its proper meaning of settling families in a new land where they could lead a happy existence.

The question we must ask ourselves is, is that dark picture entirely a thing of the past and are we creating better conditions? The answer seems to me—yes and no. In certain ways, particularly the expansion of a pure water supply from artesian wells, by expanded medical and health services, or again in certain places—for example—in Georgetown, as I have said, generally in spite of the slum area, on many sugar estates, we can definitely say yes. But there are too many

districts of the country where the old indictment may still hold and which are in real need of constructive betterment, for the elementary needs of decent living as well as for economic production. I read recently one terrible description written in 1918, and though it was limited to an examination of school conditions it is described as a true picture of then conditions at large. It is written by the late Dr. Rose on Georgetown schools and reads as follows:—

“The infection of so large a percentage of children with these parasites is due directly to the fact that human excrement in the town is not disposed of in a safe and efficient way, but is allowed to come into contact with the persons, the food and the drink of the children. There is no more unpleasant chapter in the story of the insanitary conditions of these schools than that which is concerned with arrangements for the disposal of excreta. Surface soil pollution is apparent and extensive. The privies provided are wooden buildings frequently dilapidated giving free access to flies and animals; the seats are stained with excreta; nor do the floors escape; One has only to visit these buildings to understand such facts as that 56.3% of the children suffer from infection with intestinal parasites, due solely to the swallowing of human excrement,”

That is a very lurid picture; the comment written upon it at the time was that it was true of the general conditions in very much of Georgetown. That lurid picture is no longer true of Georgetown. How much of it is true of conditions in many villages? Believe me, not a little. I have seen it, as recently as last month, and still more in the months of flood in 1943.

Yet I said that the Colony had turned the corner. The population rising steadily from 1931, with the highest figure recorded since 1917, 313,000 to 364,000 in 1943. An increase of over 50,000 in twelve years as compared with 15,000 in the decade 1921—1931, 3,000 in 1911—1921, and a drop of 4,000 in 1901—1911. In each year moreover the birth rate exceeded

the death rate, often substantially,

Year	Birth rate.	Death rate
1936	35	20
1942	38	17

—increase 21 per mille, the highest recorded.

But what do we find in 1943? A year of extreme floods when it must have been evident to any observer that not only was there a severe setback to production of crops but that sometimes elementary sanitary conditions of rural areas had collapsed. Well, it is reflected in the figures. The birth rate goes back from 38 to 30, the death rate goes up from 17 to 24. The natural increase goes back from 21 per mille in 1942 to 6 per mille in 1943. The lesson seems to be obvious; until we can get properly drained these rural areas of villages and peasant settlement, we risk every few years not only losing our crops but losing our natural increase of people.

For it all comes back, as always one way or another, to the immense need of comprehensive drainage and irrigation not only on the side of production but also for elementary hygiene and for the establishment of decent standards of living. In the comprehensive despatch which I wrote to the Secretary of State in January, 1943, I certainly did touch on this but in one paragraph only, which read as follows:—

“ A third observation I should wish to make is that touching health. Sir Geoffrey Northcote in his despatch No. 111 of 19th March, 1937, wrote: ‘Inefficiency or absence of drainage of the land around the villages which exist at frequent intervals along the road are the chief causes of malaria. Better drainage would also reduce the incidence of intestinal disease which is abnormally high in the ‘Colony.’”

My own comment followed:

"While in certain areas in the Colony which have received special attention, *e.g.*, Georgetown, there has been much improvement, this is not the case in most of the country districts. In particular the high percentage of rejections on health grounds of recruits from certain areas for military service shows an amazingly low standard of health. The floodings this year have resulted in inevitable fouling of earth and of water trenches from the pit latrines and in December medical authorities issued warning of anticipated epidemics of both fever and intestinal troubles. In very many villages betterment of drainage is in fact a measure of elementary hygiene which forces itself on Government."

I wrote that in fact before the floods of 1943 had developed to their worst. I did not expand on that subject. I think it necessary to do so more now.

There is another side to this whole question and that is the need for providing land for the population. I have touched on that to some degree in a despatch written regarding the drainage and irrigation scheme for the Corentyne Coast area, which has been circulated to Members. I find it quite impossible to believe that the growing population can be accommodated healthily and happily on the limited areas of conditioned land whether on sugar estates areas or other areas. I cannot get away from the conviction that the only way we are going to accommodate our rural population decently and happily is by deliberately, gradually, fast or slow according to ability, putting in proper order lands which are either new or are at the moment not available in good condition. I cannot consider that there is any proper alternative before the Government in this country and that there is any objection strong enough as to be allowed to halt that move.

