SOCIAL POLICY AND THE COLONIAL ECONOMY IN GUYANA

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to examine the development of social policy in a colonial society, to analyse the effects of policy in specific areas and to assess how far, directly or indirectly, social policy protected and forwarded the interests of metropolitan capitalism as a whole and the section involved in plantation agriculture in particular.

At one level the study aims to document and interpret an historical process. At another it attempts a sociological analysis of a comparatively neglected aspect of colonialism and colonial society. The study of social policy in industrialised societies is now well advanced and the development of the welfare state is considered by many to be central to the functioning of the industrial/capitalist state.¹ There have been very few studies of social policy in the ex-colonial countries which form a large part of the third, or undeveloped, world, Furnivall's early analysis standing almost alone until very recently when the subject has provoked few responses.² The process of underdevelopment itself has been extensively studied over the last twenty years, but comparatively little attention has been given to social sector developments. Where social policy has been considered, the usual conclusion has been that it was relatively unimportant and underdeveloped because of the primacy given to the economic rather than social sectors.

It is hoped to demonstrate that, just as the development of the welfare state may be seen as important in the growth of modern capitalism, the role of social policy was important and sometimes critical to the functioning of colonial economies. Considerable attention is given to the economic and social character of each period examined because it is intended to present social policy as an integral part of colonial policy as a whole and not a peripheral and relatively
period up to 1940. Chapter Six analyses the important changes in colonial policy which deeply affected the direction of Guyanese social policy in the post-war period, whilst Chapter Eight looks at the effects of this policy in several areas. Chapter Nine analyses the effects of the political crisis which resulted in the suspension of the Constitution in 1953 on social policy. Finally, conclusions are drawn in Chapter Ten.

**Guyana - the background**

The subject of study is Guyana, formerly British Guiana. The country covers 83,000 square miles on the shoulder of the continent of South America. In spite of this location Guyana, like the other Guianas (now Surinam and Cayenne), is historically and culturally part of the Caribbean, not Latin America. Originally three separate colonies - Berbice, Demerara and Essequibo which now form the counties of Guyana - Guyana was the object of attention from the British, Dutch and French. Settlements were made from the seventeenth century on, originally under the aegis of the Dutch West Indies Company. From 1742 to 1772 the government of Demerara was exercised by the Dutch Commandeur, Laurens Storm Van Gravesande, who opened settlement to people from all countries with the result that by 1760 the majority of planters were British. The possession of the colonies passed back and forth between the colonial powers as a consequence of the fortunes of European wars, but from 1803 there was continuous occupation by the British, although Dutch influence remained in the retention of existing law and modes of taxation and administration.

The major crops produced were at this time cotton, coffee and sugar. They were grown mainly along the alluvial coastlands and in the riverain areas using African slave labour. Many of the planters and slaves came to Guyana from the Caribbean islands where soil fertility was beginning
unimportant by-product of political and economic domination. Social policy is seen as developing in a dialectical fashion with economic and social/political factors; that is, the prevailing economic and social power relationships are seen as determinate of the general form of social policy which in turn generally acted to facilitate the perpetuation of those relationships. The "generality" of this statement is not due to over-caution but rather reflects the view of history adopted: that it cannot be simply "read off" according to theoretical assumptions about the relationship between the classes or indeed any groups in society. The direction of a society's history is the outcome of struggles between classes and groups within a particular economic context, an outcome which can never be assumed but which must be examined empirically and which is rarely constant. "Social policy" or "economic policy" is in actuality composed of many decisions which do not necessarily lead in the same direction, although in totality they may, and usually do, reflect the power structure, which in the colonial situation is a structure which goes beyond the colonial society itself.

After a brief introduction to Guyanese history to 1828, the sequence is as follows: in the first chapter several important theoretical issues are dealt with; the general framework for viewing colonial society and economy is elaborated, the nature of the colonial state is considered as are the definition and functions of social policy. The chapter ends with a note on the determination of the division of time into historical periods. Chapter Two deals with nineteenth century policy developments which form the background to the main period of study. Chapter Three contains an analysis of social and economic conditions in the period 1891 to 1930, with Chapters Five and Seven dealing similarly with the periods 1930 to 1940 and 1940 to 1953. Chapter Four considers the most important aspects of social policy, that is land settlement and health during the
to drop. Guyana offered high yield land, waterways for transport, regular and plentiful rainfall, abundant land for cash crops and the growing of slave food which offset the comparatively high costs of production determined by the need to maintain sea defences.

The native people of the Guianas are the Amerindians. They mainly inhabited the interior areas and carried out slash and burn agriculture. Their numbers, pattern of settlement and land holding made them comparatively unimportant to the process of colonisation that is when compared with the native populations of other areas of colonisation in Africa, India and South-East Asia. The Amerindians were not enslaved themselves as it proved more profitable for the planters to view them as allies in the enslavement of others, using them to track down runaways and generally perform policing functions.

Between 1810 and 1824 developments in world economy led to the abandonment of cotton and coffee and an increase in sugar production as estates were converted to sugar. Throughout the period considered in this study, sugar remained the dominant sector of the economy. In spite of the advantages of Guyana perceived by the Island planters elsewhere in the Caribbean, the land posed problems for those wishing to maximise profits. Chief of these was the system of sea defence and drainage required for the cultivation of the coastal strip.

Guyana is generally considered to be composed of three main geographical areas: the coastal zone, the forest zone and the savannahs. The savannahs, covering approximately 6,000 square miles, contain poor soil mainly suitable for cattle grazing. The forest zone, which covers four-fifths of the total area, is mainly sandy and supports scrub and both seasonal and rain forests. The economic value of this area lies in its mineral content and its timber. The third, comparatively small area
is the coastal zone. This is between one and forty miles wide and is composed of rich fertile clays and silts. Originally, this land was mangrove swamp. It lies below sea level but has been made cultivable by a system of sea defence and drainage instituted by the Dutch. Along much of the coastline there is a system of walls against the sea interspersed by sluices, known locally as "kokers", raised at low tide to allow land water to drain off, and closed at high tide. The coastal zone is the site of the plantations. Fabulous profits made in the eighteenth century heyday of West Indian sugar made it worthwhile for planters to maintain the costly sea defences to reap the benefits of the rich soil.

The three colonies were united under British rule and, although the demand for sugar never again reached the levels which provoked the prices of the latter part of the eighteenth century, it was still sufficiently profitable for the planters who remained after the recession in coffee and cotton prices to continue cultivation. It remained so, for some, even after the abolition of slavery changed the position of labour and created for a brief period, before indentured immigrants were introduced, a free market for labour.

In this brief introduction the characteristics of Guyanese geography, economy and society have been outlined. One of the most outstanding features of the society which is examined in the chapters which follow is the extent to which these characteristics remained basically unchanged.
Notes

1. As, for example, in the work of T.H. Marshall and R. Titmuss.


3. The name, Guyana, was assumed at Independence in 1966 and will be used throughout.


Although there may be continued debate about the precise nature of the relationship between social policy and economic systems it is generally considered that there is a relationship, and that an understanding of the characteristics of an economy is necessary to the proper analysis of the development of social policy. As Titmuss has said:

"...the study of social policy cannot be isolated from the study of society as a whole in all its varied social, economic and political aspects"(2)

The Marxist and Neo-Marxist writers have particularly stressed this relationship, but the functionalists who see social sector developments as meeting systemic needs and even the 'technicists' who see them as resulting from technological change also express their explanations of social policy in terms of the wider socio-economic context in which they occur. The character of these explanations of the welfare state will be taken up later; at this point the purpose is simply to affirm the proposition that economy and society must enter the analysis made in this study. To this end, in this section consideration is made of the theoretical delineation of the economic nature of Guyanese society. Economies may condition the form of social policies; they do not however determine them directly. It is necessary also to have a theoretical perspective on the social structure so that the comparative power of different groups in society to influence decisions in the policy making process may be taken into account, hence the nature of Guyanese society is also discussed.
The Colonial Economy

Guyana's economy was dominated from the early nineteenth century by the production of a single crop - sugar. The production of sugar was achieved almost entirely on plantations with peasant cane cultivation accounting for a negligible amount of the total. The plantations belonged, until the post First World War period, to individual capitalists who were sometimes resident in Guyana but increasingly lived in England and had their properties managed by attorneys and managers. In the post 1914-1918 period the plantation sector came increasingly under the control of a single foreign owned company, Booker Bros. McConnell Co. Ltd., but retained its position in the economy as the largest exporter and largest employer of labour.

Societies thus dominated by plantation production have sometimes been described as having 'plantation economies', the view being that they exhibit sufficiently similar and distinguishing characteristics to be identified as different from other types of economy:

"The common plantation influence gives the set of countries a certain homogeneity: each is fundamentally similar to the others, in terms of not only economic structure and economic problems but also social structure, political organisation and other aspects of human life". (3)

As can be seen in this quotation, the effects of plantation agriculture are not seen as confined to the economy but forming part of a 'plantation system' or, for some writers, 'a plantation mode of production'. Mandel describes the plantation in terms of four attributes:

"First, large scale export-orientated agriculture dominates the society. Second, the labour force requirements of that agricultural sector are greater than can be supplied through the functioning of a domestic labour market. Third, as a result, a non-market mechanism of mobilising and allocating labour is
present and this mechanism is dominant in defining the class
relations of the society. Finally, a specific culture both
emerges from and reinforces the class relations which are
articulated in this way."(4)

In a plantation economy the means of production are in the main
foreign owned and the crops produced are for the export market. The
plantation economy is thus determined not by internal factors in the
society, but is part of a wider system, the focus of control of which
lies in the metropole. Although the plantation is efficient in
production terms, it acts to 'underdevelop' the economy and society it
dominates. It has this effect partly because the production of the
agricultural crop is linked vertically within the multinational
corporation rather than horizontally within the society in which it is
grown; the plantation itself absorbs considerable capital and may
generate technological innovation, but the effects of these are not
spread within the plantation society.\(^5\) Further, the plantation stifles
the development of other sectors of the economy, notably the subsistence
sector. This it does firstly because of its ability to attract
resources to itself. This is of particular importance in relation to
public funds. Because of their centrality to the whole economy,
plantations are successful in claiming aid and assistance from the local
and metropolitan governments in the form of tax reliefs, development
grants, bounties and other subsidies.\(^6\) In this way the plantation sector
is able to secure a major part of limited funds.

The plantation sector may also inhibit the development of other
industry through its monopoly of all, or the best, agricultural land and
through its owners' ability to influence the conditions for the
acquisition of land and the granting of credit facilities.\(^7\) In addition
the legacy of slavery in many plantation economies creates a
comparatively low level of demand for locally produced goods and a high
demand for imports so that a taste for goods produced in the metropole generated in a society dominated by a metropolitan bourgeoisie, inhibits the development of local enterprise.

Another characteristic of the plantation economy is a low wage rate, or in the case of plantation production on a basis of slave labour, low labour costs. Rates of pay generally depend on the availability of labour. In pre-industrial societies this in turn depends on the availability of land. The relationship in economies formerly based on slavery is more complex than this suggests:

"The labour market is also affected in a very special way by the high value placed on independence which fixes a minimum requirement of own-account production, and by taste patterns which dictate a minimum requirement of imported consumption goods. These are parameters fixed by the legacy of slavery. However high are wage rates on the estates labour will work on its own land in the interest of independence. However low they be, cultivators will offer a few tasks of work in order to procure cash to buy imports."(8)

The suggestion here is that there are social or psychological factors which, in addition to land availability, encourage subsistence farming even where labour is in short supply and plantation wages consequently high. The tendency for wages to increase where land was available was often offset by the procurement of additional sources of labour, usually immigrant, which was bound to plantation work through contract and thus represented a moderation of market forces in the determination of wages. Although immigrant contract labour was often sought initially to fill an absolute need for labour, created for example by the abandonment of estate work by some former slaves at emancipation, it affects the rate of pay of free labour by reducing planter dependence on that labour. Coercion enters the relationship between planter and free labourer in so far as the latter finds a necessity to work on the estates for lack of alternative employment or in
the case of indentured labour through state enforced legal compulsion or violence.

The concept of the plantation economy is useful in clarifying the effect of the plantation on the whole national economy and the relationship between that and the international economy. It has been particularly valuable in the critique of the 'dual economy' theory. This suggests that underdeveloped economies typically are comprised of two or more economically unrelated systems one of which is modern and capitalist and the other(s) backward, often based on peasant subsistence agriculture using traditional, low-tech methods. Seen in this way the problem of development becomes one of transferring to the traditional system the methods and attitudes of the modern sector. The theorists of the 'plantation economy' have demonstrated that the modern plantation sector rather than being an independent development model for the traditional sector is in fact the cause of underdevelopment.

It does however, have some limitations which need to be considered as they relate to the formulation of an adequate perspective for the analysis of the political economy of social policy. The notion of a 'plantation economy' does not adequately deal with the relationship between different sectors of the economy. The point is not merely to note that plantation dominance frustrates the peasant sector, but rather to explore the possible functional significance of the latter for the former. As will be shown, such a consideration is necessary for the understanding of many of the land-population policies of the colonial government in Guyana.

In the first instance it may be noted that even in Guyana where plantations were perhaps more dominant than in most countries, substantial numbers of people, from the middle of the nineteenth century
were not engaged in plantation agriculture. Narrow concentration on the plantation may misrepresent the totality. Also the role of the colonial state is obscured whereas it played a vital role in the mediation of purely market factors and in Guyana as elsewhere, assisted in the reproduction of plantation production factors. The coercion involved in obtaining labour for plantations has been noted but to quote Alavi, "we cannot judge the significance and nature of 'coercion' without reference to the structure of the colonial state power".

So whilst the literature on the plantation economy illuminates the nature of the plantation as an economic institution and certain aspects of the relation of the plantations to the worldwide capitalist system, it is less successful in proposing a model of underdevelopment as a whole. An alternative approach considers that the particular combination of elements in economies like that of Guyana constitute a 'colonial economy'.

In the colonial mode "certain elements of the colonial economy, which are in varying degrees 'capitalist' combine with elements which have no place in a capitalist mode of production - such as peasant and subsistence agriculture - to produce an integral and particular colonial mode." 

The different sectors - capitalist (plantation) and peasant (subsistence and cash crop) sectors - are mutually dependent sectors of but one mode of production. Thus in this study the linkages between the two will be explored especially in so far as social policies were evolved which related to the maintenance of this mutual interdependence.

The idea of a specific 'colonial economy' has been developed by critics of current theory relating to underdevelopment. Writers like
Barbalet, Banaji and Alavi, arguing within a Marxist framework, claim
that colonial societies exhibit certain economic characteristics which
distinguish them both from capitalist and feudal societies or
composites of the two, and which comprise a 'colonial mode of
production.' In this view colonial economies are neither capitalist by
virtue of their involvement in the world capitalist system as Gunder
Frank argues, nor dual economies combining capitalist and feudal sectors
as Frank's critic Ernest Laclau claims. The theorists of the 'colonial
mode' suggest that different sectors of colonial economies—capitalist
plantation, peasant subsistence and cash crop sectors—are mutually
dependent sectors of but one mode of production. This position has been
useful in the present study in the conceptualisation of the links between
economic sectors and the role of social policy in supporting those links.

The Colonial State

In societies like Guyana the mechanisms of surplus extraction and
the maintenance of the structures of exploitation have been orchestrated
by the state. This in itself does not make colonial societies unusual.
It is the extent and type of state activity which differentiates the
colonial from the capitalist state:

"The colonial state plays a much greater role quantitatively as well
as qualitatively, in the colonial system than perhaps in any other
social formation. Unlike in the capitalist system, where the
state's chief role is to provide the legal and institutional
infrastructure for capitalist production relations—the colonial
state is not a super-structure erected on the base of colonial
economy; it is an integral and intrusive element in the
structuring and functioning of the colonial economy". (14)

In Guyana the state made possible the production of crops through
slave and, later, indentured labour by providing the legal framework
within which the relations of exploitation were sanctioned and without
which the plantation system would have been unviable. Thus a paradox
arises: whilst, at least until the 1940s, the colonial state extended its involvement in development activities slowly and the official view was that the state's proper role was confined to the maintenance of law and order and economic activity therefore inappropriate, the state was actually involved in the structuring of the economy in the most basic and direct way, by maintaining the conditions for colonial production thus producing a situation such as that described as typical in colonial societies by Chandra:

"The colonial state gave active financial aid and other help to...capitalists, even when the doctrine of laissez-faire reigned supreme at home".(15)

In Guyana, the state not only 'held the ring' for private enterprise but through the subsidisation of immigration, the allocation of public funds, land policy and other measures provided the context for, and actively supported, the sugar industry. Whilst individual governors and the British establishment were not necessarily in sympathy with the 'Saccharine Lords,' the sugar lobby both in Guyana and in England managed to foster a belief in the identity of Guyana's (and Britain's) interests with those of sugar. The state usually acted in such a way as to protect sugar by, for example, the varying of the cost of Crown land according to the labour situation on the estates.

The colonial state then, takes to itself not only the tasks proclaimed for it - the maintenance of law, a political and administrative structure with at least minimal provision of education and other social services - but also actively directs the economy. This produces a contradiction in that the financing of these extended functions creates a continuous budgetary crisis which hampers the state's capacity to finance development investment. The contradiction arises in that the ideology of the colonial authorities emphasized development:
they did not seek the underdevelopment of the colonies, on the contrary the whole moral philosophy of colonialism was premised on the advancement of colonial people and its economic philosophy embraced the idea of developing markets for British manufactured goods. As Chandra says:

"Underdevelopment was not the desired but the inevitable consequence of the inexorable working of colonialism, of trade and its minor contradictions.....there was no imperialist theory of under-development - underdevelopment was the result of the practice of particular theories of development".(16) 

Social policy formed part of the colonial theory of development in so far as it was considered to contribute to the promotion of social and cultural advancement and modernisation which would allow colonial people to participate in the development process.

The contradiction between colonial ideology and the actual effects of colonial policy was deepened by its inability to finance the development of welfare measures. The amount of the limited state resources used to maintain law and order functions and the bureaucracy necessary to its appropriation functions hampered the state's ability to undertake social improvement. In Guyana, for example, the proportion of the budget allocated to law and order functions ran at 15.5% in 1920, and the funds available for social development increased only as those directly allocated to law and order decreased, which is suggestive of the substitution of social welfare as a means of social control for more direct means. As will be shown, the increase in the availability of funds for social welfare and development arose as a result of worker unrest and government attempts at appeasement when the likelihood of war in Europe made stability within the Empire additionally desirable. Generally, however, the availability of public funds for social development purposes was decreased by the proportionately large sums directed to policing and other law and order functions.
The importance of the colonial state's financial limitations can be seen more clearly when another of the state's characteristics is considered. The colonial state faces graver legitimation problems than the capitalist state. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the structure of colonialism is much more easily grasped by the masses than that of industrial capitalism. In advanced capitalism the ramifications of capital are obscure and the loci of power shrouded but in colonial situations, to use Chandra's phrase, "the opaqueness of the colonial state, of its mystifying shell, is easily penetrated". The simplified social structure produced by colonialism with its clear division between ruler and ruled, between, in the case of Guyana, the planters and the masses, made for easy identification of class interests. In addition the masses in colonial societies have no access to the power structure of the state, no channels to the decision making bodies, no input to policy. As a consequence the state has few opportunities for co-opting dissenting elements and discontent tends to manifest itself explosively and sometimes violently. Finally, the legitimacy of the state may be questioned by the masses as a result of the low wages and poor living conditions general in colonial situations. Wages and conditions may be no poorer than those pertaining under, particularly early, industrial capitalism, but they more often cause crises of legitimacy because of the relative ease with which the state's role in the production of these conditions may be perceived and because the caste-like social structure of colonial societies gives relatively few opportunities for the release of social tension through the perception of chances for individual or group social mobility.

Colonial states were generally in no position to divert funds to finance social reforms to avert challenges to the legitimacy of the state in the manner of Bismarck who, with his Sozialpolitik, furnished history
with perhaps the most famous example of the use of social legislation to avert social revolution. The resultant pattern, characteristic of colonies, was high spending on direct forms of social control, low allocations to social and welfare sectors against a background of legitimation problems.

**Colonial Society**

Before proceeding to an examination of colonial society, it is to be noted that the distinction between economy and society, which form a total matrix in the colonial system, is made for analytical purposes only and does not reflect a view of the economic and social as non-reacting levels of society. In constructing a framework for the analysis of Guyanese society, the plantation will again be taken as a starting point.

As noted earlier, the plantation has effects in society wider than those pertaining to its economic organisation. In societies where it predominates the whole community is affected; involved is a "totality of institutional arrangements surrounding the production and marketing of plantation crops." The peculiar features of plantation social organisation have sometimes been described using Goffman's concept of the 'total institution.' The labour requirements of the plantation economy places in juxtaposition a large mass of relatively undifferentiated, unskilled labour and a small group of managers/owners where stratification often assumed a caste-like quality due to the coincidence of class with colour/race. The hierarchical structure of plantation society corresponds to the sharp divide between 'inmates' and 'staff' in more familiar total institutions like the mental hospital or prison.

To this may be added, to strengthen the analogy, the extraordinary all-encompassing nature of the plantation, particularly under slavery or
where indentured labour was used. In Guyana indentured labourers lived on the estates, in estate provided houses. They had their illnesses treated on the estates, in their own hospitals. Their movements were severely restricted and confined to the estates by a welter of labour regulations which circumscribed their lives.

Plantation life, although separating estate labour from the rest of the population, accomplished a degree of homogenisation with the disparate caste and cultural groups of the estate which came firstly as slaves and later as indentured labourers.

But beyond its impact on the estate communities themselves, the plantation has an effect on the whole society. Beckford, and others, have considered that plantation dominance leads to social as well as economic underdevelopment of the whole national structure. He notes that the particular social organisation which evolves around a plantation economy precludes the full utilisation and development of the human potential of the whole population:

"On the whole the plantation has a demoralising influence on the community. It destroys or discourages the institution of the family and so undermines the entire social fabric. It engenders an ethos of dependence and patronage and so deprives people of dignity, security and self-respect. And it impedes the material, social and spiritual advance of the majority of the people. In the circumstances we could hardly expect to find a lightly motivated population displaying the kinds of characteristics the development demands. The energies of most people are employed in trying to bear the system in one way or another." (20)

This is inevitable in any system where persons are distributed to occupations according to ascriptive characteristics and where there is no mobility. Further the rigidity of structure dampens and distorts achievement motivations to produce attitudes which are anti-thesetical to development and in other ways demoralise society.
These, then, are some of the social characteristics which have been attributed to plantation societies: rigid stratification, a mass of undifferentiated, unskilled labour, the use of extra-economic coercion in various forms, 'total institution' like features in the plantation communities themselves and lack of social development in the whole society.

In the same way that the concept of a plantation economy was seen as limiting consideration of the relationship between the plantation and other economic sectors, it is suggested that the conceptual parameters of 'plantation society' are set too narrowly. Considering the social aspects which have been described above, many of these characteristics are not peculiar to plantation based societies but rather are generic to colonial situations and are in the final analysis linked to colonialism rather than the plantation per se. It is not at all clear that such factors as rigid stratification, extra-economic coercion and social stagnation are primarily associated with plantations rather than being the product of the wider colonial situation within which plantation production often occurred. Also, in the analysis of these factors the 'plantation society/economy' concept does not facilitate a full understanding of the power system through which plantation interests dominated society.

Again, a consideration of the colonial state is vital. For example, the necessity of extra-market, coercive methods of mobilising labour in the plantation system has been noted, but reference must be made to the structure of colonial state power. The state's role in providing the legal sanction and institutional framework for coercive relationships was vital to both slavery and the immigration system in Guyana and elsewhere in the Empire. Similarly, we are told that in India:
"Land in fact was not yet the most valued resource in pre-British India for there was an abundance of it relative to the number of people available to extract the fruits of the unyielding earth. The truly precious possession was labour. The labourer had therefore to be made unfree as a necessary condition for his exploitation. He had to be held by coercion. It was only when under the colonial regime all land was appropriated and the labourer had no direct access any more to 'waste' land and had nothing therefore to sell but his labour power that conditions of his exploitation in freedom arose."(21)

The question of the relationship of the local bourgeoisie and the metropolitan capitalists to the state and of the masses to the state is significant to the special interest of the present work as the relative power of different groups to influence social policy and direct it is central to the form policy takes. In colonial societies the state acts as the agent of the metropolitan bourgeoisie, where necessary mediates between different sections of that group and generally guards the interest of the metropolitan capitalist against those of the local bourgeoisie. In Ghana, for example, the state moderated between metropolitan mine owners, shippers and financiers but impeded the development of local bourgeois groups as it:

"did not permit developments in industrial production, did not encourage diversification of Ghanian agriculture, and did not even encourage the development of higher quality crops. As long as the dominant trading and mining sectors, along with the banks and shippers, could obtain reasonable profits from the maintenance of Ghanian society in its peripheral capitalist mode of production....(it) was willing to guarantee the continuation of this level of underdevelopment."(22)

The situation was similar in Guyana. In the nineteenth century planters dominated the local legislature and although this on occasion brought them into conflict with colonial representatives, in the final analysis the sugar interest was protected by the state through its securing of planter life and property and its allocation of public funds in favour of the sugar industry. In the twentieth century planter representation in the legislature was much reduced but even before full
Crown Colony status was assumed in 1928 the power of the elected representatives of the local bourgeoisie to influence policy was minimal and the state continued to represent the interest of the sugar industry, by then almost completely owned by a large, expatriate business house. It did so in so far as alternative paths of development through interior development or agricultural diversification in both of which local professional and business people held interests but which were opposed by the sugar industry, never received full colonial support. The exception to this was in the development of the rice industry which was grown as a peasant crop initially but as will be shown later had, in its origin, a special relationship to sugar and in its developed form to metropolitan aims for the region as a whole. Although the colonial state in Guyana acted for the most part in support of the sugar companies, this was because of a perception of the coincidence of interest between the sugar industry and the state, and in the final instance between the sugar industry and the metropolitan state. This reflects a general relationship between the colonial and metropolitan states and the metropolitan bourgeoisie.

Whilst the political structure of a colony may allow local bourgeois groups some access to policy makers and may even involve their representatives in local legislatures, as in the case of Guyana, the labouring and peasant classes have little opportunity for direct influence. Narrow electorates excluded these classes from participation in the formal political process. The nature of colonial administration further excluded them. Whilst members of the local bourgeoisie were consulted over matters of policy in extra-legislature situations and representatives of the metropolitan capitalists were consulted almost as a matter of course, the other local classes were not invited to participate. As Jones has said:

...
"Orientations of the politically-administrative class failed...to facilitate any form of popular decision-making or the development of autonomous interest articulation within the lower social strata. For the administrative processes were tied much too closely to elite values and goals and too often took the form of a positive narrowing or limiting of conflictual issues". (23)

Essentially bureaucratic, the administration system rather than the legislature was the immediate locus of power in colonial society. This is reflected in the high status and personal authority enjoyed by colonial state functionaries. Its main function was to "maintain political control and to enforce social integration when it suited the Imperial power". Colonial administrative systems implemented policies directed by the metropolitan state, although colonial states were allowed a certain amount of autonomy in the day to day regulations of colonies. In the British colonial system this appeared in practice as the subordination of the Governor of a colony to the Colonial Secretary and of the colonial bureaucracy to the Colonial Office in London.

Typically the problem of government in the colonies was seen as an administrative rather than a political task. The ideology supporting this approach proposed that colonial people were unfit, insufficiently educated, too childlike to participate in politics. The development of popular politics was consequently opposed until the spread of anti-imperialist sentiment caused colonial authorities to seek to control the politicisation process through the sponsorship and nurturing of 'responsible', that is non-radical attitudes. As a result the bureaucracy combined within it both the administrative and political functions. As has been noted:

"This made for an extremely blurred distinction between the 'administrative' and the 'political' and the result was obviously a highly politicised bureaucracy. Policy was largely formulated and implemented by the same people - the Governor and his chosen subordinates." (25)
Although in colonial ideology the state was to represent the interests of groups unrepresented in the legislatures as Gordon Lewis has said, this ideal was almost never realised. The state operated to maintain the status quo as long as this was consonant with imperial interest.

To conclude, the study of social policy may be approached in many different ways but they all suppose a theoretical perspective of some sort, and when the aim is to understand the development of policy in a specific society the necessity of a theoretical perspective extends to the viewing of the society itself. This study seeks to explore the development of social policy in a colonial society the economy of which was dominated by the production of a single crop on a plantation system. Consideration of the role and structure of the colonial state and its relationships to local and metropolitan classes conditions the empirical enquiry by directing questions about where policy originates and how different social classes were able to influence the policy making process.

The Functions of Social Policy

A further important consideration relates to the function of social policy in society. Just as most studies of social policy are premised, explicitly or otherwise, on a conceptualisation of society as a whole, so do they involve understandings about the function which policy fulfills. With regard to colonial societies it has already been suggested that one of the contradictions of colonialism has been that whilst colonial authorities did not intend to underdevelop their colonies, this was the result as a consequence of the state's support of the development of foreign owned enterprises at the expense of indigenous development of the whole society. This has led to an investigation in this study of the
extent to which social policy in Guyana contributed to the country's economic underdevelopment.

To carry the discussion of the functions of social policy in a colonial setting further, it is useful to consider its function in capitalist metropolitan societies. Two major approaches, the Functionalist and the Neo-Marxist are considered briefly here. The discussion of social policy and welfare in mature capitalist societies has usually been conducted within the context of the analysis of the welfare state. Colonial societies were, it has been argued, neither capitalist nor welfare states, but the contrast provided assists in the formulation of an approach to the role of colonial social policy.

For the functionalists industrialisation has created a new set of strains upon the social system and social policies have been set in motion to correct the dysfunctions which have arisen thereby. In this view 'welfare' has played a legitimate role in the maintenance of stability and social integration.27 The technical determinists also feel that welfare policies have arisen from necessities created by industrialisation and urbanisation. For them the basic character of society is given by the technological level it has reached, rather than the dominant ideological position, although the latter may be considered influential at the early stages of development. Technology eventually overrides ideology and the result is a convergence of all advanced societies - irrespective of their ideological stance - towards a common 'ideal type' advanced society where social structure corresponds to industrial requirements.28

According to the functionalists and the related technicist view, industrialisation and economic growth is the 'explanation' of the growth of social welfare. Its function is to facilitate further growth and cope
with the unfortunate but necessary dysfunctions produced as 'side effects' to growth. Clearly the type of explanation of social policy's development produced by the functionalist and technicist perspective is inappropriate in the case of societies where there has been little or no growth or industrialisation. Indeed the burden of the discussion so far has been that colonial social policy was part of the process of underdevelopment. Yet the general approach of the functionalists may yet be relevant if it could be shown that colonial social policy met the needs of metropolitan society, some section of it or capitalism in general. But there are additional reasons for rejecting a straightforward functionalist approach.

The functionalist approach to social policy exhibits the same limitations as the theory in general. Firstly, it may be criticised for failing the deal with the level of 'social action'. Explanations are couched in terms of abstract 'needs of society' rather than in terms of the intended action of individuals, and groups working towards determinate needs.29 Secondly, it may be deemed insufficient for its failure to encompass adequately considerations of power. The role of class struggle in the production and direction of social policy may be minimised.

A more satisfactory approach to the role of social policy in modern society is provided by the Marxist and Neo-Marxist writers who note, as does Gough, the way in which class struggle and the functional requisites of capitalism are related. Central to the argument is the concept of the state. For Gough capitalism has an 'autonomous dynamic':

"The course of capitalism continually generates new 'needs' or 'requirements' in the areas of social policy". (30)

Yet although it is possible, and indeed useful, to analyse the 'changing
functional requirements of capitalist economies', it is, says Gough, incorrect to assume that the state or any other entity will necessarily fulfil these requirements. That the state does often act to do so is due to the emergence of a 'class-conscious political directorate' of the state which acts in promotion of the long term interest of capital even though this requires at times operating against the interests of a particular fraction of capital. Mishra similarly stresses the role of class action in the determination of the role of the welfare state:

"For ultimately the welfare state is the result of elite response to certain problems of industrial capitalism - above all and in its earlier stages, the problem of how to ensure the compliance of the broad masses to the capitalist order."(32)

In this way the criticism levelled earlier at functionalist use of the concept of 'system needs' is at least partially avoided but the Marxist concept of the state and its relationship to the dominant class is not without problems as indicated by the celebrated Miliband-Poulantzas debate. The view taken here is that the means by which the state comes to mediate capitalist interest is to be demonstrated empirically.

O'Connor similarly takes a broadly functionalist approach but seeks to relate the fulfillment of 'system needs' to class action. He suggests that capitalists have two major aims - accumulation and legitimation. Social policy plays a part in securing both goals. The way in which it does so may be exemplified by the development of state responsibility for universal education: education profits the capitalist, that is aids in accumulation, by providing labour with the requisite skills and attitudes for profitable production and also has a legitimation function like most state welfare institutions. O'Connor does not, however, suggest that the volume and type of expenditure by the state is determined by abstract functional requisites but rather 'reflect and are structurally determined
by social and economic conflicts between class and groups. 35

By contrast, in colonial societies the state’s budgetary restraints restricted social investment and private enterprise often undertook social expenditure which would increase labour productivity, although generally only in situations where labour supplies were limited. When unlimited the state often took steps to compel private investment often in order to ensure the long term viability of colonial expansion and prevent a scenario similar to that described by Polanyi who saw developments in nineteenth century European social policy as inevitable lest industrial capitalism ‘physically destroyed man and transformed his surrounding into a wilderness.’ 36 In the case of Guyana and elsewhere in the British Empire where indentured labour was used the state legitimised and facilitated the supply of contract labour by enforcing, or at least enacting, legislation relating to the housing and medical care of labourers. After indenture, when labour shortages, anticipated or real, were experienced investments were made with the intention of attracting labour and increasing productivity. Aid and grants from the metropolitan state from the 1940’s on can be seen as directed to the fulfillment of productivity and legitimation goals: the productivity of labour was to be raised by improved housing and other services: the development of infrastructure such as transport and the assumption of social costs previously met by private enterprise in health, education and housing reduced labour costs to private enterprise; expenditure was directed, especially in the Caribbean, towards the appeasement of the labouring class and the defusing of anti-colonial movements.

In this study accordingly, attention is focused on:

1. the function of social policy in legitimating colonial rule, integrating colonial society and assisting in the production of private profits.
2. the ideology of social policy, including the motivations and intentions of policy makers.

3. the comparative role of the colonial state and private enterprise in the promotion of social welfare.

4. the extent to which social policy has been influenced by the anti-imperialist movement and local class struggle.

A Definition of Social Policy

The concept of social policy has been various defined but traditionally analysts have approached policy and welfare institutionally, that is, by focusing on specific services such as health, social security and housing. In the literature on the Third World also there have been many studies of specific sectors, health in particular, but few which consider social policy as a whole. Hence there has been no real consideration of a suitable definition of social policy in the context of colonial societies. Further, there has been a concentration on the public sector resulting in such definitions as:

"The policy of government with regard to action having a direct impact on the welfare of citizens by providing them with services or income." (37)

There is much to recommend a general movement away from simple administrative definitions of policy area to a more functional analysis, i.e. one conducted in terms of interests and effects rather than administrative conventions. The advantages of broadening the scope of social policy analysis are clear. It allows for the inclusion of such measures as taxation, subsidisation or land settlement schemes, none of which are commonly thought of as 'social policies' yet are just as closely related to the distribution of wealth and social justice as are health and social security. In the colonial context a wide definition of social policy is necessary for two additional reasons: firstly, because of the importance of private enterprise's own welfare arrangements,
voluntary agencies and, in some territories, the church, it would be extremely distorting to consider only 'public' social policy, that is government action; secondly, the extended function of the state into the economic sphere in colonial structures means that a broader based enquiry is necessary to encompass state policy with regard to areas such as immigration, land policy and agricultural policy all of which were tied closely to the social welfare of the masses.

Further, a broader approach can allow for relationships between policy and the power structure to be brought into focus. Whilst it may not be clear what the purposes or function of a particular piece of legislation or a specific administrative arrangement may be, viewing policy as a whole may enable a clearer picture to be arrived at. By examining, say, the institution of poor relief in this wider framework, questions can be posed about its relationship to the entire system of rewards within a society and to the functions of unemployment in a colonial economy.

The disadvantages of a widened definition of social policy are equally clear. An enquiry based on a theoretical assumption of the importance of a broad framework can easily become diffuse and unfocused. However, to argue that an analysis should be set in a framework where policy is defined in its broadest sense does not preclude a concentration on specific policy areas. Thus, in this study, particular attention is given to health, housing, land policy, rural policy and poor relief as these are considered to be central areas but they are seen within the matrix of a particular economy and specific institutional parameters.
A Note on Historical Periods

The presentation of material in this study is basically chronological. The question inevitably arose of where to start and where to end, a problem made more difficult by the fact that Guyanese history is not yet sufficiently developed for there to be any firm conventions guiding the division of time into specific epochs. The background to the main period of study covers the years from 1838 to 1890. 1838 is a date significant to this study as it marked the change from slavery to free labour conditions. From this date to 1890 the basic structure of the social welfare system was laid down. 1930 was chosen as the next cut-off point since the years from that date to 1940 produced economic and social developments which began to challenge the existing structure of society and economy and also saw changes in colonial ideology. In the years up to 1953, the next division of time used, the results of these changes developed. 1953 is a significant date in Guyanese history as it was marked by the withdrawal of the Constitution and, in terms of the development of social policy, produced renewed efforts to foster a moderate, popular political orientation.

These dates, 1890, 1930, 1940 and 1953 also pinpoint approximately the important changes in the imperial order through the second wave of confident colonial expansion, through the world recession of the thirties into the post-war preparations for the break-up of the Empire.

The study takes 1957 as a finishing point. In this year, the Constitution was reinstated, internal government was assumed shortly after and Guyana entered a new period of development.
Notes for Chapter One

1. As Pinker remarks, much of the earlier writing on social policy was curiously a-theoretical. He suggests that in part this was due to its 'attachment' to the field of social administration, an empirically oriented study. Pinker, R. (1971) Social Theory and Social Policy London: Heinemann.


6. Even within the plantation sector technical development may be slow. Mandel, op.cit. pp 46-48


8. Ibid.


15. Ibid, p 277

16. Ibid, p 278

17. Ibid, p 278

18. Smith, R.T. op.cit. p 229

19. Originally used by Raymond Smith. Mandel and Beckford amongst others have endorsed this perception of plantation society
20. Beckford, G. op.cit. p 206

21. Alavi, H. op.cit. p 185


24. Ibid, p 240

25. Ibid, p 240


The "convergence" or "technicist" theories of social welfare are discussed in Mishra, R. (1977) Society and Social Policy London: Macmillan, Ch.3


31. Ibid, p 37


35. Ibid, p.2


CHAPTER TWO

THE ORIGINS OF SOCIAL POLICY IN GUYANA

Immigrant Heath Provision

In this chapter a broad view of nineteenth century socio-economic developments and social policy in Guyana will be given. The starting point is the accommodations which were made to the changes brought about by the end of slavery. The measures taken by the state to control the conditions under which immigrant labour lived were of great significance to the character taken by social policy in the private and public sectors until well into the twentieth century. They were the basis for the emergence of a two-tier policy which had effects outside the welfare system itself.

The advent of emancipation in 1838 threatened the very basis of the Guyanese economy, built as it had been on a foundation of slave labour. The planters almost immediately set about a search for a source of labour alternate to the newly freed slaves of African descent, fearing for the viability of their estates if such were the single source. Two factors dictated their search. The first was that there was an excess of land over population such as to allow for the establishment of a peasantry independent of work on the estates. Guyana was—and today remains—underpopulated with the concentration of population confined to the narrow alluvial belt along the coast where the sugar estates were sited. Behind this lay the vast hinterland and even on the coastal strip there were lands available for cultivation including estate lands which had been abandoned by proprietors in times of economic difficulty. Fears that the ex-slaves would take to the hinterland proved to be largely
unfounded. The difficulty of terrain and comparative poverty of the land discouraged interior settlement. Much more attractive were the abandoned estates. These were rapidly transformed into villages by freed men who pooled together money, saved during the period of apprenticeship which preceded full emancipation and from subsequent wages, and made joint purchases of land.¹

The second factor relates to the conditions under which sugar is produced in Guyana. The need for labour varies greatly over the crop cycle. While canes are growing labour requirements are low, the main task being weeding. In crop season when the canes are cut the demand for labour is heavy. Further, cane-fields are burnt before cutting takes place and it is essential to the quality of sugar produced that the canes be cut and processed within a specific period after burning. This requirement could put the planter at the mercy of labourers at the critical period should they threaten to withdraw their labour. Strikes for higher wages in 1842 and 1848 underlined the vulnerability created by reliance on free labour. In addition, the necessity of keeping wages low became increased by an Act passed in the British Parliament in 1846 which equalised duties payable on slave and free labour grown sugar imported into Britain, thus placing the Guyanese planter at a competitive disadvantage, as slave produced sugar was cheaper.² Formerly the duty on "free labour sugar" was lower than that placed on slave-grown sugar. Taken together these two factors demanded that if the level of profitability of the estates was to be maintained more labour would be required both to offset that lost to the villages and also to create an oversupply which could counteract demands for higher wages.

More free labour, however, could not guarantee an abundance of cheap and controlled labour. The answer to the problem was bound labour. The earliest experiments in indentured immigration were made with the
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<td>72</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

importation of labourers from Madeira. The Portuguese proved unable to
stand the rigours of tropical labouring and their high mortality rate led
to a search for more suitable immigrants. India provided the main
solution and Indian immigration became well established by 1850. Indians
became the preferred type of immigrant, although Portuguese, Chinese and
Africans were added in comparatively small numbers up until the late
1860s.3 (see Table 2(i)). Between 1838 and 1917, 238,960 Indians came to
Guyana under indenture through the Immigration Department. From 1843
until the cessation of indenture in 1917 the costs of immigration were in
varying degrees met by the state. State willingness to meet such costs
was ensured by the political dominance of the planter class in the local
legislature. The Franchise Ordinance of 1849 had broadened the
representation of interests in the constitutional bodies through
subdividing the colony into constituencies, but the hegemony of the
planter class remained intact. Qualifications for both elective and non-
elective members of parliamentary institutions were sufficiently high to
ensure that only wealthy planters and merchants would be eligible.
Further, since rural outnumbered urban districts the pre-eminence of the
planting interest was assured. Even when by 1853 the College of Keizers
was dominated by merchants the planter faction retained effective control
since the qualifications for the College remained such as to ensure that
members were required to have landed property, thus giving members who
were primarily merchants a common interest with the planters.4,5

One contemporary report, from Sir William De Voeux, who had served
as a Magistrate in Guyana and was a critic of the power of the sugar
interest in the legislature, put it thus:

"Trollope had termed the government of British Guiana a 'despotism
tempered by sugar'. It appeared to me rather a despotism of
sugar......and a sugar which in this, as in some human
constitutions, is apt to turn acid. Though the legislative body,
the Court of Policy, had a bare majority of officials some even of these were permitted, as I think improperly, to own or be pecuniarily interested in, sugar estates, while the whole of the unofficial members owed their position and livelihood to the same product. Again the additional members, composing with the Court of Policy 'the Combined Court' which alone had the power of voting supplies, were nearly all either directly interested in sugar as managers of estates or were carrying on a trade which chiefly depended on it."(6)

Another contemporary report for the same period comments on the effect of this planter control of the legislature:

"But that our Government has been induced - I shall say beguiled - almost to become a party to a particular manufacture, and suffered its council chamber at times to resemble the bureau of the merchant or the planter than an assembly of state, is sadly true..."(7)

The planter interest also dominated power bases outside of the legislature through representation on the statutory boards which had been established to take over functions formerly fulfilled by the plantations themselves, such as those for Sea Defence, Drainage, Vestries and Poor Law Boards.

In addition to the political power wielded through control of the legislature and other policy bodies, the planters also had great social influence which extended to the Governor himself. As De Voeux put it:

"......the Governor, while of course bound largely to consider the sugar interest, required to be, in an exceptional degree, strong and upright, in order to act independently of that interest for the welfare of the unrepresented classes which are the great majority of the population. Unless almost superhumanly politic also his independence would meet with unmitigated abuse from the Press, he would have had a social life very far from agreeable and might even have failed to obtain necessary supplies."(8)

Finally, the planters exercised influence at levels higher even than the Governor through their representation in the West India Committee, a powerful British based association of West Indian sugar interests which had as one function the lobbying of the British Parliament and the Colonial Office, often to great effect.
Indentured immigration met the requirements for continued sugar production on a basis similar to slavery. The labourers were bound for a fixed number of years, thus providing a secure source of labour independently of the free labour market. Only immigrants were indentured.

In addition to meeting part of the costs of transporting immigrants employers were also required to provide for them free housing and medical facilities. By an Ordinance of 1847, each estate employing indentured labourers was compelled to establish a hospital. Previous to this planters had been requested, rather than forced, to give medical assistance to immigrants. The belief that estate proprietors would interpret this request as in their best interest as procuring the health of labour they had acquired at some expense proved vain.

Although the constitution of East Indian immigrants proved more suitable to plantation work than that of the Portuguese, mortality rates were still high, especially amongst the recently landed. The 1851 census indicated that of 3,985 East Indians landed by 1848 (when immigration was halted for three years), only 2,736 were still on the estates, 360 of those missing were officially counted dead and the remainder were considered to have taken to squatting and begging. This was contributing to the further demise of a group attested by the Chief Medical Officer to be "daily dying in the colonial hospital."

If the commitment made by the colonial government to ensure the well being of immigrants was to be kept and thus the supply to be continued, a superior arrangement had to be arrived at. There is no doubt that, apart from any question as to the morality of encouraging immigrants without undertaking care of their survival, another factor was at the forefront
of the decision to involve state intervention through legislation. It was important to forestall criticism from elements of the British public. As early as 1839 adverse reaction to the introduction of indenture as a means of securing labour for the Empire had appeared in the British Emancipator, the official journal of the Anti-slavery Society of Great Britain. This reaction, if it grew, threatened to impede negotiations for further labour supplies. Compulsion upon employees to protect the immigrant sector of the rural population was initiated. Thus began a system which formed part of a complex web of social control. The element of control lay in the relationship between the hospital system and a legal system which provided for a compulsion to work. The labour laws under the Immigration and Masters and Servants Ordinances were extremely rigid, allowing for prosecution of the indentured labourer who failed to show himself for work without reasonable cause or failed to complete the amount of work required daily by statute. Successful prosecution could result in imprisonment or in the forfeiture of wages. The draconian nature of these laws is evidenced by the number of prosecutions made every year; in 1901, for example 23% (3,424) of all indentured labourers on estates were prosecuted by their employers; 1,922 were convicted. Tinker has described the system potently as:

"...operated by making the coolie live a life similar to that of a convict, or at any rate a prisoner on parole....All the indented people were strictly confined to the limits of their masters' estates unless given permission to move outside under strictly regulated conditions."(13)

One contemporary report suggested that the current boast of the planters was that if an indentured labourer was not at work, then he was sure to be found in hospital or jail. These two institutions did in fact relate in a system of total control. As Dr. Shier, Surgeon General in the 1870's put it:
"As a matter of discipline, moreover the necessity of entering hospitals when a man leaves his work on the grounds of sickness, is a slight but useful check upon malingering." (15)

Free housing on estate land worked in favour of the planters in two ways: firstly, the labourers were readily available for whatever work was necessary, but more importantly their containment on the estate made for easy surveillance. Thus the only 'reasonable cause' for absence from work was illness in which case labourers were expected to report to the hospital. The whole system of control was reinforced by laws relating to desertion. If an indentured immigrant was absent from the estate without leave for more than seven days, he could be arrested. The enforcement of these laws was accomplished in two ways; firstly, estate employers were compelled, under penalty, to proffer charges against absconders so that warrants for arrest could be issued; secondly, the police had the powers to stop anyone suspected of desertion and call for the person to produce a pass or exemption from work.16

Standards in the hospitals varied but, especially in the period before 1870, were low. Until 1873, the doctors supervising estate hospitals were on the estate payroll. It was therefore tempting for them to certify labourers as fit for work before they were fully recovered and to continually suspect malingering; to certify too many as unavailable for work through illness could incur the displeasure of the planters upon whom they were dependent for their employ.17

Hospital inspection procedures were poor. They were conducted initially by stipendiary magistrates.18 In 1859 an Ordinance (No.17) provided for a Medical Inspector paid from colony revenues. A Dr. Shier was appointed and his reports and oral evidence formed the basis for most of the commentary on the hospitals made by Commissioners who were appointed in 1870 to enquire into the treatment of East Indians in
Guyana. 19 One problem of inspection was that visits appear to have been announced and often specially prepared for. In spite of this the Inspector reported finding numerous breaches of regulations in every area, including provision of clothing, bedding, eating utensils, food, medicine and building standards. 20

It may seem paradoxical that the planters were apparently so careless with a commodity for which they bore much of the cost. It becomes more understandable when another feature of the system is considered. As responsibility for health care was borne by private enterprise it was considered relative to other forms of capital expenditure. Since the efficiency of medical science at this period was low, no clear relationship between good hospital facilities and improved production was demonstrable, thereby encouraging an evaluation of hospitals in terms of their value as part of an apparatus of control rather than as they might contribute to a maximisation of labour output. Minimum standards were sufficient to fulfil this function.

