

# Indian Opinion

OFFICIAL WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE BRITISH GUIANA EAST INDIAN ASSOCIATION

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**INDIAN OPINION:** Items of news interests and Literary contributions must be addressed to P.O. BOX 43, Georgetown, B.G. Features and other items appearing in this journal do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board. The editorial column reflects the policy of the British Guiana East Indian Association.

## — EDITORIAL —

### Repatriation Of Indians IV

We pointed out in our issue of the 23rd September that while the average weekly earnings of workers were only \$5.00 per family the actual cost of food, clothing, rent, etc., per family of 4.6 persons was found to be \$8.23 weekly by the cost of Living Survey Committee. But in this cost of living figure the Deputy Director of Medical Services made the following observations regarding the nutritive value of the food that was consumed:—

"An analysis of the food list shows that the average family of 4.6 persons had available 8409.5 Calories of food per day. Of this 9 1% consisted of protein, 73 4% of Carbohydrate and 17.5% of Fat. The ratio of first class or animal protein to total protein was 34.4%. The total Calories are low, as also the percentages of total protein, animal or first class protein and fat, whilst the percentage of carbohydrate is high."

On the whole the Doctor was of the opinion that the food consumed by the average family was exceedingly poor, and he concluded his observations with the following:—

"Apart from deficiency in total calories the food in several families may show remarkable deficiency in variety and may be wanting in many indispensable ingredients."

The average East Indian family is certainly more than 4.6 persons. But if we assume that there is an average of three children per family and the average earnings of a man is \$3.18 and a woman \$1.82, making a total of \$5.00 per family per week, our readers would be able to figure out how an ordinary working family of

five persons could exist on \$5.00 per week as earnings.

An interesting discussion took place over the ZFY broadcast station on Sunday 17th September when Dr. C.C. Nicholson, M.B., Ch. B., revealed that "hundreds of children in British Guiana are living on diets which are below the safety line." Dr. Nicholson is Government School Health Officer and he has calculated that the weekly cost of a child's diet should be \$2.21, but this figure may be reduced to \$1.76 if it becomes necessary. Let us therefore assume that it takes \$1.76 to feed a child per week at the present time. The average East Indian family of three children would require \$5.28 per week for feeding their children. If it is assumed that the adult would require double the amount necessary for the child then the family of five would require \$12.32 per week for food alone. The family earns on an average \$5.00 only, how then can they exist? If account is taken of the cost of clothing, rent, fuel and light, and other items based on the Cost of Living Survey which amounted to \$3.65 per week it would be clearly seen why the large majority of adults and children are in such a state of malnutrition throughout the Colony. The lot of the working people—particularly the East Indians—is pitiable and the time has come when the Government and Employers must be made to understand

that this state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue much longer in the interests of humanity.

After all East Indians have been made to live a sub-normal life in this Colony for over a Century. They are denied the opportunities of working for themselves, they are underpaid, and worse than ever they are denied the full rights of Citizenship so that they may be able to influence the Government which is supposed to be in the interest of the people of this Colony.

As we pointed out, the number of Indians in the Colony at present is about 34,000 less than the number of able bodied workers that have been introduced since 1838. We have heard quite a good deal lately about the welfare of the people of Europe and other places where the majority of the people are not what may be described as Coloured or natives. The flower of our manhood from India, our Motherland and other parts of the Empire is fighting for the Freedom of the World. We have been told about the "Atlantic Charter". We have been told about "Freedom from Want". Are our people in these parts not within the Atlantic? Are we going to sit quietly and allow our masters to continue their policy of oppression of the peoples who are supposed to belong to the Subject Races?

(To be continued)

### Adult Education

The Franchise Commission, the Capitalist, the Governor of British Guiana, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Moribund Legislative and Executive Councils have all condemned the illiterate masses of British Guiana to a degree as low as animals.

We now call on these bodies and persons to fulfil their obligations towards these self-same masses. It is their bounden duty to provide means for educating these masses. The illiterate people of British Guiana demand that adult education be organized without delay.

The responsibility for the high illiteracy that exists in British Guiana lies directly at the door of the Capi-

talists (the sugar planters) who have been indirectly exercising pressure to this effect on the Local and Imperial Governments.

We are of the opinion that immediate grants be made for this purpose under the Social Welfare Act and that classes be held at evenings in order that workers who have to maintain a family may participate.

There is no doubt that the educational system in British Guiana is rotting with chaos, will Government do something to alleviate its past errors?

We would like the Government to make a declaration of policy with respect to its education of the illiterates.

We are confident that given the facilities, the masses will take full advantage of it.

## Letters to the Editor

### RUM—A CURSE ON SUGAR ESTATES

Rose Hall Village  
Corentyne  
12th Oct. 1944

The Secretary  
B. G. E. I. A.

Sir,

I have read with interest in your Sunday's issue of the Indian Opinion, the Resolution passed by our organisation relative to the evils of rum drinking. I am happy to know that at long last our more fortunate brethren have become alive to the dangers that beset the path of the more unfortunate, in the form of alcohol.