Now in discussing this particular Corentyne project in Berbice county a strong opposing view was stated to me that prosecution of such a scheme would seriously prejudice our main industry of sugar, principally in making too great a call for labour from the sugar industry on which our economic prosperity so greatly depends.

Now let me say a word on that subject. Government is sometimes alleged to hold views which do not sufficiently value the importance of that industry's prosperity. In fact my observations in opening the 1943 session were very appreciative indeed of that industry's place. In fact my observations were criticized as going too far in that direction. I commented on the obligation of proprietors to protect, drain, maintain and irrigate and do everything else that is necessary for the upkeep of the land. I said that we saw that primary condition obtaining in the sugar industry on which we depend so greatly, and that it was maintaining the Colony's asset of land to its credit. I said that if that industry failed us the principal sufferers would be the land and people of British Guiana. I would also repeat something that I said to the Village Chairmen's Conference not so long ago:—

"In our principal industry now we are coming to a serious danger point. The sugar industry is a great asset to us, both to upkeep of our land and to our economics. I am sure no one will accuse me of putting up that industry as our one object of fostering care, but I will say with the strongest advocate of sugar that there can be no manner of doubt whatever of the seriousness of the blow to the position of this country if there is serious contraction of that industry. It behoves all concerned in the industry to remember that only by real and honest work can it be maintained to the general profit of the whole country: and it behoves all concerned to strive to remove the distrust and misrepresentation which prevail."

That and no other is Government's view towards the sugar industry. But that industry is not going to be maintained as our economic sheet-anchor, or saved, by concentrating on it, or by concentrating even our labour force on it, to the exclusion of other needs of a growing population. Even on the Corentyne I am not prepared to admit that any reasonable rate of progress in itself would prejudice the labour position in that area. I shall put facts and figures as far as we can establish them in a further despatch to the

Secretary of State which I will circulate to Members. In actual fact the main works would require only about 350 men per day. If for any reason we had to hit up the tempo and labour or other demands were excessive, we should of course try to meet it in other ways. I should be entirely prepared to adjust rate of progress to demand for labour, to make the call such as not to be excessive. If Members will remember I myself said a year ago in this Council that there is a certain pace beyond which it is not possible to press constructive development without doing harm.

But—and this we must hold in mind—to get over the present labour difficulties of the sugar industry something far more than mere numbering of heads and keeping a fluid labour supply available on estates is required. A report of 1933 by the then Commissioner of Lands and the Deputy Director of Agriculture commented as follows:—

“We are convinced that unless
“there is a gradual change of policy in the
“sugar industry..... the changing
“sociological conditions and other factors
“will result in serious shortage of labour
“and restriction of output.
“Other industries are likely increasingly to
“attract labour away from the sugar
“estates..... revival of other industries
“before the problem is solved may
“find the sugar industry of this Colony
“unprepared to meet the situation and
“to retain the services of the hired
“labour on which they now depend entirely
“for their existence.
“We urge most earnestly”

That was written over eleven years ago. It is prophetic. That difficulty foreseen has materialised and we must renew the effort again. I cannot but believe myself that there is no clash of interest as between one industry and another in embarking on the wholesale project of putting the coastlands in good order both for the sake of sure production and for decent living. No clash of interest but the reverse. In several of the schemes the provision of fresh irrigation water has as one of its principal objectives the

development of sugar cultivation and protection from losses such as have occurred in the past, and settlement of our rural population in decent conditions must ultimately promote even the interests of our principal industry. I have made this general comment from this chair not infrequently to Council and I think I might repeat what I said to this Council in December last.

“It is essential that we press forward
“steadily and determinedly with this pro-
“ject over a generation. It will only be
“done if the whole community pulls
“together and the project does not become
“the prey of politics. I am already hear-
“ing whispers that the whole project is
“uneconomic or is only economic where our
“major industry of sugar is concerned and
“that the rest of it, or the whole of it
“save where based on sugar, can only be a
“colossal economic failure. I am very
“well aware that much of the project is
“uneconomic and is deliberately intended as
“protective and welfare in the immediate
“present, and I am very well aware that
“several of the component schemes if
“carried through will not be economic
“for a period of years. I am very well
“aware that the whole may not get on a
“complete economic footing in the lifetime
“of most of us here.

“But this I would say, that the whole
“project is designed to give a compre-
“hensive framework within which every
“interest, whether it be sugar or rice or
“cattle or ground provisions or the residen-
“tial conditions of villages, will have a
“possibility of getting established on the
“only foundation which makes steady
“production possible or can raise standards
“of living in this country. If any one of
“these interests is going to damn this or
“that part of the whole because its
“particular importance is not put first,
“then we shall see our hopes wrecked.”

