

Indian Opinion

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Planning For The New Year

We enter upon the year 1945, according to official pronouncements with hopes for the planning of the advancement of this Crown Colony. We have been informed that Sir Frank Stockdale is to be the Adviser on Development and Planning in the West Indies with Sir J. S. Macpherson as Comptroller of Development of Welfare.

It appears that the Secretary of State for the Colonies has realised at last that the time is overdue to plan development; therefore he has appointed an Adviser. We wonder if this new Adviser will follow the old routine of consulting his old friends—it is better we think that we should not name them—or he will consult the Legislature of the several Colonies and so obtain the views of the people, and not the majority of officials who seem not to care for the "Natives" who form the large majority of the people.

What should be the plan for British Guiana? We are tempted to answer this question ourselves. In our leading article of 16th December we pointed out that owing to administrative incompetence the Industries of the Indians have been ruined but we have been advised that we are mistaken when we assume that administrative incompetence is responsible for the state of the Colony's minor industries. We are prepared to forget the past if we can be certain that the large majority of the "Natives" of this Colony will be given a square deal.

In 1933 the production of Sugar was 142,000 tons. We understand that the Sugar Producers are planning to produce 250,000 tons in 1945.

In 1933 the export of rice was 29,000 tons plus 25,000 tons for local consumption. May we suggest that those concerned, including Sir Frank Stockdale, plan to produce 100,000 tons of rice so that there may be a surplus overconsumption of about 70,000 tons for exporting to the West Indies and the United Kingdom.

We suggest also that plans be made to increase the production of all other Crops such as Coconuts, Coffee, ground provision etc. by at least 100 per cent over the 1933 production figures so that all those who are interested in the production of those Crops may have hope for their future.

We also suggest that the number of cattle and other live stock be doubled when compared with 1933 and that rather than make arrangements with Venezuela and Brazil to ship us beef cattle, we should continue as in 1933

to export beef cattle to the "Natives" in the West Indies.

We suggest further that plans be made by our New Adviser to develop our Timber and Lumber industries. Would it be too much to suggest that a Paper Industry be developed and that our Bauxite should be refined in this Colony?

We have not forgotten Educational Development, nor have we forgotten the various measures that should be taken to develop the health and living conditions etc. of all who form the population of this Colony particularly the "Natives."

Sir Frank Stockdale has a big job to do. We wish him success in his new sphere in this New Year and if he is prepared to cooperate with the people of the West Indies he will be able to see that West Indians can assist him materially to plan for Industrial, Educational, Social, and Constitutional Development as from 1945 for the material advancement of the West Indies.

DEMOCRACY

British Guiana Semi-Feudal Constitution

A Paradox Of British Sentiment In B.G.

BY LIBERTY

I am compelled briefly to write this week on the constitution of British Guiana which to my mind is the most antiquated and semi-feudal in the world.

Under the constitution, the people of British Guiana have absolutely no voice, and the legislature a puppet instrument in the hands of the British Government and not the inhabitants of the Colony. No wonder that British Guiana has taken one hundred and fifty years to be marching two steps forward and then two backwards so that in the sum total she is in the same position she was in, when she started off.

There are outstanding cases to

prove my point about the constitution, the most recent one has been the "Franchise question" the Drainage and Irrigation Scheme and Land Settlements.

Let us take Drainage and Irrigation, this was a topic many many years old, which finally reached boiling point in 1942 but what do we find it is not the legislature which makes the decision. The Governor first of all makes up his mind and then the Secretary of States for the Colonies and now we are told it may be the Colonial Development and Welfare Officer. I ask bluntly where is the decision of democracy.

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World Battlefronts

In a Belgian headquarters town U.S. was correspondents, conditioned by months of advance and victory, got the shocking word that the enemy had broken through, that they would have to leave on the run. Somewhere on the run, LIFE correspondent Jack Belden cabled this account of the muddle and mess of retreat:

There were no regular combat units in the town at that moment, only some army engineers, medics and ack ack officers and men who had come to try and find out what had happened to their cut-off units. In the upper-story windows of houses a few G.I.s rested rifles on sills while women civilians looked on, some with fright, some with scorn, some with amusement and some with the air of 'we're all in this together.'

As we stood there some colored soldiers drove up and began wrestling a pile of logs into position as a road block. It seemed amazing but that was all there was between us and the Germans.

Into the Night. Toward dusk we left the town. Some medics who had lost their units were walking. We gave them a lift. None knew what had happened. The road was crowded with trucks. One of them was driven by a Red Cross girl who waved spiritedly to us.

Already many vehicles were going toward the rear. Gasoline supply trucks, portable bridges that we might have used to cross rivers, all things that we could use again went back so that the decks could be cleared for action. The inhabitants of the town watched these precautions with frightened faces. Many were refugees from bombed cities and now they had jumped from the frying pan into the fire and didn't know where to go.

I noticed in myself a feeling that I had not had for some years. It was the feeling of guilt that seems to come over you whenever you retreat. You don't like to look anyone in the eyes. It seems as if you have done something wrong. I perceive this feeling in others too.