In addition, when estates were in financial difficulties the cost of medical care could scarcely be met especially in competition with other maintenance requirements of the plantation. 21 Planters were encouraged in this attitude towards medical care by the Inspector, Dr. Shier, who took a sympathetic approach to estate owners and managers who had difficulty in complying with hospital regulations allowing 'makeshift' provision where it was claimed no better could be afforded. 22

The Commissioners were critical:

"We find here the disposition, when retrenchments are required, to commence with the hospital; and that until embarrassed circumstance can be tided over the comforts and conveniences of the immigrant are postponed to the convenience of the proprietors - a state of things that certainly ought not to be allowed. As soon as an estate gets into such straitened circumstances as to prevent the proprietors fulfilling all the requirements of the law
towards the immigrants, the latter ought to be removed from the estate."(23)

There was legal provision for allocations of immigrants to be withheld from estates whose living conditions were not up to regulation standard. This proviso was not enforced as often as warranted, the Medical Inspector being sympathetic when estates requested time to improve their position. The Commissioners found many examples of gross overcrowding in hospitals where further allocations had been allowed and concluded that the Inspector had never "enforced an observation of his instructions by means of law."24

Finally, it is possible that, at least in the early days of indenture, labour was viewed from a perspective developed during slavery. Substance is given to this suggestion by the finding of the Commissioners that, until prohibited by a Circular issued by the government in 1870, stocks, although decreed a 'relic of the old regime' were not only still to be found in many hospitals but on occasion used to deal with refractory or absconding patients.25

Housing conditions were found to vary considerably; although some estates had built cottages for estate dwellers, most labourers lived in old ranges two or three stories high, which were overcrowded, badly ventilated and had poor sanitation.26 The Inspector had recommended that the old barrack ranges be replaced by single story structures with parched earth floors. This had, however, seldom been accomplished by the time the Commission sat in 1870. The conclusion drawn in their report was that little had been done to improve the situation.

It is clear that the value of immigrant labour lay not only in its productive capacity but in the control it gave over the labour force as a whole through its effect on wages. Legislation guaranteed the same wage
for non-indentured labour as indentured labour. Initially intended as a protection for indentured labour, it had the effect of reducing overall wage levels in the sugar industry since the increase in labour available as immigration continued made it possible to put down non-indentured labourers' wages and therefore indentured labourers' pay which was legally tied to it.\textsuperscript{27} In addition, the bound section of labour ensured that, when those tasks arose in the production cycle which did not allow for delay, there would always be available labour to carry them out. The evidence of an overseer to the Royal Commission of 1897 illustrates well this important function of indentured labour:

"The supply of labour has no bearing on the sugar industry; the whole origin of immigration hinges on this point. You may have work and plenty of it for a black man and a coloured man, and they will not do it. In planting cane if you leave certain agricultural work over, your crop is ruined. Therefore it is absolutely necessary that you should have bound labour that you can command." (28)

The costs of the 'welfare' system - health and housing - added to the cost of production in one way but were more than balanced by the value of the bound section of the labour force in modifying the free play of market forces in determining wage levels, in justifying the low wages paid to indentured labourers themselves, in assuring a constant labour supply and in the opportunities afforded for the surveillance and control of indentured labourers.

The system of estate health care was modified following the Commission's report of 1871. Among the reforms which resulted from the Commission was the 1873 Ordinance which provided for the employment of estate medical officers by the Government rather than, as formerly, by the planters. Their salaries were to be met from general revenues and from a capitation tax on indentured labourers to be paid by the employers. As government employees the doctors were to care for the
estate population as a whole. They were given notice that they would be required to visit, supervise and attend all patients at rural local dispensaries serving the non-estate population as soon as a project for the establishment of these institutions was realised. Further, in order to meet the "needs of the poorer classes of the community" rules were to be laid down to guide the treatment of these patients and be fixed to provide "advice and medicines for patients in the humbler walks of life, who whilst capable of defraying some small charge for medical treatment, are unable to pay the customary professional charges."\(^{29}\)

The extended duties of the new Government Medical Officers were clarified by a further Ordinance (No.9) of 1886 which established a Government Medical Service and created the post of Surgeon General. This move appears to have been motivated at least in part by the feeling of government that as since 1876, when the 1873 ordinance came into effect, the state was financing partially a medical system which nevertheless still worked mainly in favour of the estate population, the situation would be rectified and the demand for more rural care met better by removing the Government Medical Officers from the administration of the Immigrant Department. The Governor wrote:

"The whole rural population is therefore under the care of a government staff which is attached to the Immigration Department and whatever rules or regulations the government may try to enforce it is only natural that the immigration staff should consider their immigration work their chief concern and all else as a secondary concern."\(^{(30)}\)

The movement towards an integration of rural health services on the level of personnel was resisted both by planters and doctors. Planters who employed large numbers of indentured labourers stood to lose as the capitation tax could amount to more than the doctor's entire salary. Doctors were aware that in addition to greater professional regulation they could expect extra work and possibly a loss of income.\(^{31}\) In spite
of the fact that it had been common practice to admit to estates hospitals unindentured labourers, doctors apparently were reluctant to be compelled to do so by law. Their reluctance was such that government apparently found it necessary to remind them of their new duties:

"It has been brought to the notice of the Governor that in some districts the Medical Officers have refused to give medical attendance as part of their duty, to the class of persons attached to the estates, other than immigrants, who, previously to 1st July 1883, received medical aid from the medical attendant employed by the estate.

The Governor directs me to observe that in making, in the year 1873, the changes in the position of medical attendants of the estates, whereby they became District Medical Officers, it was not the intention of the Government to withdraw from the estates, or from the residents thereon other than immigrants, any part of the medical attendance previously given at the cost of the estates.

The Governor, therefore, requests that you will understand that it is your duty to give the same amount of medical aid to persons attached to the estates within your district other than immigrants, as was given by the medical attendants to estates prior to the 1st July 1883." (32)

Thus, in theory at least, the health of the whole labouring population was to be attended by the servants of the state. At the same time the cost of professional service to the planters as a whole was minimised. Estate hospitals, remained reserved for those working on the estates. There does, however, seem to have been an improvement in the hospital provision on at least some of the larger estates following the appointment of a more efficient inspectorate. The Governor reported that by 1897, forty of the ninety-seven estates' hospitals were newly built.33

Conditions in the Villages

As noted earlier the basis of an independent peasantry was laid down with remarkable rapidity in the era immediately after emancipation. Farley quotes contemporary reports indicating that by the end of 1848, 446 abandoned estates had been acquired, largely by joint purchase by ex-
slaves, upon which 44,443 persons were settled. By 1851 village freehold properties numbered 5,672 in Demerara Country, 2,254 in Essequibo and 3,265 in Berbice. At this time Crown Lands Regulations of 1839 ruled that lands could only be acquired in lots of 100 acres or more and gave a statutory price of 10 dollars per acre, thereby making it difficult for villagers to acquire land.

Many of the villages established during this period adopted a system of co-operative self government under contractual 'Agreements' through which they regulated their affairs and collected subscriptions for common property, repairs to roads, bridges and canals. The degree of independence being exercised by the villages was intolerable to the planter government. In 1866 a Central Board of Villages was set up with power to levy taxes in 'incorporated' villages that is, villages under its jurisdiction. Only eighteen villages were incorporated by 1878 at which point the insanitary conditions of the villages were used as occasion to increase central control. A Central Board of Health was created with authority over the other two hundred villages. The Board was initiated under the Public Health Ordinance, a statute based on the new English Public Health Legislation. It was given the power to raise local rates for the upkeep of main drains and outlets and authority to compel individuals to assume responsibility for drainage on land which they owned or occupied. Both the Board of Villages and the Public Health Board were dominated by the planter class.

In 1883 control of the incorporated villages was transferred to the Central Board of Health in relation to sanitation matters and the Public Works Department for roads and sea defence. A grant-in-aid of $25,000 for village relief was offered in exchange for the loss of independent control. The assumption of central control resulted in some loans for
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>Total % of total population</th>
<th>Estate East Indian No.</th>
<th>Estate East Indian % of total population</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Non-Estate East Indian No.</th>
<th>Non-Estate East Indian % of total population</th>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>47,114</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>22,481</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>111,907</td>
<td>57.9</td>
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<td>1871</td>
<td>67,859</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>44,539</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>151,492</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>2,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>84,234</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>52,418</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>196,857</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>14,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>90,330</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>71,772</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>195,943</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>28,471</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Calculated from data given in Roberts, G.W. and Johnson, M.A., "Factors Involved in Immigration and Movement in the Working Force of British Guiana in the Nineteenth Century", Social and Economic Studies, Vol.23 (No.1) March 1974, p.81
drainage pumps but the sum allocated to the villages was small, decreased by $10,000 in 1889 and a further $5,000 in 1890, and brought about no real improvement in the condition of the villages. 39

The condition of the incorporated villages, where taxation, through local rates, was higher, became worse than in the non-incorporated ones. The services paid for were provided haphazardly and the burden of taxation fell heavily. The villagers' perception of the limitations of central assistance and control led to agitation for the resumption of self control. 40 This was acceded to finally in 1894 when elected councils were restored to the incorporated villages amalgamated now to number thirteen. 41 The other villages continued as Sanitary Districts under the control of the Central Board of Health. The condition of the villages was unimproved by this move as it was accompanied by a reduction of financial resources as funds from central government were withdrawn and loans curtailed. 42 Of the public money that was expended on public works in the 80's and 90's the major part benefitted not the villages but the estates. 43

The village population began to increase in the 1870's as a result of time-expired indentured labourers moving away from the estates and taking up residence in villages. This tendency was accelerated when the system of re-indenture - whereby immigrants received a 'bounty' upon renewing his contract and extending the period of his indenture - was ended, reducing the numbers of indentured labourers from 38,318 in 1870 to 15,251 in 1884, and resulting in the growth of immigrant village settlements. 44,45 (See Table 2(ii))

Both the early villages and the immigrant settlements faced enormous problems. A major problem derived from the difficulties posed by drainage on the coastal lands. To maintain proper drainage was not only
expensive but also required co-operative effort as failure to upkeep one section of the system led to flooding in others. Often the villagers failed to organise themselves sufficiently to provide the labour needed for drainage tasks or to meet the other major responsibility placed upon them, that of maintaining the roads running through the villages. The most basic problem, however, was the villagers' inability to raise sufficient capital to finance the recurrent expenditures incurred in maintaining infrastructure.

Finally, in 1907, greater central control was reasserted by means of unifying legislation which divided the colony, including estates, into different kinds of units with responsibility for local administration. These were the Urban Sanitary Districts covering the towns - Georgetown and New Amsterdam - Village Districts which included incorporated villages, County Districts covering other villages and lastly Rural Sanitary Districts which were basically plantation areas not included in any of the other units.

Yet these administrative changes could not resolve the basic problem which hinged on the dependency of the whole economy on the sugar industry. As one Governor saw it:

"In times of commercial and agricultural prosperity the village councils may perhaps be able to carry out duties undertaken and inclined to enact liabilities incurred, but during a period of depression, such as the colony is now enduring, they seem to lack the necessary energy either to perform those duties or meet those liabilities and unless as is the case in one or two instances, they have a leader chosen from a class above the majority of their members they fall into arrears in both cases appealing to the Government for assistance."

Conditions in the villages tended to vary with the state of the sugar industry for two reasons. Firstly, many villagers, both Africans and East Indians, supplemented their income from small holdings by working on the estates or were totally dependent on wages from estate
labour and thus were directly affected by the cyclical slumps which plagued the industry. In addition the paramount importance of sugar to the entire economy meant that falls in sugar receipts reverberated throughout the whole society. In this way the village economy was linked to the estate economy which in turn was determined by the international economy.

Even the assumption of central control was no guarantee of improvement in village conditions for, as the Report of the Central Board of Health of 1907 claimed, the expense of maintaining roads and drainage was so high that to enforce the meeting of requirements in this area, as the Board was empowered to do, would mean 'the levying of an assessment beyond the villagers means, to meet expenses which the great majority would consider unnecessary.'

Whilst it is not possible to calculate separate mortality rates for the villages from existing records, there is evidence that conditions in the villages by the turn of the century were so poor that the rate of natural increase was negligible, this being mainly a reflection of high mortality rates. For the period 1871 to 1880 a natural increase of 0.15% (3,300) was recorded, and for the following decade one of 0.16% (4,200).

The proportion of this tiny increase contributed by the villagers is not known but in 1892 a Dr. Godfrey was of the opinion that 'the mortality of the villages, taken as centres of population, would be found to be double if not treble that on the estates'. He added his view that there was little or nothing being done to improve the sanitary conditions of the villages.

One can only speculate the extent to which the lot of the villagers
would have been bettered had not immigration relieved the need to preserve the village population but as will be shown later, government interest in public health grew when indenture ceased.

Non-Estate Medical Provision

Non-estate medical provision advanced in an ad hoc manner in response to crises which from time to time threatened to engulf the whole population, Europeans included. This can be demonstrated by reference to the development of public health.

A Board of Health was established for Georgetown in 1832 under Ord. 20 of that year. The primary object of this Ordinance was to deal with a cholera epidemic. Further Boards were established for the three counties, Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo under Ordinance 32 of 1850. These Boards were united years later when cholera threatened again. Originating in England, the epidemic ravaged Barbados and Trinidad in 1854. The anticipatory measures taken in Guyana, including refuse collection, lot cleaning, lime washing of buildings and the establishment of drainage systems, were successful in keeping the toll taken by cholera substantially lower than in the Islands.

The Health Ordinance of 1852 also provided for the establishment of rural dispensaries. These were to give free medicine and treatment to those who paid a local health rate or those who were paupers. The Court of Policy prevaricated in activating the clinics initially and action was forced only when a few months later a yellow fever epidemic struck. Powers were given for the establishment of dispensaries and the employment of doctors to man them. Yellow fever was particularly injurious to those newly arrived in the colony, which included not only East Indian and other immigrants, but also European overseers, managers.
administrators and soldiers. The danger was such that sailors were afraid to dock in Georgetown Port. In 1840 69% of all European troops perished from yellow fever within months of arrival in Guyana.54

By 1857 there were fifteen dispensaries financed in the first instance by central government but with monies recoverable from village rates. This arrangement was changed in 1864 when an annual vote of $3,500 was made by central government to be distributed amongst private doctors in payment for work done amongst the rural poor. The benefit of the vote to the villagers to whom doctors were theoretically available was negligible and to those in outlying areas non-existent, and was discontinued with the advent of government salaried doctors in 1876. One Governor's assessment of these methods of dealing with the health needs of the rural population was that they were ineffective:

"I have in other despatches incidentally adverted to the fact of a considerable portion of the poorer classes of the community being beyond the reach of medical assistance, except at a cost wholly beyond their means, Governor Sir. P. Woodehouse sought to remedy this in some degree, by the establishment of dispensaries in certain localities, but the plan failed to obtain the object in view. My predecessor, Governor Hicks, abolished the dispensaries and obtained an annual vote of $3,500 for medical aid for the poor in rural districts ....I think the general opinion which prevails is it is more than doubtful whether the poor receive any substantial benefit from this vote, is not far from correct...(55)

"The poor" consisted of the vast majority of the population. The degree to which the extension of the state paid doctors' duties to village dwellers actually improved their lot is questionable. The appointment of government salaried officers to the rural areas made it more difficult for private practitioners to make a living in the country areas, the attraction of which was limited already by the absence of any middle class.56 In addition doctors were still required to fulfil their duties on the estates and there is evidence to suggest that in apportioning their time they continued to give first importance to the
estates. Nearly twenty years after the institution of the new system, when giving evidence to a Commission of Enquiry, Dr. Law, the Surgeon General, rebuked a Dr. Winckler for suggesting that the *raison d'être* of the Government Medical Service was to serve the public. Dr. Law challenged such a benign view and indicated that the 'essential element' of the service was rather the 'existence of the immigration system'. Further although the intention had been to fix fees at a level which could be afforded by the 'poorer classes' soon even the smallest fees were beyond the means of many.

The price of sugar slumped in 1873 and the effects of this were aggravated by three droughts between this date and 1880. The depression deepened through the 80s. Distress in the rural areas and the subsequent increase in demand for assistance under the Poor Law led to the setting up of a Poor Law Enquiry Commission in 1881. Much of the evidence given to the Commission was concerned with the lack of health facilities for the rural non-estate population. Typical of the reports is the evidence of John Kiernan, a carpenter of Craig Village, who complained that medicines were obtainable only in Georgetown and that:

"many people cannot call the doctor, even those who are strong enough to work on the estates cannot call the doctor. I mean that they cannot afford to pay the doctor".

The Reverend J. Foreman and others testified that state employed doctors were 'indifferent' to those not resident on the estates.

There were hospital facilities at the county state hospitals in Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Suddie. These were often little more the depositories of people broken down by work and illness which had progressed to the incurable stage to die in. Tuberculosis was a growing problem: it was reported by the Resident Surgeon of the Public Hospital, Georgetown as causing 206 (27.1%) of the 758 deaths in the hospital in
1886, an increase from 4.9% in 1846.60 The African population was particularly affected and Dr. Rowland attributed this to 'imperfect recovery from the attacks of the disease, the result of absolute neglect or of unskilled treatment from the absence of medical assistance, for broadly speaking the Negro race in British Guyana has been neglected since the time of emancipation in the matter of medical aid. The poor people of the country have been left to suffer repeated attacks of disease without educated help, until with broken down constitutions they find their way to the urban hospitals to die of phthisis [T.B.] or other diseases that result from physical exhaustion'.61

There is some evidence that, as well as catering for the sick urban poor and rural villagers, the public hospitals acted as auxiliary poor houses, sometimes admitting people who were considered to be 'not sick' but were lying in the streets suffering from debility due to starvation.62 The Acting Medical Superintendent of the Berbice Public Hospital spoke in 1881 of the hospital as 'a refuge for all the starved, debilitated and broken down coolies of the district...'.63

The non-indentured labourers were not in law entitled to treatment in the estates' hospitals although in practice they often were treated, but in the straitened circumstances of the eighties it became:

"in many instances.....the practice of sending into this Hospital [Berbice Public] dying and incurable immigrants from the Estates' Hospital. (64)

It seems that this was the practice also in Georgetown for it was noted that in 1881 there were in the state hospital there 30 free and 11 indentured labourers from estates.65
The legal situation with regard to treatment of non-indentured immigrants and others in estates' hospitals and indentured immigrants in public hospitals was that in the former case there was no obligation on the part of estates' management; in the latter case estate managers paid for their indentured labourers. In practice estate hospitals were sometimes open to non-indentured labourers too. In some cases all residents on estates were treated as admissible, in others non-resident workers were also admitted. D.W.D. Comins an official visitor to estates in Guyana and Trinidad in 1893, commented that in Guyana, unlike Trinidad:

[although]"unindentured immigrants are not by law entitled to admission into and treatment in an estates' hospital......this privilege has always been given to them by their employers, and not only to them, but also to other free labourers resident and working on the estates."(66)

He concluded also, on the basis of a circular sent to Medical officers in 1876 at the time when doctors became salaried state employees, that directives to continue to give medical aid to non-indentured labourers indicated that the extension of aid to this group was customary. Departmental Reports from the Immigration Department support this conclusion as does the following table: (see next page)
### TABLE 2(iii)

**Number of Cases Treated in Estate Hospitals, 1880-1889**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Indentured Immigrants</th>
<th>Unindentured Immigrants</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>73,774</td>
<td>25,760</td>
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<tr>
<td>1881</td>
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<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>80,928</td>
<td>32,367</td>
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<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>73,325</td>
<td>39,824</td>
<td>8,693</td>
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<td>55,870</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>43,851</td>
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Source: Comins, D.W., Notes on the Emigration of Indians to Trinidad and British Guyana, p.83 (67)

Thus two separate sectors of health provision emerged during the nineteenth century, one concerned with estate labourers, the other with the rest of the population. The non-estate sector included the public hospitals in the urban population centres, the private doctors practicing in the towns and the meagre rural provision of rural dispensaries and government medical officers. The introduction of indentured immigrant labour removed the need for the preservation of the non-estate rural population whilst the provision of estate hospitals provided a measure of control over indentured labourers. The creation of Government Medical Officers in effect removed part of the cost of production from the private to the public sphere whilst bringing small benefit to the non-estate population.
Poor Relief

Poor relief, based on the English model, developed early in Guyana, as indeed it did in the West Indies as a whole. The reason for this is to be found in the predominance of the institution of slavery. In other colonies plantations and mines existed as enclaves against a background of traditional society. Redundant workers could be returned to tribal villages where they would be absorbed, or rather reabsorbed, with greater or lesser difficulty into the traditional structure. Most Caribbean societies were entirely the creation of a colonialism; there was no traditional society to fall back upon. Slave society had been regulated, as had feudal society, by the precept that masters were responsible for their slaves. Abolition ended that responsibility and created a situation where large numbers of former slaves, through, age or infirmity would be thrown into destitution.68

In 1839 an Ordinance (No.15) was passed, based on a draft prepared for the Colonial Office by England's Chief Poor Law Commissioner. By this ordinance members of families were obliged to assume the responsibility formerly held by the slave owner: fathers for children, husbands for wives and children for parents. In cases where this was not possible the central government was to take financial responsibility. Poor relief was administered on a Parish level, with the Vestry, composed of clerics and landowners, acting a Guardians of the Poor. Three Commissioners controlled central administration with power to establish work houses for indoor relief.69

Thereafter, there were administrative changes but the essential structure remained with central control and local administration by representatives of the Church and the plantocracy. The village councils were not involved in the process at any level. The Poor Law Commission
of 1881 appears to have been set up largely as a result of tax payers' concern about the increase in demand for, hence the cost of, relief. Many of the clergymen giving evidence spoke of their belief that although work for the Creole population had decreased in recent years, the basic cause of the increase in pauperisation was indolence. The Reverend Foreman claimed that unwillingness to work for more than three or four days coupled with impecuniousness was to blame. The Reverend William Veness spoke of 'the habits of indolence and the licence' as the cause of the 'deterioration of the Creole population.' These attitudes reflected the class alliance of the clergy and denied the hardship that existed both in the town and the rural areas as a result of a drop in sugar prices.

There is evidence that the composition of the Local Boards affected the degree of partiality with which outdoor relief was distributed. At the Commission of Enquiry several clergymen gave evidence of the general belief that doles were awarded on a sectarian basis. The Reverend Downer contended that people who did not belong to the Church of England did not receive relief. The Reverend John Campbell said that 'people of other [than the Church of England and Scotland] denominations have no confidence in the administration of the poor fund.' The zealousness of the established church was probably religious in part but another consideration is indicated by the Reverend Campbell's evidence that people were told they would not receive relief until their children were sent to the appropriate church school. The education system was administered by the churches and the strength and finances of the schools was improved by increased enrolment.

The presence of estate owners on the Boards, in addition to their general social influence, accounts for the small number of East Indians
who received outdoor relief. Witness after witness at the enquiry stated that the majority of applicants were Africans, that few Indians received relief. The case of St. James Parish in Wakenaam indicates the probable reason for this. The members of this parish vestry were 'mostly planters' and one such claimed:

"I have no coolies on my permanent list. The planters object to their being put on that list, because if they received five or six shillings a week, the free coolies and those who were malingering on the estates would all make a rush for relief. Sometimes we are obliged to give them casual relief, as they sometimes fall down upon the road."(76)

Planter representation on the Poor Law Boards allowed them to apply the poor laws partially to one section of the community. There were, however, numbers of sick, old or destitute immigrants who had to be dealt with in some way. It seems that the Vagrancy Laws were invoked for the control of free immigrant labour. These were first enacted in 1856 and provided that anyone found wandering, loitering or begging, not able to give an account of himself or show means of support would be deemed 'an idle and disorderly person.' The penalty on first conviction was a fine of ten dollars or two weeks in jail, with or without hard labour. Subsequent offences brought higher sentences on a sliding scale. The immigrant could, however, apply for assistance by presenting himself at the Depot in Georgetown.77 Here he would be examined by the doctor and either kept there in the Depot, which was in effect an auxiliary almshouse, or sent to the Almshouse.78 Immigrants from outlying areas would also be sent to Georgetown if they came to the attention of the Sub-Immigration Agent.79 If the labourer's physical condition allowed it he would be discharged after a time. If desitution appeared a permanent condition, he would be returned to India.80

Local administration of poor law funds, which came from state revenue, often became the target of criticisms of extravagence. The
clergy dominating the vestries were thought by the representatives of the taxpayers and the officials to err on the side of generosity. A despatch from a governor to the Colonial office typifies this feeling:

"I believe the greater part of this expenditure [on outdoor relief] to be unnecessary and the administration of it unquestionably tainted by jobbery and [illegible]. The control over this expenditure ought not to be in the hands of the clergy at all....it exposes them to the temptation to encourage in the supposed interests of charity or religion, a lavish expenditure from the Public Treasury..."(81)

This "lavishness" the Combined Court would attempt to curb when state revenues fell, by decreasing the Poor Law vote. When this occurred in 1895, for example, the Secretary to the Governor urged the upkeep of strict limits on the welfare role of the state: He "pointed out...the wide differences between private charity and money provided by the State, and that it was essential in the case of the latter to restrict its expenditure within the narrowest limit consistent with humanity."82

The Poor Law functioned on the same lines as in England, with the same aim of taking 'no part in the upsetting of the natural law governing the survival of the fittest....'83 Relief of the able bodied was exceptional and the wage structure of the sugar industry was protected by compelling East Indians to resort to the Almshouse or Depot if relief was sought, whilst the African population was afforded assistance under a harsh law administered variably.

CONCLUSION

Although the colonial ideology of the period limited the role of the state, the conditions imposed by the immigration system forced the creation of a private, but state regulated scheme of health and housing for one section of the community. The protection of the immigrants'
health through the regulation of medical and housing provision by the state was limited in its effectiveness: initially the inadequacy of inspection procedures in the system militated against the maintenance of standards especially as the medical personnel were on the estate's payroll and often saw their primary allegiance to their paymaster; later when the apparatus for state regulation was improved, standards on some estates remained poor due to the Inspector's basic sympathy with estate owners and the low priority accorded to health and housing by owners and managers particularly when the economic situation was poor. For the whole period the importance of welfare provision to the estates was primarily in the role it could play in the justification of the planation system and indenture itself. The estates' contribution to immigrant welfare was held up as of benefit to the community as a whole and the regulation of immigrant conditions could be held to mitigate any undesirable elements of indenture itself.

Welfare provision was also useful in its contribution to control and surveillance with the free housing operating to keep labour close to its supervisors and the hospitals complementing the vagrancy laws and the jails in a total system of control.

The well-being of the immigrant does not appear to have been a primary objective, although some individual owners and managers were of humanitarian intent. Before the 1870s when indentured labour was of some importance as a source of labour, the death toll amongst immigrants was high and apparently little affected by the hospitals. After this date the preservation of immigrant life became even less important as an end in itself since the labour force had increased sufficiently to supply, even over-supply, the market. By the turn of the century, however, there were indications that the conditions on estates were at least considerably better, taken as a whole, than in the town and the
rest of the countryside.

Provision for the rest of the community, the non-immigrant rural and urban poor, was limited on the one hand by the Colonial Office policy to regard the development of the colonies as not part of its role and on the other hand by a local legislature governed by planters who ruled in the interest of their class. The result was a residual, indeed vestigial, state system.
Notes for Chapter Two


3. The Africans brought to Guyana in this period were people taken from slave ships which continued to supply the Cuban sugar plantations

4. Originally a Dutch institution, the College of Keizers was composed of members elected for life who in turn elected the non-official component of the Court of Policy. The Court of Policy was the legislative arm of the Government and also contained the Financial Representatives. These two elements together formed the Combined Court.


9. Initially the period was five years with the option of renewal for a further five years. Successive legislation made the position less flexible: by 1862 all labourers were indentured for five years with the possibility of a further five year contract on receipt of a bounty of $50. From 1863 neither those under first or second indentures could change their employers.


13. Ibid, p 191


15. Ibid

tells us that deserters often reported that they were induced to leave the estate in hope of returning to India by the overland route of which they had been told.

17. This was one of the charges levelled by De Voeux

18. In fact the Ordinance of 1847 which provided for inspection by magistrates lapsed two years afterwards but Governor Wodehouse wrote that the proprietors were unaware of this and stipendiary magistrates had continued to visit hospitals. C.O. 111/324 No.93, Wodehouse to Newcastle


20. Subsequent to the Commission's sitting in 1870, an examination of the hospitals was conducted after which they were graded for the purpose of allocation of new immigrants, these going to the healthiest. Eighteen obtained an A rating, thirteen a B, fourteen a C and thirty-seven a D. See Tinker, op.cit. p 189


22. Ibid, p 142

23. Ibid, p 2

24. Ibid, p 141. For example, Moor Farm had 25 beds where the regulations required 29 more; De Willeim had 15 and required 21 in addition

25. Ibid, p 150


27. Adamson, A. op.cit. p 120

28. West India Royal Commission 1897. Evidence of Walter Alleyne Ireland, quoted in Rodney, W. (1871) op.cit. p 47

29. Circular 1103 'Duties of Medical Officers under the Medical Scheme of 1873', 3rd July 1873. Reproduced in Commins op.cit. p 85

30. C.O. 384/149 No.111. Haynes Smith to Derby, 1884


33. Governor's statement to the Court of Policy, 10th August 1887


36. Adamson, A. op.cit. p 88
37. Rodney, W. op.cit. p 129
39. Rodney, W. op.cit. p 131
40. Rodney, W. op.cit. pp 132-134
41. Ashmore, A.M. Memorandum on Village Administration from 1838-1902. Georgetown 1903, p 13
42. Adamson, A. op.cit. p 92. Adamson shows that grants from the central government dropped from an annual average of $27,664 under the 1883 ordinance to $456 under the 1892 ordinance
43. Adamson, A. op.cit. p 246. The total spent between 1886 and 1892 benefiting the estates primarily was $589,386 whilst $31,271 was spent on village water supplies during the same period
44. Adamson, A. op.cit. p 135
46. Adamson, A. op.cit. p 135
50. Registration of deaths for the non-estate population was not compulsory until 1867
52. British Guiana Medical Association and Hospital Report, Georgetown 1892, p 186
53. Singh, P. op.cit. p 21
55. C.O. 848/2. Scott to Kimberley, 1872
56. Adamson, A.H. op.cit. p 86
58. The report of this Commission was never published, but reports of the proceedings were published in *The Colonist* newspaper between August 11th and October 21st, 1881.

59. *The Colonist*, August 20th 1881

60. Georgetown Hospital Report, Georgetown 1887, (Rowland, E.D. (ed)). Dr. Rowland reported a similar rise in the Berbice Hospital from 6.6% in 1859 to 13.2% in 1879.

61. Ibid

62. Surgeon General's Hospital Report, 1880

63. Report of the Acting Medical Superintendent on the Public Hospital, Berbice, 1881.

64. Ibid

65. C.O. 384/149. 141 Haynes Smith to Derby, 1884

66. Commins, D.W.D. op.cit. p 82

67. During the period 1880-1889 the number of indentured labourers fell from 22,562 to 17,283 and the number of unindentured residents rose from 25,766 to 39,106. Rodney, W. op.cit. p 231


69. Ibid, p.67

70. The term 'Creole' was applied to persons of both African and Indian descent, born in Guyana.

71. *The Colonist* August 25th, 1881

72. *The Colonist* August 12th, 1881

73. *The Colonist* August 18th, 1881

74. *The Colonist* August 18th, 1881

75. C.O. 111/424. Irving to Kimberley 16th June 1882. The Governor says that in Guyana the annual cost of each child to the State was £1.17.6.

76. *The Colonist* August 12th, 1881

77. This was the way-station for incoming and outgoing immigrants

78. After 1897 'coolie paupers' were dealt with in the same way as others and the depot reverted to its original function. C.O. 114/74

79. Commins, D.W.D. op.cit. p 55

80. Ibid
81. C.O. 111/424. Despatch 149. Irving to Kimberley, 24th May 1882. An Ordinance to curb the power of the clergy in this domain by giving the power to appoint Presidents of Local Boards to the Governor was introduced in 1880, but dropped "owing to opposition on the part of the clergy"

82. Daily Chronicle March 4th, 1884

83. Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1907
In this chapter the relative power of different sectors of society will be examined in order to analyse their comparative influence on social policy between 1891 and 1930. Policy in the period examined so far was determined through negotiations between the Governor and the representatives of the Imperial Government and the planters who had the majority in the legislative body. During the 1880's pressures for constitutional reform grew throughout the larger Caribbean territories. In Guyana the movement was led by representatives of the emerging class of coloured and black professionals and the wealthy Portuguese shopkeepers. It resulted in constitutional changes which led to a shift in the balance of political power which, although initially more apparent than real, came after 1916 to represent the influence of the nascent middle class. This influence, however, more often took the form of a lobby for increased state support for economic development than pressure for social amelioration and its impact was minimised by the constitutional position of the Electives, the prevailing administrative system and also by the class alignments of the newly important group.

The limited developments in social policy which did occur were conditioned by the interests of the sugar industry which was often backed by the administration and, to a lesser extent, by the interests of the local business and professional classes. The masses, composed of the urban and rural proletariat and the peasantry, were comparatively disorganised and had virtually no access to the power structure.
Constitutional Development and the Balance of Political Power

Constitutional changes in 1891 resulted in an enlarged Court of Policy of sixteen members instead of ten, with three extra official members and three more elected members. In addition the College of Electors was abolished and members were now elected by the whole electorate to represent five county and three town districts. The voting qualification was lowered from £125 to £100 income per annum and the income qualification for membership of the Court of Policy was removed, although high property qualifications were added. These changes had at least the appearance of widening the franchise and making government more representative, but the creation of an Executive Council appointed by the British monarch, as an advisory body to the Governor widened the opportunity for sectional interests to influence policy through securing representation on the Council. 3

The effect of these changes was at first minimal. The size of the electorate grew but slightly. 4 The composition of the elected element of the new Court of Policy, which together with the Financial Representatives formed the Combined Court, show that the planters' power remained intact for, of the eight members, five were white planters or planters' attorneys. By the election of 1897 however, the merchant group (three members) and the lawyers (five members) had begun to challenge planter supremacy in the legislature. The Governor reported to Chamberlain, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, that:

"The formation of the legislature has considerably changed. In the Court of Policy the following gentlemen connected with the planting interest no longer represent constituencies: Mr. Holvell Jones replaced by Mr. A.B. Brown, a native coloured barrister, and Mr. E.C. Luard by Mr. Ouckama a native coloured gentleman, Manager of a clothing business in Georgetown, Mr. W. M. Payne, a Barrister, a native of Barbados, replaces Mr. N. McKinnon, Mr. W.S. Cameron, an Englishman, a Solicitor by profession and a partner of Mr. P. Dargan, has been returned in the room of Mr. G. Garnett." (5)
The planter interest was still well represented, however. Mr. Morrison, a planter and manager of a sugar estate and Mr. A.P. Mackey an English employee of Booker Bros. were newly elected and former members with interests in sugar still sat. 6

The professional and merchant group in the Combined Court continued to increase in succeeding years, although there is evidence that this development was not so much a result of the 1891 constitutional reforms but a reduction in the number of planters and attorneys offering themselves for election. Between 1885 and 1905 the economic problems of the sugar industry had put a number of local planters out of business. This accelerated a long-term trend towards absentee ownership, often by large United Kingdom based companies. Although the government was keen to have continued direct representation of the sugar industry in local politics, the companies preferred to exercise their influence unofficially and in other forms and discouraged such participation by their employees. 7

There was undoubtedly also an element of racial snobbery involved in the white planters partial withdrawal from the political arena. Clementi, Secretary to the Governor, wrote of the "timidity" of white creoles who had to "submit" themselves to a "black electorate" arguing that this state of affairs necessitated the introduction of a Crown Colony constitution. He further stated his belief that "the white population resent[ed] the position of inferiority in which the constitution places them and that most of the white politicians heartily dislike[d] the necessity of having to seek election at the hands of black voters." 8

The planter representation in the elected sector of the Combined Court though reduced was not, however, absent there being individuals of
this group in the legislature continuously throughout the period. In
addition, there was a close relationship between commercial and sugar
interests through common membership of the Chamber of Commerce, through
social convergence and through individuals having involvement in both
commerce and the sugar industry. To quote Lutchman:

"One trend which emerges is that the very close alliance which
existed between the sugar and commercial interests during the
nineteenth century was still very much a feature of the society in
the early twentieth century." (10)

Another reason for the comparatively low direct representation of
the planter interest in the legislature is to be found in the
Constitutional impotence of the elected element in the Combined Court.
The creation of the Executive Council, which came to be manned
exclusively by Official members appointed by the Governor, effectively
removed the ability of Electives to initiate and carry through policy.
The superior numbers of the Electives gave them control over finances to
the extent that their approval was required for budgetary allocations,
but they were not allowed to introduce motions which required new or
increased expenditure, this being a right reserved for the Governor and
his Officials. As a consequence any project put forward by the Electives
required the support of the Governor and the Officials if it was to be
put into effect. In theory the Combined Court's prerogative to withhold
approval of the estimates of expenditure gave them some power over the
policies to be followed. In practice the Electives seldom stood out
against the Governor and Officials. The Daily Argosy commenting on the
"arduous and protracted campaign" over the 1914 Estimates which resulted
in the Electives achieving a small reduction in expenditure, put it thus:

"Now as always the Government are able to carry what schemes it
may please to submit, since they can rely upon the support of a
sufficient number of the unofficials to secure a majority. The
occasions on which a decision is given adverse to the
Administration are so rare that they leave no appreciable
impression on the general trend of policy."(11)
The system was one where, as the Commissioners appointed to make recommendations on the Constitution in 1927 remarked:

"The divorce of responsibility from power which is so marked a feature of the Constitution, places the Elected Members as well as the Governor in a false position. The Elected Members tend to be placed in a position of a permanent opposition, unrestrained by experience and prospects of office." (12)

Yet the system worked with deadlock rarely reached because the opposition was more apparent than real: as the *Daily Argosy* commented, "the Electives have never constituted themselves a parliamentary opposition". In contrast with the monolithic position adopted by the official members, who were drawn from the Heads of Departments, the Electives represented a variety of positions conditioned by their individual identification with personal or sectional interests rather than any political orientation. As a consequence, whilst bitter debates in the Combined Court were by no means uncommon and some electives saw their role as an adversary one, on any particular motion the government could secure enough support from the Electives to have its policies put through. The Governor's ability to dispense patronage, in the form of honours for example, was instrumental in producing this complicity as was the co-opting of Electives to various committees, commissions and boards.14

One effect of the imbalance of power between Electives and Officials in the Combined Court was that the Electives generally acted to reduce expenditure on the non-economic sector.15 The reduction of expenditure was the only area in which they could exert and display any power. Also it was in line with their class interest to keep down public spending on the social sector whilst agitating for increased investment in development projects which would lead to increased production. Although many of the elected members were described as lawyers or of other
professional status, they often maintained a multiplicity of interests of a commercial kind. In the 1926 legislature, for example, sat A.V. Crane, a lawyer with land holdings, H.G. Humphreys a barrister with important connections with the diamond industry, P.A. Fernandes, barrister and estate owner, J. Gonsalves, solicitor and businessman, E.F. Fredericks, barrister and property owner and P.N. Browne, barrister with large commercial interests.¹⁶

Elected members supported plans for interior and other development projects, at least in part, because of the relationship such projects had to the forwarding of their own financial interests. The narrowness of the electorate meant that their constituency was composed of people with similar class interests to themselves and they were under no compulsion to represent the working class, the peasantry or the unemployed. In 1909 Gaskin proposed a railway for the Courantyne area. Later F. Dias and J.S. McArthur put forward a project for a railway to the interior.¹⁷ Santos, a major businessman, favoured drainage and irrigation projects for the Courantyne area to be funded by a loan taken by Government which he himself offered to put up.¹⁸ These and other projects did not necessarily relate to a member's interests in any direct way, although sometimes they did, but through the effect any development would have on the general performance of the economy. Development meant better business all round.¹⁹

Schemes of this sort were generally turned down by the Officials on the grounds of their expense. There were other areas, however, where the Electives acted to reduce expenditure, often, as noted, in the social sector. The fate of the Labour Bureau is illustrative of this parsimony. In 1904 Governor Swettenham, himself inclined to the reduction of public spending, responded to the distress current in Georgetown caused by unemployment by requesting assistance from Britain in the setting up of
an office through which persons could be found jobs. Between April 1904 and February 1906 there were 469 applicants to the Bureau and employment was secured for 189 persons.\textsuperscript{20} The Bureau's popularity and success grew as from April 1906 to January 1907, there were 930 applicants and 465 jobs secured. Yet in February of that year Mr. Dias moved for the deletion of $720 allocated for the Bureau and the motion was carried.\textsuperscript{21}

The official element was, however, often at one with the elected members in seeking reductions in expenditure. The particular balance seems to have varied with the approach of different Governors and different personalities in the elected section. Governor Swettenham, for example, was regarded by the press as having reversed the usual roles by seeking reductions in expenditure with such zeal that it provoked protest from the Electives.\textsuperscript{22} His successor, Governor Hodgson was also, like Swettenham, considered by the Colonial Office to be very concerned to keep the Colony's expenditure within strict limits.\textsuperscript{23} Within his period of office a small scheme for the feeding of destitute children in Georgetown was undertaken, administered by the Poor Law Commissioners. The project originated with the work of the Salvation Army officer. Demand had grown beyond the resources of the charity and a petition was sent to the Governor for assistance. This was granted on the basis that $300 saved from the vote for the poor that year could be used to finance it.\textsuperscript{24} Free meals were given at four, later six centres. The programme ran less than a year before it was stopped. The grounds given were curious in that desperation continued over economic conditions which had hardly improved since the riots of 1905. Yet it was deemed by the Governor that "the experiment has demonstrated that poverty and destitution are not so rife in Georgetown as was supposed....and that it is unnecessary for the Government to proceed further in the matter".\textsuperscript{25} This was in spite of his opinion that the programme had had a good
effect. All this provoked a cynical comment from a Colonial Office official who implied that the motive involved in ending the programme was a desire to reduce expenditure rather than the end of need; teachers' reports of better attendance and greater aptitudes for learning as a result of regular free meals were noted and the comment added "I don't see therefore that the experiment has proved a failure - so far as the children are concerned." Cuts made in 1900 produced opposition from at least two Electives, A.A.Thorne and P.N. Browne, against the closure of the Berbice Alms House and the reduction of doctors salaries from $750 per annum to $400. In 1909 a Colonial Office Official, in commending the Governor's conservative approach to expenditure stated his view that "The Combined Court cannot be relied upon to practice economy". In 1913 however, the regard for thrift, in some areas at least, appears to have been general again bringing a Colonial Office comment to the effect that "The subject of expense has become the obsession of this Combined Court." There is no sense in which either the Officials or the Electives consistently acted to promote expenditure which would increase the welfare of the people. Governors were constrained by a colonial policy which dictated that colonies should be kept strictly within their budgets. Electives were constrained by their desire to keep taxes down.

Representation in the legislature continued, then, to be very limited covering, to the extent that politicians represented any sector, the interest of the black and coloured professional groups, the commercial and mercantile class and the ever present sugar interest. East Indians as a whole, the rural and urban proletariat and the peasantry were unrepresented.

Theoretically the Governor and his officials represented those groups which did not have direct representation. This ideal was seldom
realised. The Officials were mainly members of the Colonial administrative service and so, not unnaturally, took their direction from the Governor. The Governor himself received instructions from the Secretary of State for the Colonies as head of the British Colonial Office, and in turn submitted reports, as did all other colonial Governors. Governors had considerable freedom to determine policy, however, and the Colonial Office's policy was generally to support 'the man on the spot', but this was exercised within the constraints imposed by the Office' overall plan for colonial development. This, until the 1940's, was premised entirely upon the view that the colonies were to be ruled to the benefit of Britain.

A general precept which directed Secretaries of State for the Colonies until the 1940's was that colonies should have only the services which they could afford from their own revenues. Grants-in-aid were given from time to time when a colony was in danger of financial collapse, as in the West Indies in 1895 when aid was given to the sugar industry, or when disaster of a natural kind struck. When a colony was in receipt of a Grant-in-aid it was required to cede financial control, a situation Governors generally wished to avoid.30

Expenditure on the social sector was regarded as a "regrettable necessity" and "by and large there was little impetus in this direction".31 Social policy originated largely from pressures exerted by constituencies in Britain, as did, for example, the rules and regulations controlling the conduct of indentured immigration, or from the application of measures originating in Britain to the colonial territories, such as public health legislation. This is not to say, however, that local pressures were unimportant in the practice that evolved from policy originating elsewhere. In the case of land settlement, for example, Chamberlain, when Secretary of State for the
Colonies, determined that encouragement should be given to the further development of the peasantry, but the precise form in which this policy evolved, the particular use of land settlement that came about at the turn of the century, was locally determined.

The unrepresented groups, the rural and urban proletariats, attempted to exercise their influence by making direct appeals to the Governor, or to the Secretary of State for the Colonies through the Governor, in the form of petitions and memorials. These tended to be routinely disparaged, countered and effectively ignored especially where they contained criticisms of government policy.

The other form of protest used by the working class was the strike. Strikes continued to be frequent in the twentieth century and became increasingly political. The usual response to strikes and other disturbances was a display of state force. Attempts at conciliation were seldom made. The police were routinely used to break up strikes on sugar estates. When more general disturbances threatened a form of 'gun boat diplomacy' was used, as when in 1895 there were rumours of discontent amongst the unemployed in the city and on the estates - always seen as a dangerous combination. The Governor summoned H.M.S. Buzzard from the West India Naval Station to patrol the Demerara, which produced the "good effect always noticeable in the presence of a ship of war in this port." Similarly, in 1905 the widespread distress resulting from a slump in sugar prices led to riots in Georgetown and disturbances on the plantations of the East Bank, Demerara. The troubles occasioned no analysis of social conditions or consideration of the needs of the poor. Even the Mortality Commission, which was sitting at the time of the riots, attributed high mortality and disease to poverty caused mainly by laziness and indulgence. Calls from Elective members of the Legislature for a Commission of Enquiry into the riots were dismissed by the Governor
as a ploy by the anti-immigration lobby to attract the attention of the new Liberal Government in Britain which was thought to be less sympathetic to immigration than previous governments.35 The main significance of the riots to the authorities seems to have been in the threatening possibility it augured of a combination of the rural East Indians and urban Africans for a universal demand for higher wages:

"The strikes that had occurred in Georgetown had had their effect upon the negro labourers on the sugar estates adjacent to the town.....if the strikes and disorders had spread to Sugar Estates in other parts of the Colony it would have been impossible for the Government to have garrisoned all the Estates, and a general rising on the plan that wages must be increased was one which under the circumstances could only be contemplated with horror."(36)

The conditions were not, however, favourable to concerted working class/peasant action. East Indians on estates were separated from the African proletariat by residence and conditions of work as well as culture and, in the case of immigrant labour, language.37 East Indian Creoles remained predominantly rural and a large proportion were resident on estates. The 1911 Census showed that 94% of East Indians lived outside urban areas, that is on the estates and in villages, and by 1908, that is after the movement of many ex-indentured immigrants to the villages, there was still a total of 79,149 persons resident on the estates as against 63,701 residing elsewhere.38 (See Table 3(i)). Before the end of indenture the differences in conditions of work between the indentured and unindentured was a possible source of division amongst East Indians themselves. Whilst not indicative of friction, the fact that strikes were often led by indentured labourers does imply that they saw themselves as a group with different interests.39 But the more important perception of difference was between East Indians and Africans. Despite the entry of growing numbers of East Indians into Creole society through membership of the professions and the ownership of large urban-
TABLE 3 (i)

RESIDENCE OF EAST INDIANS, SELECTED YEARS 1897-1927

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>On Estates</th>
<th>Off Estates</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>69,473</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>47,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>69,149</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>63,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>62,400</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>75,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>56,875</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>70,142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Reports of the Immigrant Agent General.
based businesses, East Indians on the whole felt themselves to be Indians rather than Guyanese. 40 Organisation amongst urban Africans was made difficult by their fragmentation into a number of occupations, with no large concentration in any one occupation. 41

Before the 1930s, organisations were mainly social/cultural, urban based and often catered for a particular racial/ethnic group. Their membership was also largely middle class and where political causes were espoused these were usually limited to the promotion of politicians or sectional interests. 42

The British Guiana East Indian Association (B.G.E.I.A.), the main East Indian association, like many other associations of the period was probably limited in broad appeal given its narrow membership and promotion of sectional interests. The Governor described it as:

"entirely self-appointed and seems to be a kind of East Indian Chamber of Commerce. I am not aware if any Hindus belong to it. Possibly there may be one or two, but as far as I have come across any members.....They have been mostly Christians"(43)

The Daily Argosy described it as:

"a combination controlled by a few Georgetown lawyers and small merchants."(44)

There were also several African associations. The most important of these, the Negro Progress Convention, began in 1921. 45 Its apparent intention was to improve the status of Africans in society, particularly in relation to their position vis a vis East Indians. The Daily Chronicle reported that it was formed to combat belief that Afro-Guyanese belonged to an inferior race. 46 There is some evidence that urban Africans were, by the 1920's, beginning to challenge the racial bias of colonial rule. The middle class stressed their eligibility for full membership of the governing class whilst at the same time affirming their
loyalty to colonial authority by claiming eligibility on the grounds of their education in British culture which, they argued, made them equal in wisdom and status to their English counterparts. On the whole they did not wish to change the structure but to have access to its higher positions.