Now a word as to the present position as to prosecution of the drainage and irrigation project which will be known to Members from the summarising paragraphs in my recent despatches on the Corentyne scheme and on the East Demerara scheme and which I need scarcely repeat.

The position is as follows. In the impossibility of securing equipment and proceeding with the major schemes we are progressing as fast as possible with such internal and smaller schemes as fit in with the larger framework, principally drainage works of immedi-

ate value. Nevertheless, it has been possible to commence the Bonasika irrigation scheme, the figure of costs is \$460,000 and there is at present hope of getting some of the necessary equipment for that. The smaller schemes have been detailed in the review of 1943 and, including those with fifty per centum grants to village areas, total in finance the substantial figure of something like \$800,000, for immediate relief of conditions in farming and residential areas. In addition, the special rice expansion schemes at an estimate of \$580,000 are also proceeding. A total of, including the Bonasika scheme, something over a million and three-quarter dollars developmental expenditure. We have now reached the stage when it becomes necessary, having dealt with many of the more immediate problems of village area drainage, to plan ahead and select one or more of the comprehensive and larger schemes to provide in time a complete framework; to plan ahead now for these things take a long time to launch. In accordance two despatches have gone to the Secretary of State recommending the two schemes I have just mentioned, the Corentyne Coast and the East Demerara, both very important.

Now I would like to say a word on what I sometimes hear, that these schemes are too large, too expensive, too grandiose. That is little-minded and carping querulousness. We go about boasting that we are a continental country and yet we exhibit the mentality of a small fifteen miles by ten island. In a continental country a drainage and irrigation scheme worthy of the name is not counted in terms of a few hundred thousand dollars, or in terms of two or three or four or five years to come into economic fruition. One must think in terms of some millions of dollars and of decades of years. These schemes of ours compared with schemes—not to illustrate from Europe, or America or India, where figures are so much bigger—

but from Africa, primitive Africa, at which I have heard members here sneer, schemes which I have seen, compared with such schemes, ours are just trifles. On the mud flats of the Nile in the Sudan crops are now secured, by British initiative and capital, the first expense thirteen million pounds by interest—free loan from the British Treasury, and forty years to work out: and also on the mud flats near the Abyssinian frontier on the Gash river, and on the Barak river (I saw it myself all beginning almost twenty years ago); or on the mud flats of the upper Niger by French money and initiative. Why not on the mud flats of Guiana, at an incomparably lesser cost?

When I hear that kind of comment that we cannot also embark on such things, I just wonder, have we any vision? Measured in terms of money the expenditure on the United States Army Base would have put the coastlands of Guiana in order for a generation or more. The expenditure already incurred at Kwakawani on the Berbice River, where no real production has yet materialised would cover the whole capital expenditure of the Corentyne Coast scheme. The Demerara Bauxite Company in these two or three recent years have paid us more in taxation than would cover several of our major schemes. The capital expenditure on either the Corentyne scheme or the East Demerara scheme is away down below the minimum estimate for a new hospital in Georgetown, and I would say that if there is to be a question of priority in these matters, rural reconstruction must come before amenities in the champagne standard of the front parlour. We have enough of that.

Along with this major question of improving our land goes hand in hand the projects of land settlement and rural housing, co-operative credit, security of tenure, rent restriction, rural education and community centres, and social welfare, matters on which I would not propose to expatiate now.

Many will come to you in the form of proposed legislation or resolution, I hope immediately. There goes with that too the important matters of rating and the taxation of enhanced land values, which have been the subject of a report by a special Committee. I would not wish to detain Council with more than the mention of these things here. They are in a large measure dependent on the conditioning of the land. I would only say this, that I should press for an orientation of view in our affairs, that the encouragement and support of the primary producer on the land, particularly the small-holder for whom the set-up in this country has not been favourable, that objective and not the expansion of services and amenities in the towns should have first claim on our attention and on our funds.

I return to the second subject which I propose to record briefly in this address to Council and that is, action taken recently in the last four months by myself in regard to the interior. I have addressed a series of despatches to the Secretary of State from which I propose to quote. In these in which I have emphasized not only the need for a more active development of what resources there may be in the interior but also and very particularly the political and administrative responsibility which lies upon this Government and upon the Imperial Government.

The former question, development, seems to me largely one of communications and of much more intensive geological and other scientific surveys. The need of survey is a principal recommendation of the Committee which was appointed in July, 1933, and reported early in 1939 in a notably practical and reasonable review. Their principal recommendations read as follows:—

(1) that a policy be adopted of more active sympathy and encouragement towards all those who worked or were willing to work in the interior.

