

# **We Harbour no Illusions**

(Speech by the Hon. Dr. C. B. Jagan in the House of Assembly on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1953.)

This House of Assembly is pleased to record its appreciation of Your Excellency's address delivered at the State Opening of the present Legislative session.

To the Messages of goodwill from Her Majesty the Queen and Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, the House respectfully requests that you convey to Her Majesty and her Secretary of State for the Colonies grateful appreciation and the assurance that we will strive to the utmost for the happiness and well-being of the people of British Guiana and will remove every obstacle which may be placed on the road to peace, progress and prosperity.

The House observes with favour the initiative recently shown by Her Majesty's Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Sir Winston Churchill in attempting to ease the present tense world situation and hope that the same initiative will be shown in bringing about an end of racial discrimination and ruthless oppression of, and aggression against, colonial and native peoples, particularly in South Africa, Malaya and Kenya. In such efforts he can be assured of the full and enthusiastic support of the peoples whom this House represents.

Your Excellency's optimistic views about the new Constitution and in particular the State Council have been remarked. We however, harbour no illusions about the nominated State Council which can only serve the purpose of curbing the will of the people – a reactionary and undemocratic purpose.

The presence of three Civil Servants in the House and their control of the three key Ministries in the Government and the Governor's veto are an anomaly and contrary to the professed democratic principles of Her Majesty's Government. We shall continue to struggle for a democratic Constitution for British Guiana.

The House notes Your Excellency's views that the new Government has been handed a fairly good financial position by the old Administration. However, it is fully conscious of the legacy of privation, malnutrition, unemployment and disease which is bequeathed to us by the old order.

We are aware of the pressing needs of the people and agree with Your Excellency that large capital sums will have to be raised for further development for British Guiana. To this end, we will initiate schemes for the re-organisation of the material resources of the country and for raising capital by way of Government loans, both foreign and local.

The House is fully conscious of the roles which private capital is playing and will play in the development of British Guiana. We will take such steps as will encourage and attract private capital for the development of the country and above all, will guarantee that the Government will honour and fulfil all its obligations and undertakings.

The House, like Your Excellency, is anxiously awaiting the report of the World Bank Mission which recently visited British Guiana and trusts that the report will provide a comprehensive and acceptable plan as to the direction in which development should proceed as well as the means by which the programme can be financed.

The House notes Your Excellency's observations on the need for the development of a spirit of co-operation between 'capital' and 'labour'. The relationship of capital and labour must not be based as hitherto on the whims of the capitalist but on the recognised rights of workers to organise and bargain through the trade unions of their own choice and to take an active part in the running of the industries in which they are engaged.

This Assembly notes with satisfaction Your Excellency's remarks in the encouragement of 'self-help' amongst the people of the country assisted by Government grants and loans as being one aspect of development which should be energetically pursued. To this end, it will seek to democratize all organisations touching upon the lives of the people. Finally, the House wishes to join Your Excellency in your plea for internal harmony which is indispensable to progress and assures Your Excellency that all measures conducive to the welfare of the people of the Colony will receive its full support.