Although evidence is scanty, it seems probable that in the working class the response included racial and class hostility which could have formed some basis for a challenge to the colonial order. In the disturbances which took place in Georgetown in 1924 on April 1st, rich, white-owned homes were attacked and a number of incidents indicating racial hostility occurred. Garvey's militant United Negro Improvement Association had a base in Guyana and although small was deemed sufficiently influential by the Governor to warrant investigation as it was felt that the Association was stimulating race-consciousness and anti-white feelings.

The Negro Progress Convention's approach to the improvement of the conditions of Africans, however, indicated no hostility to whites or the colonial order. Insofar as any racial animosity might have been generated, East Indians rather than Europeans would have been the more likely recipients as it was with their group that comparisons were made. At a "monster meeting" at Danielstown in 1926 Mr. Egerton advised his listeners to "cultivate thrift; to make it a rule of their life never to spend all they earned as only by saving can they become independent."

The meeting was told further:

"the negroes have been outclassed, while the East Indians on the other hand who came here as indentured immigrants and worked for small wages had raised themselves by thrift and industry and are today amongst the employers of labour."

As can be seen the general thrust of the Association was directed towards
moral upliftment rather than social challenge.

There were some other, apparently short lived associations like the New Negro Development Association but none had any real impact. Two land settlement organisations, described by the Governor as having been set up for the benefit of the organisers, do not appear to have flourished. The Chinese and Portuguese also had their associations but these were purely social and cultural in interest.

Political organisation was rudimentary until the 1940's. Elected members of the legislature did not represent political parties with ideologies and programmes but both saw themselves and were expected by the administration to represent specific interests. As Lutchman says:

"Because candidates emphasized their independent prestige and service to their particular constituencies, there was little interest in founding, or being part of, any political grouping." (52)

On the two occasions in the 1920s that political organisations were formed, their aims were limited to enhancing the power of the elected element in the legislature. The British Guiana People's Political Association (B.G.P.P.A.) was formed before the 1921 general election, apparently to organise for the election of particular persons to the legislature. Thereafter it became a small pressure group consisting of a few middle class voters who called upon the Electives for more action towards the accomplishment of drainage and irrigation schemes. It was never a popular association, nor did it ever have a general policy or programme.

The Popular Party also arose in connection with a general election campaign, that of 1926. It was dubbed by the Daily Argosy 'the first and only organised party the colony has ever known' but in effect was concerned with the organisation of support for a faction of the Electives
who favoured a more aggressive approach towards development of the colony. It was, however, thoroughly capitalist in outlook and represented no challenge to the prevailing economic system. It had no real points of contact with working people and could, as Lutchman puts it, have been labelled as the "light skinned men's party."

The trades unions were more important as vehicles of working class pressure for social reform. In 1906 Dr. Rohlehr, a disappointed candidate for the Government Medical Service, engineered the short lived Labour Union Scheme. This was the only early association which was organised for general labour; all the other small groups were concerned with skilled labour and were more like artisan associations than trade unions.

The British Guiana Labour Union, legally incorporated in 1920 was more successful. Its membership was claimed by E.F. Fredericks, a black lawyer and sometime member of the legislature, to be 'the black masses', but its real impact was less widespread than this infers. The Argosy described the Union as consisting mainly of its President and Secretary. It did, however, play a role in organising labour especially on the wharfs, to strike for higher pay. It was important also insofar as it provided a base for a united front composed of both East Indian and African workers in a way that no other association, political or social/cultural had. The success of the union in gaining East Indian confidence is indicated by the practice which developed of estate workers coming to Georgetown to consult with Critchlow, President of the Union, in the same way as they were accustomed to seeking the help of the Immigrant Agent when disputes with management arose. In 1924 the Union sought a base in the sugar belt by capitalising on the general discontent resulting from a slump in sugar prices and the usual drop in
wages. The Union is also of interest as it adopted specifically social causes, this becoming a pronounced feature of union involvement in the thirties. As Mark says:

"The historical tradition of organised labour [in the Caribbean] is that of social protest movement in which demands for welfare legislation, social equality and political rights are joined with and often indistinguishable from purely economic concern with wages and conditions of work."(61)

One of the Union's first projects was to campaign against the high rents prevailing in Georgetown in 1920. The campaign was instrumental in bringing about a rent restriction order. Its list of social demands included, by 1930, national health insurance, infant and maternity clinics, the abolition of tenement rooms, an old age pension scheme, better housing, pure water supply schemes and a mosquito eradication campaign.

The violence of the 1924 riots in Georgetown provoked a strong public reaction and although it was considered that the 'Centipedes' - the unemployed and disreputable sections of city society - had been the perpetrators of the violence, not the Union men, the Union seems to have lost popularity. It continued to campaign for social improvements as well as industrial ones but its influence was limited except in the campaign for relief measures in the depression of the early thirties.

The peasantry, composed largely of East Indian rice growers and African subsistence farmers of provisions and cane, was unorganised and had no representation in the legislature. On occasion an Elected Member would put forward proposals which might benefit peasant producers, but none saw themselves as a spokesman for the peasants. It should be noted, however, that many peasants living in the sugar belt provided casual labour to the estates and so were in effect 'part-time proletarians' and as such may have been influenced by the British Guiana
Labour Union. The village councils provided a limited avenue for political action for peasants in villages under local authorities, but the elected element of these councils seldom pursued any social goals, often being engulfed in rivalries and social striving.66

Summary

Political power was exercised by the Governor. Although the elected element of the legislature could propose schemes it could not initiate them. Its constitutional position predisposed it to the minimisation of social expenditure as did its class allegiances. Governors were constrained to act within the confines of an imperial policy in which the role of the state was considered to consist mainly of maintaining law and order and did not encourage development of any kind using state revenues, local or imperial. The sugar interest remained the pre-eminent one in society through its presence in the legislature (although reduced), but more importantly because it was championed by the administration and possessed a strong lobby both locally and in Britain. Working class agitation for improvements usually took the form of industrial action and petitions. Neither form of protest produced any significant concessions. Unity amongst the proletariat was militated against by a number of social and cultural factors and the peasantry remained unorganised.

Economic Developments

In this section, developments in the sugar, rice and mineral extraction industries will be discussed. Their importance for social policy relates to the general proposition that social policy evolved to serve the needs of the predominant sector of the economy. Between 1890
and 1930 the diamond and gold industries developed as an important avenue for Africans and the rice industry grew as an adjunct to sugar, which in spite of a continuing decline in prices, remained the pre-eminent sector in the Guyanese economy. The analysis is aimed at demonstrating the impact these developments had on social structure and labour requirements which in turn affected the direction taken in social policy.

The Sugar Industry and the Development of the Rice Industry

After a brief rallying of the economy in the late 1880s, the price of sugar again began to decline so that by 1895 the average price obtained per ton was £9.12d., a drop from the 1880 figure of £22.6d. per ton (see Table 3(ii)). The slump produced acute distress throughout the labouring class of society. The estates cut back on the use of labour from outside the estates, preferring to give what work there was to the resident labour on the estates. The acreage under sugar was reduced from 76,930 in 1880 to 66,908 acres in 1896.67

The Immigrant Agent General Reports from the period 1895 to 1901 state that it was "impossible under such conditions to find full employment for the unindentured immigrants, more especially for those residing in the villages...".68

Through abandonment of cultivation and amalgamation, the number of estates dropped from 113 to 1880 to 45 in 1905.69 Wages on estates dropped, which led to a series of disturbances and strikes protesting against low wages. In the first three months of 1895 alone, there were riots at Success, a strike at Zeelandia and strikes at several East Bank Demerera estates, including Providence.70

The increase in unemployment and underemployment resulting from the
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1st Jan. to 31st March 1892

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<td>1929</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
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<td>1936</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extracted from Nath, D., op.cit. Table II p.25
slump did not abate the planters' demands for indentured labour, even though the ability of some to afford it is dubious. The key to this apparent paradox is that the planters continued to see indentured labour as necessary to the maintenance of the wage structure. Cane cutters could and did try to maximise their earnings during the short reaping period by holding out for higher wages.71 Indentured labour was necessary to keep wages down. Planters and officials agreed that:

"The position is that the sugar industry cannot be carried on without either legally indentured gangs or with a wage population controlled by a strict land monopoly."(72)

A Royal Commission on the Sugar Industry in the West Indies, reporting in 1888, had accepted that indenture remained important to the estates' labour supply and that sugar was vital to the economy of the West Indian colonies.73 The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Chamberlain, also saw the sugar industry as important, but his concern about the colonies' ability to finance repatriation passages should the industry fail brought him to threaten to reduce immigration permanently.74 Also, the Royal Commissioners had recommended a cautious approach to further immigration, suggesting it should stop until the economy showed improvement. The planters, however, mounted a strong lobby to have indentured immigration continued.

The whole question became controversial when an anti-immigration campaign led by Patrick Dargan, a local politician and lawyer, between 1903 and 1906 orchestrated anti-immigration sentiments harboured by both the working class and elements of the bourgeoisie. A media campaign and public meetings were organised by the Elected Members of the legislature who argued that the immigrants were a tax burden as a result of state financing of the Immigration Department and the cost of the health system to the colony, whilst they were of little value to the economy as
consumers. A petition presented to the Governor signed by 5,750 persons, whom he at least though were members of "the labouring classes", complained that:

"despite the continued amalgamation and abandonment of sugar estates, the Government persists in annually introducing more indentured immigrants...and in opposition to the wishes of the native labourers who are taxed for the introduction of these immigrants to compete on unfair terms against them, and to continue to oust them from the labour market."(76)

It was believed, at least by the Governor, that anti-immigration sentiments underlay the 1905 Georgetown riots. He wrote to the Colonial Office:

"With regard to what is underlying the recent promulgation of grievance, I have no hesitation in saying it is the immigration of East Indians."(77)

The Sugar Producers' Association lobbied strenuously for continued immigration and were supported in this by the Governor. In 1898 the Governor backed a request from the planters for 3650 immigrants, claiming that railway works and rice cultivation were drawing labour away from the estates. There had in fact been some movement of labour into rice cultivation but this had been encouraged both by the government and the planters. Both were concerned that unemployment and low wages would encourage time-expired immigrants to claim their right to assisted passage back to India which would represent a burden on revenues and a loss of labour of possibly huge dimensions, and so encouraged them to take up small holdings on their own behalf.

The Combined Court requested the Governor to initiate enquiries into the best means of encouraging time-expired immigrants to commute their right to a return passage and settle permanently. Three steps resulted. Firstly, the price of Crown Lands was reduced drastically to encourage a growth in the numbers of peasant proprietors. This led to the expansion
of lands cultivated and especially to that under rice, the crop traditionally grown by Indians and the most usual major agricultural product of the villages they had settled since the 1870s. Although Indians and Africans were both free to buy land, most of the acquisitions were made by Indians, possibly because developments in the gold industry had contributed to a decline in African interest in land and agriculture. By 1903, East Indians held 23,787 acres of land including 15,669 in the Demerara region. (See Table 3(iii)). Many Africans sold out family lands to Indians in this period.79 Secondly, land settlement schemes, which are discussed fully elsewhere, were started. Thirdly, the estates themselves increasingly let estate lands to labourers at a low rental to encourage them to remain on the estates. The lands were let for the purpose of rice and provision growing.

Although the reaping season for sugar coincided with the harvesting of rice and some estate managers complained that labourers were leaving estate work for the rice fields, it was found by others that if there were no rice plots the unindentured would leave the estates to look for work elsewhere when estate work was short, and sometimes relocate permanently.80 By 1904, 8561 acres on estate lands were under paddy.81 Other estate land was let out to unindentured labour, with the same purpose in view, i.e. the retaining of labour, for the growing of cane to be purchased by the estate at a fixed price.82 A further rationale for the encouragement of rice growing by estate labourers at this juncture was that it made low wages more tolerable by contributing a staple to the family diet. The Immigrant Agent General reported:

"Prices continued low during the year...But although earnings were correspondingly small, I do not think the people were more badly off than when better rates of wages prevailed. The crop of rice reaped in the latter part of 1897 was a large one, and on some Estates the Immigrants stored up in their rooms enough to last them a year. This rice, it should be mentioned, was grown at no
TABLE 3(iii)

CROWN LAND HELD BY AFRICANS AND EAST INDIANS

AT DECEMBER, 1903

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&quot;Blacks&quot;</th>
<th></th>
<th>East Indians</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
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<td>Acres</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Acres</td>
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<td>144</td>
<td>3,999</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>15,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbice &amp; Canje</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>11,471</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courantyne</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>3,403</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essequibo</td>
<td>262</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>Pomeroon</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>832</td>
<td>33,649</td>
<td>440</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Enclosure to Acting Governor to Secretary of State 23rd April 1906. Further Correspondence Relating to Disturbances in British Guiana. Cmd. 3026, 1906

Note: The amount of land held by Indians in Demerara and Courantyne is significant as this is prime agricultural, well drained and irrigated.
Planter opinion about the development of a rice industry was mixed but the view that it was compatible with sugar prevailed. Government's view of rice as a beneficial development was in line with Chamberlain's directive that settlement of land in small holdings in the West Indies should be encouraged. However, the administration had no intention of abandoning their support of the planters to develop a peasantry independent of the estates. Planters and officials alike saw rice as a means of retaining labour for the estates and of supplementing sugar wages. The Immigration Agent General summed up the position thus:

"I am glad to be able to report that the rice industry is being extensively developed. Large tracts of land in different parts of the colony are now planted with rice, and there can be little doubt that the industry is a source of great benefit to a large proportion of the unindentured East Indian population, providing them as it does, with the means of earning their livelihood when the labour market is slack." (85) (Emphasis added)

As a result of the new Crown Lands policy and the leasing of estate lands for rice growing, the acreage under paddy grew quite rapidly from 6,778 acres in 1898-1902 to 58,046 in 1918-1922. The development of the rice industry also contributed substantially to the growth of East Indian villages; in 1897 there were 47,297 East Indians living off the estates, whilst by 1908 there were 63,701. The growth in rice holdings did not, however, mean that the village dwellers were independent of the estates, for in many areas, especially in Demerara, they were too small to provide a livelihood and consequently it was usual to continue to seek employment on the estates to supplement incomes. Drainage and irrigation problems impeded production in some areas and there is some evidence that plans to improve it were hindered by the planters who did not want the rice industry to expand to such an extent as to make
labourers independent of estate work.\textsuperscript{89}

The state of the sugar industry remained parlous until the outbreak of war in 1914 halted supplies of beet sugar and placed a premium on West Indian cane sugar. The industry had received help from the British Treasury in the form of grants-in-aid, local tax concessions and improved conditions of sale after 1907, but prices had remained low. Drought in 1912/3 produced poor crops, less work, lower wages and general distress in the labouring classes. There were riots at Lusignan in September of 1912 and Rosehall in March of 1913. In the latter disturbance thirteen were left dead, including five shot by the police.\textsuperscript{90} At Lusignan a worker was shot dead by the estate's manager.\textsuperscript{91} In the disturbances which followed the post-war slump the official reaction was conditioned by the policy regarding the role of the colonial state; law and order had to be maintained and other functions of the state were residual. Strikes on the estates and elsewhere were dealt with not as industrial disputes but as civil disorders. Typically the labourers would leave the estates to march to Georgetown to present their case to the Immigration Agent. They would be stopped on the road by the militia and the police and shooting might follow.\textsuperscript{92} Until the late 1920s the colonial regime did not attempt to deal with social unrest by making concessions or through ameliorative policies, but relied instead on the use of force.

**The End of Indenture**

Supplies of indentured labour from India were suspended in 1916 as a result of criticism of the system from several sources, including Ghandi's South African campaign. The rising tide of anti-emigration feeling in India was instrumental in the introduction of the 1917 Indian Immigration Bill. This ended indentured emigration, which became "one of
the casualties of the Great War".93 With the termination of all existing indentures in Guyana in December of 1919, the planters, with the support of the Government, began to negotiate for the re-opening of Indian immigration to Guyana on the basis of free labour. Preparations had already been made to finance unindentured free immigration with the raising of a duty on sugar by Ord.23 of 1917 to form a Colonisation Fund. Planter interest in additional labour was sharpened by the coincidence between improved sugar prices and reduced labour supplies. The sugar industry had survived the crisis of previous years, albeit with many individual casualties, by keeping wages low. Their ability to do so had rested on the low availability of cultivable land and the effect of indentured labour on wages. The rice industry had, however, reduced labour supplies and now the benefits of indentured labour were to be lost at a time when the demand for labour was higher than for many years previously. The Immigration Agent General reported:

"Comparisons with previous years' statistics show earnings rising from 1913-1917 while the percentage of labourers materially diminishes; yet during these years the demand for labour, has been constantly much more than supply."(94)

In August 1918 the British Guiana Sugar Producers' Association (B.G.S.P.A.), the local employers' association, wrote requesting the West India Committee to take up with the British Government the possibility of introducing Chinese labourers presently in Europe on the Western Front as immigrant labour, saying:

"The urgent need of labour is becoming more apparent every day and if the introduction of these people is possible efforts should be made to secure them."(95)

The Colonial Office did not support this application for labour, preferring to wait until the possibility of procuring labour from the preferred source - India - had been exhausted. Further it was considered
impolitic to introduce a third race into Guyana, although there was already a small Chinese population from an early wave of indentured immigration, and also unwise to interfere with the agreement that had been made with the Chinese that they would be returned to Chinese ports after their period of service.96

Another B.G.S.P.A. request passed on to the Secretary of State for the Colonies through the Governor concerned the possibility of securing Javanese labour.97 This was also rejected by the Colonial Office. In rejecting proposals for the introduction of Chinese and Javanese labour, the Colonial Office demonstrated sensitivity to the problems which could have arisen if a racially different group was added in numbers to the population, a sensitivity which the planters did not show.

The Colonial Office had its own suggestion for improving the labour supply. This was to send as immigrants to Guyana unemployed coloured labour presently resident in Britain. The planters were not, however, interested simply in labour but in cheap labour and black labourers from Britain would not be suitable as they would probably have high aspirations and expectations. Nor did the local government regard the plan any more favourably. To introduce such an element could, it was felt, be politically dangerous as the comparative sophistication of urban life in Britain was estimated to be likely to lead such immigrants to express dissatisfaction, possibly by combining with the newly formed Labour Union.98

The first official colonisation proposals, known as the Nunan-Luckoo scheme, aimed at securing labour supplies for the sugar industry rather than population for other developments. Although the proposal included a clause giving immigrants the right to apply for land on arrival, this land was unprepared and "it was not anticipated that penniless men with
families would wish to take up or would be in a position to take up unprepared Crown Land at the moment of their arrival." The government's intentions in putting forward the Numan-Luckoo scheme are argued quite clearly by the Governor's remarks following the circumstances arising out of a second deputation to the Colonial Office. On this occasion the proposals put forward included an offer of prepared land for immigrants. The Governor reported he was unable to disguise from himself that after this new offer, the planters "distinctly cooled off" and was provoked to the reassurance that:

"If it is worthwhile embarking on this scheme at all, I do not think a temporary setback in the price of sugar should influence your minds...It is quite true this is a scheme for free imported labour...but we all understand at the outset that the bulk of these new immigrants would be absorbed by the Sugar Estates and if the Sugar Estates do not want the labour then it is a pure waste of time for Government to put up an expensive scheme for the most important industry in this Colony." (100)

East Indian opinion appears to have been split. The British Guiana East India Association, representing merchant interests, itself sent a deputation to London to encourage the resumption of immigration. A splinter group, calling itself the East Indian League charged, however, that the B.G.E.I.A. was not representative of East Indians' views and that additional immigrants, in augmenting the estates' labour supply, would have a detrimental effect on the existing East Indian population. (101)

The world recession effectively put a stop to all schemes for large scale immigration whether for colonisation of new lands or to augment estate labour supplies, except for proposals in 1934 and 1948 to settle refugees in the interior at no cost to the state. (102) The Government agency which had been operating in Barbados to introduce small numbers of labourers from the island was closed down from 1929. (103)

The immediate effect of the end of indenture was that labourers were
in a better bargaining position. The wage increase that resulted was, however, soon wiped out by war-related price increases. Their advantage was further neutralised by the reduction in demand for labour produced by a severe drought in 1924/5.

As far as social provisions on the estates are concerned, the important thing is that there were no immediate effects. It seems that the planters took a long view of the labour position for they continued to maintain the hospitals and provide housing although their legal obligation to do so ended with the end of indenture. In the event of labour supply being reduced, for example by mass abandonment of estate work for the rice fields or in other developments, each planter considered that his estate would be at a competitive disadvantage if it could not offer the facilities to which people were accustomed, even if at a low standard. If an ill-equipped hospital seems a curious incentive to labour it should be noted that for much of the rural non-estate population medical facilities were non-existent and the endemic malaria made free treatment at any standard attractive.

Minerals and Interior Development

Although sugar was to remain the dominant sector of the economy, the growth of the gold and diamond industries from 1884 and more particularly from 1891 began, from the opening years of the century to encourage the official consideration of other developments in Guyana. The Auditor noted in 1907 that "outside capital is being attracted to the vast natural resources of the country; and there is a prospect of a prosperous time for British Guiana." Since colonial policy in this period was that neither imperial nor local state revenues should be used on any large scale for development investment expansion relied, in the absence of sufficient local capital, upon the attraction of foreign capital.
This was certainly required for the opening up of the hinterland areas in regard to which expectations of great mineral wealth were harboured by many. The attracting of this capital became linked in the minds of the local middle class, many of whom had made money from gold and diamond ventures, with the building of a railway to the interior and the building up of the population. Members of the legislature, notably Messrs. Garnet and Dias who both had substantial business interests, began to campaign for a hinterland railroad and a committee to investigate the feasibility of the proposal was set up in 1912.\textsuperscript{105}

The arrival of Sir Walter Egerton as Governor gave the local interior development lobby hopes of increased official support as he had formerly held position in Nigeria and had been associated with railway building there.\textsuperscript{106} The project gathered momentum and by 1914 was receiving official support. The Governor dubbed it as of 'paramount importance' whilst adding the proviso that hinterland development should not be allowed to drain labour from the coast.\textsuperscript{107} A Government mineral exploration expedition was set up during Egerton's governorship. His early transfer from Guyana was through by some locally and in Britain to have resulted from pressure exerted by the sugar lobby.

Railway plans faltered when the Secretary of State turned down the railway scheme as a project for development with British Treasury funds on the grounds that the interior of Guyana was neither a new territory "in which civilised administration must of necessity be established from without at the expense of the power which has assumed responsibility," nor did it contain a large population of "uncivilised tribes", the other condition prompting imperial railway building.\textsuperscript{108}

Treasury loans could not be made under the Colonial Loans Act given the existing constitution as any large loan was made only when the
Treasury had control over a colony's finances. The suggestion was that a change in the constitution to give the officials greater financial control would remedy the situation. This proposal was supported by the Governor, but the Electives were split on the issue and it was finally dropped.\textsuperscript{109}

The railway question re-emerged in the post-war period, pursued by the pro-development faction of the Elective element, especially those identified with the Popular Party but also linked closely with the interests of British and American capitalists in minerals, especially diamonds. A railway to the hinterland was promoted as essential to the fulfilment of Guyana's development potential. For example, F. Webber, a member of the legislature, in addressing the Labour Group of the Empire Parliamentary Association in London, portrayed the future which awaited the colony if a railway connecting its zones and continuing to the Amazon were to convert it into one of the "world's great highways", saying:

"A great continental highway of this kind is not only a dream but a practical possibility which once achieved would convert British Guiana from being a neglected heritage of the Crown into a proud continental Dominion, carrying millions of people and importing as much goods from the United Kingdom as New Zealand, or any of the Australian states, increasing employment at home and opportunity abroad."(\textsuperscript{110})

The Colonial Office received many applications for leases on large areas of land from potential investors, who usually promised a railway as part of their development plans.\textsuperscript{111} Amongst the applicants was De Beers, the South African diamond company. The Colonial Office was wary of De Beers and other applicants who were suspected of being 'fronts' for them, fearing that they would not actually mine the diamond fields but lock them up to prevent any big find upsetting world prices.\textsuperscript{112} By 1927 it became clear that there was no big diamond pipe and De Beers lost interest, but in the interim the development of the hinterland had been
effectively blocked, as the British Government refused to allow the building of the railway except by the state at the same time as refusing to make any imperial investment.

The pro-interior development lobby was by no means anti-sugar. As has been indicated, the official concern was that if interior development was to occur it should not be allowed to interfere with the supply of labour to the sugar estates. The Electives, many of whom had some connection with the sugar industry were, in the main, at one with the official view that sugar was essential. In their address to Major Wood on his visit to Guyana in 1921/22 as Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, for example, they asked for imperial support of the ailing industry as they did again when addressing Governor Denham on his assumption of office in 1930:

"The sugar industry of the Colony, which is its main financial and industrial support, faces the alternative of complete extinction unless assistance in some shape or form is extended to it by the Government." (113)

None of the initiatives towards interior development produced any substantial results, and no real development or diversification of the economy occurred between 1895 and 1930, except in the rice sector. The antipathy of the planters, a colonial policy which restricted imperial treasury investment but discouraged and sometimes disallowed foreign (non-Empire) investment, the paucity of local state revenues and private capital together locked Guyana into a path of non-development with the sugar industry retaining its paramouncy. The Elected Members saw it thus:

"The Colony has been sacrificed upon the alter of Imperial necessities and even made the plaything of the whims and caprices of various officials at the Colonial Office and the Crown Agents for the Colonies." (114)
The proposals for interior development to be achieved by local labour had no direct effect on social policy aimed at preserving existing population. The interest in sanitary and other measures which, as will be shown, it generated were more designed towards increasing the population and improving its health in order that Guyana's image abroad be changed from that of a country of disease and death to one of a healthy place to which labour could be attracted and which, therefore, constituted a good investment prospect. The question of preserving existing population arose only when the cessation of Indian immigration threatened a long term labour shortage for established industry.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The decrease in the number of indentured immigrants and the eventual end of indenture together with a decline in world sugar prices, varied only in the war-boom years, placed further strains on the economy of the sugar industry. These difficulties were overcome and, with the support of the administration and the Electives, the industry survived.

A local development lobby, composed largely of those with business interests seeking further investment opportunities, arose in the first decade of the century and became more vociferous over the next two decades. The optimism it generated was at times fostered by the local administration but was finally thwarted by a colonial policy which dictated that local colonial development be sacrificed to wider imperial interests.

In the final analysis, the developments of the period, both constitutional and economic, were in a sense abortive and produced no real change in the balance of power or the general characteristics of the economy. Yet, whilst sugar remained the single most important export and
largest employer, the growing rice industry was seen as having important potential effects on the availability and independence of labour. Also the new climate regarding the country's development potential together with the curtailment of immigration produced incentives for a change in attitudes towards the preservation of population which, as will be seen in the following chapter, had important effects on social policy.
Notes for Chapter Three


2. Africans had benefited from the introduction of compulsory education occurring in 1876. East Indians were not compelled to send their children to school. Portuguese had been introduced as indentured labour on the estates but had established themselves early as shopkeepers. See Despres, L. *Cultural Pluralism and Nationalist Politics in British Guiana*, Chicago: Rand-McNally and Co. 1967, p.52.


4. The number of registered electors in 1890 was 1,973; in 1892 it was 2,375. See Rodney, W. op.cit., p.239, Table 19.

5. C.O. 111/492 Hemming to Chamberlain (Confidential), 17th February 1897, p.34.

6. ibid


10. ibid, p.39.


15. The term 'economic' is used to denote projects which could be expected to yield economic returns at some point in time, in contrast to the non-economic, or social sector.


17. Daily Argosy, March 1st.


19. It is not intended to suggest that members were uninterested in the development of their country for the good of all, simply that their class interests predisposed them to seek such development in a manner consonant with that interest.


29. The number of East Indian voters in 1918 was 383, i.e. 8.5% of the electorate. C.O. 114/167 Report of the Immigrant Agent General 1918.

30. It is of interest that Guyana's elected majority and the absence of Crown Colony status made Governors of the 1920's on the contrary quite willing to cede control, ostensibly to secure funding for the building of a railway to the interior.


33. C.O. 111/477 Leicester to Ripon, 18th March 1895. Enclosure from Inspector General to the Governor. "Them Charlestown niggers always talking about making riots again. They say sooner or later they must do something as there is no work'.

34. Ibid.


36. C.O. 111/549 Hodgson to Elgin. Conf. 9th January, 1906. the West India Committee did not lose the opportunity to push forward the case for continued immigration: 'It is an important and striking feature that the disturbances were confined to the negroes, and that the coolie immigrants took no part whatsoever in the rioting, thus proving the value of a mixed population such as British Guiana possesses. Had the labouring population consisted entirely of negroes it is impossible to estimate what the consequences might have been'. C.O. 884/8. Correspondence relating to Garrisons in the West Indies. West India 142. Secret. West India Committee to Colonial office, January 1st 1906.

37. Hindi was apparently still widely spoken by all East Indians, immigrant or Creole. At a meeting of the British Guiana East Indian Association at Uitvlugt as late as 1920, the address (on the Colonisation Scheme) was given in Hindi. Daily Chronicle, July 29th 1926.

39. For example the strike at Lusignan in 1912 was by indentured labourers (Daily Argosy, September 12th 1912) as was that on De Kinderen in 1914, (Daily Argosy, March 25th, 1914).


41. The largest group was the wharf workers and it was with this group that trade union action was successfully carried out.

42. So, for example, the British Guiana Indian Association 'sponsored' candidates for the 1926 Election, Lutchman, H. op.cit., p.79.

43. Collet letter to Secretary of State (Confidential), 30th November 1920. Quoted in Lutchman, H. op.cit., p.79.

44. Daily Argosy, 10th August 1927.

45. Daily Chronicle, July 22nd, 1926.

46. Daily Chronicle, July 7th, 1926.


49. Daily Chronicle, 22nd July 1926.

50. Ibid.

51. This Association was registered on the 5th November 1925. Daily Chronicle, 28th July 1926.

52. Lutchman, H. op.cit. p.76.

53. Lutchman, H. op.cit. p.78.


55. Lutchman, H. op.cit. p.88. The Party did espouse some broader causes such as colonisation and sanitation but it is not further examined as these interests were marginal and the party never developed into a true political party.


58. Daily Argosy, August 10th, 1927.

59. For example, in May 1920 a British Guiana Labour Union led strike secured a wage increase for wharf workers. Daily Argosy, 28th May 1920.


64. Daily Argosy, April 2nd, 1924.

65. Governor Egerton had considered, in 1914, that East Indians should be given representation in the legislature through nominated members on the basis that they gave up their voting rights. This forfeiture was to be sought so that East Indians would not 'be encouraged to become political agitators as are too many of the Negro race'. C.O. 111/593 Egerton to Harcourt (Confidential) 9th March 1914. The Colonial Office squashed the proposal terming it politically untenable. The first East Indians (2) entered the legislature in 1925. C.O. 114/200 Report of the Immigrant Agent General 1925.

66. Department of Agriculture Reports, 1880, 1896.


68. Rodney, W. op.cit., p.226, Table 4.

69. C.O. 111/477 Leicester to Ripon, 18th March 1895. End.

70. Adamson, A. op. cit. p. 147.

71. C.O. 111/501 (47) Boyle to Chamberlain. 18th February (Enclosure).


73. Further Correspondence Relating to Disturbances in British Guiana 1906. Appendix III, Chamberlain to Hodgson, 10th September 1903.

74. Daily Chronicle, April issues, 1903.

75. Memorial on Immigration, Daily Chronicle, May 21st, 1903.


77. C.O. 111/501 (47) Boyle to Chamberlain, 1898.


83. Ibid.

84. Circular Despatch to Governors from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 26th July 1897.


87. See Table 3(i).


89. Drainage and irrigation certainly proceeded at a very slow pace, so slow as to encourage one local businessman, eager for development to offer a private loan to the government for the purpose. His offer was not taken up.

90. C.O. 111/588 Telegram Egerton to Secretary of State, 14th March 1913.

91. Ibid.

92. See for example, Daily Argosy, April 3rd, 1924, for an account of the Ruimveldt shootings.


95. Referred to in Combined Court Paper 21, 1919, 'Report on the Condition of British Guiana During the Great European War'.

96. Ibid, also C.O. 111/618 (294) Governor to Secretary of State 12th September 1918.

97. C.O. 111/625 Governor to Secretary of State 12th November 1919.

98. C.O. 111/625 (497) Governor to Secretary of State 6th November 1919.


100. See C.O. 114/199 Combined Court Paper No. 19, op.cit.

101. C.O. 111/625 (440) Governor to Secretary of State 12th May 1919.

102. These schemes are dealt with more fully elsewhere.


108. Ibid.


112. Ibid.


114. Ibid.
CHAPTER FOUR

LAND SETTLEMENT AND HEALTH POLICY 1890 - 1930

This chapter focuses on developments in two areas of social policy, land settlement and health, between 1890 and 1930. These sectors of policy have been selected for discussion as they were the aspects in which the most crucial developments occurred during this period, developments which arose out of the changes in the socio-economic context examined in the previous chapter.

Land Settlement

Land settlement policy between 1890 and 1940 had two phases; in its early form it developed in relation to the sugar industry's need to retain labour and cut costs; in its later form it formed part of population policy based on colonisation plans. In neither case was the establishment of an independent peasantry from the existing population a primary aim.

In the first phase of land settlement projects local people were placed on prepared land which was part of estate land which had gone out of cultivation and had been bought by government.¹ This had been done on an earlier occasion, in 1881 at Plantation Huist Dieren when concern had arisen over the numbers of East Indians claiming repatriation as soon as it was due to them.² As has been shown, this concern grew and led to the investigation of ways to deal with the problem. The drop in sugar prices had forced a number of smaller proprietors out of business between 1880 and 1904 so that by the latter date the share of estate ownership belonging to large companies had risen from 47.25% in 1880 to 70%.³ The properties that were not bought up remained as problems in the drainage
system and since this necessitated action of some sort it was seen as convenient to acquire them for the settlement of time-expired immigrants who could be induced to accept land and renounce their claim to return passage to India.

In 1897 Plantation Helena on the West Coast of the Berbice River was partitioned by the government and offered to immigrants with a view to achieving "the settlement of the East Indian on the land, and the saving of expenditure on their return passages." Three hundred immigrants received allotments of prepared land. Further schemes were set up when government acquired Plantation Whim (on the Courantyne, Berbice) and Bush Lot, (West Coast Berbice) in 1898 and Maria's Pleasure, (Essequibo) in 1902.

Planter response to the development of settlements was mixed as some considered that labour would be drawn away from the estates. The West India Committee voiced concern about the use of the fund set up to finance immigration for the purpose of land settlement. On the whole, however, land settlements did not prosper. The settlers were often ill-prepared and their agricultural problems were compounded by drought. A supervisory post attached to the Immigration Department was created and a slight improvement noted but the settlers problems were increased when, in 1900, Whim and Helena were declared Village Settlements and therefore liable to the levying of taxes. At this point the settlers were not self-sufficient and still worked on nearby sugar estates.

Doubts about the financial gains being achieved by inducing immigrants to forgo return passage and accept land began to be voiced: the Governor pointed out to the Secretary of State that when free passages were available only a small proportion of those eligible claimed them. Also the conditions regarding return passages had changed. The
Colonial Office had requested that the Indian Government accede to the abolition of free return passages because of its fears regarding its liability should the sugar industry collapse. This request was refused but an alternative proffered: that immigrants themselves pay a portion of the fare. In Guyana the planters were induced to accept the cost of the remainder upon the promise that 2,400 indentures for Guyana per annum would be allowed. The reduction in planter and state responsibility sapped government enthusiasm for land settlements. Their relevance to the problem they were originally created to deal with diminished as it was considered that the imposition of part of the cost of the passage upon the immigrants themselves made it "difficult to doubt that the change [would] effect a material diminuation in the numbers seeking to return." In addition the settlements were proving unsuccessful in another way. Drainage problems had been insuperable in some areas and many families had moved away leaving, except in the larger settlement Whim, only a small proportion of the original settlers. In other areas settlement was never completed. The settlers were in such difficulties that rate collection raised insufficient to cover administrative costs. Land settlement in its original form was abandoned and when other estates were acquired by government, lands were leased or sold in the usual manner, that is on the same basis as other government-owned land, to all comers.

Land settlement policy during this period was, then, largely a result of conditions in the sugar industry and was developed as a support to that industry. This is not to say that this was the only view of land settlement current or that the policy went unchallenged. A scheme for the settlement of the unemployed on land drained and prepared for them was put to the Combined Court in 1906 by Elected Member Patrick Dargan, one of the lawyer politicians who emerged in this period. His proposal
was that the settlers be put in houses built with government finance and
given an income on the basis of work done on the land to allow for their
sustenance while crops were maturing. The Governor's response to the
plan was unenthusiastic, his complaint being that such a project would be
too expensive as the settlers would ask the government for schools and
hospitals. Nevertheless, a proposal for an inquiry into the feasibility
of the project received sufficient support in the Combined Court that a
small local Commission sat. It received evidence to the effect that
villagers would plant more if they had more security of tenure, if they
had some form of support whilst crops grew and if drainage was
improved. As a result the Combined Court voted $6,000 for a
settlement scheme to be administered by the Department of Lands and
Mines. An area in the Pomeroon was selected which, it was proposed,
settlers would drain and empolder, receiving a wage whilst this work was
done. This plan does not seem to have come to fruition and there were
no further government land settlement schemes until the late 1920s.

In the period under discussion Africans supplied much of the labour
for cane-cutting and there is little doubt that one reason for the
government's reluctance to develop land settlement or encourage the
development of existing village agriculture was the fear that an
independent, successful African peasantry would adversely affect labour
supplies to the estates. There had already been one accelerated movement
of Africans away from the estates (in the 1880s) as a result of
retrenchments due to the economic crisis and the lure of the gold
fields. It could be argued that the cost of such schemes during a
period of low government revenues was prohibitive. Yet both local state
and imperial funds were allocated to the maintenance of the sugar
industry. State aid to immigration from public revenues continued, the
special industry 'acreage tax' helped finance immigration costs and from
1912 the estates' responsibilities for sea defence were reduced. Hence the failure to support the development of non-estate agriculture (except rice) through land settlement or indeed any other means cannot be ascribed simply to the colony's poor financial position, but was rather the result of a failure to countenance the use of state revenue in any major way except in relation to the sugar industry.

It is also worth noting that the debate about land development during this period was coloured by anti-African sentiments expressed especially at the official level. These came to the fore particularly when immigration was being considered. Governor Swettenham, in writing to the Secretary of State, contrasted the East Indian as a "thrifty and useful colonist" with the African who "instead of being on strike for higher wages has for the most part renounced wages altogether, when coupled with continuous labour". He called 'ridiculous' the claim of anti-immigration memorialists that the 'emancipated negro (described by Earl Grey in 1849 as being in a semi-barbarous state) is more civilised than the coolie with his two or three thousand years of civilisation'.

The next Governor, Hodgson, expressed similar views stating that he was not hopeful of any land settlement scheme which "for its success imposes on the negro the necessity of giving continuous labour." He took the position that if Africans wanted assistance in agriculture they should enter into indenture contracts like East Indians so that "we shall be able to say we shall not want so many immigrants from India, we will take you instead, draft you to estates where you will have houses, hospitals, doctors and every convenience, and at the end of your term of indenture you will have the same privilege as the East Indians." Chamberlain was similarly inclined to disparage Africans' ability to develop the land. Writing in connection with a railway proposal he
stated:

"...these facts coupled with the failure of the coloured population to develop and maintain the cotton and coffee industries make it impossible for me to approve a policy which would make these extensive territories a close preserve for those who have not yet shown that they are able or desire to make use of them." (23)

The early land settlement schemes were established with short term aims and thereafter left to sink or swim without much attention from government. They served the purpose of inducing some time-expired labourers to give up their claim to return passage, but were not significant in producing an expansion of peasant proprietorship.

Land settlement re-emerged in the 1920s along with plans for 'colonising' the country, particularly the interior, with immigrant settlers.24 It was first mooted as part of the colonisation proposals which followed the cessation of indenture. The problem with such proposals was that they raised the question of the settling of local people which, it was felt, would aggravate the shortage of estate labour. The Commissioner of Lands and Mines concluded:

"To make the offer of prepared land with its generous condition applicable to local workers would be impracticable as it would inevitably lead to the withdrawal of a proportion at least of the labour (almost wholly East Indian) already settled on the estates and thus the scheme which was originally planned to augment the supply of labour for the sugar plantations would tend to increase the existing shortage" (25)

Any proposal to settle new immigrants without similar consideration of local people was opposed by the British Guiana East Indian Association which took the position that residents should receive the same facilities as newcomers.26 Elements of the elected body of the Combined Court also favoured the settlement of local people or surplus population from the West Indian islands. In July 1926, for example, the Combined Court passed a motion that possibilities for the settlement of locals on the
threatened Plantation Anna Regina be investigated. During the debate the Court was reminded that 826 adult East Indians were booked to return to India by the S.S. Chenals. This was seen as a reflection of the precarious nature of employment in agriculture. Further, mention was made of a "tide of people" leaving the colony annually for America. Settlement of locals was urged to stem this tide and provide for the unemployed. It is doubtful, however, whether the Electives would have stood out against land settlement in association with free immigration projects as many of them also perceived increased population through immigration as essential to development, but no source of immigrants deemed suitable by both the Government and the Colonial Office was secured to test this proposal.

The appointment of Guggisberg as Governor gave impetus to the lobby in favour of increasing population through colonisation and land settlement. He felt that there were investment possibilities in bauxite, diamonds and gold and in hinterland development as well as in the sugar and rice industries and that the necessary foreign capital could be attracted if conditions were right. One of these conditions was the provision of sufficient labour which present levels of population increase could not provide but which immigrant colonisation could: "That is the situation with which British Guiana is faced today; Bankruptcy or Colonisation." He took up colonisation as a personal crusade and pursued land settlement in spite of the opposition of the sugar interest.

A committee was set up to investigate areas which would be suitable for colonisation. The first area to be considered was the North West District, an interior location sparsely settled. This was rejected as unsuitable for various reasons including cost and isolation. Bush Lot was the other area considered and a conversion to rice was proposed,
although sufficient land was to be reserved for the growing of ground
provisions and vegetables by the settlers.\textsuperscript{29} Whilst arrangements for the
Bush Lot settlement were being made the adjoining estates, Anna Regina
and Richmond, were offered for sale by their owners. These properties
were purchased, using the Colonisation Fund which was justified by the
consideration that the extension of the project would contribute to Bush
Lot's success.\textsuperscript{30} These three estates were all in the Essequibo. Further
estates had been purchased earlier in a similar manner on the West Coast
Demerara (Hague Plantation, Windsor Forest and La Jalousie). The
ultimate aim of the purchase of these lands was to settle immigrants on
them; Bush Lot was settled as 'the first model settlement....for the
purpose of giving intending immigrants a clear demonstration of the
conditions under which they could obtain and work land in the Colony.'\textsuperscript{31}
It was occupied by seventy-five families. This produced the opposition
of the sugar interest. The Governor complained, with reference to the
Bush Lot scheme:

"Already mendacious statements have appeared in the Local Press
which are calculated to prejudice the scheme. This I believe, is
in no small way due to the action of certain members of the sugar
planting section of the community who are hostile to any
settlement scheme which they fear will affect the labour supply of
their sugar estates."\textsuperscript{(32)}

It was not, however, the Governor's intention to damage the sugar
industry; as he noted, the Bush Lot Settlement residents would be free to
work on sugar estates and the long term purpose of the schemes was to
attract and settle additional potential labour.\textsuperscript{33} Indeed, the previous
Governor's original plan for colonisation specifically stated that it s
should not interfere with the level of labour available to the sugar
industry. It also proposed an 'unlinked labour' scheme to go along with
colonisation aimed at increasing labour to estates.\textsuperscript{34} The letting out of
lands on the settlement schemes was undertaken to keep them from lying
idle until the immigrants arrived for unworked land would represent lost rent and prove problematic to the drainage of adjoining lands.\textsuperscript{34}

Immigrant colonisation schemes for the coastland were finally overtaken by the depression. Public opinion was hardening against the introduction of immigrants at a time when unemployment was steadily growing. The Reverend Claude, a local Church leader, led a demonstration and delivered a petition protesting against "colonisation whilst the people are starving."\textsuperscript{36} Some Electives advocated the settlement of unemployed people rather than immigrants and one, Mr. Brassington proposed the use of the Colonisation Fund for a settlement in Wakenham, Essequibo to this end.\textsuperscript{37} The British Guiana Labour Union (B.G.L.U.) also called for the settlement of locals as did the British Guiana Peoples Association, an association bringing together the representatives of a wide range of colonial organisations including the East Indian Association, the Negro Progress Convention and the British Guiana Miners Association. At one of the Association's first meetings it was decided to have a prosperous peasantry as the back bone of the Colony\textsuperscript{38} towards which goal settlement of locals on the land was to play a major role.

Although the introduction of immigrants to the coastal areas had become impolitic, the Governor (Denham) continued with plans for settling the interior. In 1931 he made enquiries of the Colonial Office as to the possibility of obtaining Chinese settlers for the development of the North West District since East Indians, the preferred group, were unobtainable and news of the distress in North China suggested securing settlers from there.\textsuperscript{39} The North West District, three hundred miles from Georgetown was eminently suited for agricultural development. Previously coffee had been grown there, but low prices had led to its decline so that its main settlement Maburuma was now little more than 'a hill station for government employees.'\textsuperscript{40} The Governor claimed that
unemployment in the colony would not be reduced by the settling of locals in the area as Africans were not 'born agriculturists' and preferred work in the gold and diamond fields, whilst for the East Indians "there is always some work to be found for them on the estates and rice fields and they would not willingly leave these districts nor again would it be sound policy for them to do so either in their own interests or those of their employees." He specifically rejected, then, the settlement of the local population in potential development areas, even at a time when there was acute unemployment. Interestingly he endorsed and reiterated the established view of the Bush Lot Settlement stating that it was "intended merely to be a model of what could be done and not to relieve local distress." A number of Chinese were brought to Guyana but the experiment was brought to an abrupt halt when they proved not to be the agriculturists expected and tended to stay in Georgetown.

After hopes of state-aided immigration had faded the Governor continued, with the concurrence of Official and Elected members, to look for further sources of population which could be secured cheaply, although by 1934 the object was specifically colonisation of the hinterland rather than labour for the estates. An opportunity presented itself in 1934 when the League of Nations was seeking a place to settle Assyrians who had been living in Iraq and had become subject to attack by the Iraquis since the end of the British Mandate there. Assyrians were reputed to be hardworking agriculturists suited to settlement on land such as that offered by the Rupununi savannahs. A proposal that Guyana should be put forward to the League of Nations as a possible place for Assyrian re-settlement was advanced by the Acting Governor to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. It was also put to the Legislative Council although, typically, this body was not to be given
all the apposite information. As the Acting Governor put it:

"No mention need be made of the fact that other Nations have hesitated to take these people, not I think to difficulty experienced in assimilating them into the Iraqi community." (45)

To accomplish settlement it was proposed that the Rupununi Company which owned some of the best land and assets in the savannah area should be bought out with F. Dias, a local merchant, and members of the Executive Council acting as a front so that the asking price would not be inflated through the seller's knowledge of government interest. The Legislative Council unanimously supported the proposal for Assyrian immigration, the only proviso being that the immigrants should not be allowed to drift to the coastland and so add to the unemployment.

The plans were aborted, however, when a committee of the League of Nations set up to investigate the proposals made its report. It had concluded that as the Rupununi was a cattle rearing area and the Assyrians knew nothing of this occupation any attempt to settle them there would be "disastrous". In addition, the cattle stock was considered to be poor and the problem of flooding in the rainy season great.