“(2) that an organised and comprehensive economic survey be carried out to ascertain the resources and potentialities of the interior and methods of transportation.

No doubt we can attribute to the war the fact that no co-ordinated attempt has been made to pursue this question of comprehensive survey, yet some action in detail has begun. In particular, as Members are aware, an examination of the rivers is being prosecuted with a view to their maximum use in the transportation system of the interior for the future. This was initially from Colony funds and now under a grant under the Development and Welfare Act. Under another grant provision was made for increasing the geological surveyors from one to three—it is most unfortunate, in my view, that the survey was interrupted in 1940—it means a five year set back—now I regret to report that every endeavour so far made to secure these specialist officers has been fruitless. It is very clear indeed that what is required in addition to the not inconsiderable general surveys that have been accomplished by the Geological Department, is that there must be a much more intensive examination of areas likely to prove productive of minerals.

By far the quickest method of procedure for general purposes will be aerial survey, which would be much the cheapest and most practical method of determining the particular places where economic survey on the ground can be pursued. The present position is that a very considerable number of potential landing fields—some forty-eight—have been marked on a special map with a view to the establishment of landing facilities throughout the interior. This will be a matter for financing early. In fact a few of these have actually been prepared as part of war emergency measures. One trial landing strip is under preparation in a new corner altogether, and a plan is progressing for the expansion of B.G. Airways activities. If that

materialises we should be very soon in a position to make the very thorough examination from the air desired. I have in fact offered readiness to finance purchase of a suitable plane on Government account. Members are, I think, also aware that a scheduled service to the gold and diamond fields and to the Rupununi area is now being established. I should comment further that on this whole subject of air communications, including that of the principal aerodrome at Georgetown, I have asked for the earliest possible visit of the Secretary of State's special adviser. He is now coming and should be in Canada on his way.

As regards communications other than river and air transport, I have been engaged for some time in an endeavour to set out in a comprehensive despatch the various alternatives as to the best main trunk line communication into the interior. There seem to be three principal alternatives.

The first and perhaps most obvious is that *via* Bartica, the Potaro Road, which is now extended by a track as far as the Konawaruk River. From there another sixty miles construction would link up with Kurupukari on the Essequibo, where the cattle trail proceeds to Annai and the Rupununi savannahs. The notorious difficulty of maintaining a good service over the present sandy section of this road may be overcome by modern methods and road-making machines, which have proved successful at no great cost in sandy places in other parts of the world. The advantage of this route is that it taps country already in not inconsiderable exploitation for gold and with considerable and known possibilities in the area of the Potaro, the Konawaruk, the Siparuni and the country beyond. There is moreover habitation at a number of points on the rivers, and the improvement of this route also serves the objective of access to the Mazaruni River at a point where river transport gives no very serious diffi-

culty. There is the serious disadvantage of a piece of country which would appear to be difficult to negotiate between the Konawaruk and Kurupukari.

The second alternative would be the linking of the Demerara River, whether from Hyde Park or Mackenzie, with the cattle trail at a point only about twenty miles south of Ituni to which there now exists a bauxite railway. The directness of this route is obvious enough, the objections to it would be that it passes through country apparently valueless economically unless it be for further development of bauxite. There would be a quicker route to Georgetown for cattle from the frontier but there would be a very long stretch of utterly empty and apparently valueless country before Kurupukari is reached. An experimental track from Ituni towards the cattle trail is now being opened up.

The third alternative would appear to be a river route by the Berbice with connections created to the Essequibo and thereby to the Rupununi River, and so the Takutu, the Rio Branco, the Rio Negro to the Amazon. The advantage would appear to be the cheapness of river transport for a great section of the way, and this route could link easily with the Ituni route, but again it would appear to pass through an utterly empty country save for timber, for a great portion of the middle distance. The necessary survey of this route is now to be undertaken.

It is an easy thing to indulge in these speculations and make plans on paper but the plain fact remains that this Government has no kind of adequate administrative organisation to pursue these plans steadily and tenaciously. The whole-time pre-occupation of Government officers has constantly to be directed to the immediate and pressing problems of the coastlands. Partly from this angle

and partly from my experience of other continental countries I have been impressed more and more with the need as well as the almost complete lack of specific machinery for administration and development of this 84,000 square miles of our interior. It is no exaggeration whatsoever to say that there is no officer of the Government whose responsibility it is to pay attention to and pursue these things except the Governor himself in the small amount of time that he can squeeze out from more immediate pre-occupation. This is the point of view that I endeavour to impress upon the Imperial Government, and I have said that until this need is met it is not very much use starting in with greater or smaller developmental projects where they may require the fostering care of Government.

