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LAND SETTLEMENT IN GUYANA  
INVENTORY AND LEGAL BASES  
A COMPILATION OF EXISTING INFORMATION

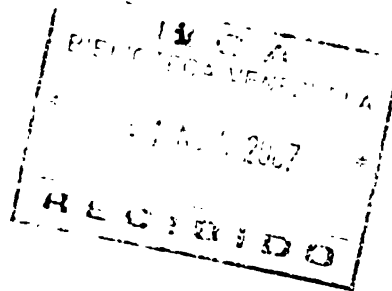
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## P R E S E N T A T I O N

This study is part of a series of works which are intended to present background information in the area of land settlements. As such it has attempted to compile existing information on almost all settlements which have been attempted in Guyana either successfully or not. Given its descriptive objective no conclusion nor critical analysis have been attempted. However, it is expected that this report will be followed by an in-depth analysis of the major types of settlements with the purpose of analysing alternative models of social organisation of production.

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REPORT ON

LAND SETTLEMENT : INVENTORY AND LEGAL BASES

COMPILED FOR THE

INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE SCIENCES.  
(I.I.C.A.)

BY: Michael McCormack.  
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## INTRODUCTION

The following Report has been compiled entirely from secondary sources and did not involve any field-work. This limitation is reflected in the Report in the relative paucity of detail of contemporary problems which land settlement schemes are facing.

The main purpose of the Report has, however, been secured in describing (a) the origins and structure of all land settlement schemes in the country; (b) identifying the government agencies which make an input into the schemes; (c) identifying the principle legal instruments which have influenced land settlement development; and (d) suggesting a categorization of the schemes to facilitate selection of schemes for future study.

I would like to record my appreciation for the assistance rendered by the Land Development Division, particularly in making available the Annual Reports of the Division from which much of the factual detail has been drawn.

It should be borne in mind that the terms of reference for this study did not include an evaluation of the success of land settlement projects nor an analysis of problems encountered. To this extent the observations in Part IV are merely suggestions of areas which may be more fruitfully explored in future research rather than judgements on past efforts. Land settlement strategies in most countries have produced more failures than successes. However, very few failures are total failures and ultimate success derives from recognizing partial successes and building on it in the future.



PART I : HISTORY OF LAND SETTLEMENT

Land settlement has a surprisingly long history in Guyana, going back to 1870. For general purposes one may periodize land settlement ventures in Guyana into three stages :

- 1870 - 1910 : Land settlement as a means of retaining immigrant East Indians in Guyana.
- 1919 - 1956 : Land settlement as a source of employment for redundant plantation workers.
- 1956 - 1978 : Land settlement as a mechanism for developing the hinterland and for creating communities of peasant farmers.

1870 - 1912

The related problem of the cost of re-patriating East Indian labour after indentureship had been completed and the shortage of labour in the colony gave rise to an attempt to resolve both problems by land settlement schemes. Despatches from the Governors of the period express concern over the considerable amounts of money required to repatriate all those eligible for return passage to India after indentureship. At the same time it was clear that shortage of labour, a recurring problem throughout the nineteenth century, could reappear if large numbers returned to India. In addition, to these reasons, the Governors of the colony became increasingly aware that if serious development and stability in the colony was to occur opportunities for improvement and progress must be created.

The first attempt at a land settlement solution to the East Indian remigration problem was on an abandoned cattle farm at Nooten Zwill on the East Coast of Demerara about eighteen miles from Georgetown. (1) 1.5 acres were allocated for crops and  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre for communal grazing. The government bought the land for \$15,000.00 but the scheme never materialized because of the lack of applicants. After a further consideration a second scheme was proposed in 1973 at Huis t'Dieren off

the Essequibo. The details of this scheme had been worked out in some detail and the fact that over 500 applicants petitioned for land is an indication that, whatever the government's motives, the scheme brought a change of Governor and a change of Policy. In 1874, Governor Irving outlined an alternative plan whereby the government would bear the cost of draining land which would be sold on an individual basis to applicants. By this method he envisaged that East Indians would buy land and thus relinquish any ideas of returning to India and the government would, de facto, be released from the obligation to pay return passages.