That land settlement was never seriously considered as a solution to the problems of unemployment nor as an avenue to economic diversification was undoubtedly due to the power of the sugar lobby to influence official policy. It is worth noting that its influence was increased by its continuity and stability which contrasted with the constant change of government policy makers. Between 1922 and 1928, for example, Guyana had five Governors which made it difficult for the administration to follow through any new policy directions. The Elected Members complained that the effect of this constant change was to produce discontinuity and hamper progress:
"The administrative policy which year by year is made to depend upon the personal lead, initiative and direction of each new Governor serves, in the interval that elapses between the departure of every retiring Governor and the arrival of a new one, as a bar to progress." (49)

Each new Governor, charged the *Daily Chronicle*, was subject to the blandishments of the sugar lobby with the result that his independence, if not compromised, was forfeited to the subtle pressure the lobby exerted:

"The moment it becomes known that Sir So and So has been appointed Governor of British Guiana, he is deluged with invitations to social functions where he comes into contact with the parasites of the West India Committee - an organisation which should be the means of offering first aid to Governors in determining the welfare of the country; but alas! We know to our bitter cost what has invariably happened. The unfortunate victim has SUGAR thrust down his throat to such an extent that he comes to this Colony prepared to see no good in any other product...." (50)

Land settlement was not a policy the sugar industry cared to support any longer in the new situation where labour supply was less certain than it had been formerly and, as a consequence, any project which could contribute to a labour shortage was considered something to be resisted. Although in the late twenties land settlement was enthusiastically supported by the administration it was connected with hopes of hinterland development by immigrant labour and was not thought of as an alternative to unemployment or casual labour on the sugar estates on the coast for the local population.

**Health Policy**

Policy in health matters during the period 1890-1930 continued to be generated on an *ad hoc* basis. The general tendency on the part of both Electives and Officials was to keep down expenditure. Action was taken either when initiated by the Governor at the behest of the Secretary of State or when an epidemic threatened to engulf all sections of society,
although concern about low levels of natural increase beginning around 1905 generated a greater interest in the health of the masses. In all cases, however, expenditure was directed at containing or eradicating specific illnesses rather than at improving the general level of health of the population, and insofar as the labouring classes were concerned, the types of illness selected for attention were those which were considered to impair the workers' ability to produce.

The Mortality Commission

The Report of the Commission of Enquiry into General and Infantile Mortality gives evidence of the state of the nations health and health provision in the early 1900s. The Commission was a result not of internal agitation over social conditions, but of the British Government's concern about population levels in several of its colonies, and was patterned after the Commission of 1905 which was set up in Britain to investigate British Poor Law.

Guyana's mean mortality rate for the years between 1900 and 1904, compared unfavourably with that of other colonies; of those surveyed only Mauritius had a higher rate. (See Table 4(i), next page).
In Guyana, the rate for East Indians was lower than for Africans, (see Table 4(ii)) and the Commissioners were of the opinion that "the relatively low general mortality among the East Indian immigrants is largely due to compulsory sanitation on the sugar estates." It should be remembered, however, that the age distribution of the East Indian population was skewed by immigration. When it took a more 'natural' shape in the post-immigration period the East Indian death rate became higher than the African one.
TABLE 4(ii)

Crude Death Rate by Ethnic Group 1895 - 1904

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Mean Death Rate (per 100 population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europeans</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Coloureds&quot;</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Indians</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africans</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The generally high mortality rate was partly a function of high infant mortality. The difference in infant mortality between the main racial groups accounts for much of the difference in overall mortality rates. It is of interest to note that the position of East Indians had improved slightly, with a reduction of infant mortality from 182 per 1,000 in 1885 to 171 in 1904, whereas for Africans the rate showed little improvement moving from 249 per 1,000 in 1885 to 243 in 1904. Presumably the sanitary improvements on the estates which were lowering overall mortality rates were important in producing a lowering of infant mortality. The same differences between the races are reflected in the mortality of infants under one year of age: between 1885 and 1904 the death rate per 1000 in this group was 279 for East Indians as compared with 354 for Africans.

This difference between the races may also be accounted for in part by the fact that most estates allowed the grazing of cattle on estate lands by estate residents for a fee and East Indians therefore tended to be the cattle keepers and so had easy access to milk for children and nursing mothers.
There were also differences in infant mortality rates as between the country and the town. The mean mortality rate for 1895-1904 was 298 per 1,000 in Georgetown compared to 160 per 1,000 in the country. The Report noted that due to boundary changes in 1903 the figures for Georgetown may have been inflated but nevertheless called the urban rate "very excessive". The high urban rates were attributed by one person giving evidence to the Enquiry, a Reverend Darby, to the yard system of housing occupied by most Georgetown residents where overcrowded tenements with atrocious sanitation were built around a central court forming "sinks of death and certainly sinks of immorality".55 Excreta disposal in Georgetown was achieved by the use of cesspits which were periodically emptied by the optimistically named 'odorless excavator' which discharged into the river near its mouth at ebb-tide. The cesspits were unlined so that the soil became saturated. Nothing much had changed since 1898 when a resident gave this description of the situation:

"The house drainage is poured into cesspools, which are unlined, so that it soaks into the ground. These pits are rarely emptied, and when this is done, another pit is dug in the compound, and the filth from one poured into the other. In this way the whole city is becoming a mass of cess pools, which it will be dangerous to disturb."(56)

Even after the 'odourless excavators' were purchased in the same year as this report, it was stated that the:

"the filthy habit still prevails of emptying their contents into the river, causing frightful stenches and malodorous deposits."(57)

Generally the high mortality rate in the colony was attributed to "the absence of adequate measures of sanitation, over crowding in rooms, in ranges of tenement rooms, and in tenement houses, the carelessness with regard to medical attendance, and possibly, in some of the country
districts, to inability to obtain it leading to the employment of quacks and the abuse of patent medicines...” With regard to infantile mortality the principal cause was deemed to be the neglect of breast feeding, often due to a physical degeneration of the mother caused by malaria. Malaria was recognised as the primary cause of infantile and adult mortality.

The following recommendations based on the Commission’s Report were put before the legislature in 1907:

- that milk depots for testing and sterilising be established.
- that quinine and other anti-malarial measures be taken.
- that anti-syphilitic legislation be enacted.
- that two or three city dispensaries and three village dispensaries be established.
- that a Medical Officer of Health for Georgetown be appointed, with his only task to be to improve sanitation.(59)

These measures were aimed at the control of malaria, tuberculosis, typhoid and hookworm, primarily. Malaria and hookworm were particularly pronounced in the country areas, although malaria took its toll in Georgetown also, whilst tuberculosis was more particularly an urban disease.

The campaigns - (i) Hookworm

Hookworm had been identified as endemic amongst estate Indian populations throughout the empire. Its significance was two-fold. Firstly, hookworm infestation induced a form of anaemia and malnutrition which adversely affected fecundity and fertility. It contributed to the production of the negligible rates of natural increase which had begun to cause comment and concern in Guyana. Secondly, it produces a considerable weakening of the body and general debility. The Governor
noted, when conveying a report on the causes of hookworm related diseases to the Secretary of State, that 'the matter is very important, as, owing to the disease the labour strength of the estates is very seriously affected.' 61

Hookworm enters the body through the soles of the feet when they are in contact with soil contaminated with faeces. The Medical Inspector's guidelines on the establishment of latrines on the estates were not generally heeded and he commented ruefully:

"Curious as it may seem it is undoubtedly hard to convince some men as to the necessity for providing any accommodation of this kind for their labourers." (62)

He adduced two reasons for their reluctance; some could see no "tangible advantage" and felt that since labourers had so far done without such "luxuries" they could continue to do so and the "medical fad" could be ignored. Others would have complied but for the cost involved in the installation of latrines at a time when the low price for sugar was putting several estates in a critical position. 63

By 1908 the Governor was reporting to the Secretary of State that within the three years previous, 23 estates had been provided with latrine accommodation, "in the face of considerable opposition", presumably from estates on the grounds of cost, and there were still nine estates with no latrines at all and another where the provision was "practically useless". 64 He decided against taking the Surgeon General's advice that estate owners should be legally compelled to provide latrines as he felt that the estates at fault were on the whole those "on the borderline between stopping or proceeding with cultivation;" and that it was more important that labourers "continue to be provided with work on the estates than protected from a particular disease..." 65
of some of the weaker estates around this period in time improved the overall performance of the estates in this area. (See Table 4(iii))

TABLE 4(iii)

Number of Sugar Estates 1839-1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Estates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>19 (15 Bookers Sugar Estates Ltd.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the case of hookworm then, the movement against the disease was initiated by the imperial government and enacted in Guyana by the Governor. It was directed primarily at the estates because of imperial concern about the low productivity and fertility levels of imported labour. The programme could not however be confined to the estates. As the Governor himself noted in 1908:

"...if compulsory action with regard to the provision of proper latrine accommodation is to be taken in connection with the sugar estates, it should be taken in connection with the several villages of the Colony, because it is quite clear that the remedy would be incomplete if such action were taken in one case and not the other."(66)

Improved sanitation in the villages abutting the estates was an essential part of control on the plantations but since there was to be no compulsion of anti-hookworm measures on the estates, it was concluded that it could not be enforced in the villages where people were not
"educated up to the point where they would assent to compulsion." 67

Although the improvement of latrine provision on the estates was one of the reasons generally attributed to the comparatively improved rates of natural increase amongst the East Indian population, hookworm was still rampant. A doctor reporting on his medical district for 1912 stated that hookworm related disease and malaria were the two chief reasons for the deterioration of the East Indian race:

"Anyone who has closely observed the East Indian in this colony knows there is a marked difference in the physique between the immigrants and those born here. The effect of local rearing tends, therefore, to physical deterioration, to the production of a light weighting thin-boned and delicate featured man, having less capacity for prolonged, hard muscular effort. Of the factors concerned with the production of this physical deterioration the two most important are, undoubtedly, malaria fever and anchylostomiasis." (68)

Clearly, the hookworm situation had not been controlled by this date. Eradication efforts were finally extended to the villages adjoining the estates when the government accepted the assistance of the International Health Committee of the Rockefeller Institute.

In America, the Rockefeller Foundation had been interesting itself in the health of the American people in so far as it contributed to higher production and economic development. Hookworm had been found to be prevalent in the southern states and dubbed the 'lazy germ' due to its debilitating effect. Rockefeller was interested in finding new fields for industrial development in the United States and launched an anti-hookworm campaign in the southern states in an effort to prepare them for profitable exploitation by northern capital. 69 He then turned his attention to foreign areas with the similar aim of developing public health programmes which would produce healthy, more productive labour forces suited to work in United States-backed industrial enterprises.
Guyana was reported to be the first overseas territory in which the International Health Committee operated. Whilst the precise reason for the choice of Guyana is not known, American capitalists had been showing interest in the rice industry and in mineral development. The discovery of bauxite deposits during the early years of the nineteenth century enhanced American interest. A United States based company was, by the outbreak of war in 1914, leasing all the available ore bearing land.

Action was taken first on the plantations, but in March of 1914 a dispensary for the treatment of hookworm related diseases was opened by Dr. Howard the Rockefeller Institute representative at Peter's Hall, a large village near Diamond Estate where investigations had shown "more than six out of every ten people...have this disease and [that] many of these people are sickly and unable to work or enjoy life because of it." The Campaigns - (ii) Malaria

Malaria, the biggest scourge of the population as a whole, was also subject of a campaign initiated by the Colonial Office, and it too had a recognised economic dimension. As noted, the Mortality Commission had determined that malaria was the major cause of death. Arising directly out of the Commission's recommendations were regulations including: Ord. 13 of 1907 which provided for the enforcement of proper lot drainage in Georgetown, another ordinance of the same year compelling the screening of water vats and other vessels, and the 1910 Mosquito Ordinance providing for action to be taken against those who wilfully bred mosquitos on their premises and for the right of entry to property for inspection purposes. The effectiveness of these ordinances, was, however, limited. The Government Bacteriologist reported in 1912 on the
results of a mosquito survey of the city carried out the previous year saying:

"It is obvious...that the whole city of Georgetown is by ignorance and apathy permitted to remain a vast breeding place for countless hordes of disease bearing mosquitos; that these mosquitos must affect most gravely the high mortality of the city, and remain as a severe threat to its health, and finally, that ample opportunity and ample powers exist for remedying this, inconceivable and extraordinary state of affairs."(74)

It would appear that measures requiring no or low capital expenditure were more often enforced. In 1909, albeit two years after the relevant ordinance was passed, 1700 vats were screened as a result of "very vigorous action".75 Quinine treatment was another comparatively cheap remedy for malaria, which also did not require any action to be taken by landlords. This was administered through post offices from 1906 and 'systematically to the coolies in the estates coolie quarters as a preventative against this all pervading cause of disease' by Government Medical Officers on all the estates.76 Finally, in 1908, following an epidemic the previous year which had claimed nearly two and a half thousand lives, Georgetown "suffered a panic assault on its trees and lily bedecked canals."77

It was generally recognised in medical circles that drainage was of major importance in the control of the malaria carrying mosquito.78 But it was also reckoned that the elimination of the mosquito was impracticable as agriculturists, by which we may understand estate owners, would "protest they are being ruined if too stringent public health principles were enforced".79 Methods of plantation agriculture changed the natural regimen of water on the land producing mosquito breeding conditions over large areas.

The problem in Georgetown lay in the high proportion of rented
properties owned by landlords of influence including members of the Municipal Council responsible for the enforcement of public health ordinances. To get drainage requirements enforced unwilling landlords had to be dealt with, and since these landlords were often ultimately responsible for enforcement this aspect of public health usually fell by the wayside. One commentator noted that "the want of money is by no means the only difficulty in the way of our carrying out anti-malarial measures in British Guiana; almost if not quite as great a drawback is the opposition one meets with from people in the most influential quarters." Sanitary inspectors were according to press reports, powerless to enforce regulations on the property of the wealthy and influential.

The imperial government's concern with malaria was increased by Britain's interest in new tropical colonial expansion and in supporting developments in the Panama Canal Zone. Sir Rupert Boyce had been dispatched by Chamberlain to Barbados in 1909, in order that he might investigate an epidemic of yellow fever there, as the disease was one proving devastating in Panama. He later took on the examination of tropical disease in other Caribbean territories including Guyana. Chamberlain also made requests to Governors for reports on anti-malarial work carried out in their territories.

It seems that, in spite of official support for malaria control the only real initiatives were carried through on some of the estates which responded to the Government's pressure for improved conditions. Boyce, visiting Diamond Estate, remarked on the contrast between the screened barrels he found there and the many uncovered water containers to be seen in Georgetown.

The estates, particularly Davsons - the other large expatriate-owned
concern apart from Bookers - continued to interest themselves in the reduction of the diseases most responsible for loss of man-hours and expense to the estates through medical costs. Between 1934 and 1937 work was carried out on the transmission of malaria by Dr. G. Giglioli, at that time a Dawson employee. This work was followed by two years of malarial studies. In 1939 the estates again collaborated with the Rockefeller Foundation, this time in the setting up of a Malaria Research Unit. The enterprise also had government support. Dr. Giglioli became Director of the Unit and proceeded with work which eventually resulted (in the late 1940s) in the virtual eradication of malaria.84

The Campaigns (iii) - Tuberculosis and Typhoid

Although tuberculosis and typhoid cases were to be found all over the colony, the concentration of these diseases was found in the city. Tuberculosis is generally associated with poverty and overcrowding but can spread through contaminated milk and contagion. The Mortality Commission Report had noted the increase in the disease over recent years and recommended control of the supply of milk and a reduction in overcrowding. Whilst tuberculosis posed some threat to the middle class and its representatives in the legislature, it was not of epidemic proportions as was typhoid, small pox or yellow fever on occasions. Nor did it threaten labour supplies as did malaria and hookworm. The campaign against tuberculosis if it can be called such, began in 1907 on the initiative of the Surgeon General and was taken up as a state and municipal supported voluntary effort.85 The British Guiana Tuberculosis Society was formed and propaganda work begun.86 The Society seems to have had little impact and presumably folded as in 1916 another society was formed.87

Typhoid epidemics had struck Georgetown from time to time and tended
to produce action either in the form of new legislation or the enforcement of old legislation, all of which was generally short term in effect. The stumbling block, as in the case of malaria control, seems to have been that the landlords' representation on the Town Council ensured that no measures that would require an outlay of capital expenditure on land or housing were made compulsory. The Daily Argosy reported that in 1912, two years after recommendations for typhoid control were made by the Surgeon General, "in the matter of compulsory structural regulations the Town Council has absolutely declined to move." The death of the son of an influential citizen in 1912 provoked rumours of an outbreak of epidemic proportion and prompted a panic re-examination of city sanitation and water supply. The Daily Argosy launched a campaign to clean up 'Garbage Town' as Georgetown was dubbed. The Mayor of Georgetown came out in favour of reforms. A bye-law against the keeping of rubbish in yards was passed. There was a characteristic flurry of activity but with little lasting effect. An Ordinance of 1907 had provided for supplies of pure drinking water throughout the populated area of the colony, but it was never properly executed; one contemporary view was that "the majority of inhabitants are absolutely unaware that such laws do exist." The activities of 1912 do not appear to have improved the situation for by 1917 the city's water supply was still judged to be "very mediocre." On the estates "the chief source of water supply [was] usually water obtained from some conservancy aback of the estate and conveyed to the various yards in open trenches." In the villages the water situation was even worse; it was reported that "there [was] not a village in the colony which possesses a decent supply of water for drinking......The usual state of affairs.....takes the form of an open trench some little distance from the village and of course liable to all kinds of pollution."
The action against typhoid and tuberculosis contrasts interestingly with that initiated in response to malaria and hookworm. There were no directives from the Colonial Office; no interest was shown by the Rockefeller Institute. Tuberculosis was left to voluntary agencies, albeit with state support. Typhoid continued to be dealt with haphazardly in response to intermittent crisis. Neither of these two illnesses had the long-term debilitating effects on the estate populations that malaria and hookworm were recognised to produce. This substantiates the contention that government and estate efforts were concentrated on health problems which affected labour supply and productivity, more particularly that of estate labour. Nevertheless campaigns, limited although they were, were indicative of an increased state involvement in the health of the nation which was prompted by the findings of the Mortality Commission and fuelled by an expansionist imperial policy.

Medical Provision

The Mortality Commission had recommended that dispensaries be established in the rural districts. The number actually started was kept few by the reluctance of the Governor and/or Electives to vote the necessary finance. Where they were established it tended to be in diamond and gold mining areas where they were considered to constitute incentives to labour. In February of 1912, for instance, in one sitting of the Combined Court, the Electives challenged the cost of the Georgetown Hospital and urged that it be reduced and also moved a resolution for the establishment of Government Medical Stations in outlying districts in the gold and diamond areas in which many of them had a financial interest. The Governor refused to support the resolution on the grounds of cost. Dispensaries were set up, however, in the early twenties when the new attitude towards preserving life and
health were developed as a large, healthy labour force came to be seen as an inducement to investors. Leguan received a dispensary in 1924 and the diamond fields several more in 1923.98

Medical attendance to the villages remained, in the main part, confined to that which could be secured from the Government Medical Officers whose primary concern remained with the estate workers. The gross poverty of the villages offered no attraction to private practitioners of whom, in 1919, there were 17, 16 of whom were stationed in Georgetown or New Amsterdam.99 The Mortality Commission Report had attested to the difficulty a private practitioner would have in securing a living in the villages by its mention of the manner in which patent medicines and 'bush' or local remedies and traditional healers were resorted to. The position was exacerbated by frequent shortages of doctors from within the Colonial Medical Service. Doctors preferred more lucrative postings elsewhere in the empire. There were local men who were qualified; as early as 1895 a Dr. Rohlehr petitioned the Secretary of State alleging that the poor state of medical provision outside of the estates could be altered by the appointment of local men to the service. The Surgeon General attached to the petition a scathing response, stating that to him it seemed that Dr. Rohlehr wanted only 'natives' appointed and that "it is open to these gentlemen to supply the wants of medical aid in districts in which he states thousands of labourers are employed, but there does not appear any necessity at present for government to appoint and pay them."100

The race consciousness of the administration did not change in the ensuing years. A Dr. Sharples, reported to be of mixed African and European descent, applied in 1914 for the post of Government Medical Officer, but was turned down by Governor Egerton on the ground that he
might be placed in a medical district where he would be the only doctor creating a situation where everyone would be dependent on him including white people "who objected to being treated by a medical officer who is not of their own race." When in 1914 war made the recruitment of doctors from Britain impossible, the Surgeon General recommended the recruitment of 'members of the white race' from India. The administration also considered changing the law regarding the registration of doctors so as to allow (white) American doctors to practice, a course which drew press criticism against such a plan whilst there were British subjects qualified and suitable in, to use the Colonial Office's phrase, 'every respect but colour'.

Finally the use of local men in the government service became inevitable and in 1916 the Officer Administering the Government, Clementi, found himself forced to recommend Dr. Sharples, making it clear that his recommendation was "based upon the supposition that you will not find it possible to obtain the service of a qualified medical practitioner of British Race for the vacancy which has occurred." The most senior posts in the nursing service were also filled by Europeans as far as was possible. The consequences of this policy for the health of the masses and for the development of a local professional class was not considered, attitudes of racial superiority apparently taking precedence.

The End of Indenture and Estate Health

By 1917 as well as having an inadequate water supply Georgetown still had no enforced housing regulations and had "an utterly inadequate system of sewage disposal mainly consisting of midden pits." The villages showed no changed since 1914 when the Surgeon General reported that most were "in a grossly unhealthy condition." On the estates, however, some improvement appeared to have taken place. The Surgeon
General stated that:

"The sugar estates in general present a great contrast in sanitary conditions when compared with the villages. One finds well drained yards, a great reduction in mosquito breeding places, absence of all thick bush and the universal provision of latrines..." (105)

The Immigrant Agent General gave details of the improvements made after noting that the hospitals were well maintained, clean and orderly:

"New separate Dispenser quarters have been built at Albion and Enmore, flush closets connected to septic tanks are in use at Albion, Enmore, Lusignan, Ogle and Houston. The dispensary has been enlarged and much improved at Blairmont, there are new bathrooms at Uitvlugt...."

He noted further that:

"very few hospitals are not now supplied with trained and registered female nurse midwives. Many estates have a second such midwife resident in the yards." (106)

The explanation for this level of activity in sanitary matters and concern for the conservation of infant life is probably partly to be found in the growing concentration of the estates in the control of the larger companies which could command larger resources and which were also possibly influenced by ideas about worker health developing in England, (see Table 4(iii)). Of equal significance is the increasing need felt by the managements to conserve labour in the sense of attracting a sufficient workforce to their estates, which were increasingly in competition with each other for free labour as the number of indentured labourers dwindled. This continued to be a motivation for many years; as when Dr. Giglioli was employed by Davson's estates in 1933, he attributed his appointment to the "specific purpose of attracting workers to take up residence on these estates." (107) By 1917, when indenture ended, several estates were already employing free labour only. These found it in their
interest to maintain their hospital accommodation and treatment facilities even though they were no longer legally obliged to do so. In addition, many estates made "special efforts...to form settlements of labourers in parts other than the customary ranges and yards" that is on estate land additional to that usually used for living quarters.

The war in Europe produced an increased demand for Caribbean sugar as European beet supplies became unavailable. The estates claimed there was a shortage of labour to meet the increased demand. The figures for numbers of those employed in the field for the period 1916-1920 are not available but the average figure of 18,529 for 1921-1925 denotes a drop from the average figure for 1911-1915 of 20,257 which does indicate that a real shortage was experienced. Additional evidence of a shortage of labour in this period is found in the reported increase in the use of machinery to offset the decline in available labour. Finally, the Immigrant Agent General stated in 1917 that the demand for labour had outstripped supply since 1913. The effects of the cessation of indenture and the subsequent removal of many labourers from the estates to the rice fields were aggravated by the high mortality rate of East Indians during the flu pandemic which hit Guyana in 1918. The Immigrant Agent General reported that:

"In the December epidemic, all races of the community were affected, but the East Indians suffered in far greater degree, and their mortality rate during the last quarter of the year was more than double that of the other sections of the population."(112)

The severe effect which was felt on some estates is indicated by the mortality rate at Plantation Mara where 112 deaths were sustained in one month, out of a population of 539.

1917 passed and the estates continued to provide medical facilities for resident labour. This contrasts with the situation which developed
in Trinidad where the estates population was much smaller and labour
difficulties not so marked; the estates' hospitals were offered to the
government which declined and the hospitals were subsequently
demolished. The Guyanese estates took a different course in order to
retain the labour of workers who might have been attracted away to the
rice fields, other estates or alternate employments. Giglioli stated
that in addition to the difficulties which would have been involved in
moving large numbers of people to new accommodation in a period of
recession, the "chronic labour shortage related to the miserable health
conditions prevailing throughout the Colony" was instrumental in the
decision that estates should retain their responsibilities in the area of
health and housing.

Improvements in conditions on the estates continued in the 1920s but
the economic stagnation of the period highlighted the weakness of the
system. Figures which allow for a comparison between bigger, presumably
economically stronger, estates and smaller, presumably economically
weaker estates, suggest that sanitation and health provision on the
larger estates was considerably better than on smaller ones. Using a ten
year average to 1932 Giglioli calculated that on ten 'large' estates with
a population of 3,317 persons the death rate for malaria in those over
the age of five was 139 per thousand per annum, whereas for the ten
'smaller' estates it was 272 per thousand per annum. Birth rates, death
rates and infant mortality rates varied similarly as can be seen:
TABLE 4(iv)

Average Birth, Death and Infant Mortality Rates for 'Large' and 'Small' Estates 1922-1932

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Crude Birth Rate</th>
<th>Crude Death Rate</th>
<th>Infant Mortality per 1,000 births</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Colony</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 larger estates</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 smaller estates</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The larger companies like Davsons, which was by 1932 employing its own medical officer, were able to mount health campaigns similar to those of the early 1920s. They still, however, concentrated on specific diseases which were thought to relate to labour production levels and justified campaigns with economic rationales. The hookworm campaign, for example, reduced the rate of infestation drastically: from 73.4% of the Davson estate's residents being affected in December of 1933, to a 6.2% rate in April of 1934. The worth of the campaign was demonstrated by the savings made on the medical bill for the estates which it effected: on one estate, Blairmont, for which detailed data were kept, it was shown that, whilst the initial stages of the campaign were costly, by the third year of its operation, annual expenditure on drugs and medical supplies was much reduced.117

Whilst the level of provision of sanitary and medical facilities on the estates could be expected to vary according to the ability and desire of management to so provide, the public health ordinances should have
secured at least a minimal level of sanitation on them. There is evidence, however, that on some estates conditions that fell far below that allowed by law were allowed to continue by an insufficient or inefficient inspectorate. C.P. Andrews, well known for his association with Ghandi, and champion of the right of Indians throughout the Empire, visited Guyana in 1928. He was very familiar with estate conditions elsewhere, having visited Fiji and Natal amongst other places. One outstanding feature of his descriptions of his visit is the extent to which conditions on estates depended on management, and the high level of variation found between estates. He also noted his incredulity that sanitary inspectors could sanction some of the housing conditions he saw and questioned government's inactivity in pressing for improved standards. He also pointed to the difficulties which arose when estates were controlled by absentee directorates as it was "not easy for an absentee landlord to appreciate practically and instinctively the economic results which sanitary and housing improvements might produce." His view of the hospitals was generally favourable, considering them to compare well with establishments elsewhere but his condemnation of sanitary conditions especially with regard to housing, was outright:

"I have hardly ever seen housing conditions for the labourers on estates belonging to companies working under modern industrial conditions so bad as these old, insanitary "ranges"".(120)

It is worth quoting in full his description of one estate on the West Bank Demerara in order to present a clear picture of what poor conditions could be like:

"The people were in a ragged condition and they looked unhealthy. The ground was very low and the monsoon conditions had already set in which turned much of the low-lying land into a bog. The labourers' quarters, called "ranges", where the people lived, appeared to me to be worse than anything I had seen in Fiji or Natal. The houses looked very insanitary and filth was in evidence on every side."(121)
Official recognition of the low standards on many estates is implicit in a statement made by the Governor in 1928 to the effect that estates had been unable to secure labour from the West Indian islands because of "the bad reputation in the islands of housing and health conditions in the lowlying alluvial belt where the sugar estates are situated." Nevertheless, the overall situation marked an improvement over that obtaining at the beginning of the century. The end of indenture produced no radical departures in estate medical policy. Estates continued to provide services for resident labour, although no longer legally obliged to do so. Standards varied considerably between estates but generally the estate sector compared favourably with town and village.

"Population or Bankruptcy" - Health Care in Village and Town

There were also developments producing a greater concern for the conservation of population off the estates. The 1911 census revealed the crucial role immigrants had played in maintaining populations levels. The Governor commented:

"the fact which stands out most vividly from this report is the absolute necessity of East Indian Immigration to British Guiana. Without such emigration the population would have dropped by 9.8% in the last twenty years. With it the increase has been 6.36%" (123)

To the pro-sugar lobby the low rate of natural increase argued for the continuation of immigration. To those interested in other kinds of development in the interior or in other, industrial projects it indicated also the necessity of preserving existing population and an enhancement of the natural population growth. Merchants and businessmen were concerned to keep up population levels to balance taxes and provide markets.
An indication of this new concern is indicated by the support given to the Baby Saving League. This was founded and patronised by Lady Egerton, the Governor's wife, in Georgetown in 1914 and extended to New Amsterdam later in the same year. By the end of 1917 there were eleven branches and eighteen clinics giving assistance to mothers and babies up to two years of age and providing trained midwives. In addition the League paid for one of the four lady Health Visitors for Georgetown working under the Medical Officer of Health. The League operated on a quasi-voluntary basis with most of its funding provided by central government. 126

The work of the Baby Saving League was considered "a major factor in the decrease in infant mortality," from the early twenties and did produce a much reduced rate of infant and maternal mortality in the cases it dealt with. 127 The success of the League and the ready support obtained from the Combined Court was assured by the sponsorship of the Governor's wife but the speech given by the Surgeon General at the opening of the New Amsterdam Branch is representative of a new attitude towards population preservation that was developing:

"....if you are diminishing every year the number of people you clothe and feed, well, that means diminished prosperity and spells, in my opinion, bankruptcy."(128)

In similar vein, the Governor stated that in view of the cost of indentured labour and the small population that made such augmentation necessary the saving of infant lives was of considerable importance if looked at from the "merely monetary point of view!" 129

The legislation aimed at the control of malaria, typhoid, tuberculosis and hookworm provided a legal framework for the general improvement of sanitation in the colony. The appointment of a Medical
Officer of Health in Georgetown in 1911, as recommended by the Mortality Commission, followed by the creation of a Public Health Department (albeit initially without an establishment) in the following year provided the machinery for advance. In addition, Ord. 40 of 1918 made "compulsory the supply of water to properties in the city of Georgetown." No real improvements in the city and villages were evident until the 1920's, however, when the cessation of indenture made the population problem more acute and the government espoused the colonisation project. Public health became a two-fold issue: firstly that of preserving the present population in the face of labour shortages and secondly that of promoting Guyana as a country able to guarantee colonists a healthy environment and investors an adequate supply of labour.

A Combined Court Memorandum presented to the Governor in 1919 proposed health measures as essential to the conservation of the labour supply. It also related improved water supplies and sanitation to the likely success of efforts being undertaken to secure more immigrants suggesting that:

"It would...be sheer folly, indeed it would be immoral, to take steps to introduce immigration in large numbers into British Guiana without at the same time taking the steps necessary to keep them alive and in good health."(130)

The official view was similar, stressing the role of improvements in attracting colonists. The Secretary to the Governor stated that "Improved sanitation is the paramount need," and also that "Colonisation and improved sanitation must go hand in hand."(131)

In 1924 a plan was produced for the improvement of water supplies in rural areas: small villages (population below 300) were to be provided with storage tanks, medium villages (population 300-800) were to have purifying plants to treat bush water; large villages (population over 800) were to have one or more artesian wells sunk.(132) There were already eighteen wells
provided by the state but these had not been functioning well because of blockage with sand.133 The 1924 plan proposed sixty six further artesian wells, four purifying plants and four tanks. The plan for artesian wells proceeded slowly until taken up as projects developed with loans from the Imperial Treasury in the 1940s.134

In Georgetown an ordinance (No.40 1918) was passed to make compulsory the supply of water to houses and tenement yards. The sewage system was improved by the installation of a "sewage disposal plant on the septic tank principle to replace the old, costly and insanitary pail system".135 In the twenties a Georgetown Improvement Scheme was launched, to be mainly concerned with drainage and sewage disposal. Parts of the system were put into effect in 1929 following a malaria epidemic in the previous year, and the whole work was completed in 1930 at a final cost of $5,000,000.136 The initiative for the scheme came from the administration which was concerned with colonisation prospects. The Governor remarked in 1928 that whilst the cost of improving standards in the coastal area had proved heavy both for the state and the estates yet he felt the work had to go on for "the improvements made in the last seven years must be continued if immigration is to be renewed on the scale required."137 The plan won support from the municipality whose citizens' interest in sanitary improvements had been stirred by the recent epidemic. It was funded in the first instance by a loan from state revenues, 50% of which was to be repaid from municipal rates. The landed interest in the city acted true to form after the project was completed, however. They lobbied, unsuccessfully, as the Georgetown Property Owners Association, to have the project adopted as a 'Colonial Question' and so be paid for mainly by the State.138 The Improvement Scheme had an immediate effect on the health of the city dwellers; the death rate in the city fell as the scheme progressed:
"Parts of the system were put into operation in 1929, and the whole of the works were completed in 1930. In 1926 the death rate in the city was 28.0 per thousand; in the three following years it was 24.5, 27.9 and 24.5 respectively; in 1930 it was 22.3 and in 1931 it dropped to 18.5." (139)

A further development of consequence in this period was the transference, in 1934, of powers for the regulation of public health from the Local Government Board to a newly created Central Board of Health. Hitherto public health was represented on the Local Government Board only by the Government Medical Officer of Health who sat as an ex-officio member. Under the new regime public health was accepted unequivocally as a state function although Urban, Village and Country Districts remained the relevant authorities for the administration of local public health.

The success of these measures in city, village and estate can be gauged from the decrease in child mortality and death rates for the whole colony from the 1920s. (See Table 4(v)). The whole period from 1920 to 1940 was, as will be shown in the next chapter, one of economic stagnation, hence it is reasonable to argue that improvements in public health rather than in consumption patterns account for these developments in population trends. Although medical and sanitary provision on the estates varied and was in the remaining rural and urban areas limited both in coverage and scope, the population data suggest that the action taken against specific diseases and the improvements in water supply and sanitation together produced greater natural increase than hitherto in the history of the colony.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The period 1890-1930 saw a growth in interest in colonial development on several fronts: locally, the business class, and at times the administration, favoured measures which would increase business
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Birth</th>
<th>Death</th>
<th>Infant Mortality (per 1,000 births)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911 - 15</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916 - 20</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>33.1*</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921 - 25</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926 - 30</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931 - 35</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Report of the Surgeon General 1936, Government Printery Georgetown, p.32 (infant mortality) and Mandle, J., op.cit. Table 23 p.81

* This figure reflects the effect of the influenza pandemic in 1917-18.

Note: The 1937 figures for Guyana were B.R. 35 per 1000 D.R. 21.9 per 1000 Infant Mortality 121 per 1000. In England and Wales they were B.R. 14.9 D.R. 12.4 Infant Mortality 58.
potential and attract foreign capital; imperial policy also moved towards a more developmentalist position generally, although this did not necessarily result in support for specific development projects or indeed development in a particular colony.

The climate produced had effects on both land settlement and health policy in that both were geared towards attracting migrant labour and foreign investment. Estate managements were affected both by directives prompted by Colonial Office interest in labour productivity and, in the post-indenture period, by their concern to attract labour in a situation where labour deficits could occur.

Policy in land settlement and health remained essentially *ad hoc* and also quite insulated from mass involvement or inputs. But whilst land settlement policy had only a slight impact on land tenure and the viability of the peasantry, health policy both on the estates and elsewhere, limited though it was, did produce a real improvement in health.
Notes for Chapter Four

1. A major reason for government's purchase of abandoned estates is to be found in the system of drainage necessary on the coastlands. Failure to upkeep one section could lead to problems in other, cultivated sections.


6. C.O. 111/528 (377) Ashmore to Chamberlain, 23rd October 1901. The Fund was produced by a tax on acreage under cane introduced in 1891 (Ord.18) to help planters finance the introduction of immigrants. The tax was paid by all planters whether or not they took indentured labour.


8. C.O. 111/528 Ashmore to Chamberlain, 23rd October 1901.


10. C.O. 111/502 Combined Court Proceedings, 3rd March 1898. The planters were to pay half the cost in the case of men, and two-thirds in the case of women.


12. ibid


18. In 1902, for example, an Imperial Grant - in-Aid of $331,200 was granted to the sugar industry, C.O. 111/533. Enclosure 29th July 1902.

20. Ibid.


24. As will be seen it was, however, originally discussed in connection with schemes for increasing estate labour supply.


31. Ibid.

32. C.O. 111/679 (65062) Governor to Secretary of State.

33. Ibid.

34. Governor's Memorandum on the Colonisation of British Guiana, 20th October, 1928.

35. C.O. 111/607 Governor to Secretary of State, 11th October, 1930.


38. Daily Chronicle, July 2nd, 1926. The Press also supported the settlement of local people. Daily Chronicle, November 2nd, October 18th, 1926.


40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Office of the Acting Governor to Secretary of State. Telegram 10th August 1934, Guyanese Archives, No. 1888/34, Sub-file 1. It is of interest that this area had for many years been regarded as suitable for white settlement. In 1908 E. Davson described the Rupununi as
"white man's country" and pondered the difficulty there would be in attracting white labour there in the future. See Davson, E.R. "British Guiana and its Development", Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute, Vol. 39, 1907/1908.

44. Ibid.


46. Ibid. Telegram 14th August, 1934, also C.O. 884/7 Papers Relating to a Proposal that Certain Assyrians Resident in Iraq should be settled in British Guiana 1934/5.

47. Ibid. Telegram 21st September 1934.


49. C.O. 114/209 Address of the Elected Members to Governor Denham, December 1930.


52. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into General and Infantile Mortality, op.cit., p.6. Elsewhere it was noted that the establishment of latrines had reduced hookworm, contributing to the decreased morbidity.


54. Ibid, p.4.


57. Ibid.


60. Tinker, H., op.cit. p.198.

61. C.O. 111/544 (64) Hodgson to Lyttleton, 13th March 1905.


63. Ibid.

64. C.O. 111/560 (56) Hodgson to Elgin, 4th March 1908.
65. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
70. Daily Argosy, March 26th, 1914.
71. C.O. 111/565 (24) Hodgson to Crewe, 5th February 1909. For example, A Mr. Vinton of the U.S.A. was reported to have gold, rice and sisal interests in Guyana already and to have had applied for 20,000 further acres in the Abary region. Mr. Vinton also claimed to have 'half a dozen men of large capital' interested in visiting Guyana with a view to investment.
73. Daily Argosy, March 26th, 1914.
78. See Boyce, R., op.cit. also Ozzard, A.T. (Dr.), 'Some of the Preventable Diseases of British Guiana and what we can do to prevent them'. Timehri, Vol. II (New Series), 1911, pp.136-148.
81. Daily Argosy, January 23rd
82. This report is Boyce, R. op.cit. Whilst Boyce was in Barbados he was requested by the Governors of the Windward Islands, Trinidad and British Guiana to visit and report on their colonies.
83. C.O. 884/12 West Indian No. 195 op.cit. Secretary of State to the Governors, 8th October, 1912.


85. Daily Argosy, February 27th, 1907.

86. Information cards on T.B. and also malaria, hookworm and baby feeding were distributed. See Boyce, R. op.cit.


88. Daily Argosy, January 5th, 1912.

89. Daily Argosy, January 5th, 1912.

90. Daily Argosy, January 23rd, 1912.


92. Ozzard, T. op.cit.


94. Ozzard, T. op.cit.


96. A columnist of the Daily Chronicle noted caustically in 1928 that the Surgeon General had previously not seen the need for village dispensers but that now he did there was no money to provide them. Daily Chronicle, March 18th, 1928.


100. C.O. 111/495 (208) Surgeon General's comment on Dr. Rohlehr's petition to the Secretary of State, 1895.

101. Governor to Secretary of State (Confidential) 11th March, 1914.

102. Ibid.

103. C.O. 111/606 Clementi to Secretary of State (Confidential), 15th July, 1916. The Colonial Office commented 'I am afraid B.G. will have to submit to the inevitable and appoint half-caste and even coloured doctors' not because of enlightened racial attitudes but because 'we can certainly not hope to secure European doctors for B.G. now'.


105. Ibid.


Ibid.


Combined Court Paper 21, 1919. Conditions in the Colony During the European War.


Ibid

Giglioli, G. 'Medical Services of the Sugar Estates of British Guiana', Timehri, 35, October 1956, pp.7-31.

C.O. 111/617 (216) Governor to Secretary of State, June 1918. The B.G.S.P.A. and the Immigrant Agent General considered that there was more work available than labour to do it and that labourers were working four days instead of five per week, presumably devoting the other day to work on their own plots.

Giglioli, G. 'Medical Services of the Sugar Estates of British Guiana', op.cit., p.9.


Ibid.


Governor's Memorandum on Colonisation, 20th October, 1928.

C.O. 111/583 (42) Cox to Harcourt, February 4th, 1912.


See various issues Daily Argosy, March 1914.


Daily Argosy, March 20th, 1914.

C.O. 114/150 Governor's speech to the Court of Policy, February 16th, 1914.
130. Combined Court Paper 21, 1919. Conditions in the Colony During the European War.


134. By 1951 there were 158 artesian wells "thus providing practically every established community in the coastal area with an ample and wholesome water supply". C.O. 114/257 Leg. Co. Paper 3, 1951.


136. C.O. 884/14 Correspondence January 1933 - January 1934 on the Georgetown Improvement Schemes, No. 1, Governor to Secretary of State.

137. Governor's Memorandum on the Colonisation of British Guiana, 20th October, 1928.

138. C.O. 884/14 Correspondence on the Georgetown Improvement Schemes, op.cit.

139. C.O. 884/14 Correspondence, Georgetown Improvement Schemes, Governor to Secretary of State, January 1933 - January 1934, No. 1, p.1.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE TRANSITIONAL YEARS

Between 1928 and 1940 there were several developments a consideration of which is necessary to the understanding and analysis of important new policy directions taken in the 1940s. The period is termed transitional because in it began trends which would emerge more fully in the forties: firstly, a pattern of under-employment of labour in the sugar industry developed; secondly, the old precepts guiding imperial involvement in colonial development began to be eroded with the introduction of the first Colonial Development Act; thirdly, the latter part of the period saw a rapid development in the trade union movement. These developments occurred against a background of economic and constitutional stagnation which is taken as the context for the discussion.

The Effects of the Depression

The world economic recession of the late twenties and early thirties had important effects on the local economy. The prices for all the country's main exports continued to fall, with immediate effect on wages. Plantation Anna Regina stopped planting in 1928, Marionville in 1929. The factories on both estates were dismantled. Other estates, Cove and John, and Ogle, were reported not to be planting and were expected to wind up. Actual unemployment amongst estate workers was kept down by the estates' policy of reducing the amount of work available to each worker whilst maintaining the number of persons employed. The rationale was that labour lost during the crisis might be permanently absorbed into
other employment, most probably the rice industry, which would result in a shortage of labour when demand increased. The Governor remarked:

"The estates realise the urgent importance of keeping the labour together as far as possible and are, therefore, employing as many labourers as they can, though generally reducing wages all round." (3)

Figures relating to East Indian labourers for the estates submitting returns to the administration for the period 1928-1930 give evidence of the trend (see Table 5(i)).

The general impression given is that whilst the number of labourers employed changed slightly, the wages paid were considerably reduced. This can be seen in Table 5(i). In addition, a contemporary estimate based on the same data as that from which the Table has been drawn, concluded that whilst the percentage reduction of labourers employed in 1930 January to June as compared to the same period in 1929 was 0.7, the reduction in wages was of the order of 3.5 per cent. In the period July to September 1930, the reduction compared to the corresponding period in 1929 was 4.8 per cent in labour as against 17.8 per cent in wages paid. 4

The Immigrant General reported in 1931 that any decrease in persons employed occurred amongst the non-resident population, so that as far as East Indian resident labour was concerned a fair level of employment was maintained despite the depression and the uncertainty of the sugar market. 5 That the proprietors wished to keep labour attached to the estates as provision against better days is borne out by their willingness to maintain hospital facilities although no longer legally required to do so, so that even while the crisis was "inducing many estates to represent their inability to continue the maintenance of their hospital and medical services ....though they generally recognise(d) that to seek relief from these charges might seriously prejudice their position with their labour." (6)
# TABLE 5(i)

**Average Number of East Indian Labourers Employed Weekly by Sugar Estates and Wages Paid, 1928-1930**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Estates</th>
<th>Average No. Employed Weekly</th>
<th>Total Paid in Wages</th>
<th>Average Weekly Wage per Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21,613</td>
<td>2,253,571</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20,760</td>
<td>1,978,480</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930 Jan-June</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21,446</td>
<td>977,429</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930 Jul-Sep.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19,010</td>
<td>356,392</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from CO884/13 West Indian 218 Confidential Correspondence relating to the West India Sugar Situation, Enclosure to Item 74.

**Note:** The aggregate figures for 1930 are not strictly comparable to those for 1928, 1929 as only 31 estates submitted data as compared to 32 and the months Oct - Dec are not included.
It was also recognised that if unemployment amongst East Indians became very high it might lead to large numbers emigrating and being lost to the estates altogether. This fear was fostered by the fact that many immigrants had an entitlement to government-assisted passage to India. It was estimated in December 1933 that of a total East Indian population of 135,114, no less than 18,310 persons were so entitled. Since this number represented a cost of 15,014 full passages, neither the administration nor the taxpayers wished this burden to be added to the state's financial obligations. The result of the estates' policy was not, then, serious unemployment amongst estate workers, but rather drastically increased under-employment.

The reduction in estate wages was only made supportable by a change in estate policy with regard to allowing labourers to cultivate other crops - provisions and rice mainly - on estate lands let for that purpose. Previously proprietors had rented out lands more selectively, but now it was felt, that in order to keep labour near the sugar fields, opportunities to augment their wages had to be given. The Governor remarked:

"I am glad to report that the East Indians are in every way showing themselves ready to take up more land for food provisions, and with the co-operation of the estates, which was at one time lacking, the back lands are now being put under cultivation. The estates have realised they have to afford opportunities for their labour to augment their resources."(9)

Government anxiety about unemployment lay elsewhere. Gold and diamond mining had also been hit by the recession and it was estimated that by February of 1931, nearly 1,000 people had left the diamond fields and by May, 1,659. The irregular nature of this work made accurate figures impossible, but a rough indicator of the fall in employment in gold and diamonds is given by the numbers of persons passing annually through Bartica, the village nearest the mineral fields through which
entry to them was made: in the year ending February 1928 the number was 20,083; at the year ending February 1929 it was reduced to 16,118 and by February 1930 it had fallen further to 12,627.\textsuperscript{11} The unemployed diamond workers were seen as a particular threat, partly as they were nearly all Africans and were not likely to find other sources of employment and partly because "they represent a body of men who are a positive source of trouble and discontent unless they are kept employed"\textsuperscript{12} presumably due to the spirit of independence fostered by their job, but more importantly because they tended to gravitate to Georgetown where there was a "large loafering population",\textsuperscript{13} and were considered likely to contribute to the groundswell of discontent. The British Guiana Labour Union and the British Guiana Workers' League were at this time organising protest marches and demonstrations and generally mounting agitation to secure action from the Government to relieve the unemployment situation.\textsuperscript{14} The situation was seen as particularly dangerous as in addition to the disquiet and demonstrations in Georgetown, the estate population was considered to be "inflamed generally."\textsuperscript{15} Also, there was a new dimension to the unemployment of this period in the large number of young people without paid employment.\textsuperscript{16}

The state was unable to deal with the crisis by an increase in welfare spending since its sources of revenue were limited and all dependent, directly or indirectly, on export prices. The fall in duties received from the export of sugar meant a loss of government revenues and a consequent cut back in public works. The completion of the sewage works programme in Georgetown threw a further two hundred out of employment. High urban unemployment and a reduction in wages on the sugar estates placed a strain on the commercial sector. The social services suffered also. The grant for education for 1928-30 was cut resulting in the laying off of 400 teachers and the closing of twenty six
Outdoor relief payments were reduced from 19.34 cents per diem per caput in 1929 to 16.81 cents in 1930. A Committee was set up to consider means of cutting back further on Poor Law commitments to produce a saving of $20,000 in 1930 over the 1929 estimates. This Committee, though recognising the distress caused by current conditions nevertheless recommended a further reduction in doles of 12% in Demerara and 10% in Berbice.