I urged this on the Secretary of State in October last in particular reference to developments on the Brazilian side of the frontier, where a federal territory is being created of the Rio Branco region which will come directly under the central Government which will supply personnel and finance rather than leave the region dependent on the local State Government. I said in my covering despatch:—

“These developments must make this Government consider very seriously whether we can much longer continue to be satisfied with the very skeleton administration hitherto in existence.”

I have since pursued that matter with regard to the whole frontier area and I have gone so far as to say that the interior as a whole is not effectively administered or even occupied. I wrote in a despatch in February as follows:—

“My view however is that the question is a far larger one than merely that of evolving a number of practical schemes which would come within the terms of the Development and Welfare Act. I feel that it is much rather one of administrative and political responsibility for an area of something like 85,000 square

“miles which is not at present being adequately shouldered by the local Government or by the Imperial Government. The former has been in the past and is still quite unable to find either the funds or the personnel adequately to carry that responsibility, and will be so in any foreseeable future for a generation at least. The matter requires an altogether wider angle of approach than that of particular specialised welfare schemes however welcome these individually would be. Moreover I do not think that these can be adequately and successfully put into real operation and valuable use until some administrative steps are also initiated.”

I went on to say that the existing administration has simply got to concentrate on the innumerable things that face us on the coastlands and the existing personnel cannot dissipate their energies by endeavouring to spread activities over a large interior which is so thinly populated.

The criticism which can be brought against our administration in this matter seems to me a very valid and strong one. I put the facts of the matter in my despatch, though some of its thunder was stolen by the Honourable Colonial Treasurer at the Barbados Conference, as follows:—

“British Guiana has a territory of some 89,000 square miles, that is, larger than the republics of Uruguay and Paraguay in the South American continent and much larger than any of the independent republics in Central America except Mexico. I have taken figures as shown in Whitaker's Almanac. It is more than three-quarters of the area of the American territory of the Philippines, 110,000, and infinitely larger than Hawaii, 6,000 and Porto Rico 3,000 square miles. It is double the size of Cuba and three times the size of the two republics of Haiti and San Domingo combined. It is twenty times the size of Jamaica, four and a half times the size of the whole of the British West Indies, including the Bahamas and British Honduras; and in regard to British Colonies elsewhere is only 2,000 square miles less than the Gold Coast and 4,000 less than Uganda—of which however 13,000 square miles are water. It is over three times the size of Sierra Leone. It is true that it is as a whole very sparsely populated in comparison with island territories and even common African conditions, and its population of 360,000 is largely concentrated in an area little over 4,000 square miles. Nevertheless it does not seem to me less sparsely populated than many parts of the American continents nor can

“ I conceive that had it been in Africa in
 “ this last generation of Colonial develop-
 “ ment could there have been complete
 “ failure to maintain the skeleton of com-
 “ munication and administration through-
 “ out the whole area. Forty or fifty years
 “ ago it was common to reproach certain
 “ colonial powers with failure to maintain
 “ effective occupation of territory claimed
 “ as under their rule, for example, much
 “ of French West Africa in the interior,
 “ but in these countries the picture has
 “ entirely changed in three decades, where-
 “ as in the interior of Guiana it would be
 “ possible quite easily to argue from facts
 “ that there has been retrocession and
 “ divestation of Government responsibili-
 “ ties whenever needs of financial economy
 “ or of personnel demanded: the coastal
 “ area not unnaturally got first claim. The
 “ small posts created from time to time
 “ appear to have been abandoned, no doubt
 “ for what appear to be good reason at the
 “ time, but with the result of complete
 “ failure of any continuity. Paragraph 3 of
 “ my confidential despatch of 8th October,
 “ 1943, gives extracts from a pen picture,
 “ journalistic and sometimes unkindly
 “ critical but saddeningly true, of this
 “ retrocession, by Mr. Evelyn Waugh. It
 “ is at present date amazing to realise how
 “ utterly non-existent are the means for
 “ example of obtaining accurate informa-
 “ tion as to what may be happening in
 “ practically the whole length of the frontier
 “ area except at one point.”