The Frightened People. More people now stood in the roads, alarm plainly stamped on their faces. Our planes were swooping and diving and circling close overhead and sometimes you could hear the sputter of machine-gun fire and the sharp crump of a bomb falling in the valley behind the hills encircling the town. Once there was a tremendous crash close by, the windows rattled and a column of smoke leaped out of a small wooded hill a few hundred yards away. The people rushed for the buildings. Our blood began to race a little faster.

A middle-aged woman grabbed me by the arm and began pouring out words of broken English in a pleading, tortured voice. She wanted us to take her children, a boy aged ten and a girl aged twelve with us. "Just a

little way on the road," she said "then you can drop them off. My husband, he's been in the resistance movement. He'll have to get out. The collaborators will report him. It doesn't matter about me. But only take my children with you." Her eyes were red and I realized she would have been crying if her need for saving her children had not been stronger than the grief. A French photographer finally agreed to take her in his civilian car.

The road was jammed with every conceivable kind of vehicle. A plane came down out of a formation and bombed and strafed the column, knocking three trucks off the road, shattering trees and causing everyone to flee to ditches.

Three Months After. We went down roads along which we had advanced to the tune of cheers and ap-

plause three months before, but now there were not many people about and they no longer looked ecstatically happy, but only glum. Many, however, gave us the V sign and waved bravely. At dusk we came to a city. The buzz of the bombs was loud and clear over the hubbub of the traffic, and we saw a trail of red fire coming across the grey sky on the darkened city. It fell with a loud clatter and flames shot up and people ran hurriedly through the streets.

It was like that all night. There must have been a buzz bomb or a piloted plane raid somewhere every five minutes. The next day in a jeep we saw the tail flame on one roboromb overhead suddenly go out and then the big frame of the bomb dove down on us in perfect silence, an inhuman Moloch coming to devour us. We threw ourselves to the ground and it burst nearby, breaking all the windows but not hurting anyone. I went to a cafe where I had been the first American three months previously and was kissed and embraced by the barmaid and given free drinks of cognac. The people told me: "We can stand the buzz bombs. That's nothing. But the Germans, We couldn't stand the Germans here again."

"The Fate of The World"

The year 1944 was the climactic year of the war against Germany. It was not the last year of that war, as many had predicted and more had hoped. But it was, beyond all reasonable doubt, the last full year.

It was not a year in which the outcome—the question of who would win and who would lose—still dangled precariously in the balance. The trend of the war had been reversed in 1942 at Stalingrad and El Alamein. By early 1944 the U.S. was almost fully armed—thanks mainly to the Man of 1943, General George C. Marshall.

The promise of victory was bright. But the path to victory was highly uncertain. And the greatest single element of that uncertainty was the success or failure of the Anglo-U.S. invasion of western Europe, which Soviet Russia had been demanding since 1942, and which Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt now proclaimed as necessary and imminent.

The invasion was the greatest gamble, the most complex operation in the history of war. The design of it was the product of hundreds of brains. The responsibility of it fell on the shoulders of one man—Dwight David Eisenhower.

To be Continued

Democracy

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The next point is the question of veto power just imagine readers. The Governor whoever he may be, has the last word and can over-rule any decision of the Legislature and further the Governor of British Guiana is not a Guianese, he is an Englishman and he has the last word in British Guiana. Can such a constitution be democratic or is it Bureaucratic and Plutocratic—as it does not to the smallest degree approach the classical definition of a Government of the people, a Government by the people and a Government for the people—Readers just contemplate what you have just read—it is healthy.

Joseph G Hanoman

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Pampering Sugar Industry

United Kingdom Grants \$9.60 Per Ton Increase on Price of Sugar

Local Government Waves Dollar a Ton Tax from Colony's Revenue

Labourers Told that Increase in Price Obtained Would not mean Increase in Wages

BY THE WATCH DOG

It was indeed surprising to learn from the Local Government and the Sugar Producers' Association that the recent increase in price for Colonial Sugar in the United Kingdom and the waving of the dollar a ton tax recently imposed as export duty on Sugar is not going to better the wages in anyway that is being paid out to the labourers of the sugar estates.

I cannot help but express the opinion that the Imperial and Local Governments are pampering the Sugar Industry and the owners of the plantations, it is inconceivable to perceive how void the advisers of Government are of human necessities and understanding.

I cannot bring myself to believe that the British people could be as callous as to permit the present state and standard of living the inhabitants of British Guiana to continue in its present status quo; neither can I believe that the responsible officers of the British Government would allow the major portion of the inhabitants of British Guiana to live in conditions worse than that of slaves.

British Guiana has been described by two Non-British Writers as "the land where men die faster than they are born," and the land where the inhabitants are "wretched and miserable unbelievably filthy and unbelievably poor." Could any Englishman hold his face straight and his shoulders upright to such accusations. Is it not a direct shame on the British Nation?

The direct responsibility for the conditions of the inhabitants of the Colony lies on the shoulder of the past and present Governors, who have been and are the direct representatives of the British Nation.

Recently there has been added a Colonial Development and Welfare Officer who occupies the position of a kind of supervisor; to Governors and their decisions; but it all seems to be leading no place and the country is generally speaking in the same place it stood a century ago.