The state had been faced with the problem of controlling the population whilst in the grip of severe economic depression before, and the dependence of the economy on sugar had always meant that a crisis in sugar reverberated throughout society so the situation was not a new one. What was considered different was the attitude of labour. As the Commissioner of Lands and Mines remarked in 1933:

'The outlook and attitude of labour had changed very much in this Colony in recent years and the writing was on the wall for everyone to see'.(20)

The reaction of the British Government to the threat of civil disturbance was fairly swift. Under a bombardment of memoranda and telegrams from the region's governors, the Secretary of State realised the seriousness of the situation for the future of British interests in the area. He wrote:

'...unemployment is now there, and in a negro population without any Poor Law it is a very short step to firing the canes and looting the stores. We must let the Governors start their Relief Works.'(21)

With the local governments in the West Indies virtually bankrupt, it became essential for the imperial government to provide funds for relief or risk total breakdown. It was decided to give free grants rather than loans as it was considered that the West Indian colonies were so deeply
in debt that this was the only feasible course. £125,000 were allotted to Guyana in toto, with £35,000 of this available to be spent in 1930. Of the total, £40,000 could be spent on the improvement of conditions on sugar estates giving in effect a large subsidy to the sugar industry. In all, during the period from 1930 to 1939, £264,493 was given from imperial funds in the form of grants and £549,500 as loans. This amount was received as aid in meeting usual budgetary commitments but included in addition funds for unemployment relief (1930-1933) and on a very limited scale, resources development. (1935) (See Table 5(ii)).

The measures adopted for the relief of unemployment were conservative and small scale and could have no real impact on the situation. However, they included providing work for as many as possible on public works, mainly roads, on three day shifts at fifty cents a day and providing passage to the gold and diamond fields. A government Labour Bureau was set up to assist in the finding of work. Feeding schemes were started; one in 1933 gave tickets for a daily meal to the unemployed to be tendered originally at a soup kitchen then later at a food centre at the Alms House. The Food Centre was closed in June 1933 but re-opened as a Breakfast Centre "consequent upon the common outcry of the unemployed for assistance arising out of continued economic and financial depression and having regard to all the pressing circumstances." Tickets were given to those registered at the Labour Bureau. From 1936 applicants were subject to a means test.

The parsimonious approach adopted was a far cry from that called for by the Trade Unions. In 1931 the British Guiana Labour Union was pressing for the giving of financial relief to the unemployed. There was however, no deviation from the principle of refusing outdoor relief to the able-bodied.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>£ Grant</th>
<th>£ Loan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From C.D. Funds</td>
<td>103,964</td>
<td>193,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Imperial Funds*</td>
<td>264,493</td>
<td>549,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* includes 1930-1933 unemployment relief and 1935 funding for resource development.

Source: Adapted from West India Royal Commission Report, 1945, Cmd.6607, op.cit. p.73
The general economic climate began to improve slightly from 1934, with exports showing an increase from a value of $10.5 million in 1935 to just under 15 million in 1940.\(^{29}\) This did not however signal any general improvement in the condition of the workers. The sugar industry, by this time composed mainly of the large concerns with Bookers pre-eminent, had introduced technologies which allowed for greater yield per acre.\(^{30}\) In 1937 an International Sugar Agreement, limiting the sugar production of signatory nations, was concluded. These factors together put a premium on raising yield and cutting costs. As will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7, the sugar producers of Guyana began to tend towards the achievement of this aim through a reduction in the work force through mechanisation. By 1938 it was "evident that the supply of labour in the sugar industry exceeded the demands" and that "it was not possible for all employers to provide the workers with an adequate amount of work....."; further, it was "evident also that owing to the limitation of production imposed by the International Sugar Agreement and the natural increase in population, under employment would increase....."\(^{31}\)

The drop in the mortality rate which had begun in the twenties was beginning to have an effect on the labour supply. The population which had risen by only 1,650 between 1911 and 1921 had increased by 13,242 between 1921 and 1931, with the increase of both decades contributing to a growth in the amount of labour available in the 1930s if not yet producing a pronounced additional pressure against employment availability. (See Table 5(iii)).

Low earnings and irregular employment led to a spate of disturbances on the sugar estates with riots on several of them in 1935. Conditions in the villages were also severely affected by the recession. Because of the interdependence between many of the villages and the sugar estates,
### TABLE 5 (iii)

**POPULATION INCREASE (1891-1911) - (1931-1941)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>10 year Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>278,328</td>
<td>+ 17,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>296,041</td>
<td>+ 1,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>297,691</td>
<td>+ 13,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>310,933</td>
<td>+ 43,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>354,219</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from figures in Nath, D. op.cit. Table 4a p.230-231
the non-estate rural population was also adversely affected by the low sugar wages. In addition, the fortunes of rice had also sunk with export earnings reaching an all time low in 1933. The Immigrant Agent General noted that:

"With regard to the conditions of East Indians of the labouring class employed elsewhere than on the sugar estates, these have naturally been very adversely affected by the low price obtaining for rice." (33)

The area under peasant cash crops appears to have declined between 1930 and 1940, indicating poor prices for produce. In 1930 peasant proprietors in Canals Polder had 2,000 notices for rates served on them and they attributed their inability to pay to the poor market for their crops. Further, the International Sugar Agreement damaged peasant cane farmers as they were forced by the estates to which they sold their canes to limit their acreage to that already under cultivation at the 1st June, 1937.

Conditions in the villages of Essequibo County were even more desperate. The sugar estates of the area had been reduced from eight at the beginning of the century to one in 1935. This last one, Hampton Court, was closed by 1937 at which time the District Commissioner for the area attributed the increase in pauperism in the area to the fact that "since the closing down of the sugar estates there has been little or no work for the population," which had lead to steadily worsening conditions. A public works programme for flood relief and prevention financed from Grants-in-Aid relieved the situation in some villages. The overall situation in the villages, however, remained unchanged.

The First Colonial Development Act

In addition to sums derived from the Grants and Loans-in-Aid, the
resources of the state were bolstered further throughout the thirties by a total of £103,964 in grants and £193,674 in loans from a Colonial Development Fund. This Fund was created by a Colonial Development Act of 1929. Under the terms of the Act, £1 million per annum was to be made available to colonial governments in the form of grants or loans. The Act was claimed by its proponents to have had a dual object - "the development of the colonies and the promotion of trade in or with the United Kingdom." The general colonial policy was to insist upon stringent local budgeting whilst propping up administrations financially and applying funds to limited development programmes, particularly those concerned with infrastructure. Over all the colonies the main expenditure of Colonial Development Funds was on Internal Transport and Communication, to which 30% of the total went.

Although the unemployment problem in Britain rather than the stimulation of colonial economies was the main reason given for the Act, it was welcomed by all parties as "a long overdue contribution by Britain to the economic development of her colonial dependencies." However, the limits in the amount made available and the narrow terms under which money could be disbursed made it probable that neither of these aims could be met. It was more significant in that in principle at least it was aimed at development rather than the propping up of ailing industries. In the case of Guyana transfers from the British Treasury had formerly been almost exclusively to aid the sugar industry. The development potential of the Act was, however, limited as the projects for which funds could be applied for were restricted to those a government could expect to finance running costs out of normal revenues. Hence there was no real 'departure from the old principle that a colony should have only those services which it can afford to maintain out of
Funds were used mainly for drainage and irrigation projects, the improvement of sugar estate housing and the improvement of rural water supplies. The guiding principle for development announced by the Governor was that "care must be taken to see that the measures devised for industrial expansion do not prejudice or injure established industries such as sugar and rice." In sending his proposals for projects to the Secretary of State he stressed that it was not "intended to undertake the responsibilities of the Estates .....not to find an outlet for surplus estate labour except insofar as during the present season the number of unemployed in the neighbourhood of estates is likely to be very considerable". The sum of £100,000 asked for under the head 'Improvements in Labour and Other Conditions on Sugar Estates' was however, the largest. Spending under the following heads was envisaged: construction of light railways, reclamation of land, drainage improvements and irrigation improvements. The sugar estates benefitted substantially from funds allocated to them and from spin off from drainage and irrigation schemes for other agricultural crops. They also received relief when the export tax on sugar was suspended in September 1930. The actual effect of the application of Colonial Development Funds, new principles of colonial policy notwithstanding, was more to assist in the modernisation of the estates than the country as a whole.

The process of the determination of social policy remained much the same as it had in the 1920's. The manner of the Colonial Development Act's implementation in Guyana demonstrates the relative importance of different groups in directing policy. Requests for funds were to be submitted by Governors to the Colonial Office. In drawing up a development plan the Governor of Guyana consulted with the British Guiana
Sugar Producers' Association and the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce. He did not put proposals before the Legislative Council, and the Elective members were not consulted at all.

The Governor's independence of the views of the Electives was a result of constitutional changes brought about in 1928 which had reduced the power of Elective representatives in the legislature. The Court of Policy was abolished in 1928 and a new Legislative Council replaced it. This was composed of the Governor (with casting vote only), the Colonial Secretary and Attorney General as ex-officio members, eight nominated officials, five nominated unofficials and fourteen elected officials. In this assembly, the official component, although now in the minority, continued to control policy because of the allegiance given to it by the nominated unofficials. These were men chosen by the administration for their "reliability"; for example, the nominated unofficials in the 1928 Legislature were all men connected with big business and/or sugar.

The abolition of the Court of Policy did, in effect, remove the Electives' power to, as a body, limit state expenditure, a power they had held since the constitutional reform of 1891. Although, as has been shown, the Electives rarely set themselves up as a united opposition to the Officials, they nevertheless had constitutionally held a position where, through their representation in the Court of Policy, they could upset the administration by refusing to vote funds for the various tasks of state if they so desired. In actuality, the constitutional change did not much alter the position. The Electives continued to play their accustomed role in relation to the administration, neither bemoaning their loss of fiscal power unduly nor exercising their new majority against the officials. As Raymond Smith has described them, they were:

"educated gentlemen for the most part, identifying themselves with the existing English rulers, and arguing their fitness to
govern on the grounds they constituted a Europanised elite."(50)

The causes of the change in the Constitution are complex and full discussion of them is beyond the scope of this work. Of great importance, however, was the desire of the officials, the sugar interest and those interested in investment in Guyana, to have the financial control of the colony entirely in the hands of the administration unimpeded by the Electives. In speaking at the Royal Colonial Institute, London in 1927, Governor Rodway stated with regard to constitutional changes and in relation to the existing situation:

"There is ....an element of insecurity which cannot fail to serve as a deterrent to prospective investors...."(52)

Similarly, in addressing the West India Committee, members of a British Parliamentary Commission appointed in 1926 by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to investigate the constitutional question reported that whilst there were plenty of potential British investors interested in Guyana, they would need to be:

"satisfied with the financial position of the Colony and that the real essential government of the Colony is in the hands of the government and not in the hands of an elected majority."

The high level of unemployment in the early thirties seems to have dampened popular enthusiasm for trade union activity. However, an additional general union, the British Guiana Workers League (B.G.W.L.) was created by A.A. Thorne, a former member of the legislature. Although the union was not registered until January 1931, by April of the previous year it had active branches in North Essequibo, Batchelors Adventure, Beteverwating, Anne's Grove, Grove and Mahaica, all predominantly African areas, as well as Georgetown. At this juncture Thorne was adopting a radical anti-sugar position unlikely to find favour with either the official or the unofficial sections of the legislative. At
one of the B.G.W.L. meetings, for example, he gave an address in which he asked:

"...when the sugar planters were making their piles in the colony, did the people benefit in any way? When sugar magnates prospered, did the people prosper?" (55)

The significance of rhetoric of this kind was increased as the B.G.W.L. moved into the sugar belt, but the climate of the early 1930s was not conducive to the strengthening of trade union organisation. Neither the B.G.W.L. nor the British Guiana Labour Union (B.G.L.U.) was powerful enough to do more than mount limited campaigns and fulfil a lobbying role. They did, however, provide the base from which a radical critique of the plantation economy and the society it created emerged in later years. Thorne's rhetoric has been noted. In addition the B.G.L.U. lobbied, from the early thirties, for universal suffrage and also began to ally itself with socialism. The B.G.L.U. also petitioned the Secretary of State for the introduction of a compulsory old age pension, a scheme it had advocated from its earliest days.

The late thirties, however, brought a burst of trade union activity. In the period 1937-1938 seven unions were formed. The most important of these was the Manpower Citizens Association (M.P.C.A.) which organised sugar workers. This organisation was formed at a time when dissatisfaction on the sugar estates was high. The M.P.C.A. was important for trade unionism firstly because of the large membership it attracted. Between 1938 and 1943 its membership was around 20,000 making it 'a giant among pygmies'. Secondly, the size of the group of workers it represented and the importance of their industry to the colony's whole economy made the union's potential power much greater than that of other unions. In addition the similarity of conditions of life and work
amongst estate workers was perhaps more likely to produce class consciousness amongst this group than any other. Finally, the M.P.C.A. was important because it began to develop a position which was not only critical of conditions on estates but challenged the structure of society itself.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The world recession had a great impact on the economy of Guyana particularly through its effects on the price of exported commodities. There were immediate repercussions in relation to state funded welfare provisions with cut-backs throughout the social sector.

The slight recovery in the second half of the decade was insufficient to produce any significant improvement in the condition of the masses. Nor could the Colonial Development Act, limited as it was both in terms of the finance it made available and the conditions under which grants and loans were made, provide sufficient impetus towards either economic development or social amelioration. The condition of the workers as a whole remained unchanged.

The effects of stagnation in the economy began to be exacerbated by an increased population, a product, largely, of developments in public health, especially post-1920. In addition, constitutional changes minimised the effectiveness of the elected section of the legislature which, although it had never formed an entirely coherent or popular political force, had hitherto represented at least a possible avenue of influence for some sections of the local population in relation to government finance.

The result of these conditions in the economy was labour unrest and increased labour organisation through trade unions.
The impact of the working class and the peasantry on the determination of policy remained minimal however, in spite of increased union activity, but the long recession, increasing population pressure and changes in the sugar industry produced spontaneous struggles through the region which, as will be seen in the next chapter, at last produced a response from the colonial state with potential for a real change in social policy.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER FIVE

1. C.O. 884/13 (32) Governor to Secretary of State. 28th July, 1930.

2. Bookers, for example, continued to recruit labourers from Barbados, securing 36 males and 30 females for service at Plantation Skeldon. Report of the Immigrant Agent General, 1930.

3. C.O. 884/13 No.74. Governor to Secretary of State 5th december, 1930.

4. Ibid.


6. Ibid.

7. C.O. 884/13 West Indian 218 (93) Governor to Secretary of State, May 4th, 1931.


9. C.O. 884/13 Governor to Secretary of State, May 4th, 1931.

10. C.O. 884/13 W.I. 218 (92) Telegram Governor to Secretary of State, 4th May, 1931.


12. C.O. 884/13 W.I. 218 (93) Governor to Secretary of State, May 4th, 1931.

13. Ibid.

14. On February 5th 1930 for example, an unemployment demonstration, several hundred strong was led by Rev. Claude Newton Smith, reputed chaplain of the British Guyana section of the Church Army of the U.S.A. in conjunction with Mr. John Griffiths of the B.G.I.U. Daily Chronicle, February 5th, 1930.

15. C.O. 111/686 Governor to Secretary of State. Telegram. August 22nd, 1930.

16. C.O. 884/13 (32) Governor to Secretary of State, July 28th 1930. Reference is made to the report of a committee which had considered the causes of unemployment and which estimated 8,000 persons were unemployed of which number half were thought to be young people.


18. C.O. 114/210. Report of the Poor Law Commissioners. 1930. It was reduced further to 15.33 cents in 1933 and 15.79 cents in 1935.

19. A saving of $14,952,99 was effected. Ibid.

20. C.O. 114/215 Legislative Council Paper No.8, 1933

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21. C.O. 111/689 (75086) Secretary of State for the Colonies to Treasury. 28th August, 1930.

22. Ibid.


25. Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1933.


27. Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1936.


31. Ibid


34. See Mandel, op.cit. p116. Table 36. Total area under coconuts, ground provisions, coffee.


37. C.O. 114/226 Quoted in the Poor Law Commissioners Report 1937.


45. C.O. 884/13 West Indian, No. 32, Gov. to Sec. of State, 28th July, 1930.


47. Daily Chronicle, January, 29th 1928.

48. A motion was passed by the Legislative Council, to send a telegram to the Secretary of State requesting that no funds for British Guiana be passed until the council had had the opportunity to express its opinion on the proposed scheme. Daily Chronicle. January, 30th, 1928.


52. West India Committee Circular. 'The Future of British Guiana'. Address to the Royal Colonial Institute, 1st December, 1927.

53. West India Committee Circular, July 14th, 1927.

54. Daily Chronicle, April, 23rd, 1930.

55. Ibid.


57. This petition is referred to in C.O. 345/26 (94344) 1932. The Colonial Office copy of which has been destroyed.


CHAPTER SIX

WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT

The effects of the economic depression were still manifest in the late thirties and led to disturbances throughout the region. In Guyana the period was characterised by frequent strikes on the sugar estates aimed against low wages, poor working conditions and insecure employment. The level of discontent can be gauged from the strike figures for 1938 which indicate that on one estate alone there were 37 strikes and this estate - Leonora - was by no means exceptional. In this chapter the response of the imperial government to these manifestations of worker disaffection is examined. The new ideological and practical approaches to colonial economic and social development is described. This is followed by an analysis of the way in which, in Guyana, the new 'development and welfare' philosophy became translated into a policy producing some 'welfare' but little development.

The Royal West India Commission

The possibility of insurrection in the Empire on the eve of war with Germany was sufficient to cause alarm in Britain. A Commission was appointed in August 1938 to investigate social and economic conditions in the West Indies, chaired by Lord Moyne. The Commissioners duly reported but their findings were not made public until the end of the war as it was considered against the public interest to issue so condemnatory a report at a time when Britain was anxious for the support of its Empire in pursuit of its war aims.

The situation was, however, urgent and seen to require immediate
action. A major finding of the Commission was that conditions in the West Indies were so poor that there was "a pressing need for large expenditure on social services and development which not even the least poor of the West Indian colonies can hope to undertake from their own resources". ²

The Report was influential in the formulation of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, 1940, which Act incorporated many of its recommendations but which covered the whole of the Empire, not only the West Indian colonies. The Act marked a final departure from the long-entrenched principle, already somewhat eroded by the Colonial Development Act of 1929, that a colony should be financially self-sufficient and have only the services it could afford. It was also indicative of an important development in colonial ideology. Lord Hailey had noted in his influential 'African Survey' that a new 'welfare' approach to colonial development was required in the re-interpretation of the old doctrine of 'trusteeship', thereby allowing for an increase in state involvement in development activities. ³

In the early forties the concepts of 'welfare' and 'development' became linked. Social development came to be seen as the basis on which and through which economic development was to be built. Finance put into welfare programmes was intended to have a 'pump-priming' effect on the economy which, it was hoped, would generate further development.

The new colonial ideology was perceived as requiring a broadening of state functions from simple concerns of law and order to ones of active intervention in the economy and the promotion of social welfare. The Governor of Guyana saw it thus:

"What has developed in these last few years is a complete re-orientation of colonial policy. The older one was that Government was mainly concerned with the elementary needs of public order and
administration of the law, the prevention of abuses and matters of that kind, coupled with a desire to promote advance by gradual stages in the direction of self-government. The idea of Government responsibility in economic development or in social services generally was at that time completely in the background. Today, parallel with developments in the United Kingdom and other advanced countries, a far more positive view of the state has come into being ... and it is now generally admitted that a primary obligation is the extension of social services and the ratio of the general standard of living. This has brought with it the admission that the state institution assume control over the organisation of industry and the use of capital or land."

Social development was to be elevated from a residual activity pursued with what local revenues could be afforded when primary state functions had been met to a major arm of colonial policy. In fact, as has been shown, the colonial state had long concerned itself with more than the maintenance of law and order. The state had continually acted to create or support conditions for the continuance of estate production based on cheap labour. In its assistance to and sanctioning of the movement of large numbers of immigrant labourers to the estates of Guyana, in its restrictive policies militating against development in areas which would result in competition for labour against the interest of the sugar lobby, in its appointment of taxes and duties which continually worked in sugar's favour, the state assumed a role, though indirect, of involvement in the economic sphere. Whilst many governors and the British administration as a whole were not in sympathy with the 'saccharine oligarchy', by the end of the nineteenth century the West India Committee and other vested interests had entrenched the principle, never seriously challenged throughout the rest of the colonial period, that Guyana could not survive without sugar.

**The 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act**

The 1940 Act, however, represented a further stage in the development of direct state intervention in the economy. Under its terms fifty million pounds were made available in the form of loans and grants
for development and welfare programmes in the colonies as a whole. This was to be expended at the rate of up to five million pounds per annum in the furtherance of any project likely to "promote the development of resources of any colony or the welfare of its people."

These terms were much wider than those of the 1929 Act and allowed for the financing of operating as well as capital charges, although they still presented many limitations. Initially funds were allocated on an annual basis and were non-accruable. Limited infrastructural development, scarcity of technical skills and war-time material shortages made it difficult for many territories to absorb the funds which were available to them. The administrative system gave responsibility for the execution of the planning function to the local level, to administrations ill-equipped and inexperienced in planning functions. T. Simey, Social Welfare Advisor to the Comptroller of Colonial Development and Welfare in the West Indies charged that:

"The machinery was unwieldy. Decisions on policy were only achieved after many interests had been consulted and those finally made were perforce based on so long a succession of compromises as to inhibit energetic executive action."(5)

Crown Colony constitutions together with limited franchises effectively removed any possibility of mass participation in the decision-making process.

The emphasis in the Caribbean as elsewhere was, initially, much more on 'welfare' than 'development'. This tendency was especially pronounced in the first five years of the Act's operation. This was in line with the analysis of West Indian problems made by the Royal Commissioners. In his assessment of development and welfare in 1945-6 the then Comptroller, Sir John McPherson, recognised the significance of the Moyne Report, as the West Indies Commission Report became known, in directing attention
and action towards welfare rather than strictly developmental projects:

"In the West Indies, moreover, though the importance of economic development was recognised, the Royal Commission's recommendations had placed special emphasis on the need for expenditure on improved social services."(6)

Whilst recognising that both rural and urban under-employment and unemployment raised difficulties, the general tenor of the Report was to lay primary blame on social and administrative factors. Insofar as the economy was considered a causative element in producing distress in West Indian society, the Report stressed redistribution as the panacea rather than enhanced production through an altered economic system.

Although the Report was in some senses remarkable - it was for example the first of the commissioned reports to cover such a wide area of concerns - it exhibited a reformist, moralist concern with the moral and ethical fabric. The church was to assist in a 'moral resurgence' upon which material betterment was seen to be mainly conditional. Considerable attention was given to the regularisation of sexual relations and the strengthening of the family unit. The emphasis was placed upon the stabilisation of the family as a weapon against poverty. After practical steps for the removing of the evils of improvidence, theft, promiscuity and inefficiency are considered the Report states:

"But in the last resort the success or failure of any programme of social reform and betterment will depend on a definite and prolonged effort on the part of West Indians to help themselves even while accepting help. The material betterment of the West Indies must be accompanied by, and is to a large extent conditional on, a moral resurgence among the people themselves. We do not believe the mere removal of the causes of poverty, uncertainty and casualisation will of itself suffice to remove the evil consequences of these evils."(8)

A predominant attitude in colonial circles at this time was "that the economic situation of the West Indies depends in the final analysis on the awakening in the mind of the worker of a willingness to do more
work." The provision of social services was to strengthen moral fibre and act as an incentive to greater efforts at work as well as to 'prime' the economic 'pump'. This perception of West Indians as, in effect, work-shy and lazy was simply in the tradition of, to use Simey's phrase,

"the old staple diet of the West Indian political warrior, Natural Indolence." (10)

The Commissioners placed their faith in the development of an independent peasantry, the foundation of which would, they felt, assist in reducing unemployment and at the same time encourage family stability and civic responsibility, for they considered that where

"the size of the holdings remains adequate the peasants form the solidest elements in West Indian society, and it is among them that the social virtues of forethought and the care of children are most commonly to be found." (11)

They concluded that the primary sector for food production in the future should be peasant agriculture thereby restating Chamberlain's policy objective from the previous century. Given the lack of available evidence to suggest that any extension of peasant agriculture was feasible in many territories, the thinking behind the Report seems to be more an expression of faith in the old 'yeoman' virtues than a rational approach to economic development.

The reliance on agriculture for the development of the West Indies was also a result of the extremely limited role allowed by the Commissioners for industrial development. They rejected the idea of any application of local government or imperial funds to industrial development except where the purpose was to improve markets for agricultural produce or to contribute to import substitution. The first Comptroller of Welfare and Development, Sir Frank Stockdale, took a similar line and in the main industrial development during this period
was specifically related to the easing of wartime shortages.

In the post-war period other factors emerged to provide further reason for the speedy development of the colonial territories. Firstly, the state of the British economy led to a need for the creation of new markets so that British products could be absorbed and the dollar crisis eased. Further, with the carving up of the world into spheres of influence between the new superpowers, the West Indian colonies became of significant international interest and although the Caribbean was clearly within the Western ambit, its strategic importance was such as to make programmes for social and economic development which would promote political security, a matter of "security as well as humanitarianism." Anticipation of the coming new political world order led to the creation in 1942 of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission, a consultative and advisory body set up by the two governments concerned, with a view to easing the path to development in the Caribbean in the light of its new global importance in relation to the war.

The Labour Party's post-war entry to government in Britain made no radical difference to colonial policy:

"During the forties the official creed advanced by both major political parties in Britain was that the colonies should be prepared for eventual self-government. There was unanimity on the concept that social and economic development was the prerequisite for the assumption of political independence."(13)

The parties differed on the extent to which public enterprise should play a role in development but Labour agreed that private enterprise was important. A bi-partisan policy evolved with spokesmen for both parties supporting the welfare approach and a continued economic and political association with Britain as its colonies assumed independence. The emergence of nationalist movements throughout the Empire gave added
urgency to development. By the time of the passing of the second Colonial Development and Welfare Act in 1945, however, the 'welfare' approach was being questioned and its limitations recognised.

In the Caribbean the limitations of the welfare approach to development had become quite evident and had been exacerbated by new factors. The increasing rate of population growth in stagnant economies meant that any effect of purely palliative welfare measures would soon be wiped out by population increases alone. Welfare measures could not be supported by any significant redistribution of wealth since national incomes were too small for such action to result in any appreciable rise in individual standards of living. Increases in government revenues raised were absorbed by price increases on imports and labour. In Guyana, for example, direct taxation rose from 12% of the national budget at the beginning of the war to 36% in 1944 but the increase in revenue produced was largely taken up by increased salary disbursements, a War Bonus introduced to supplement wages in the face of rising prices and the increase in the cost of materials and supplies. In addition, the sensitivity of the local economies to world market conditions over which local governments had no control meant that there was no guarantee that new welfare measures introduced with Colonial Development and Welfare funds could be maintained by locally generated resources when the Act was terminated if there was no independent economic growth.

By mid-decade commentators both in Guyana and the West Indies as a whole were calling for the reappraisal of development objectives and strategies. Simey noted that by 1945 the only industrial scheme of any note to be financed by Colonial Development and Welfare funds was a small cotton spinning industry in Barbados. This he saw as indicative of a mistaken reliance on agriculture which could not in his assessment
provide sufficient employment for the growing population. He also argued that welfare would have to be built on economic regeneration and development and that "lack of economic foundations makes futile any attempt to produce reliable plans for the social reconstruction of the West Indian colonies." O.A. Spencer, financial advisor to the Guyana Government, was similarly critical of welfare without economic development. He argued that 'pump-priming' welfare spending did not produce growth in economies like that of Guyana due to their sensitivity to international price factors. He proposed that the welfare-development formula be reversed:

"'Welfare' must spring from 'Development' and be conditional and consequential upon it." (17)

He warned also that without any appreciable increase in national income it was doubtful whether services could even be maintained at their existing level.

This kind of reassessment of development priorities was reflected in a directive given by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1945. He pronounced that:

"Without economic development it will be impossible for the dependencies to maintain from their own resources the improved standards which are desired for them." (18)

He indicated, further, his wish that economic development be more strongly promoted.

The reasons proffered for redirecting the emphasis from welfare to development were essentially financial. A 1945 Act, essentially a renewal of the original 1940 Act, provided for a vast increase in the monies available to all the colonies to one hundred and twenty million pounds over a ten year period, with allocations for individual
territories accruable from year to year. If the larger sums available were used exclusively for welfare projects and no substantial economic growth was realised, then the economies would not generate sufficient funds to maintain the level of welfare provision attained at the end of the period of financial assistance. Therefore it was seen as necessary that economic development be supported by increased allocations to projects specifically directed towards the raising of national incomes.

It is important to note that mid-decade the priority given to agriculture in the region and the low level of development investment in industry also came to be questioned at the Colonial Office level. Sir John McPherson, Comptroller, wrote:

"The chief asset of the West Indies is the land and plans for its more effective and balanced use, and more adequate marketing of its products must rank high in all development programmes. But responsible opinion today is much more optimistic than was the Royal Commission about the prospects of increased industrial development in the area."(19)

Industry was not to compete with metropolitan industry, however, as emphasis was to be on the processing or partial processing of the area’s raw products.

Locally, support for according more attention to industrialisation came from the West Indian Conference, an intergovernmental meeting, at its First Session of 1944 and also from the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission which endorsed the Conference's views.20 Thus, by the second half of the decade the Colonial Office position on a development plan for Guyana and the region, one which received support from other bodies, was that industry should be encouraged more strenuously and that whilst projects that contributed to the promotion of social welfare should continue to be developed, they must take second place and be built upon economic development.
Another important mid-decade corrective, introduced in the 1945 legislation, was administrative. In addition to the weaknesses in existing arrangements noted earlier in the chapter, it became clear that if the much larger sums of money made available were to be expended effectively and rapidly, a new approach to planning would be necessary. The old ad hoc and piecemeal orientation was to give way to real planning with all that implied in terms of outlining objectives, assessing overall needs and programme development. To this end local governments were required to set up relevant departments where necessary or expand on existing administrative capabilities so as to produce detailed development plans.

A third broad direction for the future, the diversification of agriculture, whilst not new, continued to be stressed by the Colonial Office and received support from the Caribbean Commission. The latter organisation recommended diversification to the participating governments and the British section accepted, noting that the proposal was already the avowed policy of the British West Indian Governments.21

Guyana - Development and Welfare?

An analysis of developments in Guyana during 1945-1953 shows that none of the policy objectives relating to agricultural diversification or industrial development was met. Welfare spending continued at a high level. Little commitment to industrial development was demonstrated. Diversification in agriculture, although developed successfully during the war period, lost government support and in Guyana agricultural development, rather than moving towards self-sufficiency in foodstuffs, was concentrated dramatically on another export cash crop, rice.

A breakdown of total annual expenditure indicates that the proportion of the budget allocated to the social services did not decline
TABLE 6(i)

Annual Expenditure on Law and Order, Social Services and Economic Development as Percentage of the Annual Budget, 1920 - 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law and Order</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8.66</td>
<td>9.42</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>8.36</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>8.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>22.54</td>
<td>22.38</td>
<td>25.34</td>
<td>26.65</td>
<td>28.54</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>27.05</td>
<td>27.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.35</td>
<td>11.37</td>
<td>10.56</td>
<td>9.93</td>
<td>9.24</td>
<td>11.69</td>
<td>10.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 6 (ii)

**Development Expenditure proposed 1947-51, Actual**

**Expenditure to the end of 1950**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expenditure Proposed 1947-51</th>
<th>Per Cent of Total</th>
<th>Recurrent per Annum $</th>
<th>Actual Expenditure to end 1950 $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capital $</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>523,705</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>174,378</td>
<td>626,402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1,849,122</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>264,800</td>
<td>1,253,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other social services</td>
<td>68,814</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>86,320</td>
<td>138,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>3,853,430</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,150,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage and Irrigation</td>
<td>5,358,786</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>5,945,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology and Mines</td>
<td>72,400</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>56,920</td>
<td>98,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Fisheries</td>
<td>1,846,306</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>76,608</td>
<td>710,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forests</td>
<td>1,143,944</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>53,930</td>
<td>210,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Planning, Urban Housing</td>
<td>3,332,844</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>36,760</td>
<td>843,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Housing, Land Settlement</td>
<td>1,549,401</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>113,680</td>
<td>1,605,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and Industrial Development</td>
<td>509,000</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>63,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Schemes</td>
<td>207,635</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>75,940</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20,315,387</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1,082,336</td>
<td>12,573,407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development Plan, failed to allocate more than a meagre sum to interior development thus failing to meet a demand expressed by elements of the local population for increased development, and hence job and investment possibilities, in the hinterland. Hopes were raised in Guyana by statements made by Mr. O. Case, Chairman of the Secondary and Minor Industries Committee which suggested that the accepted notion that the interior held no commercial value was incorrect. He referred, for example, to the "enormous quantities of raw materials" including silicia, timber, kaolin which it promised and also the hydropower potential the hinterland held. These statements were eagerly reported by sections of the press.

A Ten Year Development Plan was, however, published in 1947 without any substantial allocation to interior development. This was in large part a reflection of government's continued emphasis on coastal development, but also in expectation that the report of a Settlement Commission (Evans), to be published in November 1948, would make some recommendations with regard to interior development. The Settlement Commission had been appointed by the Secretary of State to investigate the potential of the interior of Guyana and Belize (British Honduras) for the settlement of European war refugees and surplus West Indian island populations. It adopted very wide terms of reference and considered economic prospects in the hinterland; the Governor referred to it as a "Development Commission". It recommended schemes costing between seven-and-a-half million and fifteen million pounds. This, together with the promise of the imperial government to form a Colonial Development Corporation, raised fresh hopes of interior opportunities. The Annual Report for 1948 stated:

"The original ten year plan was principally concerned with development in the coastal belt. Apart from $1,000,000 for
in the post 1945 period but actually increased, whilst the budgeted allocation to economic development including drainage and irrigation, remained fairly stable. (See Table 6(i)). The World Bank Mission reported that, in real terms between 1949 and 1953, the budget showed:

- Increase in government revenue - 26%
- Increase in social welfare expenditure - 31%
- Increase in development expenditure - 5%
- Decrease in expenditure on economic departments - 4% (22)

In terms of the development programme itself, including expenditure from Colonial Development and Welfare funds, there was, they felt,

"a tendency to devote a perhaps over-generous proportion of the Colony's financial resources to social welfare expenditures which were only indirectly productive."(23)

The planning function for the production of the colony's Ten Year Plan as required by the Colonial Office was carried out in eleven sub-committees which reported to a Main Development Committee which had the colony's Economic Advisor as chairman and unofficial and official members of the Legislative Council and representatives of business and commerce as members. Firm proposals were made for the first five years' expenditure, but the plans for the second part of the period were left vague. The expenditure proposed can be seen in Table 6(ii). A total of 26.9% of the total development allocation went to the social sector excluding education (i.e. housing, health, social services) with the largest single other area of allocation being under the heading 'drainage and irrigation'. Hence it is clear that the general view that spending on economic projects should be increased at the expense of social ones was not adopted in the actual allocation and expenditure of funds.

One other point may be usefully noted here. The Ten Year
forestry development, only $200,000 was provided for schemes in the interior. However, the Report of the Settlement Commission .....holds out hopes for considerable development in the interior."(27)

Budgetary commitment to the interior remained small, although some advances were made in forestry, and the settlement of the interior by new immigrants failed to materialise, the final judgement being that much more in the way of surveys and other preparatory works were necessary before such settlement could take place. With the end of the settlement scheme the suggestions for interior development by the Commission were shelved and the interior continued to be neglected with the concentration of population and resources on the coast was maintained. The reasons for this are probably several and include uncertainty about the true economic potential of interior projects. Most earlier assessments of the hinterland had not been encouraging. But it is probable also that the sugar lobby and other coastal interests were instrumental in producing a climate antithetical to any real change in direction. This is supported by Mr. Case's statement to the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce that fear was being expressed that interior development might detrimentally affect the sugar and rice industries, principally by attracting labour away from them.

The 1947-49 Report on Development and Welfare in the West Indies attributed at least part of the slow pace of economic development to technical difficulties. Undoubtedly local governments found it easier to build on existing welfare foundations than generate new projects. However, it is likely that at least in the case of Guyana there were other, more important, factors involved. A.P. Thorne, Economic Consultant to the Guyana Government at the time states that the Colonial Office issued a memorandum to the local government indicating that in spite of the general desire expressed in the colonies for
industrialisation, Britain's current problems in securing world markets necessitated that colonial, and especially Guyanese, industrialisation should not be encouraged.\textsuperscript{30} He also speculates that this attitude towards Guyana's development was behind the retiring of the popular and pro-industrialisation Governor Lethem and the removal of Mr. Case, the Governor's primary assistant in the promotion of secondary industries.\textsuperscript{31}

What is certain is that the allocation of five hundred thousand dollars to industrial development proposed by the Sub-Committee on Industrial Development for the setting up of a British Guyana Development Corporation was insignificant and indeed was never effected.\textsuperscript{32} The lack of enthusiasm for any realistic funding of industrial development shown by the Sub-Committee was undoubtedly a reflection of the interests of its members. Of the six, one was from the Demerara Electric Company which was jealously guarding its market by opposing the development of hydro-electric power except under its own aegis or that of another Canadian company, Demerara Bauxite, which also had representation on the Committee. A third member represented the Sugar Producers' Association and a fourth William Fogarty Ltd., a foreign-owned dry goods business.\textsuperscript{33} None of these entrenched companies appeared willing to support proposals for development which might represent competition for labour or other resources.

As the example of committee composition cited above indicates, administration under the 1945 Colonial Development and Welfare Act did not alter existing patterns of influence in policy making. Rather, after 1945, the role of private interests always consulted previously became formalised and institutionalised as representatives of those interests assumed consultative positions within the expanding bureaucracy. Formerly, policy was formulated by the Governor and his officials under the direction of the Secretary of State for the Colonies and subject to
lobbying from sectional interests, the strongest of which were the planter and mercantile groups. These groups were now co-opted into the planning process itself. Further, policy decision-making became more entrenched within the bureaucratic machinery. The tendency to deal with questions of policy as problems in administration was strengthened. The Colonial Development and Welfare Act did nothing to democratise policy making. It rather institutionalised the non-bargaining element characteristic of colonial policy making and increased implementation by fiat. Nor was the essential elitism and conservatism of the administration affected. In spite of the recognition made by the Royal Commissioners that race prejudice was a growing problem in the West Indies and constituted a "serious obstacle to the harmonious political development which is necessary as a preliminary to the eventual grant of wider powers to the elected representatives of the peoples of the West Indies", the staffing of the Colonial Development and Welfare apparatus in the West Indies did little to contribute to a reduction in tension. The Comptroller and his staff were all English although there were many West Indians who could have filled the posts. Not surprisingly, given the constitution of development committees and sub-committees, the development debate, such as there was, never contemplated any radical restructuring of the economy or anything except gradualism in the movement towards independence.

Agricultural Policy

Next, agricultural development will be considered. By 1946 war conditions had induced a situation where a new direction in economic development was conceivable. Yet in 1945 Dr. Benham, Economic Advisor to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies, concluding his survey of the economic position of the sugar industry in relation to the rest of the economy, stated that the sugar industry was
the mainstay of the colony. This was the view that prevailed; subsequent years showed a retreat from the initiatives of the war years. By 1947 the Governor was claiming that the programme to grow more food locally was a 'short term policy' and had proved too expensive for government to justify its continuance when war no longer made it absolutely necessary. This was in spite of the position taken in 1942 when the Department of Agriculture entered into discussion with the Sugar Producers' Association with regard to the adoption of a 'long range policy of diversification' in line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission Report (Moyne).

The divide between Colonial Office directives and actual developments in Guyana during the period under discussion is illustrated by the following statements appearing in the Development and Welfare Report for 1948-49:

"It is desirable that the area should not depend for its stability exclusively upon any one crop, and a diversification of the economy together with the establishment of some minor industries is required as a basis of the next stage of economic progress;"

and

"Drainage and irrigation required for the opening up of lands for cultivation continue in British Guyana to absorb most of the funds available for the Colony's development." (38)

That is, most funds were expended on the development of rice lands.

The initial expansion of rice was adopted as a war measure to provide rice for the Caribbean market whilst traditional sources were unable to supply. The Department of Agriculture Report for 1940 noted that:

"Because of its importance as a food crop, both locally and in the neighbouring colonies, a substantial part of the Department's activities was directed towards the extension of rice."
Between 1943 and 1944, Colonial Development and Welfare funds were used to undertake drainage and irrigation schemes which increased the land available for rice cultivation by fifty percent. In addition experiments were made with the introduction of machinery for cultivation and threshing. The future of rice in Guyana, in the short term at least, was made more secure in 1946 when Caribbean governments contracted with the Rice Marketing Board, sole supplier since its establishment in 1939, to accept at least 80% of their requirements from that source at a fixed price for five years. The war time initiative in rice continued. By 1952 the acreage in rice for the main harvest had risen to 133,970 acres from 76,500 in 1944, largely as a result of the government's investment in drainage and irrigation. (See also Table 6(iv)). The heavy commitment of Colonial Development and Welfare funds to rice relative to other areas of development which reflects the allocation of funds from all sources is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head</th>
<th>Assistance (£)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>166,381</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>165,384</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>215,626</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare</td>
<td>68,858</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Settlement and Housing</td>
<td>127,075</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage and Irrigation</td>
<td>1,918,268</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>219,645</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Development</td>
<td>180,865</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,062,102</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 6(iv)

AREA UNDER RICE CULTIVATION, SELECTED YEARS, 1884 - 1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1884 - 88</td>
<td>about 2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>17,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>29,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>47,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>60,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>29,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>52,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>70,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>57,859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>63,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>93,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>153,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nath, D., op.cit. Table 14, p.260
The head 'Drainage and Irrigation' in Table 6(iv) mainly covers expenditure on the preparation and maintenance of rice lands, the setting up of rice mills and the introduction of machinery for use in rice production. Drainage and irrigation schemes also benefited the production of crops other than rice but government initiatives were comparatively minor in these other areas. For example, of the 30,000 acres to be brought into cultivation at Black Bush Polder, part of the Courantyne Drainage and Irrigation Project began under the Ten Year Plan, 27,000 were earmarked for rice. There were undoubtedly purely economic factors which argued for the development of the rice industry to the exclusion of other agro-industry, notwithstanding the Colonial Office's recommendations of greater diversification and self-sufficiency in agriculture. The guaranteed market and good prices arranged in 1946 indicated, at least in the short term, a secure future for rice. The cost of developing rice lands was enormous, however, and it is certainly arguable whether the investment was justifiable given the comparatively meagre returns offered. Further, whilst expansion in rice cultivation could absorb some displaced labour from the sugar industry with its contracting labour requirement, its amenability to mechanisation made it a poor long-term prospect in terms of employment generation. On balance it seems that social and political factors were also instrumental in producing the emphasis on rice as well as purely economic ones.

The position of rice relative to developments in the sugar industry was of particular importance. Historically rice had been encouraged to develop as a supplement to wages earned on the estates and had later been grown as an alternative to estate wages when estate work could not be had or when low wages made rice growing more attractive. There is some evidence to suggest that this view of rice as complementary to sugar
remained the official one. For example, the Development Sub-Committee on Agriculture recommended that no expansion of the spring crop be allowed in sugar areas so that rice would not be competitive with sugar at critical periods in the crop cycle.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION}

Doubtless Colonial Development and Welfare funds were insufficient to support any radical restructuring of the economy of Guyana or elsewhere. But this was never the task set. In Guyana, national budgetary allocations to the social sector continued to be set at relatively high levels as compared to the economic and developmental sectors. Within Colonial Development and Welfare funded programming, spending was heavily concentrated on drainage and irrigation. Hinterland development and industrial development were ignored in favour of a massive investment in rice lands made in an effort to provide an additional employment for the rural population which was compatible with the sugar industry's well-being. The welfarism without reconstruction of the 1940-45 period did not really change in the next phase, official Colonial Office pronouncements notwithstanding. In addition to metropolitan pressures against anything but agriculture-linked spending, there were strong local pressures in Guyana leading in the same direction.

By the time that Ten Year Plans were being drawn up in 1946 social, economic and political conditions had begun to change, in some ways radically, from those explored by the Royal Commissioners in 1938-9. These changes will be explored fully in the next chapter. At this point we note only that increasing population and consequent pressure on land and housing, trade union and political activism and a growing
nationalisation, presented new problems both for the sugar interest and the colonial power.

For sugar the dominant question in the forties was how to preserve a sufficient, cheap and quiescent labour force in the face of increasingly clamant demands for higher wages and improved working conditions. For the colonial power it was how to guide the nation to independence on a basis that would ensure a continued economic and political relationship with Britain. Welfarism was seen as the answer by both groups.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER SIX


4. Legislative Council Paper No.15, 1942, p.3.


7. Moyne Report, op.cit. p.35

8. Ibid.


10. Simey, T.S., op.cit. p.136

11. Moyne Report, op.cit. p.35


16. Ibid, p.143


19. Ibid, p.6


23. Ibid, p.17
24. Graphic, February 6th 1946
25. Daily Chronicle, May 12th 1948 and July 22nd 1947
26. Legislative Council Paper No.17, (1948) Address by Governor Wooley, "The Commission turned itself into a Development Commission realising very rightly that without extensive development of the interior there was no room for appreciable immigration".
27. Annual Report 1948, p.3
28. Legislative Council Paper No.17 (1948)
29. Graphic, February 6th, 1948
32. This was one of several committees set up to assist in the drawing up of The Development Plan.
33. Thorne, A.P., (1963) op.cit, p.212
34. Moyne Report, op.cit., p.451
43. Smith, R.T., (1957) "Economic Aspects of Rice Production in an East Indian Community in British Guiana", *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol.6 (No.4)
Studies by Smith and O'Loughlin in the 1950s showed that by this time rice had reached its maximum levels of employment per acre without absorbing available village labour.

44. Legislative Council Paper No.11 (1948). Papers relating to Development Planning p 173
In this chapter it will be argued that the applications and other outcomes of the "development and welfare" policy in Guyana described in the previous chapter were the result of profound changes occurring in the society, particularly in the sugar industry, population structure, the level of mass political mobilisation and in the constitution. Social and economic developments during the period to be examined began with the Royal Commission of 1938 and ended with the suspension of the constitution in 1953. They form the background to the way in which the new development and welfare ideology actually functioned in the social welfare area.

Changes in the Sugar Industry

The effects of the war on the sugar industry were several. The early years contributed to its prosperity as a result of a guaranteed British market at improved prices due to Europe's difficulty in obtaining sugar from war affected areas. From 1942, however, severe dislocations were caused by shipping difficulties because of German action in the Atlantic. In the remaining war years the problems grew. Labour costs increased whilst productivity declined. The quality of cane dropped as fertilisers to which the sugar producers were accustomed became unavailable and unfamiliar types were resorted to. An additional difficulty was posed by the government's requirement that the estates devote a proportion of their land to the growing of food crops so as to assist in the war plan to achieve greater self-sufficiency in food. More importantly, a labour shortage became evident in 1942. This led to the curtailment of planting programmes, making necessary harvesting from
Ratoons. (Ratoons require less attention, hence less labour, than new plants but they give a lower yield).

Government encouragement to local peasant food production contributed to a 50% increase in ground provisions between 1941 and 1945 which may have at least partially caused the labour shortage experienced in sugar as labourers devoted more time to their plots. Whilst the acreage maintained by sugar estate workers was small, usually under one acre, the good prices guaranteed for root crops during the war made the workers less reliant on sugar wages for their subsistence. As one contemporary report noted, possibly with intended sarcasm, "they could manage to live without giving up so much of their leisure to working for the estates."4

Rice, however, was probably more important in claiming a share of sugar workers' time, although it does not appear that at this stage there was any large scale movement away from the estates to the rice fields. The number of adults, defined as over twelve years, resident on the estates, increased by 1,789 between 1941 and 1942, but the average number employed weekly in the field decreased from 25,060 to 20,356.5

Table 7(i)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>15,963</td>
<td>16,120</td>
<td>13,230</td>
<td>9,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Resident</td>
<td>10,752</td>
<td>8,940</td>
<td>7,126</td>
<td>p 5,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26,715</td>
<td>25,060</td>
<td>20,356</td>
<td>t 4,206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p = piece workers  t = time workers

Source: Department of Labour Reports, British Guiana, 1940-1944.
The reason for the decrease in time allotted to estate work by the labourers adduced by a committee set up to investigate problems in the sugar industry was that:

"resident workers find it more profitable to work on their rice fields and farms and some non-residents have left working on the fields on the estates for more profitable occupations. (6)"

The price for rice rose from $46.60 per ton in 1939 to $81.35 in 1942, thereby offering a return for labour which compared favourably with estate work. Whilst rice growing did not cause many to abandon estate work altogether it made workers less reliant on sugar wages and thus likely to decrease the number of weeks they spent in work on the sugar crop.

Rice had been a factor in the Guyanese economy since the beginning of the century and had reached significant export levels before the war. The bauxite industry, however, grew to unprecedented levels between 1941 and 1943, stimulated by American wartime aluminium requirements. This development was also blamed for the deficit of labour in the sugar industry. However, most of the workers in the bauxite industry were of African descent. By the forties the regular field labour force on the estates was almost entirely Indian so any loss to the sugar industry occasioned by the development of bauxite was numerically small. It may have been critical nonetheless, as Africans tended to provide the skilled factory labour on the estates. Labour of this sort was drawn to the wartime United States Army Base at Atkinson's Field.