I have the assurance of the Secretary of State and of the Comptroller for Development and Welfare that they would view with sympathy any practical proposals of a developmental character and a number of these have been adumbrated by the Honourable the Seventh Nominated Member of this Council with a number of other unofficial gentlemen, and these will be pursued as opportunity offers. I pointed out however, that unless we create at the same time an organisation not only to plan but also to supervise and be responsible for the working and the active prosecution of them, we can scarcely make an effective beginning. In submitting a recommendation of my own I wrote in a final paragraph as follows:—

“ What however has impressed me more
 “ has been the administrative side of all
 “ this question. The position is and as far
 “ as I can see it has been in the past, that

“ the interior has no effective spokesmen
 “ in the councils of Government, while the
 “ administrative machinery on the spot,
 “ where existent at all, had been complete-
 “ ly skeleton, *e.g.* a titular Protector of
 “ Indians with purely negative functions, and
 “ liable to interruption or even complete
 “ withdrawal whenever economy or need of
 “ personnel in the coastal area demands
 “ I find the records hard to credit in their
 “ complete absence of any serious attempt
 “ to maintain any administrative or general
 “ policy.

“ I incline to the view that it is not prac-
 “ tical to hope for more efficient adminis-
 “ tration of the interior or for the success-
 “ ful carrying of the several schemes of
 “ development and welfare such as those
 “ that have been mentioned unless there
 “ is established special administrative
 “ machinery, possibly with separate
 “ financial provision. I have said in the
 “ preceding paragraph that there has been
 “ no effective spokesman for the interior in
 “ the councils of Government. At the
 “ moment the whole initiative depends
 “ entirely on the personal attention of the
 “ Governor. There is no department of
 “ Government in a position to deal with the
 “ matter, and both the Colonial Secretary
 “ and Commissioner of Local Government
 “ are completely immersed in more urgent
 “ work. I incline therefore to the view that
 “ it would be highly desirable to create an
 “ appointment of a specially selected officer
 “ as Commissioner for the Interior. He
 “ would have direct charge of three
 “ administrative districts, each under a
 “ District Commissioner, the Rupununi—
 “ 41,000 square miles, the Potaro-Mazaruni
 “—24,000 square miles, and that part of
 “ the North West District not immediately
 “ dependent on the existing coastal area,
 “ which is in touch with Georgetown by sea.
 “ Adjustment of boundaries between these
 “ districts could probably be usefully made.
 “ Such a Commissioner could reside either at
 “ Bartica, which is a natural gateway for
 “ the interior, or possibly much farther up
 “ in the higher country where ease of air
 “ communication would easily discount the
 “ greater distance from headquarters. The
 “ whole organisation should be I think a
 “ separate department of Government with
 “ separate provision on the colonial
 “ estimates. I have previously suggested
 “ that this expenditure might be met by
 “ special grant-in aid, but it is scarcely
 “ necessary to consider that in detail at
 “ the moment.

“ This project is necessarily put forward
 “ to you at this date in the most embryo
 “ form, but I would invite your attention
 “ to it as important to consider even now
 “ if we are to meet the future general
 “ responsibility for administration of the
 “ interior.”

The project was put forward by me as the ideal solution. I found, however, remarkable confirmation of it, on being referred by the Conservator of Forests to the report made in 1922 by the present Lords Halifax and Harlech (then Mr. Ormsby Gore) in which they actually suggested the necessity of

"A policy of dividing the colony into two, leaving one portion under the existing Government and organising the remainder under a separate administration."

This is a very significant and relevant quotation.

The paragraph ends:

"It is a big task which should be handled 'on broad and generous lines.'"

Now that is twenty-three years ago and we are, save for a very few particular steps, the Potaro Road, a new Potaro-Mazaruni district, some minor steps in the Rupununi, scarcely further on. It is a lamentable confession.

The other side of this question touched on in the report of Lord Halifax and also in the report of the Commissioners of 1907 was the need of heavy capital expenditure. I do not know that need necessarily be heavy, relatively to standards of to-day, except in regard to the creation of communications. The intensive surveys and specialist experiments should go on and need not be expensive, nor is it necessary to envisage large-scale schemes of land settlement and movements of population. What should be possible is that the small communities that live in the interior—whether ranchers, lumbermen, gold and diamond workers, the mixed settlements on the rivers, missionaries and Amerindians, should receive, as in the words of the 1938 committee:

"More active sympathy and encouragement to all those who work and are 'willing to work in the interior.'"

I confess I regard the matter as one of very real responsibility of the sovereign power which can no longer

be neglected and it is with that in view that I have been pursuing it vis-a-vis the Secretary of State and shall continue to do so.

With these two subjects, rural reconstruction and the interior, I have dealt thus fully because I have given a particular degree of time and attention to them in recent months, and because, unless I am greatly mistaken, they should be the two major planks of which this Country must make its platform, to take the place which it can and which it must take in Caribbean and American affairs.