The whole world is evolving and this colony is no exception so that it

is time the Imperial and Local Governments change their Policy towards the inhabitants of the Colony.

In conclusion I want to make it clear that the labourers are justified in demanding that the sugar estates increase the wages that is being paid to them. An advice to the Government is that the present semi-feudal system is rotten and must go or it will very seriously stain the character of the British Nation.

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AGENTS

New Year Message

BY JEANARINE SINGH
President British Guiana East
Indian Association.

My dear fellow Indians, I speak to you to-day in my capacity as President of The British Guiana East Indian Association. I wish to convey to you a feeling of Good-Will and Cheer for the coming year.

I know that for the majority of our people the coming of the New Year means nothing other than that, instead of a change of a leaf in the Calendar Almanac a new one will have to be found; as poverty stares us in the face from every corner. To these our people goes my special wish and prayer that God gives them fortitude and strength to overcome these hardships, and that the New Year or Years to come will somehow someday bring the normal privileges of mankind within your grasp to which you are fully entitled. The problems which confront our people are indeed enormous, they are by no means unsurmountable, but every Indian will have to shoulder this responsibility regarding it with sanctity and trust.

I make a special appeal for the New Year to all our people of every category to close their ranks and consolidate their position with a greater degree of harmony and unity than heretofore. And now I must conclude by saying that my solemn prayer is that God bless our race and show us the path whereby we may be able to pursue our lives in a happy atmosphere. May the New Year bring our Indian People in British Guiana and elsewhere prosperity and happiness which they fully deserve, and now on behalf of myself and the Executive Committee of the British Guiana East Indian Association I wish you a happy and prosperous New Year.

Letters to the Editor

THE WINDSOR-FOREST INCIDENT—

The Editor, Indian Opinion

Dear Sir;

I am writing in connection with the treatment that Sir Gordon Lethem Governor of British Guiana gave the people of Windsor Forest. I want to state that the Governor was very wrong to have taken the attitude he did and I think it will not lead to any better relationship between the people of this Colony and the Representative of the English Government if such an attitude is persisted upon.

I wonder if Sir Gordon realizes that the people of British Guiana in their own humble way can ask the Secretary of State to recall him to England; after all the people of this colony is paying his salary and has provided a home for him.

I am of the opinion that little acts like what Sir Gordon Lethem has done does as much harm to the English Nation as the exploiters of the Sugar Estates. It gives me the impression that such acts goes to the discredit of Sir Gordon and he should be more careful of his future actions.

The Windsor Forest incident has created a feeling of discontent and all are watching and looking on keenly.

*

THE GOVERNOR AND THE PEOPLE

Port Mourant
Berbice
27/12/44.

Sir,

Since the Governor came back from England, he is not the person as before, now he is all and all sugar; other Industries can go, as long as sugar lives. If the people in this colony have to bear the expense of a first class Colony why must the Colonial Office come in the picture; and if it is that Colonial Office will have to do the say; then had it not been better this colony's status remained the same.

Democracy as it stands really mean the White people and not other races, in British Guiana.

This Colony will experience the British people's attitude soon to colonials, although they have said that the British people is at War for freedom, yet they are content to keep other under slavery to be exploited upon, then where is the British Democratic principle?

How can we expect a square deal from the British Government when we are not WHITE. We are simply disgusted with the present system of Government and something should be done to relieve the situation, perhaps the Governor was assured of our tame

people but a timely warning is necessary. Its better a man die, than to work and yet starve:

R. SINGH

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CROAL STREET

Mr. E. A. Adams Government Nominee To City Council

The "Indian Opinion" is happy to offer its congratulations to Mr. E. A. Adams who is now a City Father by virtue of Government's recent selection of him as one of its three nominees to serve on that Body.

Undoubtedly, the ratepayers of the city will stand to benefit considerably from Councillor Adams' ripe experience which he has gained in addressing himself to consideration of general civic matters, and particularly as they affect the financial state of the colony as a whole.

Mr. Adams is an auditor of high repute and the Man-Power Citizens' Association which benefits from his excellent services which he has from its inception rendered it in that same professional capacity, look forward to his civic stewardship as being an exceptionally appreciable one in the light of the valuable assistance which it is in Mr. Adams' power to render the Council.

Again, we join with the many others in offering this young, talented and very unassuming British Guianese our sincerest congratulations on the preferment.

900 Registered With Employment Exchange Service

G'TOWN., Thurs., Jan., 4

In the two-and-a-half months that the Employment Exchange Service has been in operation, more than 930 workmen in the Greater Georgetown area have registered. During the same period employers have notified the Exchange of more than 90 vacancies, and there are at present vacancies for unemployed coopers, timber grant workers, salesmen, and youths.

Contrary to the opinion which appears to be held by some persons, the Exchange does not register only manual workers, but unemployed clerks and, in fact, male workers of every description are registered.

Registered applicants at the Exchange are reminded of the instructions to report once a month at the Exchange on the day specified at the back of their brown cards. In placing applicants in employment, preference will be given to those who have followed the instructions and renewed their registrations.

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