The shortage of labour experienced in 1942 and 1943 was one of the factors leading to major changes in the sugar industry which were to affect policy relating to health, housing and social welfare on the estates. The general trend during the forties, a trend which became more pronounced in the next decade, was towards a rationalisation and
stabilisation of the labour force in the industry. There was a movement away from a labour force composed largely of an undifferentiated mass of low paid workers with a large casual element to a reduced number of regular workers. The transformation was to be accomplished through mechanisation. Interest in mechanisation was generated initially by the labour shortage which although diminished, was still experienced in 1945. At this point such a solution became feasible with the prospect of a return to normal shipping conditions. By this time the Department of Agriculture was reporting that:

"Important developments may be anticipated in field mechanisation, which are arousing considerable interest at the moment and which should help to ease the labour problems." (II)

The other factor stimulating interest in mechanisation in the war years and immediately after was the level of industrial unrest in the industry. The Moyne Commission had found evidence of extreme dissatisfaction on the estates not only with wages and living conditions, but also with the entire structure of estate production, its colonial context and its legacy of demeaning social relations. Since 1937 the workers' grievances had been articulated by its union, the Man Power Citizens' Association (M.P.C.A.) the influence of which had grown through the war years. Strikes had continued unabated. Ten estates were involved in stoppages in 1942, eighteen in 1943, thirteen in 1944 and eleven in 1945.12

The labour relations situation did not improve a great deal in the post-war period in spite of the Department of Labour's mediation. The sugar workers gradually lost faith in the M.P.C.A.'s ability to secure better conditions. On failing to attain power within the union the more radical element formed a new union, the Guyana Industrial Workers' Union (G.I.W.U.). This new organisation could soon call upon more supporters
than the M.P.C.A. but the Sugar Producers' Association refused to recognise it. The demand for recognition became part of the background to a strike on Enmore Estate in 1947 called by G.I.W.U. ostensibly to protest at the introduction of new work practices. The police were called in to deal with the strikers. Shooting into the crowd they killed five workers and injured fourteen others.

A Commission of Enquiry, occasioned by the continuing disturbances on estates, chaired by Dr. J. A. Venn, was set up in 1948 with wide terms of reference to investigate the organisation of the sugar industry. The Commissioners gave particular attention to working conditions and the level of amenities on the estates. Although commending management for the steps taken to improve housing and social welfare, the report made by the Commission was extremely critical of many practices and conditions. Many recommendations in the area of welfare policy were made. The welfare programmes of the major company, Bookers, were begun by the time the report was published in 1949, but the circumstances from which it arose added to the pressure for reform on the estates.

By 1948 labour problems rather than labour shortage was the primary inducement to mechanisation. Increasing population and unemployment in other sectors reduced the possibility of a recurrence of the shortages experienced six years earlier. There is evidence that the basic motivation leading to mechanisation was not a consideration of any lowering of prices which could be effected through a reduction in labour input but the desire to minimise reliance on a militant labour force.

By 1953 mechanisation was reported as having an impact on labour requirements:

"Apart from stoppages of work, the level of employment would still have been lower than the previous year as the use of mechanical equipment tended to displace labour."(17)
A further factor generating the move towards rationalisation of the industry was the cost of welfare to the steadily increasing numbers of persons resident on sugar estates but not engaged in sugar production. Such people typically still received free medical and other services from the estate.\textsuperscript{18} The estates had no legal obligation to these people nor indeed since the end of the indenture system to any of their workers and theoretically could have reduced costs simply by refusing to provide the customary benefits, though such a move may have been judged impolitic given the volatile state of labour relations. Considerations of this type became unnecessary in the context of the overall plan to rationalise the industry. It was estimated that by 1945, of the approximately 50,000 adult residents on the estates there were five to six thousand who:

"earn their living as domestics, shopkeepers and shop assistants, hucksters, seamstresses, tailors, priests, teachers, cartmen, fishermen and so forth."\textsuperscript{(19)}

In addition, there were:

"a considerable number of housewives who go out to work only occasionally or not at all and a number of young persons (aged 12 to 17) who do little or no paid work."\textsuperscript{(20)}

The non- or partially employed women and youths had been a longstanding feature of the estate population although the ranks of unemployed may have been swollen during the depression. Concern about this 'surplus' population was generated at this point because of the industry's drive to regularise and reduce the work force and offer a new welfare package to its work force.

A reorganisation of the sugar industry to bring it into line with the principles of modern capitalist production was facilitated by a wave of amalgamation with most of the smaller, locally owned estates being absorbed or ceasing cultivation and a multinational, Booker McConnel, becoming increasingly pre-eminent. As Table 7(ii) shows, the reduction
### TABLE 7(ii)

**AREA UNDER CANE CULTIVATION, SUGAR EXPORTED, SELECTED YEARS 1841-1950**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area Under Cane Cultivation (acres)</th>
<th>Quantity of Sugar Exported (hogsheads)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>24,850</td>
<td>34,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>75,944</td>
<td>104,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>77,379</td>
<td>92,323 Tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>78,307</td>
<td>116,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>69,532</td>
<td>83,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>57,500</td>
<td>97,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>57,244</td>
<td>114,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>67,914</td>
<td>174,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>70,822</td>
<td>142,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>63,015</td>
<td>132,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>72,403</td>
<td>173,283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in the number of estates in the twentieth century did not affect the level of sugar production as acreage devoted to sugar was maintained fairly steadily.

By 1945, the situation was that:

"Bookers are a public company; the other two (Sandbach Parker and Davson's) are private companies. The Demerara Company (Diamond, Leonora and Ruimveldt) owns all the shares of the Berbice Development Company (Blairmont, Bath and Providence). Versailles, Houston and Lochamber have entirely local shareholders and the Enmore and Resouvenir Estates have a considerable portion. Bookers have a large interest in Port Mourant and Wales and own all the shares in the other companies."(21)

Bookers owned fourteen of the twenty-three operating estates and in addition had local commercial interests and controlled most of the shipping. Guyana was reaching the condition in which it was often referred to as "Booker's Guiana".22 The company's strength and its share of the Guyanese economy continued to increase post-1945 to a position where it controlled fourteen of nineteen estates in 1960 which in terms of acreage gave it a virtual monopoly in sugar.23

**Population Changes**

Population trends were also making future labour deficits in the sugar industry less probable. Birth rates had been increasing slightly but steadily from the 1920s especially for East Indians, the beneficiaries of improvements in sanitary conditions on the estates, and continued to do so. Death rates decreased even more dramatically from 1930, again most markedly in the East Indian population (see Tables 7(iii) and 7(iv)).

The combination of a rising birth rate and a declining death rate produced unprecedented rates of natural increase. This trend was strengthened when malaria was brought under control for the first time
### TABLE 7(iii)

**AVERAGE ANNUAL DEATH RATES 1931-1950**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>East Indians</th>
<th>Africans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1931-1935</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-1940</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-1945</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-1950</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 7(iv)

**AVERAGE ANNUAL BIRTH RATES 1931-1950**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>East Indians</th>
<th>Africans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1931-1935</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-1940</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-1945</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-1950</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

through the application of D.D.T. to the surfaces of living quarters. A limited house spraying programme was launched on the estates in February 1945, extended to cover 50,000 people in 1946 and made a country-wide programme in 1947. The effects were immediate and dramatic. From 280 deaths and 15,490 cases in 1947, the rate dropped to an estimated 28 deaths and 181 cases in 1952. By 1955 malaria was negligible as a cause of death (Table 7(v)).

Table 7(v)

Malaria Cases and Deaths, 1947-1952

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>15,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>8,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>4,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>28*</td>
<td>181*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimate


The eradication of malaria contributed only part of the reduction in mortality and increase in fertility. Newman concluded that it caused 40% of the post war increase in population growth rate in coastal Guyana. The eradication of malaria enhanced a trend which had begun in the 1920s. Similarly, Mandel's examination of census data demonstrates that a reduction in the death rate from 1920 was the cause of population growth until 1946 when the birth rate increased markedly, so that malaria eradication greatly enhanced, rather than started, a reduction in death rates begun through public health measures taken earlier.

Population increase brought a small growth in the potential labour force which foreshadowed the enormous growth in the late fifties when the children of the post war boom entered the labour market. Even in the
years before the rapid increase in population which was to come the economy failed to provide employment for the comparatively modest earlier increase which must be counted as one indicator of the failure of Colonial Development and Welfare funds to meet Guyana's development needs.

Unemployment

There are no precise unemployment figures for the period available, but the 1946 census figure of 3,731 at a time when the work force was 146,164 grew to what one contemporary source estimated at "not less than about 8,000 to 12,000 and maybe more" in 1954.27 Of particular interest is the trend towards high unemployment amongst the "unexperienced" (largely school leavers) which began to appear in the late forties. The 1946 census estimate of this group was 1,300. By 1956 the estimate had risen to 10,100 according to a survey conducted by the International Labour Office.28 Of a total labour force of 164,600, 29,600 persons were estimated to be unemployed.29 (see Table 7(vi)). There are difficulties in arriving at estimates of unemployment in economies where there is a great deal of casual, seasonal and family labour. However, another estimate of the 1956 figure which took into account seasonal employment by averaging the in-crop and out-crop periods in the sugar and rice cycles, considered approximately 14% of the labour force to be unemployed.30

The increase in unemployment was due to a steady decrease in jobs in the sugar industry and the failure of any other or any new sector to develop and provide extra jobs to match the population increase. Sugar was, as we have seen, moving towards a contraction of labour requirements. The World Bank Mission considered in 1952 that:

"The prospect for expanding employment in the sugar estates is practically nil."(31)
### TABLE 7(vi)

**LABOUR FORCE, EMPLOYMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT, OCCUPATIONS,**

**MID-JULY 1956**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At Work</th>
<th>135,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>29,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Labour Force:</strong></td>
<td><strong>164,600</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Industrial Occupations of the Total Labour Force:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, mining and quarrying and other primary activities</td>
<td>66,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>19,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and Construction</td>
<td>11,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and Communications</td>
<td>820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>18,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration, finance and professional</td>
<td>15,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and other services</td>
<td>15,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never worked</td>
<td>10,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>164,600</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst bauxite production continued to increase in the post war period it was never a large employer of labour:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Numbers Employed in Bauxite, 1942-1950</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>2,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>1,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>2,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>2,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>2,350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Labour Reports.

Rice was in the main produced on small units of less than six acres normally worked by family labour. The capacity of this sector to absorb the growing number of unemployed was limited. It depended upon more lands being made available for cultivation. Its potential for mechanisation was fairly high indicating a future decrease in labour requirements. Returns tended to be unstable and when insufficient were supplemented from wages drawn elsewhere, most usually in the sugar industry where, as we have seen, labour requirements were contracting.

In addition to the increase in the rate of population growth, changes in fertility and morbidity patterns led to changes in the age distribution of the population. The proportion of children to the total population has been estimated from census data to have increased from 38% in 1931-46 to 46% in 1946-60. The implications of this change in balance are clearer when the child population is taken as a proportion of the working age population defined as between the ages of 15 and 64 years. Then, it has been calculated, in 1921 the number of dependents to working age persons was roughly 1:2. In 1946 the ratio was 3:4 and by 1960, it was 1:1.

Apart from the macro-economic effects of such a change it also
represented additional pressure on household budgets. On the broader level, the growth in the number of children meant that the already inadequate provision for housing, health and education were placed under increasing stress. The situation which has become so familiar a part of third world societies was fast being arrived at; rapid population growth, low economic development, rising expectations.

Urbanisation

In addition to the problems posed by population growth in a stagnant rural sector and to some extent arising from it, Guyana experienced urban growth. The population of Georgetown, still the only major town, had been growing steadily from 1921 (see Table 7(viii)).

Table 7(viii)
The Population of Guyana and Georgetown, 1921-1946

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Georgetown No.</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>Guyana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>59,624</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>307,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>69,663</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>318,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>94,358</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>376,146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Reports, British Guiana.

The proportion of the population living in Georgetown, however, did not change radically between 1931 and 1946, but this is partly because East Indian fertility rates were higher than African rates, producing a higher rural rate as East Indians were predominantly rural dwellers (see Table 7(iii). Although East Indians had taken up urban based occupations with growing success since the turn of the century, they remained concentrated in the villages and on the sugar estates.
In terms of the pressure on housing and services provided in the city, the most important factor was not the proportionate increase but the absolute number added to the population. Between the censuses of 1931 and 1946, the population of Georgetown grew by 19,040.\textsuperscript{34} Natural increase and rural-urban migration both contributed to the growth. The latter had begun to cause concern by the mid-forties. To illustrate the concern felt in urban circles, reference may be made to the pressure on housing. The shortage of housing in Georgetown had become so severe that it was affecting all classes. The \textit{Graphic} reported that the middle classes too were being thrown into debt as the shortage had forced rents so high that even they could not meet them. That this group should be so affected caused additional concern:

"These are the people who bear the brunt of taxation. These are the people who keep the social and industrial wheels of the country turning, the 'white collar workers' as they are called" who, because of the housing shortage were forced to

"keep their mouths shut and pay higher rents or do without somewhere to live."(35)

In local government circles the subject of concern was the drift of population from some rural areas. In one area comprised of the villages of Anne's Grove and Two Friends, for example, the 1931 population of 1,535 had dropped by 120 to 1,415 in 1949.\textsuperscript{36} Natural increase in the rural areas compensated for any drift to the towns in the long term and even as a proportion of the population the rural areas sustained only a small loss.\textsuperscript{37} In the short term, however, and in the context of impending crisis in Georgetown, the comparatively small drift was sufficient to cause alarm and provoke thoughts about possible remedies. The Commissioner of Local Government was quoted as saying:
"The only solution to the problem lies in providing villagers with better amenities such as electric light, a village hall or community centre, a library and playing fields. Cottage industries should also be developed." (38)

The fear of an uncontrollable increase in population pressure on Georgetown was an important motivating force towards the development of various schemes to be discussed later, aimed at increasing the attractiveness of village life so as to minimise "push" factors contributing to population movement from rural areas. Thus the slight trend towards urbanisation in the forties coupled with improving rates of natural increase had an impact on policy thinking both in terms of the pressure exerted by the growth in absolute numbers of city dwellers and in terms of its consequences for policy for the rural areas. 39

Another aspect of urbanisation is the extent to which it may aggravate unemployment in the city. No precise figures for Georgetown are available but it is likely that the movement of people from the country to the town increased urban unemployment. The capital works programmes financed with Colonial Development and Welfare funds did not get under way in the city until the fifties and although the economy was buoyant in the immediate post war years, it is improbable that industrial developments in the city were sufficient to engage the extra labour force. A contributory factor may have been the higher poor relief benefits given in Georgetown as compared with the country rate.

One official estimate of the level of unemployment in the city in 1949 gave the monthly average for January to March as between 750 - 800 with the March figure at 965. 40 This official figure represents an appreciable increase from a negligible official rate of unemployment noted for 1946. Both rates are undoubtedly under-estimates. Of interest is the official description in 1949 of an "appreciable percentage" of those seeking employment as "undesirable unemployables", 
"inasmuch as they are said to be fitted for no beneficial form of occupation they would remain more or less among the perpetually unemployed."(41)

Constitutional and Political Developments

Unemployment in the thirties had been met with by short-term relief work. Solutions of this kind were inadequate to the problems of social control posed by what was emerging as a trend towards a new level of structural unemployment. The problem for the colonial state in the thirties' depression had been to control the threatened civil disorder. Trade union organisation was then fairly rudimentary and there were no purely political parties. Between 1942 and 1948, however, union membership grew from 3,705 to 14,531.42 The number of unions increased from six in 1939 to sixty eight in 1950 and by the latter date represented a large segment of the working population.43 Further, in 1947 Dr. Cheddi Jagan formed the markedly left-oriented Political Affairs Committee and then in 1950 the People's Progressive Party (P.P.P.). The Party's manifesto called for immediate independence and a socialist programme for development.

The issue for the colonial state was now altered from one of containing mass unrest to one of countering an organised radical political opposition, one which related local working and social conditions to wider issues of colonialism, capitalism and imperialism, issues of critical importance in the post-war period when independence was on the agenda.

Whilst the post-war Labour government in Britain was committed to colonial independence, it espoused a gradualist policy with the emphasis on the development of "responsible" rather than radical leadership.
Creech-Jones, the Labour Secretary of State for the Colonies, put it thus:

"With their hopelessly inadequate revenues and the need for services of every kind, one cannot get far in effective policy by reference to cliches about imperialism and colonialism." (44)

The Labour government did not effect any real change in the overall approach adopted towards social and political development in the colonies although the Colonial Office became staffed by more people who were sympathetic towards colonial aspirations.\(^45\) In the West Indies this meant the gradual development of constitutions towards more representative forms along with planning for steady social and economic progress. As Ayearst remarks, in the West Indies

"no drastic reforms were instituted and the Colonial Office went on much as before to apply a 'benevolent imperialism'. It seemed to the Labour Government that reform would necessarily continue to be gradual and to include not only political advance in the shape of more local representation in the colonial governments but also such British aid as might enable the colonies to attain a minimum of social advancement and a sound economic advance." (46)

Constitutional changes introduced in Guyana from the 1940s were initiated in response to the disturbances which had swept the Caribbean with a view to giving broader representation as a first step in the development of "responsible" politics. The elected element in the legislature was enlarged in 1943, placing it further in the majority. The elected, unofficial component now included a representative each of the trades unions and of the sugar workers. It formed a majority in the new Executive Council and allowed elected representatives the possibility of influencing policy formation more directly than since the introduction of a Crown Colony form of government in 1928. In addition property qualifications for voting for the Legislative Council, which was retained, were reduced but remained sufficiently high to ensure that the professional, commercial and artisan classes retained their monopoly.
A widening of the franchise followed in 1945 giving the vote to literates owning or renting land to the value of $150 or renting property valued at $45 or with an annual income of $120. The result was that in 1946 the number qualified to vote was around 60,000 whereas previously it had been 13,500.47

The first legislature formed under these constitutional changes sat in 1947.48 The elected element, with the exception of Dr. Jagan, represented no specific political orientation. Its failure to support any of Dr. Jagan's proposals for reform was indicative of its conservative cast and inability to take a lead in even a gradualist approach to development. The rapid growth of the P.P.P. after 1950 was in part a reaction to the old political elite's failure to disengage itself from the commercial interest. The old guard was inadequate to the task of controlling the forces unleashed by a growing worker restiveness fuelled by increasing unemployment and radical political mobilisation.

In 1950 a Commission was set up by the Colonial Office to make recommendations for further developments in the constitution which would pave the way to full self-government under a ministerial system with the retention of reserve powers by the Governor to ensure "public order, public faith or good government". It provided for universal suffrage and a bi-cameral legislature with a lower House of Assembly composed of three ex-officio members and twenty-four elected members and a State Council of nine members of which six were to be appointed by the Governor, two further on the recommendation of the six Ministers and one after consultation with minority and independent members of the lower house. Property qualifications for the elected members were removed.49

Elections under the new constitution were held in 1953. The P.P.P. gained 51% of the vote and eighteen of the twenty-four seats. The other
political party of any strength to contest the election was the National Democratic Party. This party had its origins in the Negro League of Colored Peoples and had its major support amongst Africans. Its position was, in essence, opposition to the P.P.P. and communism. However, organisational weaknesses and ineffective policy formulation limited its impact.50

There is no doubt that the P.P.P. had the advantage over other parties in terms of organisation, propaganda and mobilisation and its success at the elections was in part a reflection of this superiority. More important, however, was the appeal of the P.P.P's attacks on colonialism to the largest section of the community, the rural proletariat and peasantry which the Party had schooled in a recognition of the limitations in their own lives as products of a particular economic system.

THE 1953 CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

The new House of Assembly with its P.P.P. ministers held power from 27th April to 9th October 1953. At this point the Assembly was dismissed and the Constitution suspended by the Governor.

The immediate occasion for this move was Jagan's attempt to push through a Bill which would empower the Ministry of Labour to conduct a poll in any industry where there was no recognised union or where there were two or more unions contesting for the position of bargaining agent. The results of the poll were to be decisive in securing employer recognition. The Bill was introduced to allow the P.P.P. affiliated Guyana Industrial Workers' Union (G.I.W.U.) to gain ascendance over the management favoured but less popular Man Power Citizens' Association. The government was prorogued the day after the passing of the Bill.
The colonial authorities had previously been disturbed by the manner in which the Elected Members had outmanoeuvred and ignored Ex-Officio Members in introducing other pieces of legislation and took the passage of the Union Recognition Bill as final proof that extremists had taken over the party. Jagan and his P.P.P. ministers were clearly not going to assume the position of 'responsible' politicians leading their people into 'responsible' independence according to the path of development mapped out for the colonies by the imperial government.

As we have seen, Development and Welfare funds were applied in the first instance to contain social unrest and to provide a framework for economic development in which a local bourgeoisie would emerge to assume power upon independence. The constitutional changes of the period were engineered to give experience both to an emerging political leadership and an expanding electorate in the 'responsible' exercise of political power. The success of the P.P.P. and the orientation of its leadership indicated the failure of the Colonial Development and Welfare programme and constitutional developments to fulfil those aims. In order to arrive at firm conclusions about the reasons for the Colonial Development and Welfare programme's lack of success (in terms of the political goals attached to it) in Guyana as compared to Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados where similar programmes had been launched, it would be necessary to engage in a comparative analysis of several aspects of the political, economic and social matrices in each of the territories. Here it is possible only to suggest tentatively the possible reasons for Guyana's more successful radical movement.

One difference between Guyana and the Islands mentioned, which stands out and was probably important, lies in the structure of the labour force. In Guyana a large sector of the work force was concentrated in one industry - sugar - and its workers shared working and
living conditions on the plantations which in itself made the task of radical politicians easier. Further, the close relationship between the rice and sugar industries made for the extension of the radicalisation of the sugar workers to the peasantry. The economies of Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad were, by 1950, more diversified and in none of them was there a single industry with a comparable concentration of workers. Lastly, the peasantry in these countries was, perhaps, less open to radical influence.

In Guyana the election of 1953 demonstrated quite clearly that welfarism and little development could not meet the aspirations of the people nor contain the potential for radicalism arising from the social and economic situation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The post war period opened with the promise of independence. The context in which this aspiration developed was one of increasing political mobilisation and trade union development, a contracting labour requirement in the major industry and a rapidly growing population. The agricultural policy adopted aimed at continued maintenance of the sugar industry as the prime sector whilst this industry began to mechanise and reduce the necessary labour input. The decision was taken to develop rice as the secondary agricultural sector even though rice cultivation required heavy investment and could offer comparatively low employment prospects and these only on a seasonal basis.

This proved to be a volatile mixture which was not contained by the application of 'welfare' as it was conceived. A political response to the radicalism of the Assembly could be achieved with comparative ease through the suspension of the Constitution; the apparent radicalisation
of large segments of the population which had made such an Assembly possible could not be dealt with so easily. The British government and its representatives in Guyana, together with elements of the Guyanese bourgeoisie, responded to the problem as will be shown in the following chapter with a desperate attempt to wean the population away from radical politics through increased social and other spending.

At the beginning of the period discussed, funds were allotted to welfare and economic development projects aimed at making 'responsible' independent government possible by eradicating the causes of social unrest uncovered by the Royal Commission of 1938. By 1953 the limited success of this programme for development was clearly demonstrated to have failed to achieve its political aims.
Notes for Chapter Seven


2. Ibid.

3. A ratoon is a sprout from the root of a sugar cane that has been cut down.


6. Ibid.

7. 29,120 tons were exported in 1933. The highest tonnage exported during the war years was 25,418 tons in 1945. See also Table 6(iii).

8. German attacks on shipping caused a drop in export levels for the rest of the war.


11. Ibid.


13. Ibid. p.148

14. Ibid. p.141


20. Ibid.

21. C.O. 114/237 Legislative Council Paper No.11, 1945, op.cit. p.4

22. Hence a once popular saying: "When Bookers' sneezes, Guiana catches a cold".


26. Population growth was estimated at 1.5% per annum from 1946 to 1952. The increase in rural population was 2,097 per annum from 1931 to 1946 and 5,780 per annum from 1946 to 1950. See International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (1953) *The Economic Development of British Guiana*, Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, p.90 and 188


29. Ibid.


31. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, op.cit. p.188


33. Ibid.

34. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, op.cit. p.57


37. In later years, between 1960 and 1965 the urban areas actually lost population relative to the countryside, the percentage of urban dwellers dropping from 29% to 26%, David W., op.cit. p.62


39. "Rural Betterment", as rural social policy became known, is discussed in Chapter Eight.


41. Ibid.

42. Chase, A., op.cit. p.114

43. Report of the Department of Labour, 1950


48. See Appendix 1 for the composition of the 1947 Legislature.


Social Welfare

In this Chapter developments in several areas of social policy and practice in the period between the West India Royal Commission and the constitutional crisis of 1953 will be examined. Particular attention is given to the way in which the programme of social amelioration embarked upon was aimed at the production of moderate social and political attitudes and to the consequences of the social policy adopted for relationships between the two major races. As indicated earlier the immediate impetus leading to the passing of the Colonial Welfare and Development Act was civic disturbance, and this background influenced the emphasis on the development of structures supportive of attitudes thought to be necessary to the eventual assumption of 'responsible' self-government. The colonial administration continued to fear radical developments on the road to self-determination and the predominant concern throughout the forties and beyond continued to be with the promoting of 'correct' attitudes both at governmental and individual levels. A 'correct' attitude for local governments, in which increasingly the elected elements formed the majority, was political moderation. For individuals, 'correct' attitudes were those relevant to the practice of 'responsible' civic virtues which, of course, included an eschewal of radical or violent response to social conditions.

It was in this context that the British Government encouraged the formation of trade unions in the colonies provided these were set up and organised in accordance with guidelines of the type embodied in legislation passed locally in Guyana, based on British legislation, which
included the control of registration of unions and certain conditions relating to the control of funds and the provision of decision making mechanism. It was hoped that the formation of trade unions would produce moderate collective bargaining and reduce 'unreasonable' worker demands and unorganised labour disputes.\textsuperscript{1} To this end training in Britain was proposed:

"Considerable thought has been given to the development of responsible Trade Unionism in the British West Indies ... There is, however, still room for improvement, and development in structure, scope and responsibility might progress a stage further if potential labour leaders were given practical training in the United Kingdom." (2)

The Labour Departments, which were created in many colonial territories in 1942, gave assistance to the development of trade unions on approved lines. In Guyana the Labour Department saw its role as one of creating "an atmosphere unfavourable to disputes, encouraging negotiation and advising in the principles of Trade Unionism."\textsuperscript{3} One of its earliest tasks was the setting up of joint negotiating machinery on the sugar estates, a move welcomed by most estate managers who demonstrated "a growing awareness ... of the usefulness and purpose of trades unions."\textsuperscript{4}

Trade unions and a labour department were the mechanisms promoted to avert radical challenges in the industrial area. 'Responsible' civic attitudes, on the other hand, were to be encouraged by the various elements making up the social welfare service. The moral influence of institutions like co-operatives was considered of importance in addition to the purely economic function of generating income. As the Social Services Sub-Committee of the Ten Year Plan Development Committee put it:

"We regard the promotion of Co-operative Societies as of great importance. Their effect is both social and economic, members
securing a practical demonstration of the advantages to be derived from self-reliance and combined effort while at the same time enjoying a more beneficial organisation of that business." (5)

Co-operatives

The Co-operative Movement was seen as the most important programme of those intended to "foster a spirit of independence and habits of mutual aid." 6 The greatest emphasis was on savings, thrift and credit societies;

"Indeed it may be said that these societies constitute the foundation of the (Co-operative) Movement. Their success is a clear indication of the need for thrift among salary and wage earners as well as farmers throughout the colony." (7)

Thrift and savings societies were introduced into the schools to encourage the adoption of thrifty practices from childhood, but as well as teaching children simple accounting practices they were thought to

"teach children how to conduct themselves orderly at meetings, make speeches, elect officers and use votes wisely." (8) (emphasis added)

The Co-operative Movement was an instrument of colonial policy throughout the Empire at this period and in some territories they were important economic devices used to cut out middlemen buyers and encourage higher production of crops for the export market. 9 In Guyana, however, the co-operatives were small affairs geared towards production for local consumers and were encouraged with their social rather than economic benefits in mind. They were instituted in 1945 when six newly trained Social Welfare Officers returned from overseas to assume their posts. Thirty-nine groups were organised in the first two years with total assets of $7,000.00, a very small sum even when it is noted that at this stage many of the groups were still engaged in the study of co-operation
in preparation for the actual undertaking of particular enterprises. Typical of the projects were two marketing about 70 dozen eggs per week, one at Calcutta, Mahaicony area and the other at Rose Hall.¹⁰

The stress on the social benefits of co-operativism rather than its value as a tool of economic development was characteristic of the general attitude towards social welfare as a whole at the local level during the period 1940 – 1953.

The Social Welfare Division

The co-operatives were part of a wider programme put on by the Social Welfare Division which was instituted in 1945. On the recommendation of Simey, Social Welfare Adviser for the West Indies, this Division was established as an attachment to the Local Government Department. Simey was highly critical of the existing "somewhat old fashioned" relief services characteristic of the West Indies which he felt had been carried out at the expense of more "modern constructive services."¹¹ For him, this approach to welfare was the product of a social attitude more concerned with mere palliation than the proper investigation and subsequent cure of social ills. He felt that, in turn, this approach led to:

"such activities as the continual tinkering with political constitutions, regardless of the social realities which condition their operation, and the paying of disproportionate attention to one specific social problem or another such as the care of 'orphan' children or the technicalities of education administration." (12)

He charged further that:

"Colonial Administration has been too deeply influenced by passing fashions in the world of administration and the enthusiasms and prejudices of individual officials." (13)
The Social Welfare Division was created to assist in the development of a more integrated approach to social welfare and one which, unlike the largely voluntary efforts in the area hitherto, would concentrate on constructive rather than relief programmes.

Provisions for social welfare in the colonies as a whole had tended to develop in a piecemeal way as a reaction to specific problems, much as they had in Britain, and tended to be modelled on British legislation and provision. Concern about growing crime and vagrancy amongst the young in urban areas led to the establishment of probation services and the building of juvenile courts, remand homes and reformatories in the 1940s.14 In some of the Asian colonies concern about prostitution led to legislation directed at its curtailment and associated legislation for the protection of children. Urbanisation both in these Asian colonies and elsewhere had led to the abandonment of children and the appearance of vagrant bands in the cities. Child welfare legislation was enacted in many British colonies to deal with this.15 Such legislation was in many territories copied word for word from the English Children and Young Persons Act of 1933.16

The experience of the Caribbean area was similarly ad hoc. The Royal Commission had suggested that a social welfare officer be appointed in each territory and that Social Welfare Committees be set up, but did not clearly delineate the field of social welfare nor provide a framework for action. Simey judged the Report's section on social welfare to be vaguely framed and considered that:

"the remaining recommendations were of so miscellaneous a character that it proved hard to state precisely what the functions of these officers and committees should be." (17)
For him it was this climate of uncertainty had led to the creation of social welfare divisions which he saw as:

"the line of least resistance ... (to be used) as handy administrative dustbins in which to get rid of inconvenient governmental functions that could not be tidily attached to any of the existing departments." (18)

Such criticisms notwithstanding, the creation of social welfare divisions in the Caribbean and elsewhere did involve the application of the principle of planning to the area of welfare, an advancement on previous reliance on ad hoc measures. It also marked a new departure in government involvement in social affairs in so far as it introduced professionalism into an area hitherto largely in the hands of the voluntary agencies whose approach tended to one of middle class benevolence. In the Caribbean the class division between giver and receiver in charitable organisations, a division which had become repugnant to the British working class, had been further complicated by the correspondence of class and race so that parties to the charitable act were identifiable with race as well as class.

The local government system in Guyana was more developed than elsewhere in the area and hence it was decided that it should carry social welfare since

"the Commissioner of Local Government had already adopted what may be termed a 'social welfare' approach to his work, and all that had to be done was to extend the functions of his department and his staff to include social welfare formally and officially."(19)

This approach had already been recommended by Simey, when Social Welfare Adviser for the Caribbean, and held out by him as a model for other territories.20 The relationship between the Social Welfare Division and the local government authorities proved, however, to be an
uneasy one as the members of the village bodies were jealous of their authority and resented the intrusion of representatives of central government. In 1946, one year after the Division was started it was said that:

"Social welfare work had not progressed well in the villages during the year to the extent expected, which is regrettable. The village local authorities have complained that they are being slighted in connection with the carrying on of social welfare work in the villages. The official arrangements which caused dissatisfaction is one of the causes of slow progress." (21)

Eighteen months later the situation was not much changed. At a meeting of the West Demerara Chairman's Union, the President reported that whilst there was greater cordiality between local authorities and the Social Welfare department, there was still much room for improvement. He went on to pinpoint the problem:

"What the local authorities desire is the greater co-operation of the Social Welfare Officers. The local authorities also contend that they are responsible for the carrying on of official social welfare work in their districts. They think that when a social welfare officer is sent to work in a village or group of villages he must be sent to the local authority or local authorities. In other words, the local authority in any place where work is being done must approve beforehand." (22)

Social welfare's beginnings as an administrative and professional area in its own right was, then, hampered by difficulties which were apparently aggravated by the perception of the programme held by some elements of the local communities which led them to see it as an imposition by central government.23

"Rural Betterment"
The general policy of the Division in Guyana was:

"that emphasis be placed on the constructive rather than the relief services and that attention be focussed more on the rural areas than on the cities of Georgetown and New Amsterdam." (24)
The decidedly rural emphasis of the work is indicated by the institution of a Rural Betterment Service as an arm of the Social Welfare Division. The latter was manned by eight District Social Welfare Officers, a Co-operative Organiser, two 4H Club Organisers25 serviced by the Headquarters Staff of five Officers attached to the Local Government Department. Under this Service came the promotion of co-operatives, 4H clubs, women's groups e.g. Women's Institutes and cottage industries.

The Rural Betterment Scheme was based both conceptually and in terms of practical organisation on a voluntary organisation called Jamaica Welfare Ltd. which had been established in 1937, chaired by Norman Manley and financed by a voluntary donation from the main banana exporting companies. Welfare Ltd. aimed at promoting rural community life, co-operative, cottage industries and adult education.26 The organisation's work had been favourably viewed by the Royal Commission and the Social Welfare Adviser, T. Simey and funds made available by the Colonial Development and Welfare Act were used to reactivate it in 1943. It had ceased because the war had put a stop to the shipment of bananas and hence to the fruit company's donations (which took the form of a cess on the value of bananas shipped).

Most of the Division's activities involved, at least minimally, some aspect of economic development. This was probably thought a necessary inclusion in order to gain the interest of people whose low standard of living made economic improvement a prime motivation. But the main impetus directing the promulgation of the programmes was, at least initially, a concern with producing greater involvement at the community level, a development of 'proper' civic attitudes Conducive to the acceptance of 'responsible' political positions. Evidence of the
expectation of a link between the social programmes and the political and civic attitudes to be promoted is seen to be in the central role given to the co-operatives which, it was hoped, would develop:

"the best type of leadership, bringing forward those individuals who can see beyond their own narrow, immediate interests; and if properly supervised, it provides graduated lessons in the management of a business enterprise, in the operation of economic forces, and in the working of democratic processes." (27) (emphasis added)

But whilst in the narrow sense the economic dimension of these programmes was minimal they also met an economic need, in the wider sense, in so far as they serviced the emerging new structure of the major industry - sugar. As has been shown, by mid-decade the estates were seriously involved with plans for increasing mechanisation and as a result of the streamlining strategy adopted which was leading to the decasualisation of the labour force, two effects began to be apparent: firstly there would be increasing labour displacement and secondly the remaining labour force would require transformation from an undifferentiated, casual mass into a modern, stable productive force. Both these processes could be eased to an extent by "rural betterment".

Labour displacement from the sugar industry, although largely to be met by the development of rice production, could also be ameliorated by the promotion of other cottage industries. But perhaps more important was the role that rural schemes could play in easing the tensions in the sugar belt arising out of poor economic conditions, through the encouragement of projects which would provide supplementary income. One function of the District Officers was seen to be for them

"to devise ways in which rural populations can employ themselves profitably between crops - with cottage or village industries and handicrafts." (28)
Thus, in addition to promoting attitudes and habits of independence, which were seen as suitable for and necessary to a modern labour force and much mooted in the estates' own welfare programmes, the Rural Betterment Service could, through its schemes, help to make the old pattern of rural under-employment more viable in an age of rising expectations and growing labour militancy. By 1947, as has been shown, the government's policy was to continue to place the major emphasis on sugar with rice as the complementary crop. Both rice and sugar involve a mainly seasonal labour requirement and neither wage labour on the estates nor rice growing on the predominantly small plots could provide either year round employment for the majority, or high levels of remuneration. If these two crops were to continue to be the main areas of agricultural development, there was a clear danger of increased labour conflict on the sugar estates and rural misery in the rice areas both of which were undesirable politically.

The thesis that 'Rural Betterment' was essentially an instrument of social control designed for pacification of the villages is given some support by the disproportionate attention given to rural aspects of social welfare in comparison with that attracted by the urban areas. (See Table 8.(i), next page)
Table 8(i)

THE SOCIAL WELFARE DIVISION'S

RECURRENT ANNUAL EXPENDITURE 1940 - 1945

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Recurrent Expenditure</th>
<th>Capital Expenditure</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rural Betterment Service</td>
<td>$35,000.00</td>
<td>4,800.00</td>
<td>52,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Youth Service</td>
<td>4,800.00</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
<td>5,900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Child Welfare Officer</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
<td>5,900.00</td>
<td>6,880.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Probation Service</td>
<td>5,900.00</td>
<td>5,880.00</td>
<td>287,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Belfield Girls' School</td>
<td>$52,500.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recurrence expenditure for 5 years 262,500.00
Capital expenditure 25,000.00
Grand Total 287,500.00

SOURCE: Papers Relating to Development Planning, Vol. 2, 1948, Table 1, p. 70.

Whilst village health and housing conditions during the first half of the century were no better than those in the urban centres, the rural areas as a whole, when estates are included, were better off than the urban areas in terms of water provision and public health provision. In addition, the urban population had been with increasing rapidity, putting great pressure on infrastructure and employment in Georgetown. By 1946 a quarter of the total population (i.e. 94,035) lived in Georgetown and its environs. Thus it is arguable that social need which could benefit from a welfare approach was as dire in the urban as the rural areas, and that the concentration of social welfare on the rural area was the outcome of considerations in addition to that of manifest need.
By the mid-forties the government of Guyana had committed itself to agricultural development to the almost total exclusion of industrial development. Hopes were pinned on the creation of a 'stable peasantry' hence the more imaginative elements of social welfare were directed towards achieving this overall design for the future.

**Social Welfare in the City**

Whilst 'development and welfare' were the terms in which the development debate of the forties was conducted, and whilst Guyana devoted what some critics considered a disproportionate amount of public funds to the social sector as a whole - defined as including housing, health and education - 'social welfare' spending was comparatively small. (See Table 6(ii)) The uncertain basis on which it existed is indicated by this statement from the Sub-Committee for Other Social Services, a committee set up in connection with the drawing up of the 1947 Development Plans:

"This Sub-Committee has drawn up a moderate plan largely on account of the restricted shadow allocation which it was accorded. 'Social Welfare' represents a new aspect of Colonial Administration and as such has been subject to considerable criticism in many quarters. Even now the recurrent cost of the basic Social Welfare Organisation is carried as part of a Colonial Development and Welfare grant which will fall on the Colony in 1948/49 when present provision comes to an end." (29)

The committee recommended that the Welfare division be maintained by local funds when the Colonial Development and Welfare grant ceased. The Main Committee accepted the recommendation and it was endorsed and acted upon by the legislature when the time came in spite of Dr. Jagan's contention that social welfare should be regarded as

"... an attempt of a conscience-stricken political order to correct some of the ills inflicted on the people as a whole." (30)
The criticism referred to by the committee undoubtedly came from those quarters concerned with tax increases but probably also reflected a conservative tendency in the administration. Miss Ibberson, who succeeded Simey as Advisor on Social Welfare to the Comptroller of Development and Welfare in the West Indies judged that the lack of development in social welfare administration in the region was related to governments being "a little shy of identifying themselves publicly with 'welfare' perhaps because of the abhorrence in many quarters of the 'welfare state' ..... "  31

The response to social problems in the urban area centred on the creation of institutions based on British patterns and introduced with little consideration of their appropriateness. The increasing problem of unemployment amongst the young and the threat of growing delinquency was dealt with through the introduction of a Probation Service. Also grants were made to voluntary bodies for the establishment of club facilities for the youth of Georgetown, these being seen by the Sub-Committee members as "an increasingly urgent requirement." A new school for delinquent girls and a young offenders' detention institution were also planned. 32

The introduction of a social welfare programme manned by professionals together with state support of youth work represented some development towards the preventative, professional approach advocated by Simey; but social welfare outside the "Rural Betterment" programme received limited resources and grudging support from the tax-conscious Legislative Council. It was low on the list of development priorities and, in the city, far from fulfilling the vitalising role Simey had seen for social welfare in community development. Urban social problems were
overshadowed by the necessity of placating the rural masses towards whom the major development thrust was aimed except in so far as the question of the control of unruly youth arose.

Social Security

The publication of the Beveridge Report in Britain had generated great interest in the Caribbean and elsewhere in the colonies. It intensified demands for social security provisions:

"In several parts of the Colonial Empire, a considerable and growing interest is being shown in the question of social security or social insurance ..... it is clear that public opinion has been stirred by the 'Beveridge Plan' and representations by Colonial Legislatures or other authoritative bodies have often taken the form of requests for investigation into the possibility of adopting that plan or some modification of it." (33)

In Guyana, long before, demands for the introduction of an old age pension had come from the trade unions. In 1930 the British Guiana Labour Union made an old age pension one of the items of their programme for improved conditions.34 A proposal for a contributory pension, part worker funded, part government funded, was made by the British Guiana Congress of General Workers to the Royal Commission in 1939.35

As we have seen previously, however, the accepted policy by the mid-forties was that:

"Both Development and Welfare are necessary but the priority and proportions must be carefully weighed and consciously decided for that limited slice of the all-too-small 'cake' of National Income which the State is able to appropriate by taxation, may either be 'eaten' today in the form of 'social services' or set aside in the form of 'development' in order to increase the 'cake' of tomorrow and the day after, it cannot be had both ways." (36)
This effectively ruled out consideration of most non-contributory programmes of social security. The exception was the old age pension, introduced in Guyana in 1944 by Ordinance 17 of that year. The conditions for receipt of this non-contributory benefit were that the claimant be:

1. Over sixty-five years old.
2. A British subject for at least 10 years.
3. Resident in Guyana for twenty years.
4. Receiving a monthly income of below $4.50 in Georgetown or $3.50 in the rest of the colony, these being the sums received as pension benefits.37

The benefit went to 7,155 recipients in the first year of the Ordinance's operation.38 The pension was very small and could certainly not entirely support an old person. It was paid for in part by the reduction in the number of old people living in the Alms Houses, the Poor Law institution for the receipt of 'indoor relief'. The average daily number of inmates was 788 in 1943. By 1946, it had dropped to 590.39

The labour pattern of the Caribbean with its high levels of unemployment, under-employment and large element of casual labour made the introduction of a contributory social insurance scheme on a national basis complex. In addition the low incomes of most families meant that a contributory scheme would have to be supplemented by a state contribution as it would yield extremely small benefits. Nevertheless, the level of social expectations had risen and this required consideration.

For generations, probably from the days of slavery, there had been Friendly Societies in some form in operation in the West Indies. An
ordinance of 1913 had provided for their registration. In Guyana fifty-one societies were registered by 1917.\textsuperscript{40} It had been suggested by Major Orde Brown, after the investigations he carried out preliminary to the 1938 Royal Commission, that Friendly Societies merited encouragement and that:

"if assisted to reduce their charges they might furnish a partial remedy for the lack of state provision for social services at present debarred by financial considerations."

(41)

This notion of the important role which could be played by Friendly Societies was endorsed by the Conference of West Indian Social Workers at their conference in Barbados 1947, and investigated by a Colonial Development and Welfare funded research team between 1948 and 1949.\textsuperscript{42}

The report resulting from the research noted a number of problems in the existing organisation of Friendly Societies in the West Indies, among them that:

a) there was a prevalence of very small societies,

b) the extent to which officers held more than one post or posts in more than one society led to opportunities for financial malpractice,

c) a disproportionate part of expenditure went on management costs, and

d) management was generally poor.\textsuperscript{43}

A further limitation of the Guyanese Friendly Societies was that they only covered part of the population. Two-thirds of them were Georgetown based, they were preponderently subscribed to by Afro-Guyanese and sixty per cent of the membership was female.\textsuperscript{44} The sickness benefit offered by many societies was rarely more than $1 per week which was only
given for between three to six weeks and thereafter reduced. Most of the organisations were "purely financial", that is, they operated more like savings schemes than insurance schemes, with members withdrawing sums to meet festival costs, for example, at Christmas.45

It was concluded that the Friendly Societies had neither the financial means nor the administrative expertise to be the basis for a national insurance scheme of any type. It was suggested that a limited "Colony Benefit Scheme" be started in a form amenable to expansion, administered by the government, subscribed to voluntarily, built up initially from contributions from the insured and operated primarily for sickness and death insurance. This scheme was turned down by the Secretary of State on the grounds that it would not be able to offer benefits larger than those given by Friendly Societies, thus placing it in competition with them, and would not give experience of compulsory benefits.46 The question of social security was left in abeyance, despite trade union pressure until the political crisis in 1953 gave added urgency to a review of the situation. Guyana, like much of the rest of the Empire, entered the fifties with a social welfare policy which was essentially residual and ameliorative, and a social security system still based on the Poor Law of 1855.

Although spending on the 'social' sector remained high in the areas of health, housing and education, the original emphasis of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act on welfare in its widest sense as joint partner with economic development in the enhancement of life in West Indian society fell prey to the notion that 'welfare' and social security were 'frills' which could only be afforded when economic development had raised production and national income.
Social Welfare on the Estates

Whereas estate involvement in worker housing and hospital care was a century old, management provision for worker welfare in the broader sense was virtually non-existent before the forties. This neglect was in striking contrast to the care given to the security and recreation of the senior staff who were all or nearly all, expatriates. With the exception of a few cricket fields laid down in the thirties, there were no recreational facilities of any kind provided by estates for workers.\(^\text{47}\)

The absence of facilities in estate communities was of far more significance than any comparable lack of facilities attached to factories in industrialised nations. Firstly, the nature of the estate was such that it combined work place with living place, so that an absence of facilities at work could not be compensated for by community based facilities as in other societies. Secondly, the absence of opportunities for communal recreation contributed to the demoralisation and dependency of estate communities to a much greater extent than it would in other communities. The social structure of the estates was not conducive to independent action nor strong group cohesion against management. There was a tendency for workers to look to the estate managements to meet their needs and solve their problems rather than to generate communal approaches to these issues. Since the cessation of indenture there had been no steady replenishment of religious and cultural life as provided earlier by successive waves of immigrants. Religious leaders, whilst still of great influence felt their importance waning as the East Indian population became increasingly creolised.\(^\text{48}\)

Further, the main religious bodies had never assumed a political character in Guyana, nor had they taken a very active role in the promotion of social welfare.\(^\text{49}\)
It is not suggested that a community hall, sports activities and sewing circles for girls could overcome the dependency and demoralisation which was the outcome of a century of indenture and degrading working and living conditions, nor that their absence was the cause of it. However, such facilities and organised activity can provide a framework through which those with leadership skills may develop as group representatives.

In the post-war period a new management attitude towards social welfare emerged as part of a policy "to foster the self-reliance of their employees and to encourage them to stand on their own two feet". The old policy was based on thinking such as is commented on here:

"The well established argument against allowing the estate worker too much opportunity to make money 'on the side', and indeed against giving him too high wages is that experience has shown that he will only work to earn sufficient to satisfy his simple needs and will then take life easily until money runs out." (51)

A new policy was developed in the context of the changed structure and organisation emerging in the industry. The Chairman of Bookers McConnel Ltd., by this point by far the largest company in Guyana, saw the improvement of conditions on the estates as vital to the future of the sugar industry as can be seen from this illuminating statement;

"I'm preaching the fact that .... we cannot distribute profits at the expense of assets human or material. Proper living conditions for staff and labour must be a charge on the business parallel with the maintenance of our land and equipment in the highest economic state. There's no doubt that of late years many of our estates have shown profits at the expense of the future ... The Board need not fear I'm encouraging expenditure on luxuries - far from it. The point is that certain things must be put right if the industry is to survive - factories must be efficient, staff and nuclear labour must be well housed and cared for, mechanical field equipment must experimented with and purchased, drainage and irrigation must be really good, our technical staff must be strengthened and all these are minimum requirements. (52)

(emphasis in original)
As a result of the new direction to be taken several projects were launched on the estates with the aim of improving social welfare. The British Guiana Sugar Producers' Association appointed a Social Welfare Organiser whose duty it was to promote the new management philosophy. He was attached to the Social Welfare Department of Government and took up duties at the beginning of 1946. The timing of this appointment and the attachment of the Officer to the government department suggests that the company did not wish to appear to have fallen behind the state in the advancement of workers' interests. Historically, the provision of housing and medical attention had been used to control workers and also to advance the claims of the planters that the industry benefitted the whole society, with part of that benefit accruing from the provision of houses and hospitals at cost to themselves, and hence to justify low wages. In the post-war period the anticipated changes in the structure of the workforce which would make it smaller and, it was hoped, more stable made direct control less necessary and increasing labour militancy made it less possible. An appearance of modernity in management-labour relations, including a concern for the welfare aspect, was calculated to advance the interests of the industry. It is also probable that the estates' management wished to retain autonomy over the estates and so were concerned to create parallel provision for estate workers and so avoid state intrusion.