I am however somewhat sceptical as to whether the situation would be improved if Government should accede by your request by removing all rum-shops from within the area of Sugar Plantations.

If this question is to be tackled with any degree of success, it must be tackled courageously and firmly.

Government will be reluctant to introduce any machinery which would retard the progress of the liquor trade for obvious reasons but we must be bold enough to tell Government that it must govern to improve the health and happiness of its people, and not to exist at the expense of the health and happiness of its people. Legislation must be introduced to expel other and more humane sources for revenue.

This is what I think Government should be asked to legislate:—Drinking in rum shops and public places must be strictly prohibited. Not more than a half bottle of rum to be sold to an individual at a time.

The laws of drunkenness must be rigidly enforced. When these laws are made and put into operation, then and only then can one hope for a better, stronger and happier people, only then can social workers make progress in social work. Only then can Government hope to see the gladsome effect of its proposed social schemes.

I am  
Yours Faithfully  
RAM, MANOHAR

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### ROTTEN PRIMARY EDUCATION SYSTEM IN COLONY

Pln. Ogle  
23rd October

The Editor  
"Indian Opinion"—  
Sir

I have seen much in the Colony regarding the evils of the present dual control of the educational system.

There is inefficiency everywhere and a spirit of 'don't care' almost in every school.

The governing body seems to be more interested in the religious aspect of the children than their educational needs, every effort is made by the teachers, catechist and minister in charge to have those children that belong to some other faith into their own religious sect.

I am astounded to see that this most primitive system of education is continued by a Government which is apparently interested in the welfare of the inhabitants. The regretful part of the whole matter is that these schools are really run on government provided funds.

Yours Faithfully  
Guianese

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## British Guiana The Forgotten Land

No Practical Outlook Of West Indian Caribbean  
Conference

BY THE WATCH DOG

Reports reaching us from the American owned Caribbean Islands indicate that the U.S. Government is putting plans forward to implement some of the recommendations made at the West Indian Conference held in Barbados in March of the present year. There were almost specific recommendations made as far as this colony was concerned.

Yet every thing seems to have been forgotten of the Conference as far as British Guiana is concerned.

Too much of this academic discussion seems to be leading this country nowhere. These Conferences cost the tax payers money; and therefore they expect some return for their investment. It is therefore the duty of government to take steps to implement the recommendations or to state the reasons why it cannot embark on them.

The Colonial Treasurer, officially represented British Guiana, has been also forgotten of the Conference and its recommendations or is it that he is too busily occupied in other directions,

Government would do much towards getting somewhere if it established several small committees [not interminable ones] to iron out details and present them for implementation.

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**The Unwelcomed B. G. Franchise Commission And Its Report**

*By Observer*

The population of British Guiana would certainly refer one day to the Franchise Commission headed by E. G. Woolford and scorn its contents as having been reported by one of the sons of British Guiana. The names of those who signed the majority report would always be a thorn in the side of every true Guianese, as persons responsible to keep the colony back from progress.

Credit must be given those who signed the majority report for having played the black race against the East Indians, much to the detriment of the black race and to the self preservation of a majority of the signatories. The greater portion of the signatories of the majority report are men imbued with the idea of selfishness and belong to mixed races, therefore the subtle game of playing one race against the other. It must be clear to these men nevertheless that they cannot go on doing this trick indefinitely without being found out; the problem of the Blackman is fundamentally the problem of the Indians, and therefore the unit is bound so close together that their cohesion is inseparable. A word of warning to the wise is enough and those who think they have won a battle has in reality lost one. The masses of British Guiana believes in God, their souls and conscience are free, can, the same be said of the signatories of the Majority Report of the Franchise Commission?

**Necessity For A West Indian Rice Board**

*By I. O. Special Correspondent*

Those responsible for planning the future of British Guiana are certainly sleeping as far as the Rice Industry is concerned. It is common knowledge that the entire West Indies are suffering from the lack of an adequate supply of rice as a food on the table of the masses. At the present moment we hardly export enough rice to satisfy the demands of Trinidad alone. British Guiana has been distributing its exportable rice as equitable as possible to all the British West Indies; This is, certainly a very commendable humanitarian act on our part. "A friend in need is a friend indeed". Now, the future of the rice Industry of British Guiana will depend on these self same West Indian markets but under completely different circumstances than the present monopoly that British Guiana rice enjoys in these islands; there would be international competition.

**Windsor Forest, La Jalousie Hague Affairs**

**Under Normal Conditions Expenditure Should Not Exceed Revenue**

REPLIES TO QUESTIONS NO. 5  
BY THE HONOURABLE A. M. EDUN REGARDING REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE ON THE GOVERNMENT ESTATES, WEST COAST, DEMERARA

Question 1.—What are the comparative figures of revenue and expenditure of the Government estates of Windsor Forest, La Jalousie and Hague during the years 1941, 1942 and 1943 regarding the cultivated sections of the aforesaid estates?