Both involve major effort of a constructive and long view character. They involve what might appear to some people as large capital expenditure. That is not absolutely large, but may be relatively so to the scale on which this Country has hitherto been developed. I have already commented on the fact that our drainage and irrigation schemes are in themselves trifling in comparison with those which are commonplace in continental countries. I also said that capital expenditure on the development of the interior should not be relatively great in the initial stages except in some degree regarding communications, and we are perhaps fortunate at least in a late start now in that we will be able to take full advantage of the economics of air transportation and other scientific advance.

If the Government of this Country and backed by the Imperial Government is not prepared to embark at this stage on its obvious twin mission—if not to produce marvels in a lustrum but at least to lay its plans definitely and begin to work towards them—I could only regard that as defeatism which I could only bitterly lament. The time for decision and action is now.

We have lamented long enough that the magnificent act of emancipation was not followed by its proper

corollary of much more constructive economic effort vis-a-vis the mass of Africans, and we have regretted that that era was followed over a long period of decades with an immigration system devoted to one narrow end of production of a staple at low economic cost, and not towards the more human objectives of colonization, which modern opinion regards as the one principal justification of the tenure of tropical countries. I said in opening the 1942 Council that we are seeing a revolution in regard to land holding in this country and we have got to admit that that is very far from being on entirely satisfactory lines. Men's minds have changed immensely on these colonial problems in the last twenty-five years and the last five or six have added a tremendous stimulus. We share with the islands of the Caribbean the new emphasis on human and social welfare as taking the first place in our profession of policy; while fully realising that these aims can only progress properly on an accompanying programme of economic development.

But—and it is important—in this country we have to add something which distinguishes us completely from the Islands. That is two-fold; the physical facts of our coastlands, which we know must be treated in a certain constructive way, and which if so treated give a country of agricultural possibilities second to none. The other is the 84,000 square miles of mountain and forest, river and savannah, the resources of which so far as known are qualified but which are certainly not negligible, and which in three hundred years the governing powers, Dutch or British, have never adequately developed or administered or even occupied.

I have stated constantly that in my view it is shocking to the pride that these needs have not been met more completely or more thoroughly in the last forty years, which dates back to a time when colonial Governments elsewhere realised

such obligations and began to meet them. The Province has been called Magnificent but can only be so if we make it so, and that requires an effort bigger and more comprehensive than anything that has hitherto been put forward.

I have said too that we cannot do it on our own resources of personnel or of funds for physical facts are against us. It will require much faith and vision, not only in ourselves but in others whose help we must inevitably seek. My predecessor said in 1939 that the economic organization of this country was inadequate to support a vigorous and healthy life for all its inhabitants. A year ago I commented on the large scale necessary to hold in mind in projects for the future progress of British Guiana. I said not only in ourselves was that vision required but in those whose help we must inevitably seek. I have been told we must ask the minimum or nothing from the British taxpayer. I am a British taxpayer, an income tax payer, and I have been so, as a householder in spite of residence abroad, now for nearly twenty years, and I suppose my pension will be mulcted 50% in due course, but as I envisage the choice before myself and present as Guiana, between that choice between the sovereign power continuing to hold, in the present state, lands here with such a properly criticised past and present as Guiana, between that choice and that of putting forth the minute fraction of taxation which will make it a country proud to be British, or rather still more proud to be British, I can imagine but one answer. If I am wrong then we must confess defeat and failure properly to carry our heritage.

But we here are wrong in conceiving that any formidable difficulty confronts us. The sums of money, the number of qualified personnel required are not in any way insuperable difficulties, as I have said before, given any faith in the future. No doubt we can-

not pay as we go along or find special funds from revenue for capital expenditure then it is necessary to borrow on the future, a perfectly proper policy, then we must borrow and look forward fifty years and posterity will thank us as we now thank those who put up ten million dollars to ensure sea defence.

I would say one thing more, it would of course be possible to sit back and play for safety. As it happens, I have had personal experience of that policy ten years ago in another colony, i.e., to force a country into the strait waistcoat of its recurrent revenue. It can be done. It was done in that colony. It involved for example in that case cutting the senior personnel of its medical department in half, the same with the land surveyors and magistrates and educational officers, suspension of scholarships, abolition of ecclesiastical establishment, a reduction of postal services, in fact almost abolition in rural districts save through police stations, a ten per centum reduction of all salaries and so on. We produced a balanced budget and—potential stagnation for the future. That kind of thing can be done in this country and developmental projects for which we cannot pay on the nail be deferred. If it came to applying such a policy I think I have more experience of it than anyone in this room.