The programme encompassed the formation of new groups for youths and workers and the strengthening of already existing ones such as the Boy Scouts. A variety of indoor and outdoor activities were encouraged in these groups including sports, handicrafts, film shows and the use of libraries which were started on some larger estates. Sports clubs with the accent on cricket, were particularly encouraged and the sports
grounds and other facilities upgraded.

For women and girls homecraft classes were introduced, sponsored by the wife of the Social Welfare Organiser, apparently on a non-paid, voluntary basis. In addition, modern creches, to be used by working mothers, were being built and staffed by trained personnel. These were replacing the old "grannie" system which had persisted from the days of slavery and in which some old women of the community with no formal training were recognised by the estates as child-minders.

All these activities were promoted as likely to contribute to character building, civic pride, the profitable use of leisure time and the improvement of industrial relations. Trade union activity amongst sugar workers and the growing strength and militancy of the union encouraged management to seek for a basis for a new relationship with workers. The promotion of social welfare was a relatively cheap, non-controversial area which could be hoped to contribute to that new relationship. Why, however, the stress on developing traits of independence and community feeling, when for decades the estates had encouraged quite the opposite? As the Venn Report noted, the social welfare programmes did not represent pure altruism on the part of the estates' management:

"The Companies have declared it to be their policy to foster the self reliance of their employees and to encourage them to stand on their own feet. Following this principle they have since the war embarked on a considerable programme of social welfare on the estates, feeling that, by an examination and understanding of the problems and difficulties of their employees and by the provision of more amenities of life, they will point the way to a higher standard of living and give an incentive to personal and family ambition ... Increased productivity is needed today in the industry and a self-reliant man with an incentive to improve his position is naturally enough going to be a keen worker and put more effort into his job." (56)
Historically, sugar had been produced by a mass of casual, relatively undifferentiated labour. Whilst the proclivity of that labour to work less than a full week and sporadically at that, due to a preference for tending rice lands and vegetable plots, had been a cause of concern to proprietors in the past, its impact had been minimised as long as labour was cheap and plentiful and the nature of the bulk of tasks such that one man could easily substitute for another. But as we have seen, the post-war period brought changing conditions. As a consequence decasualisation, a reduced labour force and mechanisation were being introduced. These changes in turn necessitated a different kind of worker. In effect, more modern conditions and relations of work required new worker attitudes consonant with modern production relations characterised by a streamlined labour force and higher levels of production per worker. It was hoped that social welfare measures would breed a desire for social and material advancement which could be fulfilled by working for time over and above that necessary to yield income to meet basic needs.

As well as fuelling ambition and thus producing higher production levels, the welfare measures were expected to play a role in the production of 'responsible' worker attitudes, a role also outlined for state sponsored programmes as indicated earlier. The various activities to be promoted in the sporting and social areas were to be run from community centres built on the estates which in the words of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee were "naturally the focal points for activities aimed at the development of individual and community responsibility among the members."57
The recommendation of the Venn Commission in the area of social welfare was that each large estate should provide for its workers a welfare officer, playing fields, a nursery and a community centre. This was accepted by government and the British Guyana Sugar Producers' Association and by 1953 there were nineteen community centres. The rank and file workers were to be taught and encouraged towards 'independence' and 'responsibility' through community involvement through the centres.

For the local staff members a further innovation was introduced. As indicated earlier, there had always been provision for the recreation of senior staff and the estate Staff club had been important as a symbol of the class and race divisions in plantation society. In the post-war period the Junior Club was instituted as a matter of policy on Booker controlled estates thus extending club membership to the mainly clerical, and other local junior staff. This was a means of binding more tightly the loyalties of local staff to the stratification system of the estate and to the company itself this being seen as necessary in the context of growing nationalism, militancy and anti-colonialist feelings in the country.

A critical awareness of the relationship between colour and status was developing in the Caribbean as a whole and creating a potentially explosive situation. In a society where class lines followed colour lines very closely, the possibility of race conflict aggravating labour conflict was clear. On the estates the class/colour relationship had always been very clear, underlined by their social organisation. The (usually white) planter and his (often white, expatriate) overseers and managers occupied a social sphere distinct from the labourers, indentured or free. Their housing was physically separate and of a greatly superior kind. Their social life was conducted differently and in
different places, with the staff clubs playing an important role in
marking lines of status and racial differentiation.

The new political climate in the post-war period indicated to the
companies that some blurring of the class/colour lines would be advisable
if anti-white/anti-management sentiments were not to be aggravated. The
high priority given to the creation of junior staff clubs attests to the
urgency with which the companies viewed the problem of securing the
loyalty of the more 'responsible' sections of the work force. That the
estate social workers themselves were to play a similar role is indicated
by this further reflection from J. Campbell, Director of Bookers'
McConnel Ltd., on the training of social workers:

"I most sincerely hope this experiment will succeed not only
because good local Social Welfare Officers are badly needed to
carry out the mass of the work to be done in this sphere, but also
because the influence and leavening effect of young Indians who
have gained balance and a sense of proportion in a position of
some authority in the sugar industry would be immeasurably
valuable." (59)

Social welfare on the estates developed as part of management
strategy to transform the labour force into one more appropriate for
the execution of modern production practices and business philosophy.
In addition, it was designed to dampen discontent with plantation society
and its manifestations of class/colour differences. In actuality, by
promoting ambition and independence it probably caused higher
expectations which in turn provoked greater dissatisfaction.
(i) **Urban Housing**

Urban housing was, up to the forties, largely free from state control of any kind except that relating to public health ordinances. There was no planning authority nor any government responsibility assumed for the provision or supervision of housing. The city of Georgetown, unlike other colonial cities, was not superimposed on an existing city grown out of traditional culture and pre-capitalist economic systems. It developed originally as a port for the transport of sugar and cotton and became in addition the military and administrative centre of the colonial state. Finally, it became also the commercial centre for local merchants and for the sugar companies, more particularly Bookers, which extended operations in Guyana to the selling of agricultural implements, dry goods, groceries and pharmaceutical items. Housing in the city was largely owned by large landlords who had successfully resisted, through their control of municipal committees, any attempts to control their operations.

The growth in the city's population in the twentieth century had resulted in overcrowding and deterioration of housing stock. A Housing Committee of 1934 had reported in terms that were surprisingly enlightened. It recommended that the building of tenement ranges be made an offence and that the conversion of two or three-storeyed buildings into tenements be similarly treated. It also suggested that government assistance be given to proprietors to improve their properties. Most importantly it was recommended that the government enter the arena of public housing via the setting up of a housing trust and the giving of financial aid, for it was considered that:

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"It is impossible, in our opinion, for the scheme to be carried through by private enterprise. There is a gap between what the private owner considers an economic rental and what the tenants can pay." (60)

Nothing came of these recommendations and it seems likely that interests which militated against the state expanding its role and hence raising expenditure, and thus taxation, prevailed. The disturbances of the late thirties, however, made the authorities, both at Colonial Office and local government levels, aware that social conditions, including housing, had to be improved if further troubles were to be averted.

It was in this period that a link between poor housing and social disturbance began to be recognised. The Department of Labour and Local Government in Guyana reported:

"Evidence is not lacking to show that part of labour unrest is due to the realisation, however vague, on the part of the worker that his standard of living is too low and that he can never hope to raise that standard until his house is provided with a degree of comfort which is at present beyond his reach ..... good housing accommodation forms an important link in the promotion of satisfactory relations between the employer and his workers, and from this aspect as well as social grounds it is desirable that some standard should be laid down and enforced for providing the plantation worker with an improvement in his housing." (61)

Further, by the end of the 1930s both the Orde-Browne Report and the Royal Commission were recommending that "any slum clearance scheme should be undertaken as an essential social service rather than an economic proposition".62

In the Caribbean, as elsewhere in the colonial world and indeed Britain too, it was clear that large segments of the working class would be unable to pay economic rents for improved housing and therefore it was not to be realistically expected that private enterprise would undertake the re-housing of this group without some financial inducement from government. That colonial governments should become involved in
housing, at least in respect of slum clearance and related re-housing, became part of colonial policy empire-wide. A Colonial Office Paper stated:

"In the Colonial Empire as in the United Kingdom, slum clearance schemes must often be regarded as a social service essential to the community rather than as an economic proposition." (63)

In Guyana the Colonial Office directive in the area of housing was translated initially into a survey of housing needs conducted in Georgetown in 1945 and guided by the Town Planning Advisor to the Comptroller of Welfare and Development. The results of the survey indicated the depth of the problem. Seven thousand, nine hundred and ninety-four houses were surveyed and of these 2,309 were deemed unfit for human habitation, 5,303 needed repair and a mere 382 were considered structurally sound. Over 90% of the dwellings were rented, a factor which obviously contributed a great deal to the problem and which was compounded by the inability of many residents to pay high rents. Not only were the structures generally of poor quality, they were also overcrowded. The tenement was the predominant form of housing: 58.5% of housing in Georgetown and 54.6% in New Amsterdam (the other, much smaller, urban area) was of this type. This, together with the fact that very few dwellings had more than two bedrooms, (indeed most [58.6%] only had one), contributed to a high rate of overcrowding as judged by density per bedroom. The Town Planning Advisor's conclusion was that the slums of Georgetown were worse than those anywhere else in the British Caribbean.

Pressure on existing housing had been increasing due to natural increase and the flow of people into the city over the previous two decades and was likely to continue to increase as a result of a continuance of urban drift and natural population increase. [See Table
In addition, a rise in building costs and a shortage of materials resulting from war conditions had contributed both to a slowing down in new developments and dilapidation of existing housing. Finally, the introduction of rent restriction covering all housing in 1941 acted to make some landlords less able or willing to make repairs. In some cases they refused to make repairs so that the Council would make a closing order on the property, the tenants would be forced to leave and they could introduce new, higher-paying tenants. Another practice was to evict on the grounds of nuisance and convert a house into more lucrative 'apartments' or demolish a low rental building entirely and build another high cost accommodation on the land. These ploys made the housing situation of the lower income group critical.

A housing authority of the type recommended by the 1934 Committee was eventually created by the Housing Ordinance No. 24 of 1946. Linked with this legislation was a further ordinance to control development in both rural and urban areas, the Town and Country Planning Ordinance No. 25, 1946. Together these ordinances marked a radical extension of the state's powers in this area. The Planning Ordinance, which was based on similar British legislation, represented the assumption of government powers and responsibilities in the control of land development. Planning was to be effected through a Central Housing Planning Authority set up under the Housing Ordinance. This Authority could declare an area a slum and through purchase or compulsory order acquire the land and secure re-development.

State involvement in the urban areas was, however, confined to the clearance of slums and the provision of alternative accommodation. By 1953, that is over the first seven years of the Ordinance's existence, the only new project under way was in connection with the clearance of Albouystown, a notorious dockside slum area; the re-housing of 231
families from the district was to be accomplished through the building of 100 low cost houses for rental in La Penitence, an area just outside the city which had been canefields. This was in addition to a small project to house 48 families at Wortmanville, an area of Georgetown, begun in 1946. Even this scheme for two-bedroom self-contained flats did not meet the needs of the poorer section as the monthly rental of $10 was beyond the means of most of the working class and suited more to artisans, foremen and persons of similar status. 69

Slum clearance alone could not affect the other major housing problem in Georgetown which was a shortage of accommodation. Measures to encourage building were taken, mainly tax exemptions for builders 70, but more radical measures and the finance to support them were not introduced until the 1953 crisis provided the impetus.

(ii) Rural Housing

Whilst housing needs in the rural areas were perhaps less dramatic, they were still great. The bigger estates had been improving their housing provision but many families were still housed in ranges which in one contemporary view represented "the worst kind of urban dwelling". 71 In the villages the houses were often clustered together and very small, producing overcrowding not dissimilar to that found in urban slums. The housing of people on former sugar estates which had been converted to rice posed a particular problem. When the estates ceased cultivation, workers often continued to occupy the range housing provided by the estate management, which had in many places become extremely dilapidated. 72

The main lines of rural development in housing were defined in terms of the decision to revamp the sugar industry and develop rice.
Accommodation of the needs of the sugar industry was accomplished through the setting up of a Sugar Industry Welfare Fund from which housing loans were made to sugar workers.\textsuperscript{73} The development of rice was to be assisted through the establishment of further land settlement schemes. As in social welfare, the stress was more on rural rehabilitation than urban problems.

\textbf{The Housing of Sugar Workers}

The Moyne Commission had addressed the question of estate housing and concluded that the government must accept some liability for the rehousing of estates' workers. That they should somehow be rehoused could no longer be questioned - and indeed was not questioned by the Commissioners.

The estates' managements had shown themselves unwilling or unable to comply with the recommendations of a 1932 Committee that housing be improved and cottages only (not ranges) be built. By 1936 the Central Board, dissatisfied with the level of estate rehousing activities, had set down new standards, but this had produced only limited results. Change was slow and by 1941 the view of the Department of Labour was that the "very small improvement in the housing conditions (on estates was) a matter for serious concern".\textsuperscript{74} By 1944, 1,163 of the 1,371 ground ranges condemned by the Board were still standing.\textsuperscript{75}

Although estates had been willing to keep on the responsibility for housing estate residents and government more than willing to allow them to do so, the continuous labour unrest in the industry, fueled by increased expectations characteristic of this period made it politic for both estates and the colonial government to resolve the problem of providing improved housing more satisfactorily.
In addition the social and demographic characteristics of the estates' population changed considerably between 1900 and 1950. The ratio of women to men rose from 63:100 in 1891 to 87:100 in 1931. A more natural balance arose after the cessation of the large scale immigration which had led to a situation where males were in the majority. The number of ex-indentured labourers taking up their option to return to India had steadily declined from between one and two thousand per annum in the first decade of the century to the 311 who returned in the last ship chartered for the purpose in 1949. The estate communities were increasingly composed of locally born families rather than foreign born males. This change in the structure of the population altered both housing requirements and housing expectations of the population. In addition, increasingly the estates population included persons who did not actually work for the estates. As indicated earlier, one estimate was that of a total adult population of 45,917 persons, 11,735 were not employed by, nor ever worked for the estates but were engaged in trades such as bakery, butchery and dress making; that is, they were privately employed servicing the estate community. In addition, there were approximately 4,189 children, bringing the percentage resident but not engaged by the estates to 22.2%.

Whilst the estate population contained increasing numbers of persons who did no work for the estate, on many estates an increasing amount of work was done by non-residents. As Giglioli put it:

"The condition of mutual advantage which caused the customs established during indenture to be continued even after the cessation of indenture and its legal implications, have now to a great extent, ceased to exist or, at least, appear to have changed to the unilateral advantage of the estate resident." (79)

Developments in the industry during the forties leading to the movement towards rationalisation of the labour input and mechanisation
also provided reasons for estates' managements to alter their view of worker housing. There emerged a policy of differentiating between key or 'nuclear' workers and non-essential or 'extra-nuclear' workers. Following on the recommendations of the Royal Commissioners, the Comptroller of Development and Welfare proposed that estates should make land for house lots available and either given free, sold or leased to government, and that the Central Housing and Planning Authority should provide the financial assistance necessary to enable estate workers to build their own houses. 'Nuclear' workers, he proposed, would continue to be housed by the estates.

Discussions between the British Guiana Sugar Producers' Association, the Commissioner of Local Government and the Colonial Secretary ensued and the proposals were adopted in principle. Government thus assumed the responsibility for re-housing an estimated 6,555 families. It was, however, by no means clear from whence the finances for such a large undertaking would come, and in 1947 the Development Sub-Committee on Housing put forward only a 'pilot' scheme involving three estates - Wales, Versailles, Port Mourant - which would involve the building of 1,596 houses. In 1948, however, a levy on sugar exports, legislated for two years earlier was imposed and the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund (S.I.L.W.F.) instituted. It was intended that this fund should be made available for the housing of sugar workers and on the strength of this the re-housing project was to be extended to all estates.
### Table 8(ii)

**Home Ownership on Estates by Sugar Workers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Resident in Estate Owned Housing</th>
<th>Resident in Self Owned on Estate Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>47,054</td>
<td>27,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>43,831</td>
<td>27,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>43,832</td>
<td>29,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>44,451</td>
<td>30,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>42,761</td>
<td>33,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>43,287</td>
<td>34,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>41,432</td>
<td>38,738</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** Department of Labour Reports. N/A - not available.

The finance for the project became available in 1950 when the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee took over responsibility for all house loans advanced from the estates. From Table 8(ii) it can be seen that re-housing was proceeding fairly rapidly even before Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund loans came into operation. The dominant company, Bookers Bros., McConnel Ltd., had already begun to encourage home ownership and resettlement for surplus workers before the agreement with government was made. In 1940 an area at Plantation Bath was selected for workers to build their own houses on. The intention was that "the settlers [would] be able to obtain casual employment on the estate in the same way as workers who live in the adjoining villages." 85
Even this encouragement of home ownership was not new as since 1917 selected individuals had been allowed to lease estate land upon which to build a house, so that by 1946, 41% of the estate population lived in their own houses, often built with financial assistance from the companies. With government's assumption of responsibility for the housing of non-essential workers, the estates could support an accelerated drive towards self-ownership. Further, a new sensibility was developing, leading to the "general opinion" that:

"A large number of workers live in their own houses, frequently away from the estates and ... these employees are more independent and, with more incentive, are keener and better workmen than those who rely on the estates for their housing." (86)

The advantages of worker home-ownership to the estates were, by the 1940s, several. It was clear that the old ranges had to go. Many were simply falling down anyway, but yet more importantly they had become a focus of worker discontent. As the Venn Commissioners put it, referring to the ranges:

"There can be no peace on the sugar estates until this depressing legacy from former days is removed." (87)

It was obviously cheaper for the companies to encourage self-ownership than to build and maintain large numbers of new houses particularly if higher standards were demanded. The old imperative of tying a large workforce to the estate no longer operated so forcibly and the estates could concentrate on the rehousing of the estimated 5,262 families (of a total of 10,944) containing nuclear workers. These families were to be housed by the estates on condition of their continued employment with the estate.

In 1938 the sugar companies were defending range housing before the Orde Brown Inquiry on the ground that East Indian patterns of
socialisation led to a preference for this kind of accommodation, and had found that their provision of housing without legal obligation to do so provide a useful factor in bargaining with Government. By the post-war period, conditions had changed so drastically that the old ranges were finally condemned, although they were not to disappear completely for many years, and the companies were content to disengage themselves from the responsibility for housing it had so long suited them to take. They did, however, continue to sponsor home-ownership schemes of various kinds themselves after the division of responsibility with government, in the absence of immediate action from that quarter, until 1950 when financial responsibility for all such schemes was assumed by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. From that year it offered home loans to all sugar estate residents. Plots were leased out by the estates at a nominal ground rent of $2.88 per annum for a period of twenty-five years with the right to renew the lease. The estates individually retained the prerogative to decide whether land should be leased or sold to the Government. (The major company, Bookers, retained control until the 1960s.) They remained responsible for roads and main drainage.

Although Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund loans could be obtained for building on land not owned by the estates, very few loans of this type were applied for. In 1952 for example there were 1,829 applications in relation to estate land, and 77 for loans to build on land outside the sugar area. This preference for remaining on estate lands was undoubtedly due primarily to the favourable terms of lease and the prepared land offered by the companies. For the estates relocation of workers on estate lands meant that even whilst they were going ahead with mechanisation plans, they could still be assured of part-time casual labour located nearby whenever it was necessary, such as at crop time.

Between 1951 and mid 1953, 3,200 houses were built with Sugar
Industry Labour Welfare Fund loans, this contrasted with the comparatively slow pace in urban development. The generous terms offered to the sugar workers, with loans of up to $1,000.00, representing 50% of the cost of an average-sized house, also contrasted sharply with the difficulties experienced by urban low income workers in securing finance.

In this way, then, part of the cost of housing sugar workers, except for 'key' personnel, was transferred to the state and thus 'socialised'. The method by which this was accomplished had two important long-term consequences. Firstly, the people being re-housed on estate lands were almost entirely East Indians which meant that ethnically segregated communities were established again even after the break-up of the original 'plantation communities'. Secondly, because the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund monies came directly from a levy on sugar exports, the unusual principle was established of allocating government revenues to one section of the workforce, which in this particular case was also identifiable as belonging to a specific ethnic group.

These factors undoubtedly enhanced the feelings of insecurity that had been developing within the black community. The concentration of development funds on agriculture, the support to the sugar industry and the development of rice, clearly favoured the East Indian group. The increasing importance of rice had led to Indians acquiring land for its production, often from Africans. One commentator saw it thus:

"Within recent years an acute sociological problem has developed in British Guiana. It is the supplanting of the Negro by the East Indians in ownership of land in the coastal areas and the need for creating fresh avenues of employment for the dispossessed landholders." (90)
African hopes were for developments in industry and especially in those industries connected with the interior where Africans had traditionally worked; in gold, diamonds and timber.\textsuperscript{91} As noted earlier, however, the years immediately after the war produced little in the way of industrial development and virtually no investment in the interior. Indeed, the major context in which interior development was discussed during the period was in connection with investigations of the prospects for the successful settlement of displaced persons from Europe and surplus population from the West Indian Islands.

Other factors were also important in producing the attitudes involved in the racial disturbances of the early sixties. However, the effects of housing and development policy as a whole contributed to ethnic antagonisms. These seem to have been developing in the post-war period, leading the President of the Transport Workers Union to state in a May Day Parade speech in 1950 that:

"Recently ... an even more dangerous monster, aiming at destroying working class unity, has reared its ugly head in our midst. I refer to the serious obstacle of racial antagonism now being infused in the trade union movement by the invidious propaganda of unscrupulous politicians and careerists who build their following on a racial chauvinistic line to the detriment of working class solidarity."\textsuperscript{(92)}

Social policy of the period could only make more fertile the ground upon which the "monster" fed.
(iii) Other Rural Housing

The most urgent problem in rural housing apart from that involving estate residents was presented by the areas on the Essequibo Coast and Islands, where sugar production had been abandoned for many years. Some of these had been selected as land settlement areas and housing projects were being pursued in relation to this intent. An investigator of this area reported that, with people still using decayed old ranges there was "a need for immediate improvement in housing conditions."93

It was clear that most of the people living in the area who were surviving from the cultivation of small plots of rice lands leased from landlords would, like the urban slum dwellers, be unable to pay economic rents or re-house themselves by building their own houses. As a consequence the Development Sub-Committee recommended that a scheme be adopted for this area which involved subsidies and loans for people earning less than $60.00 per month, amounting to a third of the cost of the building as a grant, and a half of the cost as a loan, with the maximum cost of the building fixed at $650.00.94

Although the rural problem was not considered as dire as the urban situation, improved housing in the countryside was seen as important "as some counter attraction to the town and urban life where overcrowding is already rife and unemployment more than an incipient problem."95

The Sub-Committee's proposal was rejected by the main committee as too costly and approval was given only to an experimental scheme involving the building of 25 houses, the repair of 25 and the enlargement of 25 more in each of the Essequibo areas viz. Leguan, Wakenaam and the Coast. Even this limited plan moved slowly due to the intransigence of the landlords who were unwilling to sell house lots and thereby lose
control over their tenants. The inadequacy of this project can be estimated from the findings of the 1943 survey that 1,954 houses in the areas surveyed ought to be pulled down and that a further 1,545 were in need of repair. The only other project in the rural areas excluding those for the rehousing of surplus estate labour concerned the re-housing of families in dilapidated ranges and cottages on the government controlled Anna Regina estate. The acuteness of the housing problem and the inadequacy of government action or private initiatives to meet it is indicated by the estimate that, with population increasing at around 13,000 per annum by 1950, 2,000 additional units were required each year over and above those replacing old stock.

The post-war housing position in Guyana was very similar to that which could be found in other colonial countries. Lack of planning in the urban areas, poor company housing on the estates and rural poverty had led to a low standard of housing which became critical in a situation of rapid population growth and rising expectations and aspirations.

**Land Settlement**

Land settlement policy in the forties, like housing policy, also tended to give the appearance that one group was being favoured over the other, since it became linked with the development of rice which had always been seen as an 'East Indian crop'. Even before this, land settlement was viewed as promoting East Indian interests against those of Africans. For example, although condemning schemes to date as "petty" one contemporary figure, Alfred Crane, a local senior magistrate and former member of the Legislative Council, contended in 1938 that a third of rice farmers were African and claimed that they, too, should benefit from land settlement schemes. He saw such schemes as the only means of
breaking the stagnating clutch of the estates for the benefit of both racial groups. He argued further that the African, due to the dearth of village lands, was driven to swell the ranks of the urban unemployed. His view of the rural dilemma which, he felt, a land settlement programme would resolve, is interesting for its summation of the developing African view of their own situation:

"Farming in village districts can at best provide villagers with bare subsistence. For the purpose of improving their homes, educating their children and developing their communities, villagers can obtain nothing from their farms and the little progress achieved in the amenities of civilised community and domestic life during the last century has been obtained almost exclusively from money earned in the gold and diamond fields. The great bulk of the people has not emerged from the state of primary poverty since the emancipation. Low wages, which provided less than bare subsistence made savings of any kind impossible .... The accumulation of capital for even small ventures has been impossible." (99)

A. A. Thorne, President of the British Guiana Workers' League, similarly claimed that settlement policy had discriminated against Africans who, he claimed, were already at a disadvantage having been supplanted as skilled labour on the estates by cheaper East Indian labour.\textsuperscript{100} Hence, while land settlement projects to date had had but little effect on patterns of land control in the country, they had produced an effect on African perception of their treatment by government.

As has been shown, land settlement had developed as an expedient way to discharge the state's financial obligations to expired labourers and as an inducement to immigrants to stay in the country. It had then become attached to colonisation schemes. It had never been part of a coherent policy for the development of land or the large scale settlement of local people on their own land. The \textit{ad hoc} nature of land settlement policy is indicated by the lack of unified control for the responsibility of their management, the department responsible for the settlement being
dependent upon the conditions surrounding and time of their assumption by Government.

Table 8(iii)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date Started</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>No. of Farmers</th>
<th>Under Control of</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna Regina</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>8,747</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vergenoegen</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>3,862</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Commissioner of Local Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity Amazon</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
<td>Housing &amp; provision farms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cane Grove &amp; La Bonne Mere</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>7,233</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One consequence of the varying control [see Table 8(iii)] was that the character of the settlement reflected the emphasis of the government department controlling it. Thus Anna Regina, controlled by the Department of Agriculture, was the more efficient in terms of rice production.

By the mid-forties, population increase made colonisation schemes as a means of adding to population redundant. Further, the retaining of East Indian labour or the saving of money on passages to which emigrants were still entitled were no longer important. Land settlement could now be considered in another context: it became an adjunct to the policy evolved to deal with surplus labour from the estates and to the plan for development of the rice industry, itself in a large part a response to the changing labour requirements of the sugar industry. Specifically, land settlement in this period was to be developed in connection with drainage and irrigation schemes. It was reported in 1949 that:

"... in reality land settlement schemes in British Guiana are in fact aiming at providing for the beneficial occupation of sections of land brought within main drainage and irrigation schemes."(101)

The Moyne Report had recommended that land settlement be based on mixed farming with a movement away from specialised export crops. Yet, as we have seen, in the post war period the government significantly withdrew support for the peasant based diversification of crops which had emerged during the war. The agricultural emphasis remained with sugar and with rice as its complement.

The new, planned approach to land settlement as an instrument of development policy began with experiments, including the construction of model houses on the Anna Regina Estate land which was almost exclusively tenanted by East Indian rice farmers. This activity was initiated as
a Colonial Development and Welfare scheme, financed by a grant of £4,225. In 1943 a Land Settlement Committee was set up and a Land Settlement Officer appointed. Two years later a further grant of £57,609 from Colonial Development and Welfare funds was made for land settlement projects.\textsuperscript{103}

Under the Ten Year Development Plan 1947 - 1956, two large drainage and irrigation projects, at Corantyne and Boeraserie were intended to facilitate the development of large areas devoted to rice. The first major new land settlement under the Ten Year Plan at Vergenoegen, on the right bank of the Essequibo, demonstrates the character of land settlement policy in this period. Vergenoegen-\textit{cum-annexis} were estates which had gone out of cultivation and much of the land was now uncultivated, other of it leased out to tenants for the purpose of rice cultivation. Location within the Bonasika irrigation scheme gave access to water. The land was also within 5 1/2 miles of two sugar estates where part-time employment would be available periodically, hence a land settlement scheme would be useful as a means of drawing off surplus population from the estates.\textsuperscript{104} The first thing done after purchase of the land by government on February 1946 was the repair of the drainage and irrigation system "so as to make a portion of the land available for rice cultivation."\textsuperscript{105}

Vergenoegen then, had the virtue of being related to a drainage and irrigation scheme, and thereby made suitable for rice cultivation. Further it was near to estates and so could take off surplus population. The relationship between land settlement, sugar and rice in planning during this period is indicated further by the recommendation made by a 1943 Land Settlement Committee that the size of holding offered to
settlers should depend on the possibility of estate work being available to them with smaller plots going to those in areas adjacent to sugar estates. In a similar vein, the Development Sub-Committee on Agriculture recommended that no expansion of the spring crop of rice be allowed in sugar areas so that rice would not be entirely in competition with sugar for labour.

In the same year, 1947, government acquired Plantations Cane Grove and La Bonne Mere, also in the Essequibo area, after a petition was made by residents requesting such government assistance following the cessation of cultivation by the proprietors. Sugar production in Essequibo County had been gradually declining and had ceased altogether during the war. Apart from government owned estates which had been given over to rice, large tracts of land were in the possession of landlords who often "resolutely refuse[d] to grant long leases or sell house lots - a course which they consider[ed] would destroy the control over their tenants possessed by them." The state was seen by the farmers as a preferable landlord. Cane Grove and La Bonne Mere too became largely made over to rice cultivation, although the raising of cattle was also encouraged.

By 1950 the relationship between land settlement and the cultivation of rice seems to have been firmly established. The Local Government Commissioner reported that:

"Land settlements are established primarily for the growing of an export crop - rice, and to serve peasant cultivators who desire to reside on and make their livings from their holdings and who do not desire except in a larger degree to supplement the returns obtained from their holdings by undertaking wage-earning employment."
Here too then, the direction of policy appeared to favour the East Indians who were the chief rice growers.

The significance of land settlement projects in Guyana can be seen when the context of land ownership and tenure is examined. Ninety percent the colony was Crown Land. Since 1931 the policy had been not to grant freehold, but to give grants of leasehold for up to 99 years, more generally for 21 years, and this was the practice adopted on the new land settlements. The rest of the land on the coastal strip was in the hands of the estates, or of landlords with large holdings in the case of coastal land no longer used for estate sugar cultivation. The landlords tended to be conservative in terms of the development of the land. Tenants had no security of tenure, leases being renewed in general annually. Landlords also tended to be against tenants owning their own houses due to the loss of influence for them which this entailed.

A Departmental Report of 1954 summed up the position thus:

"Some sugar estates provide small portions of well-drained and irrigated lands to their workers, but very often the only course open to the small farmer is the rental or lease of Crown Lands which are held by private individuals on long lease at nominal rental. These lands are let out to farmers under conditions of varying severity. The rent is either exorbitant or the drainage has been allowed to deteriorate. In other cases, irrigation facilities are either non-existent or ingress and egress a problem. Should a landlord desire for any reason to dispossess his tenant he applies methods designed to force his unfortunate 'subject' to abandon his holding. In many cases the difficulties with which the tenant is faced are accentuated by the fact that the landlord is rice miller and moneylender as well." (115)

Land settlement schemes represented an opportunity to break the stranglehold of landlords on the development of the coastlands and, for the settler, better conditions for the growing of crops and securing of his livelihood but to have any real impact on the predominant pattern of Guyanese economic and social life a large, integrated programme was
necessary. The ownership of most of the prime agricultural land by the estates and big landlords remained a stumbling block to the aspirations of the landless which was unaffected by the land settlement programme. The programme continued to be relatively small-scale and linked to the opening up of expensively claimed new rice lands.

HEALTH

As we have seen, the developments in medical care, public health and sanitation which had occurred in Guyana since 1920 occurred mainly on the sugar estates. The growth of village populations had not been met by increased medical provision and large areas of the countryside, outside of the estates, were in effect without medical care. The Royal Commission had recommended that rural health centres be established and financed by Colonial Development and Welfare funds. The aim of the health units was:

"to supply at low cost the various activities which are required to promote the health of rural communities ... the development of maternity and child welfare work, venereal disease clinics, school medical services and the better education of the public in health including nutrition ..." (116)

In Guyana work on health clinics began before Colonial Development and Welfare funds became available, taking up the recommendation of the Orde Browne Inquiry. The programme continued using these funds in 1940. By 1947 there were nine of them. Apart from the clinics, there were six other Colonial Development and Welfare funded projects. Two projects were concerned with the provision of additional medical staff, a school Medical Officer and a Sister Tutor, one with the training of sanitary inspectors. A fourth project aimed at providing medical services for the Amerindians who inhabited the interior of the country.
The most far reaching project was the establishment of the Mosquito Service which developed out of the Malaria Survey and Yellow Fever Campaign projects. The Malaria Survey continued the work initiated by the Malaria Research Unit, and was followed by a systematic malaria eradication campaign which brought malaria under control by the end of 1947.

Apart from the dramatic success of the malaria campaign, the position of the rural population not engaged with the sugar industry was not much improved during the 1940s. As noted earlier, the Government Medical Officers of Health could hardly cover the areas to which they were assigned:

"Most of the medical districts are too large and populous to be efficiently or adequately served by their respective officers. For example, the Port Mourant Officer has charge of a district 23 miles in length with an estimated population of 32,000."(119)

Nor was the urban service keeping pace with population increase or increased demand. The number of patients dealt with in the Government hospitals and dispensaries on both in- and out-patient bases was growing fast. At the No. 1. Dispensary in Georgetown, for example, 17,252 patients were seen in 1939, whilst in 1944 the figure was 32,543.120

The rural problem was aggravated by the almost total absence of any doctors in private practice. Only one country village, Buxton, had a private practitioner resident.121 Government Medical Officers of Health were also in short supply as were hospital based specialists. The latter were mainly expatriates from the Colonial Service and Guyana did not pay well in comparison with other colonial territories.

The 1947 Health Sub-Committee of the Development Planning Committee
proposed two new cottage hospitals, at Mahaicony and Wakenaam, and fifteen new rural centres, with extensions to existing facilities at Bartica, Suddie, Berbice and Mabaruma. Its other major recommendation for extending coverage of the rural population was that the Government and the Guiana Sugar Producers' Association should come to an arrangement whereby estate hospitals would treat persons in their area who were not estate residents in addition to those who were.122

A large proportion of admissions to the estates' hospitals had been due to malaria and malaria related diseases. As indicated, the almost total eradication of malaria was accomplished by 1950. This made the old hospitals, with their large capacity, redundant. As can be seen from Table 8(iv), the number of admissions was drastically reduced between 1946 and 1948 as the incidence of malaria fell.

Table 8(iv)

Sugar Estates Hospitals Admissions 1944 – 1948

All Diseases and Malaria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Admissions (all diseases)</th>
<th>Malaria Admissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>21,222</td>
<td>9,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>17,745</td>
<td>9,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>24,527</td>
<td>5,144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>11,113</td>
<td>1,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>12,843</td>
<td>872</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Report of a Committee of Inquiry into the Sugar Industry of B.G. (Venn) p. 179 Table xxxvi

The Venn Commissioners found practically empty estate hospitals, some harbouring only a few old people whose 'ailment' they judged to be destitution. In one hospital with accommodation for 100 there were only
seven occupied beds. The twenty-one sugar estates hospitals had a total accommodation for 1,409, that is one bed per 51 persons living on the estates, as against an accommodation ratio of one bed per 993 persons in the five existing state hospitals. This capacity was now more than generous and represented an unnecessary expense to the estates. From the estates' viewpoint an extension of state provision to 'extra-nuclear' workers and a rationalisation of their own provision for 'nuclear' labour was both economical and suited to the new organisational principles of the industry.

The Venn Report noted the gross underprovision of hospital facilities for the countryside:

"It startled us to find that outside the estates, no provision exists at the moment for hospital treatment in the villages and rural districts. Urgent cases are sent to the hospitals at Georgetown or New Amsterdam but these, the only two of the five public hospitals in the colony which serve the 'sugar belt' are themselves overcrowded with town patients." (125)

The Health Sub-Committee's proposal that Government arrange with estate managements for the treatment of non-estate residents on payment of agreed fees was rejected by the Commissioners on the grounds that, on the whole, estate hospitals were not up to modern standards, in some areas they were unnecessarily numerous and generally they were badly sited in relation to emerging patterns of population distribution. In addition, the Commissioners were not satisfied with medical supervision in estates' hospitals, noting that Government Medical Officers visited estate hospitals only on average three times a week. The rest of the time sicknurse/dispensers were in charge and it was considered that, even when these were fully qualified, this grade of worker was not trained to take such a level of responsibility.
The recommendations of the Commission were in line with the emerging requirements of a stream-lined sugar industry and also with the necessity of developing a more comprehensive system of care for the burgeoning rural population inside and outside the industry. In essence they suggested that:

1. The government assume responsibility for all rural hospital services.

2. Those estates' hospitals that were redundant due to their proximity to others should be demolished immediately with the rest remaining in temporary use until the needs of the whole rural population had been assessed.

3. The Government should ultimately provide at least four, and preferably six, additional, state hospitals sited so as to serve both estates and villages.

4. The estates should each provide a modern dispensary for its resident 'nuclear' population, instead of the existing hospital, and also an ambulance service for the carrying of hospital cases to the nearest state institution.

5. That a Government Medical Officer be designated to supervise these dispensaries.

The industry, which had for a long period found it useful to assume responsibility for the provision of health care for its workers, counting the sums incurred as production costs, was now willing to quit that responsibility and cut costs. In 1938 the managements of all the estates had agreed together that an Estates Medical Officer be appointed and that a central hospital for each sugar estate area be established to meet the needs of the estates in its vicinity.127 This indicates that
estate managements held at that time an intention to continue providing a full medical service to estate residents. However, as we have seen in the case of estate housing, the steady increase in the number of estate residents not employed in the industry and the plans for mechanisation with consequent reduction in the workforce, made the provision of extensive coverage of large populations unattractive. In addition, many of the estate hospitals, although held up as models of what could be achieved in tropical medicine at the turn of the century, had become dilapidated and required replacement or extensive refurbishment. This encouraged managements to view favourably schemes which would lessen rather than increase their expenditure on medical provision.

The recommendations of the Venn Commission were accepted in principal by Government but, as in the case of the housing sector outside of the rehousing of estate workers, the pace of development which followed was slow. This prompted the British Guyana Sugar Producers' Association to implement the reorganisation of their medical services from 1952. In this year the demolition of obsolete hospitals began, a process largely accomplished by 1956, and new dispensaries took their place.\textsuperscript{128} [See Table 8(v)]

Table 8(v)

Number of Estate Hospitals 1926 - 1969 Selected Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Estate Hospitals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Reports of the Surgeon General (1926 - 49), Reports of the Medical Department (1954 - 60).
In this way the estates reduced their responsibility for medical care, which for nearly half a century they had assumed without legal obligation. Clearly this, together with the rapidly growing population and its settlement in new areas, threw additional burdens on the state sector. Hence both in health and housing the demand for state services grew dramatically because of the extension of state responsibility to the whole population at a time when natural population growth and increased demand were already creating pressure on existing provision, and when political developments encouraged the government to seek to meet these demands. The total number of general hospital beds in 1937 was 2,555: 938 in public hospitals, 50 in a private hospital and 1,567 in estate hospitals.\textsuperscript{129} In 1954 the total number was 3,113: 2,263 in public hospitals, of which approximately 900 were 'special' beds, and 850 in private and estate hospitals.\textsuperscript{130} State provision together with private expansion failed to substitute for estate provision since the number of general beds actually fell to about 2,200.

The sparsity and low level of existing services made it difficult to effect any dramatic change without high expenditure, and whilst the health budget did increase between 1946 and 1953, material shortages during the war and the immediate post-war years, increased costs after 1950 due to the re-evaluation of the pound sterling and staffing shortages throughout made progress slow. The Director of Medical Services remarked in his Report for 1954 that:

"It is extremely worrying to the Medical Department that few of the major and minor improvements to Medical Institutions in the colony which it has recommended for a considerable period have commenced." (131)
Colonial Development and Welfare expenditure did not have any radical effect on the level of health provision, with the major exception of the malaria control programme. Nor did planning in the forties attempt any re-evaluation of priorities. The programmes introduced tended to be directed, as in previous years, at specific diseases rather than attempting to improve general standards of health. The accent continued to be on cure rather than prevention. The urban bias of state provision was not radically altered even in the years immediately following the decision to withdraw estate hospital provision.

CONCLUSION

Developments in social policy between 1940 and 1953 were essentially conditioned by the changing requirements of the sugar industry. By this period this policy was evolved not by a legislature composed of sugar barons and their agents but by bureaucrats who decided that sugar was to remain the primary crop and that rice was to be encouraged as its adjunct. Interior development was never supported in any substantial way, nor was the development of industry. Changes in the sugar industry were of critical importance in the shape taken by land settlement policy, in social welfare policy and in housing and health policy.

The level of social and economic development achieved during these years and the direction that they took failed to keep pace with the population growth or to dampen the emergence of radical nationalism. In so far as it was the intention of the colonial administration to encourage economic and social development to a level where 'responsible' independent politics would emerge, it manifestly failed. Economic development was too slow to provide alternate employment for those made redundant in the sugar industry, or to create jobs to match the increase
in population. Social policy was inadequate either to meet people's material needs in health, housing or income, or to produce more 'stable' communities. The direction taken in both economic and social policy acted to prolong the life of the plantation society with its traditional confinement of economic activity and population to the coastal strip, its emphasis on export cash crops, agricultural bias and racial separation. Indeed, as has been indicated, the policies adopted actually increased ethnic separation and hostility.
NOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT


2. Report of the Department of Labour, 1942, p.15

3. ibid.

4. ibid.


6. ibid, p.77.


8. ibid.

9. See for example, Bowles, B.D. op.cit. p. 177 for a reference to this role of co-operatives in Tanganyika.


13. ibid.


15. ibid.


18. ibid, p.193 .

19. ibid, p.213.

20. ibid, p.214-215.


25. 4H Clubs are clubs for rural youth which place their emphasis on agricultural training and character development.


32. ibid


34. Daily Chronicle, January 19th, 1930.

35. C.O. 950/651 Evidence of the B.G. Congress of General Workers to the Moyne Commission, Submission by A.A. Thorne.


39. ibid.


43. ibid, p.27-29.

44. ibid, p.42.
45. ibid, p.96.

46. ibid

47. Manpower Citizens Association Foundation Souvenir, 1939 (pamphlet) p. 4.


49. ibid, p.133.

50. ibid. It is interesting to note that as late as 1949, by which time trade union activity on sugar estates was well established, the Venn Commissioners felt that "dependence" was still a predominant characteristic of workers.

51. ibid, p.140.

52. "Bookers Sugar 1954." Supplement to the Annual Report and Accounts of Booker Bros. McConnell and Co. Ltd., 1954, p.89. The quotation is from a letter to "NPS" from J.M. Campbell, the Chairman, dated 24th February 1946, included in Campbell's postscript to the supplement.

53. Graphic, 27th January 1946.


55. ibid, p.135

56. ibid, p.133


58. Report of the Royal West India Committee (Moyne) pp. 59-60.


68. Daily Chronicle 19th and 22nd April, 1949.

69. Graphic, 19th January 1946. This was the view expressed by Mrs. Bayley, a city councillor and social worker.


72. Papers Relating to Development Planning, op.cit. p.289. Also Moyne Report, p.175; "Some of the worst examples are to be found in British Guyana both near estates within a mile of the capital and along the Essiquibo Coast, once the centre of a sugar industry which has now deserted their area. East Indians are closely crowded in ranges on the verge of collapse lacking every amenity and frequently almost surrounded by stagnant water".

73. ibid, p.289.


75. C.O. 114/235 Report of the Department of Labour, 1944, p.3. Ground ranges were range type buildings with no floor laid. The floor was formed by compressing the earth.


77. ibid, p.187-88, Table 8. Nath notes that during the thirties large numbers of the returnees were given free passage on grounds of disability or destitution.

78. Papers Relating to Development Planning, op.cit. p.311.


80. The terms 'nuclear' and 'extra-nuclear' were used by the Comptroller of Development and Welfare in his proposals for the rehousing of the estates' populations and came to be official terms used to refer to full and part-time casual workers.


82. Papers Relating to Development Planning op. cit., p.319, Table IV

83. ibid. p.290.

84. This measure was adopted in all the sugar producing colonies. See, for example, Titmuss, R., Smith, B. A. Social Policies and Population Growth in Mauritius. Methuen: London 1961.

86. Venn Report, op. cit., p. 122.

87. ibid.


90. "Argosy Christmas Issue 1944." "Industrialisation would solve sociological problems" (no page numbers).

91. ibid. Note the reference to the statement made by the Colonial Treasurer, Hon. E. F. McDavid (a local, coloured person) to the West Indian Conference: "The Negro may lose out on the coastlands, but with the interior he more than holds his own. He is the adventurer who works in the forests. Interior Development would provide an outlet for him".


94. ibid.

95. ibid p. 54.

96. ibid.

97. ibid p. 289.


100. C.O. 950/651. Memo of Evidence to the Royal West India Commission from the B.G.W.L. Region 2, 1938.


103. ibid p. 75.

104. Papers Relating to Development Planning, op.cit. p.292

105. ibid.

108. ibid p. 286.
112. Legislative Council Paper 17, 1944, p. 2. The significance of this is to be seen in the context of agricultural conditions in coastal Guyana where drainage and irrigation are essential.
118. Papers Relating to Development Planning, op. cit., p. 15.
119. ibid.
122. Papers Relating to Development Planning, op. cit., p. 15.
126. ibid.
131. ibid
CHAPTER NINE

SOCIAL POLICY AND THE 1953 POLITICAL CRISIS

In this chapter it will be argued that the political "crisis", i.e. the success of the Peoples' Progressive Party (P.P.P.), acted as a spur to a continued high level of spending on the social sector in an effort to wean the masses away from nationalist radicalism. This path was contrary to the one recommended by a Mission from an international bank.