Answer 1.—The figures are as follows:—

CULTIVATED SECTIONS.	1941		1942		1943	
	Revenue	Expenditure.	Revenue	Expenditure.	Revenue	Expenditure.
	\$ C	\$ C	\$ C	\$ C	\$ C	\$ C
Windsor Forest	3,362 87	14,249 53	4,072 86	7,907 16	4,521 26	7,380 10
La Jalousie ...	5,870 17	5,021 16	4,931 94	6,391 97	6,481 82	12,368 67
Hague ...	5,553 96	2,604 38	4,152 26	10,773 03	4,964 28	9,394 37
	14,787 00	21,785 07	13,157 36	24,972 16	15,967 36	29,143 14

Expenditure exceeded revenue by a considerable amount during the three years as a large sum was spent in overtaking arrears of maintenance. Under normal conditions expenditure should not exceed the revenue.

Question 2.—What are the comparative figures of revenue and expenditure of the house lot sections of the Government estates of Windsor Forest, La Jalousie and Hague during the years 1941, 1942 and 1943?

Answer 2.—The figures are as follows:—

HOUSE LOT SECTIONS	1941		1942		1943	
	Revenue	Expenditure.	Revenue	Expenditure.	Revenue	Expenditure
	\$ C	\$ C	\$ C	\$ C	\$ C	\$ C
Windsor Forest	207 60	507 25	161 43	665 73	222 61	776 77
La Jalousie ...	110 76	287 58	65 71	441 53	117 64	441 78
Hague ...	118 35	342 62	129 20	500 36	195 56	625 84
	436 71	1,137 44	356 34	1,607 62	535 81	1,844 49

EDITOR'S NOTE—In the earlier part of this year the authorities at Windsor Forest, La Jalousie and Hague had increased the rates on the House Lot Sections, in some cases up to 400% and under. The residents took objection to the high increases and a deadlock has ensued. The residents have offered 33 1/3 % but according to the figures below 33 1/3 % would not be sufficient to meet the cost of keeping the House Lot Sections in proper sanitary conditions with the figures available there is no reason why a settlement cannot be reached.

It is only logical, therefore, that these West Indian Islands, which are interested to have a regular and continuous supply of rice come war or come peace, should also have a say in our future plans as far as the rice industry is concerned.

Immediate steps should be taken by Government to contact all the British West Indian Governments and a Board be formed to work out plans to ensure an adequate supply of rice, for the West Indies, cement trade arrangements and financing of the industry etc.

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**Apathy Of Inhabitants And The Government**

By Liberty

There is a general apathy of the inhabitants of the Colony with regard to the general welfare and development of the Colony as a whole. There is of course ample reason for this unusual behaviour of the population. The most significant reason nevertheless can be found, in a continuous subjection of body and soul to almost inhuman treatment and conditions.

Time and again these same people have made efforts to have their affairs straightened out; but every effort of theirs were stalled directly or indirectly by the capitalists and the Local and Imperial Governments; every conceivable method has been used in the past and is being used today to govern the people not in the way the

people would like to be governed but how the capitalists the Local and Imperial Governments would like to have them governed; naturally this cannot lead to an improvement of relationship between rulers and ruled but to a serious deterioration of harmony. The population has long grown accustomed to have things pushed down their throats, a typical example has been the question of Universal Adult Suffrage.

An invitation to any impartial observer willing to gauge the interest of the people in the affairs of the Government can be easily seen at any sitting of the Legislative Council when hardly even six citizens are present in the gallery.

Certainly there is plenty room for improvement in our system of Government if it is going to enjoy the confidence of the people. The situation calls for statesmanship not of hot air but of facing hard facts and solving them for the sake of humanity

**Rebuilding of Mackay Memorial School**

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UPLIFT AND EDUCATIONAL WORK 1943-1944

Dear Contributing Friends,

1. An appeal is hereby made to you in our urgent endeavour for aid in the social, mental and spiritual work for the upliftment of our children so as to fit them for the tasks of the morrow.

2. In our educational programme we must prepare for better and more useful citizenship by the training of mind, body and soul, or the mental, physical and spiritual. We have had for the last year, mainly as parents interested ourselves in our children and community, to maintain the building and equipment, and also provide the salaries of teachers and a school that really trains citizens.

3. We have been running this school for the past 8 months having one First Class Head Master from the Training Centre, one Third Class, First Assistant, one Uncertificated male Teacher, one Pupil Teacher and two Female Teachers, with an enrollment of 200 children paying \$150 per month from money paid by the Governing Body.

4. This matter was a burning Question in the Legislature the latter part of last year and this early part of the present year and it is still in suspense.

5. We can only now appeal to you as brothers of charity to understand and assist; whether it be in some valuable donation to this worthy purpose or in some monthly contribution to equipment or our teachers' salaries, until such time as we put things on a footing that demands the Government Grant offered in the Education Ordinance.

Thanking you for whatever you offer, we kindly request that you fill in the numbered coupon attached, and return to either the representatives mentioned below in the kind care of the B. G. E. I. Association.

Yours for progress,

DAVID DRAPPAUL, Businessman Chairman  
MOHABIR Rice Miller  
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