Irving's rationale in summary form was that :

"There exists among the coolie and creole population the elements of a prosperous peasantry - we must make proprietorship of the soil by these people possible." (2)

The idea of land settlement as an alternative to re-migration persisted, however, and in 1880 the government bought Huis t'Dieren and again a considerable number of applicants sought to become settlers on it. Between 1873 and the final decision to go ahead with the Huis t'Dieren scheme, several other settlements had been attempted and reached varying degrees of completion. In 1879 plantation "L'Amitie" was considered but rejected as unhealthy, it was later bought by four indentured labourers with a loan from government. Two years previously migrants had petitioned the governor for land in lieu of passage at Bestandigheid in Berbice but the governor refused the request because blacks had bought land nearby and he feared feuding. The area was also considered unhealthy.

By 1881 fifty-three lots had been allocated at Huis t'Dieren on the basis of two acres for cultivation and  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre for a house lot. The following year the system was again interrupted by a plan to sell the land to immigrants, a further 62 lots were sold. By 1884 135 cultivation lots and 117 village lots were occupied, partly by settlers in lieu of passage and partly by purchase.

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(1) see Key, L : Village Patterns and Peasant Agriculture -

A Historical Overview (Mimeograph, U.G. Library).

(2) Colonial Office 111/No.427, January 1883.

The role of the Immigration Agent in the land settlement schemes was most important. He, in fact, had over-all responsibility for land settlement until 1887 when it passed to the Crown Surveyor. (3). The "Rules and Conditions" (4) pertaining to land settlement were laid down in 1881 and provide a valuable insight into the concept of land settlement which existed at the time.

Several features of the Rules are noteworthy as being remarkably enlightened in comparison to some aspects of contemporary land settlement administration. In particular, Clause 8 which deals with irrigation schemes suggested by the settlers which the government will carry out leaves a degree of initiative and decision-making with the settlers which later land settlement planning removed. The question of how soon in the planning and implementation of a scheme the settlers themselves should be involved is a vexed one, but experience both within and outside of Guyana points to the success of their participation from the inception. Another Clause which is ahead of its time, in some respects, is Number 12 in which the commitment is made to provide a Dispenser to the Settlement and to stipulate controlled prices for the services provided.

Huist'dieren did not fulfill expectations and by 1910 we find land being sold in blocks of 14 lots to individual buyers (5), and two years later the Commissioner of Lands and Mines Report notes that land in Huist'dieren is selling at \$5.00 per two acres in an attempt to attract sellers.

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(3) See Appendix I

(4) Administration Report for the Years 1909 - 1910: Crown Surveyor's Annual Report 1910.

(5) Administration Report for the Years 1911 - 1912: Annual Report of Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

Although Huis t'Dieren did not maintain its initial promise as a land settlement scheme, the idea of settling East Indians on the land in lieu of passage became well established. A number of schemes were initiated in the 1890's throughout the coastlands. In 1897 Helena on the Mahaica Creek was drained and 1216 settlers allocated free lands. Irrigation was supplied by the East Demerara Water Conservance and rice cultivation initiated. In 1900 the Immigrant Agent-General was appointed "Local Authority" for the scheme. (5) Two courts were established to deal with the passing of transports to settlers. Whim settlement on Lower Corentyne was established in 1897 with a complement of 574 settlers. In 1901 an artesian well was bored and rice cultivation undertaken. Bush Lot (West Coast, Berbice) was started in the same year with 1227 settlers. Maria's Pleasure on Wakenaam Island was also designated as a land settlement scheme.

Helena, Whim and Bush Lot were almost wiped out in the first year. The settlers were still closely attached to near-by sugar estates and did not take up residence immediately. Plantation labour requirements dominated agricultural production throughout Guyana in the 19th century, and any departure or initiative which implied an alternative source of income was strongly resisted by the planters to keep labour on the estates is what occurred at Anna Regina estate in 1884. Labourers were encouraged to rent land at \$23.04 per acre, half of which was remitted if the labourer worked for three days per week on the estate when required. (6)

Although the Superintendent of the Settlements complained of the slowness with which settlers moved onto the land, the dependence on the estates for income and the prolonged droughts of that period made settlement a precarious undertaking. Along with complaints of non-residence the Superintendent also complained that the settlers were not making sufficient effort to clear the land properly. Despite these set-backs the early schemes survived and in 1905 were declared to be Local Authorities and ceased to have any special status as land settlement schemes.