Before the events of 1953 described in Chapter Seven, the government had commissioned the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (I.B.R.D.) to conduct an economic survey of Guyana.¹ The resultant Mission evaluated the existing development programme and suggested its own 5 Year Plan for 1954 - 1958. Its Report, presented in August 1953, pointed out what it considered to be a disproportionate increase in spending on non-economic, that is 'social welfare', functions between 1949 and 1953. It mentioned also that a 'substantial share' of the development programme itself had gone to this sector in the form of public health, education and housing projects. The general thrust of the Bank's own proposed development plan was to "give greater weight to the directly productive sectors of the economy, which did not ... receive an adequate share of past investment allocations."²

The Report recommended that the agricultural sector be expanded and diversified and additional food crops grown to meet local needs. The coastal transport and communications systems were to be improved. Forestry was to be upgraded. The problems arising in the wake of population increase were recognised and in the social sector higher expenditure on both rural and urban housing was recommended as were
additional primary schools to meet the growth in the number of school children. The problem of population pressure on land in the rural areas was clearly recognised:

"Chronic agrarian under employment looms as one of the main problems of the present farming structure." (4)

There was, it was reported, no prospect of the sugar industry offering more employment in the foreseeable future; mechanisation in the rice fields was liable to reduce employment possibilities in this crop. It was estimated that there would be an average increase of 600 farmers per annum which, over a five year period, would necessitate an additional 45,000 acres if each new farmer was to be settled on farms of 15 acres. This meant that:

"The expanded schemes, plus additional riverain lands which may be opened by public or private enterprise will be barely enough to meet the most urgent needs by 1960." (6)

High priority to the extension of farm lands was therefore recommended, but it was also suggested that a new land policy be evolved:

"Not only new land but a new land policy will be needed. Heretofore local agricultural development has been conceived largely in terms of production; the aim for the future should no longer be 'production' alone but also employment of as many people as possible at a satisfactory level of production." (7)

The agricultural programmes recommended, however, mainly aimed at expanding rice production. Of a $24,487,500 programme recommended for agriculture, $10,880,000 was to be spent on two drainage and irrigation projects largely devoted to the development of rice lands, $1,150,000 on land settlement similarly directed and $4,500,000 directly on industrial plant connected with rice. [See Table 9(i)]
Table 9(i)

The I.B.R.D. Recommended Five Year Plan - 1954-1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Funds</th>
<th>$1000</th>
<th>Investment Programme $1000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Government funds and revenues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Funds from annual revenue</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Additional funds from annual revenues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) From savings on State subsidies</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) From savings on operating loss of State enterprises</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Loan funds not disbursed, end of 1953</td>
<td>5,300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Estimated surpluses, end of 1953</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Repayment of Agricultural Bank and other State loans</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Other credits repayable during the period</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Colonial Development and Welfare Grants</td>
<td>11,100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Allocated for 1954-6</td>
<td>6,600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Estimated possible, 1957-8</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. New Loans</td>
<td>13,100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66,000</td>
<td>Total 65,911</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 'social welfare', of a $7,450,000 total suggested, $6,000,000 was to fund rural and urban housing, this being seen as the most outstanding need in relation both to the need to cater for a growing population and as part of the programme of resettlement of people on the agricultural lands to be made newly available through the drainage and irrigation projects. Apart from education, where primary school building was recommended, health was the only other social need to be considered. No major capital expenditure was thought necessary in addition to the Colonial Development and Welfare programmes for malaria control and hospital improvements already under way. The eradication of malaria was expected to reduce demand. Hence it was considered that "the medical and health services are faced with no urgent immediate needs for additional facilities".8

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development plan did not, then, differ greatly from the Ten Year Plan already in operation. The emphasis was almost entirely on coastal development with nothing anticipated for the interior except further surveys and research. Industrial development was minimised and was to receive only $1.5 million in credits and technical assistance. Agricultural development was considered the key to the improvement of economic productivity.9 Lip service was paid to agricultural diversification whilst actual projects were mainly oriented to the expansion of rice production. Finally, it was in line with the prevailing theory that 'welfare' must be a result of increased production and not be a precondition of it.

This approach towards the relationship between welfare and the economy, or the 'productive' and the 'social' sectors had developed in the 1940s. It had, however, proved impolitic in the face of increased
social unrest and industrial strife to plan or expand on the basis of this theory and as a consequence 'non-economic' spending in Guyana had increased. Similar considerations affected the way in which the I.B.R.D. Plan, which was accepted as sound in principle by the government, was effected.

The administration's response to the constitutional crisis of November 1953 was essentially to attempt to increase rapidly the pace of economic development and also improve social conditions through increased spending and investment. Shortly after the crisis the Governor wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

"In the light of recent developments in this Colony ... it has become imperative that the Development Programme drawn up by the World Bank Mission should be implemented as far as possible with the utmost despatch if public confidence in the Administration is to be restored". (10)

The Interim Government was wholly nominated with a Legislative Council composed of a speaker and twenty-seven members, these being members of the opposition in the previous government, and a nominated Executive Council of ten members, all of whom were also members of the Legislative Council.11 In addressing the newly constituted House of Assembly, the Governor promised greater production, more employment, better social services and more homes.12

A separate Development Budget broadly based on the I.B.R.D. Report was devised and a Credit Corporation established to handle the funds and assess claims for development work.13 For this Plan there were no committees or indeed any consultations with local opinion. It was drawn up hurriedly in London and brought back to Guyana by the Governor at the
Table 9(ii)

Development Project Estimates 1954-55 ($)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Area</th>
<th>Grant</th>
<th>Loan</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGRICULTURE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage and irrigation</td>
<td>5,680,000</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>241,845</td>
<td>6,594,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land settlement</td>
<td>1,655,000</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2,073,217</td>
<td>220,000</td>
<td>241,000</td>
<td>2,534,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOREST PROJECTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,164,116</td>
<td>485,660</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,649,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS</strong></td>
<td>3,118,400</td>
<td>7,130,590</td>
<td>75,460</td>
<td>10,324,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CIVIL AVIATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>115,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,620,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLIC WORKS</strong></td>
<td>1,327,767</td>
<td>483,593</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,811,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINANCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural credits</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Self Help</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>1,300,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance to Industry</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOUSING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural and Urban</td>
<td>3,030,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,030,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing loans (exclusive of sugar workers)</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing, Land Settlements</td>
<td>768,750</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>768,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing, Public Officers</td>
<td>1,770,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,770,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Loans, Public Officers</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATION</strong></td>
<td>548,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>548,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HEALTH</strong></td>
<td>1,068</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,068,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>21,000,000</td>
<td>29,300,000</td>
<td>2,797,898</td>
<td>44,098,898</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

end of January.\textsuperscript{14} It covered the two years 1954 - 1955 with the intention that it should be later absorbed into a longer term plan. [See Table 9(ii)] The Plan allocated $44 million to be apportioned $33 million to economic development and $11 million to the development of social services. This compares with an investment totalling $66 million as proposed by the I.B.R.D. over a five year period, and a total of $26 million allocated for the ten year period of the previous Development Plan. The proportion allocated to the social sector in the Development Budget, one quarter, was substantially more than the $7.5 million or 11\% of the total investment advocated by the I.B.R.D. and clearly represented the administration's view that notwithstanding the economists' advice that investment should be mainly in the 'productive' sector, the political situation called for an immediate improvement in social conditions, one which could not wait upon sufficient economic development to finance it. The Royal Commission set up to report on the situation leading up to the withdrawal of the Constitution recommended that during the Interim Government's period of office "plans for social and economic development [would] be energetically pursued" so that "the gradual improvement of social and economic conditions would help to bring about a change in the political outlook of the electorate",\textsuperscript{15} and it was in this spirit that the administration proceeded.

The 'economic' sector plan for development followed closely that recommended by the I.B.R.D. The proportionately high expenditure on the social sector did not represent any change in the current ideology regarding the relationship between the economic and welfare development. There is no evidence of any change in philosophy since the government's economic advisor in the late 1940s, Mr. O. Spencer, had cautioned that
"it would be most imprudent to embark on any further significant expansion in the level of those [social] services until it is clearly established that the level of National Income and Output is growing and will be able to maintain them." It could be argued that an adequate explanation of high spending in the social sector is that it arose because the economy could, in accordance with this philosophy, afford to introduce increased services and maintain them since a real growth of the national income averaging 4.6% per annum had been achieved between 1947 and 1952, and the annual budgetary expenditure on services had been increasing since 1947. The 1953 - 54 Plan, however, represents a very definite commitment to increased welfare spending whereas previous increases often represented reluctantly incurred increased costs rather than expanded programmes. The speed with which programmes advanced in the post 1953 period as compared with the few years before also suggests strongly that whilst many of the projects were not new and in fact the new developments, economic as well as social, were in line with the previous plan for development, the quickening pace of development was occasioned specifically by a conscious intent to dampen social unrest and political radicalism so that there could be a return to the programme for independence under a 'responsible' government. The government clearly shared the view propounded in the editorial column of the Daily Chronicle that:

"A development programme must be ambitious if it is to catch the imagination of the people and wean them away from the paths of communism into which the P.P.P. was leading them."(17)

The initial months of the two year period were taken up with planning and administrative changes. The Credit Corporation had to be set up and staffed. New Departments of Housing, Land Settlement and Drainage and Irrigation were created and these required organisation.
During 1954, however, in spite of the fact that the necessary legislation was not passed until May, sixty of the seventy-nine projects incorporated in the programme were got underway.\(^{18}\) Regional Development Committees and Area Sub-Committees were established in each of the twelve administrative districts, headed by District Commissioners and composed of locally stationed Government Technical Officers and representatives of the local residents, one of the functions of which was to advise the Credit Corporation on projects for the locality.

The lack of local expertise and available technical skills reduced the economy's capacity to absorb the planned amount of capital and slowed down project development. Expenditure over the two years fell \$19 million short of the \$44 million envisaged in the plan.\(^{19}\) There were charges of inefficiency and corruption in the administration of the funds and it is possible that this too hampered developments.\(^{20}\) Yet spending in 1954 alone represented an enormous increase over budgetary expenditure in the previous year: \$8,522,345 as against \$857,485.\(^{21}\) However inadequate the response may have been the 1954/55 expenditure did form the basis for later developments, particularly in the development of the rice industry, and stimulated the pace of development in the social sector even if it did not much extend it, whilst re-committing the state to involvement in welfare provision. Public expenditure nearly doubled between 1952 and 1957. The increase in the development component of that growth was more than double. Expenditure increases in the social sector were, despite the recommendations of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development Mission, relatively greater than in any other sector. This may have been partly a function of the greater capacity of this sector to absorb capital investment rapidly but was also indicative of the government's recognition that the years of Colonial
Development and Welfare projects had failed to develop social services to a level which satisfied popular expectations and reflected its hope that massive investment in housing would produce fast results in terms of political objectives.

**Developments in the Social Sector**

In this section "post-crisis" developments in housing, health community development and social security are considered. It is not argued that these are solely the outcome of government's (either local or British) perception of the political instability of the period. Rather it is suggested that the crisis speeded up developments which might have taken longer otherwise, made the strict application of prevailing economic theory concerning the primacy of economic development politically unfeasible, directed priorities and, in some cases such as community development, conditioned the form projects took.

(i) **Housing**

As has been shown, government initiatives in housing had been confined largely to the re-housing of former estate residents. This programme was accelerated with a diversion of $2,500,000 from the sugar industry financed Price Stabilisation Fund (set up at the same time as the Welfare Fund to assist the industry), to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund, on December 7th 1953. Between 1954 and 1957 the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund financed the building of 33,553 new houses for sugar workers. Government activity in other areas of housing had been, as has been shown, minimal. The political crisis was the catalyst to activity. The I.B.R.D. Mission had recommended that $6 million be
spent on housing over five years. The Development Budget for 1954 - 1955 allocated $3 million in two years with a further $1.75 million for the housing of public officers and $4 million for housing loans exclusive of those to sugar workers. The Government acknowledged that "it is generally known and accepted that the need [for housing] is great. The population concerned is more than half the Colony." 24

Housing was considered to be the social service on which money spent would have the most immediate impact, both in raising sanitation and health levels and general standards of living. The Robertson Commission, set up in 1954 to investigate the constitutional situation after the crisis, noted the "squalor of much of the housing" and also that there was much dissatisfaction with housing on the estates where "the problem is thickest and the discontent greatest." 25 There was a further development of the old idea that giving the people "a stake in the nation", historically thought of in terms of land, now in terms of house ownership, would have a stabilising effect. 26 The interest taken in housing public officers undoubtedly represented an attempt to alleviate the grievances of this section of the public and secure their loyalty to "responsible" political principles.

During 1954, 1,399 houses were constructed in rural areas. 27 Between July of that year and January of 1955 the entire allocation for housing to the British Guiana Credit Corporation, which was the body handling housing loans, was dispersed. 28 Midway in 1955 a housing scheme to provide 1,400 new houses for the lower income group in Georgetown was launched. 29 A housing advisor from the Caribbean Commission assisted the Housing Department in the organisation of self-help housing schemes, beginning in 1954. In these schemes the government provided land preparation, bulk purchasing of materials and skilled building foremen to
supervise whilst self-help group members provided the labour
themselves. The rate of building that could be achieved using this
method relative to the enormous need for better and additional housing
raises questions about its choice for any part of the housing drive, even
though it reduced costs. The idea of self-help as a means of building
houses (community centres and other public facilities were similarly
built), especially in rural areas, was promulgated for social and
psychological reasons. It was hoped that it would stimulate communal
activity, presumably of a "responsible" sort, and generate a greater
appreciation of government through a greater understanding of the stages
necessary to project development.

The number of houses actually built overall may have been
insufficient, and indeed was criticised as such by, amongst others, the
President of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, W. Raatgever, who
claimed that the slums were unaffected by mere "show piece"
development. It was, however, an improvement on the virtual
standstill that existed previously except in relation to Sugar Industry
Labour Welfare Fund financed building. Estate workers as a group still
had a better opportunity of obtaining financial assistance towards
acquiring a house and this contributed to a continuation of the
perception of many Africans that Indians were in a favoured position.
Such perceptions are difficult to document, but the gradual development
of the sugar industry as "East Indian" in labour terms together with the
emergence of separate streams of social policy for estate workers and
others, with the former often actually or apparently superior, certainly
played a part in the racial animosities that were exploited in the late
Fifties and early Sixties, culminating in the terrible events of 1962/63
when a state not far from civil war developed.
(ii) **Community Development**

In the post-crisis scheme for social development, the old "Rural Betterment" programme re-emerged as a Community Development Programme. This was run as another function of the Regional Development Committees. These Committees were authorised to "arouse interest in economic and social development, encourage a spirit of enterprise and self-help in rural areas, develop the co-operative movement, and promote and supervise community self-help schemes (except the housing schemes which were dealt with by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing)."\(^3^5\)

Community Development was placed not under the Social Welfare Division, which on the face of it might seem the obvious department to handle it given its experience in Rural Betterment, but was made the responsibility of the District Administration Division. In the earlier discussion of "Rural Betterment" in Chapter Eight, it was suggested that whilst the economic value of projects was considered a necessary motivating component there was a primary concern with the promotion of "responsible" civic attitudes. The assignment of Community Development to a department other than Social Welfare had the virtue of enabling the programme to be seen as more economically biased. The District Administration Division was, in addition, already fulfilling a co-ordinating function, one which would be necessary in relation to the new development approach and was also seen as more prestigious than the Social Welfare Division.\(^3^6\)

In 1955 an American expert in community development was loaned by the International Co-operation Administration as part of a wider technical aid programme. Three villages - Golden Grove, Nabaclis, Huis t'Dieren and Crabwood Creek - were selected for intensive development on
an experimental basis. Committees were set up to promote improvement in every aspect of life: home, leisure and work. Elsewhere, rural development continued upon the lines set by Colonial Development and Welfare programming with more community centres being built, continued support of voluntary organisations such as Women's Institutes, and further assistance to handicrafts and co-operatives.

The three village project was not repeated elsewhere nor continued after the pilot period. The project's failure could be attributed to the problems outlined by Dr. Vaughn, the organiser: inadequate experience and leadership skills in the community, administrative difficulties and frustration developing from overly ambitious expectations. Equally important, however, was the necessity of provoking initiatives and enthusiasm from the villagers themselves. Community Development was seen by the government as an attempt to use the method of "planning from the bottom up", and was promoted as such. The government officers involved in the projects often found it difficult to adopt this new approach and usually were not trained to do so. Nor did the political emergency encourage an atmosphere where new approaches would be allowed to develop gradually. Yet the involvement of the villagers themselves was of crucial importance in two ways; firstly, in order to accomplish the practical aims of projects; secondly as an important goal in its own right in so far as it related to the political objective of encouraging and facilitating a non-radical way of dealing with community problems and an accommodation with the Interim Government. It was precisely this local enthusiasm which the community development programme failed to generate. Dr. Vaughn himself considered that the three village project at its conclusion was far from being a "people's movement."

The administrative, organisational and attitudinal problems associated with
community development hampered its success, but it is doubtful that, especially given the political climate in which it was introduced, it could ever fulfill either the economic or the political role assigned to it.42

(iii) Health Care

Developments in health care continued along the lines set out by the Venn Commission, the recommendations of which were generally endorsed by the Medical Enquiry Committee (Clarke) which reported in 1954. The Clarke Committee recommended the provision of three additional general state hospitals and six additional cottage hospitals:

Existing State Hospitals (1954)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgetown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Berbice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suddie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best (Tuberculosis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Berbice (Mental)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mahaica (Leprosy)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small Mining Area Facilities</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mabaruma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bartica</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cottage (small rural)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>Ida Sabina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interior Sick Bay</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rupununi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proposed Additional State Facilities

General
Leonora
Skeldon
Port Mourant

Cottage
Wakenham
Diamond
Mahaica
Mahaicony
Le Grange
Fort Wellington

The demolition of the old estate hospitals and the construction of estate dispensaries proceeded, so that by 1954 there were only twelve hospitals offering 550 beds. The expectation was that the State would provide the additional district and cottage hospitals recommended by the Venn Commission and that the medical role of the estates would be to provide a dispensary service to resident labour with ambulance facilities for the conveyance of patients to the nearest state hospital where necessary. The state system was, however, far from ready to cope with the increased demand which, contrary to the expectation of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development Mission, was resulting from the absolute increase in population, higher expectations and the contraction of estate hospital facilities.

Of the twenty-three health clinics which were scheduled to have been built as Colonial Development and Welfare projects, few were actually completed. By 1947 there were only nine completed. In 1953 the public system provided 1,432 general beds which hardly compensated for the reduction in estate provision. Seven years after the recommendation made by the Venn Commission that additional State hospitals be built, only one, at Port Mourant, had been started and even this was incomplete by 1956. The expansion of provision of health centres was still at
project stage by the time of the Clarke Committee at which point it was proposed that they be built by self help as community projects.\textsuperscript{46}

Staff difficulties added to the Department's difficulties. To the perennial problem of attracting expatriate doctors, which resulted from the comparatively low salaries, was added the fear of many potential recruits that "a career in colonies with growing nationalistic aspirations ... may be prematurely terminated or ... national discrimination may be exercised to their detriment."\textsuperscript{47} Local people trained as doctors usually preferred to go into private practice as the increase in real income since the 1930s afforded them better opportunities there than formerly, and although the state now sponsored the training of some local doctors at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of the West Indies, the first students did not graduate until 1954 and these were not of sufficient numbers or experience to make much of an impact on the deficit.\textsuperscript{48}

Although in practice many people still had access to free medicine and treatment as paupers or pensioners there was no truly national system of care nor any form of national health insurance.\textsuperscript{49} Standards were sometimes low, and there was gross overcrowding at the Public Hospital Georgetown. Persons with insufficient or inappropriate training were sometimes used to run dispensaries.\textsuperscript{50} This deficiency was of particular import because of the role played by dispensers in, especially rural, medical practice. The person operating a dispensary, ideally somebody specifically qualified for the task, would often be consulted for diagnostic and prescribing purposes. Dispensers were, in effect, in charge of the health clinics and although they were supposed to be visited regularly by the district Medical Officer, often this was not the
Finally, coverage of the rural population remained poor. There were a few dispensaries in outlying districts and the interior gold and diamond mining areas. There were the very small facilities with less than ten beds in Charity and Ida Sabina. The bauxite company, Demba, had operated a hospital for its work force since the 1930s at Kwakwani, and later provided another at Mackenzie. Beyond this there was no provision for those not engaged in the sugar industry.

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development Mission’s Report had recommended that there be no increase in health expenditure, but the Clarke proposals suggested five new state hospitals. Expenditure on health planned for 1954–1958 was estimated at $3.5 million over and above the usual annual costs. The extension of state provision had been firmly on the agenda since the Venn Report, but little had been done to accomplish it by 1957. It received renewed attention as part of the general re-thinking of social sector expenditure policy promoted by the political crisis, but was overshadowed by the housing programme upon which resources were heavily concentrated. Investment in hospitals, health centres and health care generally was considered of lower priority, presumably as compared to the quick political pay-off hoped for from new houses. The slow development of state provision of health care contrasts with the much more vigorous approach taken in the development of state-assisted housing.

**Social Welfare on the Estates**

The sugar industry responded to the crisis in a manner similar to the Government. It continued to develop its social welfare programme
and to place its faith in the stabilising function of house ownership.\textsuperscript{52} The programme for the rehousing of 'nuclear' workers on the estates was boosted with the increase in finance received by the home loan programme through a further $2.5 million transfer from the Price Stabilisation Fund in 1955.\textsuperscript{53} A Social Welfare Adviser for women's and girl's work on the estates was appointed by Bookers.\textsuperscript{54} The Community Centre building programme continued, paid for by Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund monies.\textsuperscript{55} The centres were considered important for their contribution to the "responsible" attitudes government and industry alike wished to foster:

"The Community Centres on the Estates are naturally the focal points for activities aimed at the development of individual and community responsibility among the members ..."\textsuperscript{(56)}

In addition, Bookers launched a pilot scheme for tenant cane farmers. There had always been a small number of independent cane farmers on the coastland. They sold most of their produce to the sugar companies, but had never been encouraged to expand either their acreage or their output per acre. The need for stability in the sugar belt was now considered of sufficient importance to necessitate at least a gesture in the direction of greater independence for sugar workers. The Director's Report for 1954 noted:

"It is considered that the formation of a sturdy body of tenant farmers on Estates' lands will bring a stability which is lacking where there are only wage earners and employers".\textsuperscript{(57)}

So here again the notion of increasing peasant land ownership, bitterly fought against by the estates for the best part of the time, was trundled out at a time of need. The final irony is perhaps that the Chairman of Bookers was instrumental in the formation of the National Labour Front (N.L.F.), (a party formed from a splinter of the United
Democratic Party, the party representing commercial interests at the previous election), which campaigned on the platform of "Land for the Landless". The scheme got underway in 1955 with 32 farmers taking up tenancies. The political instability and industrial unrest which caused an increase in welfarism on the estates also caused a continuation in the trend towards further mechanisation and a further reduction and de-casualisation of the workforce. One indication of this was the decline in the number of women working in the fields from 1950, brought about "principally as a result of the policy of the employers of stabilising and regularising their labour force". Overall field labour requirements dropped from an average, weekly number of 17,668 (low month) 25,587 (high month) in 1950 to 9,478 (low month) 19.150 (high month) in 1960. The decrease in the labour force in the fifties did not mark any reduction in the importance of sugar to the economy nor in the level of production. It indicated, rather, the development of the industry from a low technology, high labour input base to a high technology, mechanised base. Whilst labour decreased, acreage and output grew. Acreage under cane on estates rose from 71,472 acres in 1950 to 94,103 in 1960 whilst sugar tonnage produced from 196,651 in 1950 to 334,441 in 1960.

(v) Social Security

The trend towards de-casualisation in the sugar industry made developments in welfare, particularly social security, more feasible. Social security has many aspects, but worker demands, which had been growing steadily since 1945, focused on pensions, sickness benefits and unemployment assistance. In 1954, the Colonial Office commissioned an investigation of the possibility of introducing a wider social security
programe in the Caribbean, particularly in Guyana and Barbados. The problems noted in the Report which resulted were clear and remained essentially the same as noted by the Moyne Commissioners fifteen years earlier; the economies of the Caribbean could not afford high rates of assistance; the under- and un-employment of large numbers posed special problems administrative and financial and there would, at least initially, be difficulties in the administration of social security schemes. The general tone of the Report was, however, optimistic. Richardson, its author, noted elsewhere that the Caribbean, although not wealthy, was not at the bottom of the financial league of nations, but was rather in the middle range, and most of its people were involved in the cash economy. Further, there was already an experiential base in the benevolent associations found so frequently in Caribbean communities. His view was that conditions in the region were favourable for the introduction of social security measures, especially in the form of sickness benefit, old age pension and industrial injury compensation. The scale of unemployment, he felt, made unemployment benefits unfeasible financially and he saw the extension of relief work as the more appropriate method of assisting the jobless.

The demand for job related pensions was becoming more insistent and it remained an important platform for the major unions. The introduction of a pension scheme was one of the conditions for a return to work made by 400 bauxite workers employed by Reynolds Mining Corporation at Kwakwani. The sugar workers were less successful. The Venn Commission had recommended that a contributory pension scheme be set up to cover adult male workers. The worker contribution to the fund was to be at 2.5% of the weekly earnings and the employer contribution 5% of the same. At fifty years of age the worker, it had been suggested,
should receive a pension graded to length of service. In spite of repeated representations by the Union, no scheme was introduced. The state-run Rice Marketing Board proved more tractable and extended its pension scheme to weekly and monthly workers, as did several other local firms. Professor Richardson had recommended that government should initiate a national pensions scheme by meeting the administrative costs of a voluntary provident fund, but this was not done, neither was there any provision made for national coverage in case of sickness. Bookers did, however, introduce in 1958 a sickness benefit scheme where workers were credited with six days wage per annum to be drawn in case of illness of a week or more on an accruable basis.

Professor Richardson also examined the system and rates of public assistance and consequent upon his recommendation, the monthly rate was put on a sliding scale from $4.00 to $7.50 in Georgetown and $3.00 to $5.50 elsewhere, with payment made in accordance with the result of a means test. Although there had been no formal means test previously, the practice had been to consider that to be eligible for assistance a person should have means slightly lower than those of a person entitled to an Old Age Pension.

The middle class continued to provide for itself privately. Several factors combined to bring about an increase in and strengthening of the local middle class in the 1950s. In the public service, Colonial Development and Welfare and 'crisis budget' spending increased the number of local people holding 'white collar' jobs. In the private sector, higher government spending and an improved economy produced opportunities for advancement in clerical and lower management levels and it had become politically advantageous to offer the posts that arose to Guyanese. The major sugar company, for example, adopted a policy of "Guyanisation".
The ranks of junior staff had been increasingly open to Guyanese since the 1940s; from the 1950s, local people were considered eligible for senior posts. By 1961 there were 137 Guyanese holding senior positions out of a total of 289. A proliferation of private services developed to cater for the demands of this expanding class. Civil servants already had some security under the old Widows and Orphans pension scheme introduced since 1892, and also pension rights. In education, new selective schools for the education of middle class children were erected. In health, several private hospitals were opened. Increasing numbers secured pensions related to their jobs. On the whole, however, there was no general expansion of the security of the masses except in relation to home ownership. Indeed the increase in structural unemployment and underemployment in the absence of unemployment benefits or a well developed scheme of relief work meant that for many, insecurity increased. [See Table 7(vi)]

CONCLUSION

The programme for development, economic and social, continued through the 1950s to be governed by principles developed in the previous decade. In the economy, sugar continued to be paramount with rice as its partner. In the social sector, welfare continued to be viewed as something which should, ideally, be paid for in advance out of rewards of increased productivity. There were, however, factors operating which militated against the low level of social spending which would have been logically generated by such a philosophy. Changes in the sugar industry required that state responsibility in housing and health be expended to cope with sugar workers who had previously had access to estate housing and health facilities. Further, the low standards obtaining in health,
housing, sanitation and community facilities became a political liability. The programme begun in the 1940s to raise standards and at the same time nurture 'responsible', that is non-radical, political attitudes had patently failed. The position adopted by the government in response to the political radicalism of the 1950s was the same as that produced in reaction to the unrest of the 1930s; the raising of social standards could not be delayed until the economic programme paid off.

Economic and social planning did not change appreciably in direction in response to the challenge presented by the radicalism of the short lived P.P.P. government. It continued essentially along the lines which had been laid down by the programme formulated in 1947, although much larger sums were available. Social trends which had begun to emerge in the previous decade also continued. Population pressure increased. Unemployment increased, fuelled by lay-offs in the sugar industry and the inability of the second most important agricultural sector, rice, to absorb the labour surplus. The social sector was once again called upon to absorb and transmute the discontents resulting from failures in economic development. There is no evidence of a return to the philosophy which abounded in the early days of the Colonial Development and Welfare programme; social development was in no way seen as having a 'pump-priming' economic function, nor was it seen as an investment necessary to the foundations of economic development. Social policy 1953 - 1957 was in the final analysis another ad hoc initiative derived from panic programming made in London with minimal consultation with local bourgeois interests and none at all with the mass of people of Guyana. The resounding victory of the P.P.P. at the polls in 1957 when the constitution was restored indicates the failure of the social programme's political agenda.
NOTES TO CHAPTER NINE


2. ibid p. 19.


4. ibid p. 188.

5. ibid.

6. ibid p. 189.

7. ibid.

8. ibid p. 77.

9. This was still the generally accepted official view in Guyana although the idea of "industrialisation by invitation was gaining currency elsewhere in the Caribbean. Frank Brown, the Land Settlement Adviser said in 1954: "The foreseeable economic future of British Guiana depends on Agriculture, Mining and Timber - probably in that order." Daily Chronicle, January 6th, 1954.

10. Governor to Secretary of State, 17th October, 1953, (Guyana Archives).


22. The plans for many of the projects pre-date the crisis.


26. It is certainly true that Guyanese, like other Caribbean people, are very strongly motivated towards home ownership, although many can never achieve it.


28. ibid p. 64.

29. ibid p. 89.

30. ibid p. 54.

31. Cost was not really an issue in this period. Jagan reports that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Lytton, had declared in the House of Commons in November 1953 that as much money as was required would be found. Jagan, C. op. cit., p. 192.


35. Grant, C. op.cit.

36. The difficulty the Division experienced in establishing its authority vis-a-vis local bodies was discussed in Chapter Eight.


40. Grant, C. op. cit., p. 179.

41. Vaughn, T. op. cit., p. 5.

42. Grant notes, interestingly, that community development, an approach used elsewhere in the Empire also, was most often successful when part of a nationalist movement whereas in Guyana it was introduced to counter a nationalist movement.


47. Legislative Council Sessional Paper 8, 1955, p.1

48. Real income rose by just over 20% between 1942 and 1951.

49. Under the new hospital fees introduced in 1953, free outpatient treatment was extended to cover paupers (as before), persons with a weekly income below $9 per week, children below 15, adults over 65 and nursing mothers.


51. ibid.

52. Jagan states that Jock Campbell, Chairman of Bookers, declared after a visit to Guyana that "there was no place for a conservative party ... any party thinking of capturing the imagination of the people must talk in terms of a welfare state." Jagan, C., op. cit. p. 213.


"Now let me tell you about our land for the landless policy ... We feel the people and the Government should enter into a partnership for the fuller utilisation of land, commencing with our riverain lands, bulldozing and clearing these lands and giving them to the farmers ..."


62. Guyana Sugar Producers' Association Annual Reports.


65. Ibid.


CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

One of the most remarkable characteristics of Guyanese history is the comparative stability of its major features over time. The nineteenth century opened with the establishment of sugar as the primary crop. Sugar retained its importance throughout the period studied. Its production was accomplished on plantations and although the twentieth century brought changes in ownership and the amalgamation of units, the plantation system remained intact. Similarly, the local political process in the nineteenth century was dominated by the planters whose influence also extended to the British power structure; the big business heirs of the planters continued to exert major influence on the determination of policy, social and economic, throughout the remainder of the period. Raymond Smith once wrote that to explain current conditions in the Caribbean in terms of slavery was analogous to attributing mid-twentieth century British balance of payments problems to the Napoleonic Wars. Yet any tendency of Caribbean people and others to make sense of their history in this way is perhaps understandable given the lack of change in many Caribbean territories.

In this chapter the aim is to summarise the foregoing analysis of social policy in Guyana. Further, in Chapter One certain characteristics of the colonial economy, the colonial state and colonial society and their relation to colonial social policy were proposed. In this chapter it is argued that Guyana exemplifies these characteristics and also that its development demonstrates the relationship of those characteristics to social policy (and vice-versa) as originally suggested. Specifically, the following points are considered: the role of social policy in the
production of the under-development associated with colonial economies; the part played by the colonial state in the structuring of the economy; the effect of the colonial structure on the relative power of classes in Guyanese society to affect the policy-making process; the contribution of the subsistence sector to the plantation sector and the contribution of the latter to the under-development of the whole economy in their relation to social policy; lastly, the role of social policy in social control and the legitimation of the colonial state.

It has been suggested in this study that social policy in Guyana, through its general tendency to afford support to the colonial economy, was part of the underdevelopment of both the social and economic sectors whilst at the same time being conditioned by the colonial economy. To what extent has this been substantiated? The question will be considered first in general terms and is taken up again later in relation to the discussion of the specific areas of health, housing, social security and land settlement.

First, the term 'underdevelopment' must be made clearer. Although the author is of the view that speculation on 'what might have been' if certain historical events had not occurred is generally an exercise in futility, it is considered of some use to ponder, for example, the potential for economic development of pre-colonial societies such as those in Africa and Asia which had existing traditional cultures. In such contexts it may also be valid to consider the ways in which colonialism 'under-developed' societies by dismantling existing social and economic structures.

In the case of Guyana and other Caribbean territories, the situation is different: these societies were not altered by colonialisation but created by it. 2 'Under-development' in this context denotes a condition
where the colonial economy imposes limits on and directs growth in particular ways which preclude alternative modes of development which may be judged to be more productive of growth in the whole society and economy. Social policy contributed to underdevelopment in this sense insofar as it sustained the colonial economy which closed opportunities for alternative paths of development.

This is not to suggest that this was the intention of the colonial state functionaries. On the contrary, colonial philosophy and often the personal predilections of officials as well had the effect, particularly in the twentieth century, of moving governors to see themselves as representing the wider interest.

Nor did underdevelopment as defined emerge out of 'systemic needs'. It was rather the outcome of the comparative power of the sugar interest, the local and metropolitan bourgeoisie, the local proletariat and peasantry, to affect the policy making process. In nineteenth century Guyana the planters were able, through their economic power and control of the legislature, to limit expenditures from local revenue to those which benefited their own industry. State funds were concentrated on law and order. This protected planter lives and property and it also guaranteed production from their labour. Planter control of finance ensured the voting of immigration funds which assisted in the provision of that labour. This is not to suggest that the planters would have been able to determine the priorities of state spending in this way against the wishes of the colonial power; minimal attention to the social sector or indeed to development of any kind was consonant with colonial theory regarding the role of the colonial state.

The local bourgeoisie gained representation in the local legislature from the 1890s, but its ability and willingness to have any major impact
on policy-making was minimal. Its elected representatives' constitutional power was limited and, in addition, although they generally espoused expansionist policies in agriculture, industry and interior development, they were not 'anti-sugar' and usually went along with the administration. The events of 1953 demonstrated dramatically the ultimate limitations attaching to the power of the local legislature, showing that it could be swept away at any time it took a direction not sanctioned by the colonial state. The two periods of state expansion in welfare and development (post-1940 and post-1953) were precipitated by mass action in the sense of their being reactions, in the first case to civil disorder and industrial unrest, and in the second case to radicalisation of a mass political party which held legislative majority. Yet even in these instances there was no real popular involvement or participation in the policy and planning process. Hence, whilst class action in the form of strikes and civil disturbance can be said to have led to an increase in state welfare expenditure the role of the masses in actual decision making remained negligible. In the post-Moyne period decision making in relation to social and economic policy was actually removed from the political process and entrenched even more firmly than it had been formerly in the administrative process. The clear line between rulers and ruled, characteristic of colonial society stayed, and the system of government remained essentially non-negotiating.

The two instances of heavy state investment in social welfare (post 1940 and post-1950) can be seen as attempts to use welfare to legitimate colonial rule. It is by no means unusual for states to use social welfare measures for this purpose; what is perhaps unusual is that such means were not used earlier, especially given the problems of legitimisation faced by colonial states. That they were not can be attributed in part to the state's financial limitations which resulted
from colonial fiscal policy, economic underdevelopment and to the state's tendency, at least until the 1940s, to use force rather than welfare to deal with social unrest.

One form of state coercion existed in the legal restrictions associated with indenture. Another lay in the economic and political powerlessness of the masses which made them dependent on the wages of the plantation sector. But beyond this lay the physical force which the state could, and often did, employ in dealing with strikes and civil unrest as in the riots in Georgetown in 1905 and the strikes on the estates in 1917, 1924 and 1948. The maintenance of social control in this way absorbed a substantial proportion of state revenues which could arguably have been used for social and economic development. When 'welfare' was introduced in the 1940s as an alternative method of social control, the British Treasury had to back up the policy with finance as the local economy was destitute. Imperial investment in colonial welfare was instituted to ensure colonial loyalty in war time and became a strategy for buying time to advance social and economic conditions and to nurture civic and political moderation on the road to political independence. The political expectations held of the Colonial Development and Welfare programme involved a clear intention to secure social control through appeasement.

Social policy contributed to under-development also in that it contributed to the viability of the colonial economy. Nineteenth century state regulation of estate labour's conditions, whilst not producing much in the way of welfare, did legitimise the practice of indenture which was so important to the plantation wage structure. Comparative neglect of village welfare exacerbated the stagnation of the non-estate sector necessary to the viability of the sugar industry. Twentieth century developments in population policy, approaches to health, land settlement
and housing arose to support the economic status quo as the sugar industry changed; policy grew and adapted around the changing form of the sugar industry.

Further, in Chapter One it was suggested that it was of some importance in the analysis of colonial economies, to note the relationship between the plantation and the subsistence sectors so that the contribution of the latter to the former may be gauged. In Guyana, as has been shown, the rural population was viewed by planter and colonial administration alike as a reserve labour pool for the estates. This affected social and economic policy in several ways. Firstly, industrial development and agricultural diversification (except to rice) which could have attracted labour away from the estates was discouraged. Secondly, land settlement policy was adopted only in relation to the need of the sugar industry to keep surplus labour available to it and never constituted an alternative to plantation domination of agriculture. Thirdly, the growing of rice and other peasant crops supplemented the low and seasonal wages offered by the sugar estates, thereby making subsistence possible whereas it was often not on sugar wages alone, and thus contributed to the viability of the wage structure of the industry.

Social policy also added to social underdevelopment whilst contributing to the viability of the colonial state through its divisive effects on the masses. The separate development of estate welfare increased the differences in circumstances between estate workers and others, which differences reflected not only occupational but also racial groupings. These differences in turn enhanced perceptions of difference in interest between occupational and racial groups. In this sense separate welfare provision for estate workers continued the social separation of plantation workers described in Chapter One as
characteristic of plantation-dominated societies. Whilst there have been many occasions on which sections of urban labour or even urban and rural labour together took joint action and whilst direct evidence of social policy's contribution to a weakening of class ties and a heightening of race divisions is difficult to find, it is quite probable that the structure of welfare and social policy, though not immediately responsible for race conflict, did form one strand in the complex causal chain leading to the disturbances of the 1960s.

All these points can be illustrated by the effects of social policy in specific areas. Health care evolved from company, but state regulated, provision on the estates and residual state provision for the rest of the population. Estate care developed in relation to the industry's specific requirements at different stages. Initially part of a system of surveillance and control of indentured workers, it became in the post-indenture period a means used by estate managements of attracting and keeping labour. Post-1945 when malaria control made the old, larger hospitals redundant and the attraction of labour no longer an important issue, estate provision contracted to suit the needs of a new smaller and more regularised work force. Although from the 1920s to the early 1950s the estate system of health care was in many ways superior to state provision new developments in this period concentrated on the elimination of diseases which affected the productive capacity of the worker rather than the provision of total care to the whole worker and his family.

The colonial medical service had the effect of stifling the development of the local medical profession for, in the context of village underdevelopment, private practitioners were not attracted to the rural areas, but until the post-1914 period, local doctors were rarely accepted into the colonial medical service. The separation of estate
health services led to the underdevelopment of the state sector insofar as it determined the location of and priorities of the government medical officers, both of which favoured the estates. This affirms the proposition put forward in Chapter One that the plantation sector, rather than providing a model for development to the subsistence sectors of the local economy actually brings about the underdevelopment of other sectors. The minimal level of state provision aggravated the generally high level of, particularly infant, mortality which, in addition to being undesirable in itself, possibly reinforced underdevelopment by making Guyana a relatively unattractive investment proposition to foreign investors whilst leading also to a numerically inadequate population for the exploitation of the hinterland. Near zero natural population growth until well into the twentieth century also contributed in a curious way to the maintenance of the indenture system and consequently the plantation production of sugar by providing a rationale for indenture insofar as it could be held up as an essential means of keeping population up to required levels.

Housing also followed two separate lines of development. On the estates houses were provided for indentured workers as a legal requirement. This assisted in the legitimation of contract labour and also formed another element in the control of workers. The state was not otherwise involved in housing until the post-Moyne period when state assistance and regulation in this area became part of the welfare package aimed at diverting social unrest and promoting economic development. This involvement grew after the 1954 emergency budget, again in response to political radicalisation of the masses which was interpreted by the authorities as a reaction to social dissatisfaction. As with estate health provision, housing by the estates followed a pattern of development dictated by the changing requirements of the sugar industry.
Workers began to be encouraged towards home ownership when the employers felt that this would contribute to the stability of labour relations and this trend was further encouraged when, post-1945, the sugar industry began to develop a new pattern of employment. The state assisted the industry in its housing policy in the first instance by a not very energetic and basically sympathetic application of housing regulations and in the post-1945 period by creating the machinery for the rehousing of sugar workers at a time when the industry wished to divest itself of major responsibilities in this area.

This sequence of development resulted in the state assuming wider responsibility for housing at a time when relocation of surplus sugar workers, the generally run-down state of landlord owned urban accommodation and dilapidated rural housing combined with increasing population levels and higher expectations to create an enormously increased demand. As in the case of health care, estate provision of housing up until the 1940s had the effect of encouraging the state to assume residual, minimal responsibilities only to be obligated by estate withdrawal from these areas to increase its involvement at a time when population expansion alone required greatly increased investment. Another major effect of estate health and housing provision was that, after 1917, it functioned to perpetuate plantation society by exaggerating the geographical and psychological separation between the two main ethnic groups.

Land policy, especially as it applied to land settlement, can also be seen as both contributing to underdevelopment and the colonial economy and resulting from it. As has been shown, nineteenth century colonial policy was directed at the protection of the sugar industry through the restriction of access to land by keeping the price of Crown Land high.
This was changed in the 1890s but generally land policy continued to be made with at least some consideration of sugar interests. Land settlement began as an aid to the ailing industry and was dropped when it no longer appeared to serve the purpose of retaining immigrant labour. It was later revived to attract colonists. At no time was it adopted as a major arm of development policy and it was always formulated with the needs of the sugar industry in mind.

This provides another example of the way in which the plantation sector inhibits other sector development. The state's approach to land policy had the effect of stifling agricultural development whether by local investors or settlers or by foreign investors. The only exception of note to this is to be found in the case of the rice industry. This was taken up and encouraged by the state initially as a means of enhancing the viability of the sugar industry at a time of economic recession. It was developed because of its compatibility with the production of sugar and its place in British plans for the region, Guyana being promoted as the 'rice bowl of the Caribbean'.

The extremely conservative approach to land settlement contributed to and was influenced by, the state's tendency to restrict economic activity to the coastal strip and confine agricultural production to sugar and later to sugar and rice. A greater investment in land settlement could possibly have been a means of creating a more viable and successful peasantry, independent of the sugar industry and the large holders of rice lands. As it was, land settlement policy had a negligible effect on land holding patterns and the predominate concentration of agricultural effort on export crops.

Social security remained for the whole period studied very underdeveloped. Provision under the Poor Law introduced to cope with the
aftermath of slavery remained basically unchanged until the 1940s. Planter influence on Poor Law Boards allowed the partial allocation of benefits, with East Indians apparently excluded so as not to undermine the wage structure in the sugar industry. Pressure from worker groups and later trade unions for the introduction of wider benefits did not produce any real development. Even the introduction of a small non-contributory old age pension was the result of direction from the Colonial Office as part of a wider imperial policy rather than local agitation. An important factor impeding the development of state sponsored or state financed social security, even after 1940 when it came to be seriously considered, was the characteristic wage structure and employment pattern. Although by no means excluding the possibility of social insurance, low wages, high levels of unemployment, casual and under-employment, made the introduction of national social insurance problematic so long as there was no radical change in economic structure or political priorities, hence the plantation element of the colonial economy hindered development in this area too.

Social policy in Guyana from the mid-nineteenth century until 1957 went through several identifiable stages. In the first, the state assumed a residual role whilst overseeing conditions in the sugar industry. Although a free market, laissez faire philosophy was espoused, the state in fact intervened to support and assist the industry to survive the succession of crises presented by the end of slavery, the challenge of beet sugar and the end of indenture. The residual social policies adopted by the state in the period up to the 1940s were consistent with the maintenance of the existing economic structure.

In the early 1940s a new approach to social policy emerged; henceforward welfare measures were to nurture and lay the foundation for economic development. The state began to abandon its residual stance
and, funded largely by the British Treasury, embark on a wider programme of welfare. The success of this theory of the relationship between welfare and the economy was relatively short-lived. It was followed by what was in a sense a reversion: the idea that development of the social sector is something which must be afforded and paid for out of economic development rather than being a precondition of it. The difference between the old and the new versions of this theory was that in the re-vamped form the state was to expand its direct involvement in the stimulation of the economy.

As has been shown, however, the state in Guyana did not abandon its newly adopted role in the social sector. A combination of changes in the sugar industry and population growth put stresses on the social fabric which political mobilisation of the masses and the growth of anti-imperialist and nationalist sentiments made potentially threatening to the established order. Consequently, social sector spending remained high at the expense of purely economic investment, which tendency continued into the 1950s as a result of the 1954/55 development programme which was introduced as a result of the political crisis.

The increased spending in the fifties could not, however, meet the requirements generated by a rapidly increasing population, especially given the inadequacy of existing social provision and mounting public expectations. Nor was there any radical departure from economic policies which appeared to promise little to the urban unemployed or the rural landless. Guyana consequently entered the period of self-government and independence, like so many other colonial countries, with a social sector ill-equipped to meet the problems generated by a young and growing population, an economy dominated by the production of agricultural crops in which only comparatively small increases in the demand for labour
could be expected and a very small manufacturing and industrial base.

It can be concluded, then, that social policy as exercised in Guyana was integral to the working of the colonial economy. It supported and facilitated the maintenance of the plantation system of production at the expense of the development of other sectors of the economy. Whilst individual pieces of social legislation or welfare action may have produced benefits to the masses, as in the case of public health developments in the twentieth century, generally colonial social policy can be considered to have been part of the process of economic and social underdevelopment in Guyana. The character and effects of social policy helped to produce the relative lack of change exhibited by colonial Guyana which even today keeps fresh the group memory of slavery and indenture.
Notes for Chapter Ten


2. It is not intended to dismiss the fate of the aboriginal peoples of the Caribbean area, but simply to reflect that their societies were relatively unimportant to colonial society by virtue of their being extinguished or marginalised early in the process of colonialisation.
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Annual Reports, Bookers McConnel Co. Ltd.

Note. Where documents and government department reports were consulted at the Public Records Office, Kew, the C.O. number is given in the notes. When the C.O. number is not given, the report/document was located and consulted in the Guyana Archives or elsewhere.

The archival material relating to Bookers McConnel Co. Ltd. in Guyana was destroyed by fire in Georgetown, 1945.
The demolition of the old estate hospitals and the construction of estate dispensaries proceeded, so that by 1954 there were only twelve hospitals offering 550 beds. The expectation was that the State would provide the additional district and cottage hospitals recommended by the Venn Commission and that the medical role of the estates would be to provide a dispensary service to resident labour with ambulance facilities for the conveyance of patients to the nearest state hospital where necessary. The state system was, however, far from ready to cope with the increased demand which, contrary to the expectation of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development Mission, was resulting from the absolute increase in population, higher expectations and the contraction of estate hospital facilities.

Of the twenty-three health clinics which were scheduled to have been built as Colonial Development and Welfare projects, few were actually completed. By 1947 there were only nine completed\(^44\). In 1953 the public system provided 1,432 general beds which hardly compensated for the reduction in estate provision. Seven years after the recommendation made by the Venn Commission that additional State hospitals be built, only one, at Port Mourant, had been started and even this was incomplete by 1956\(^45\). The expansion of provision of health centres was still at
APPENDIX I

1947 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Elected Members

Western Essequibo
Demerara Essequibo
Georgetown North
Essequibo Riber
Berbice River
Demerara River
Georgetown Central
East Berbice
Central Demerara
New Amsterdam
West Berbice
North West District
Georgetown South

C.V. Wright
Dr. J.B. Singh - Medical Practitioner
Dr. J.A. Nicholson - Medical Practitioner
T. Lee - Barrister
C.P. Ferrara - Director, private business
D.P. Debidin - Lawyer
J. Fernandes - Shipping & Commission Agent
Dr. G.M. Goosalves - Dentist
Dr. C. Jagan - Dentist
W.O.R. Kendall
A.T. Peters - Minister of Religion and Barrister
W.A. Phang - Merchant
J. Carter - Lawyer

Nominated Unofficials

F.J. Seaford
V. Roth
T.T. Thompson
W.J. Raatgever
G.A.C. Farnum
C.A. McDoom
G.H. Smellie

Retired Civil Servant (museum curator)
Retired Schoolmaster
Merchant
Secretary, Humphrey & Co. (diamond merchants)
Merchant, proprietor, rancher, rice farmer
Director, Demerara Life Assurance

Nominated Officials

The President
The Colonial Secretary
The Attorney General
Dr. P.G. Kelly
T. Millard
Major W. Bain Gray
Prof. G.S. Dash
Col. W.E.H. Bradburn
Major G.C. Craig
B.R. Wood
S.H. Bagley

His Excellency the Governor
ex-officio
Surgeon General
Colonial Treasurer
Director of Education
Director of Agriculture
Inspector General of Police
Director of Public Works
Conservator of Forest
Managing Director, Colonial Transport Department