Well, suppose we do it. Georgetown would still prosper and be a livable and pleasant enough corner of the world, merchants and middlemen would still make profits, proprietors would still carry on, not making fortunes, not putting much or anything back into the land but getting a living, some enterprises might spring up and prosper with private capital for a few years here and there; and I suppose the great mass of agricultural producers would subsist, somehow, and public services might struggle through, somehow, to keep things going not too bad; the flocking into towns would increase and unemployment of unemployable

people in Georgetown increase, and every occasional year of flood or drought would knock the whole country back for two or three years but that would not destroy it. That is the only drab alternative future of stagnation I could see for Guiana. I would most sincerely ask all Guianese as well as those who are interested in us elsewhere to hold the larger vision.

Let me quote from two great Secretaries of State—the first and the last since the phrase “Colonial Development” came to have its modern meaning.

The last is of course Colonel Oliver Stanley who said a few weeks ago at a public meeting in London, on his return from his first important tour of colonies:

“I hope the people of this country are going to continue taking a greater interest in colonial problems, and that they will be prepared to shoulder greater financial responsibilities for the sake of the Colonial peoples than they have done hitherto.”

and in the later passage he says

“if only we exhibit wise statemanship and generous planning.”

Mark his words “greater financial responsibilities” and again “generous planning.” That is the expressed policy of His Majesty's Government as stated in the White Paper of 1940, to me personally by one Secretary of State in conversations in 1941, and with the Parliamentary Secretary of State who had recently visited this very Colony (1941 when our war prospects were much more critical than now) and now as you see repeated by another in 1944. It has been again emphasised by him this month in the House of Commons. I know of no other, and until I receive His Majesty's instruction to the contrary I must go on and call upon the people of this country to co-operate with me in so doing.

But hear also the words of the first modern Secretary of State. That is of course Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. It is half a century since he said:

"It is not enough to occupy certain great spaces of the world's surface unless you can make the best of them—unless you are willing to develop them."

In half a century we—and the blame is here as well as elsewhere—have not yet been willing properly to make the best either of the great spaces we hold behind the coastlands or on the coastlands make the best of them in the interests of the great mass of the people there brought in, brought in by slave ships and indenture ships as cheap labour to work and die here.

Are we yet willing to make the best of them? I said I would ask all Guianese as well as those who are interested in us elsewhere to hold the larger vision. Do not doubt that the ways and means can and will be found.

The hoped results will not be seen by members of this Council or by few of them but I would like to express the prayer that the Legislative Council of the 1940s may have at least taken the first hopeful steps.

In saying that too I would express the earnest trust that this session opening today may, under God's blessing, play its useful part in these next few months.

I have therefore the honour formally to declare open the 1944 Session of the Legislature of the Colony.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Sir, in the absence of the Honourable the Senior Elected Member, I have been asked by my colleagues to thank you for the address which you have just delivered. I am sure that members have listened with sympathetic interest and even concern to the very interesting, instructive and arresting, survey which you have given of the Colony's public activities and its administrative activities during the year under review. I can recall myself no occasion on which there have been so many questions of very great public interest, so much collective effort employed in examining the problems which invest those questions and

so definite a policy in arriving at their solution. Much of that, sir, is due to your guidance, to your advice, and in a large measure to your energy—too vibrant and devitalizing for some of us (laughter)—but which, no doubt, is much needed in an apathetic and indolent community such as we are. I hope, sir, that you may be spared to see the fruition of some of these schemes which have been largely due to your initiative and I may express the hope that those Elected Members serving on the various Committees and whose help Your Excellency has so often acknowledged, will be spared, whether the Constitution changes or not, to make their own contribution in their own individual way. It only remains for me, sir, to thank you again and to ask that the speech which you have just made be printed and circulated for the benefit of members.

The PRESIDENT: I would just like to express to the Honourable Member for New Amsterdam my warm appreciation of his words. The review of the year 1943 will be in the hands of Members today, and the address which I have just made to Council should be ready in a few hours.

There is one point on which he has touched and on which I myself would wish to add a word, as I should have done in my address. That is in regard to the Advisory Committees of this Council which have been appointed some six months ago and are functioning, as I believe, successfully and usefully and with, as I regard it, further possibilities of constitutional advance. I should here say that last week I received a despatch from the Secretary of State expressing his approval of the institution and his warm appreciation of its constitutional possibilities, as I have myself expressed will be our hope. I would again express my thanks to the Honourable Member for New Amsterdam.

I adjourn Council to 12 noon on Thursday, 1st June.

The Council adjourned accordingly.