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(5) Report of Immigration Agent General: 1900-1901

(6) Key, L: Village Patterns and Peasant Agriculture - A Historical Overview (Mimeograph, U.G. Library)

1910 - 1954

The periodization of land settlement which we have chosen is, as noted above, somewhat arbitrary. It corresponds more to the policy changes which underlay land settlement programmes rather than to the implementation of the schemes. As with the earlier period the question of land settlement schemes during this second period was closely related to the fortunes of sugar cultivation. After the 1884 slump in sugar prices many estates never properly recovered. Gradually a number of them went into receivership in lieu of debt payment or were abandoned by their owners.

Land settlement offered a solution to two problems, the unemployment created by the demise of sugar cultivation and the productive use of lands which were being taken into Crown ownership. Land settlement was also seen as a way of establishing the rural population which inevitably began to drift towards areas where estate work was still available, or to Georgetown.

The three estates of Windsor Forest, La Jalousie and Hague were acquired by the Crown between 1910 and 1912 for default of payments, and the lands devoted to a land settlement programme. Anna Regina estate was acquired in the late 1920's and by 1934 Cane Grove and La Bonne Mere estates were also acquired by government. In the same period, 1944, Charity-Amazon on the Pomeroon River was designated a land settlement scheme although this scheme should be considered an exception since it was designed more to serve as an entrepot for the Pomeroon District than to provide land for settlement purposes. Towards the end of this period Orvenholt and Garden of Eden were approved as land settlement schemes. Chronologically their beginnings fall into the third period of land settlement development which we have suggested but conceptually they belong with the other ex-plantations.

Land settlement was conceived in individualistic terms rather than as a vehicle for creating new communities. The same

thinking appears to have influenced the development of land settlement as is evident, for example, in the security of Tenure Ordinances (Rice) which took effect in this period. Principally, they sought to secure a farmer on a sufficient area of land to provide him with full-time employment and an adequate income. Land settlement was one of several strategies used to achieve this end, and does not appear to have been considered as a separate or inherently different approach from other policies for increasing agricultural production. The adoption, for example of the recommendations of the Brown Report (1948) on the size of land which should be allocated to peasant farmers was adopted also for land settlement schemes.

Evidently the physical constraints arising from the drainage and irrigation net-work on the former estates offered little opportunity for imaginative development, or indeed for any kind of development which did not conform to the physical lay-out of the land.

#### 1954 - 1978

Since the Land Settlement Department was established in 1954 the administration of the schemes has been its major responsibility. The first new scheme to be established, Mora, in 1957, suffered from the physical problems which had created such obstacles for previous settlement schemes arising from the fact of it being a former sugar plantation. However, broader objectives were introduced into the planning of the scheme and, although they were largely unachieved, the lesson became clear that land settlement programmes which went beyond the mere distribution of land could hardly succeed unless the physical planning was harmonious with the broader social goals. This lesson was repeated in the case of Brandwagt-Sari in 1964 which again was located on an abandoned sugar estate. It is curious why the Brandwagt-Sari scheme should have

been attempted in the first place since with the opening of the Black Bush Polder and Wauna-Yarakita schemes in 1959 and 1960 there had been a completely new approach to land settlement introduced, and a break with the concept of land settlement on former estates.

Black Bush Polder constitutes a turning point in land settlement evolution in Guyana. For the first time virgin land was cleared and drained with a view to settlement. The conception and planning of the scheme from its inception was tailored to the agricultural and social objectives of settlement. Wauna-Yarakita was the second attempt at land settlement on virginland. However Wauna-Yarakita never materialized as planned due to the reluctance of settlers to move into the area. Black Bush remains the most (if not the only) successful land settlement scheme to the extent that settlers have remained and been economically successful. The fact that it is capable of being fully administered as a land settlement scheme has no doubt contributed to this state of affairs. To what extent it offers a repeatable formula for future development is a proposition which can only be answered in the light of more detailed study. An especially important aspect of such a decision must be the enormous costs of infra-structural works, the continue subsidizing of the Polder scheme and the location of future schemes.

Apart from the other innovations which the Black Bush Polder settlement was able to incorporate, the scheme marked a new development in land settlement objectives. Whereas previous schemes had attempted to either stabilize the population in a particular area or to offer them land in near-by coastal areas, the Black Bush project began to develop the hinterland or interior of Guyana. This may be considered something of an exaggeration since the Polder is in fact located on the coast-lands, but the fact of opening up new lands was the beginning of a concept which is now firmly established and being promoted as an agricultural priority. The Kimbia land settlement project perhaps illustrates the point more clearly, but its origins place it outside of the mainstream of land settlement programmes.

Although the Black Bush settlement experience must clearly be the starting point for any future planning of land settlement schemes, the fact that they are likely to be located in the interior areas limits the degree to which it can serve as a pilot project.

PART II : LAND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Approval was obtained in 1943 from the Legislative Council for the establishment of a Land Settlement Department. In 1955 the Department of Land Settlement came into existence as part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests, Land and Mines. In 1959 it was re-designated the Land Development Department and was integrated into the Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and Lands. Its present designation as the Land Development Division under the Ministry of Agriculture came in 1964.

The AIMS of the Division have been expressed in Annual Reports and can be essentially resumed into the following:

- i. To make more cultivable land available to small farmers on economic holdings.
- ii. To encourage the production of suitable crops in order to increase total production per head of population.
- iii. To apportion land in sufficient quantities for highest efficiency, and to obtain a self-sufficient income.
- iv. To offer guidance and improved methods to farmers.
- v. To intensify the cooperative movement among farmers.
- vi. To establish harmonious communities with suitable social amenities.

In order to implement these aims the following FUNCTIONS of the Division have been identified:

- i. To select and recommend areas suitable for land settlement.
- ii. To undertake the settlement of farmers.
- iii. To prepare development schemes for implementation by the government and other organizations.
- iv. To coordinate with other Ministries on such matters as crops, drainage and irrigation, size of holdings, housing and public health.



The original selection criteria for settlers utilized by the Division are:

- i. The applicant must be between 22-55 years of age.
- ii. He must be un- or under-employed.
- iii. Must not possess or rent land except very small plots.
- iv. Must have previous experience in agriculture.

It would appear that these criteria may have to be modified if settlers from the coastal areas are to be attracted to the hinterland settlements.

PART III : LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEMES

1. ANNA REGINA

HISTORY

The nucleus of the Anna Regina Land Settlement Scheme is the ex-plantation of the same name. Originally acquired in the late 1920's by local government, the plantation was leased to tenant rice farmers. In 1934 the government leased the whole estate of 3346 acres to a private individual, Mr. Rai, who in turn leased to the small tenant farmers. The number of tenants during the 1934-35 period varied between 205-214. With the loss of control over the tenants by the Department of Agriculture (since responsibility for the upkeep of the estate and the payment of rents had passed to the lessee, Mr. Rai), tenants' assets were sold to the lessee in order to dispose of their debts. To ensure recovery of debt payments, all of the rice crop was sold to the lessee and repayments made to the tenant through the Department.

Another device used against indebtedness was the branding of cattle. In 1937 the Estate was leased to Messrs. Sase Narayan and S.H. Seymour on account of the poor upkeep by the previous lessee. The following table of Indebtedness gives some notion of the volume of debts and the current prices for the period. In 1934 the price paid to farmers for a bag of rice was \$1.22. (1)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Popula- tion</u>	<u>INDEBTEDNESS</u>		<u>Sanitary Fees</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Advance</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
			<u>House Rent</u>	<u>Land Rent</u>				
1934	184	205	72.73	207.93	10.50	28.30	1,448	1,768
1935	240	214	34.67	304.79	1.50	41.59	1,611	1,994

(Source: Annual Report, Department of Agriculture, 1935)

Between the years 1937-1954 the area of the scheme increased to include Plantations Richmond, Alliance, Bush Lot, Henrietta, La Belle Alliance, Lima and the Second Depth of Devonshire Castle. In all the acreage rose to 7,818 acres. In 1954 with the creation of the Land Settlement Division responsibility for the administration of Anna Regina cum annexis passed from the local government to the Division. Development of the Scheme was undertaken in a piecemeal way as more lands were incorporated due to the failure of increasing numbers of sugar estates during the 1930's.

The acquisition of lands by government during this period was motivated principally by the desire to provide alternative employment to those persons thrown out of work by the closure of the sugar plantations. By 1940 all sugar-cane cultivation had been abandoned on the Essequibo Coast and there was an evident 'push' factor influencing migration from the Essequibo to other parts of the country. Stabilizing the population in the area was the long-term goal of land settlement policy at that time.

Curiously, there was no particular enthusiasm on the part of the estate workers to become full-time peasant farmers. Traditionally estate workers had access to cultivate a rice 'bed' (one-quarter acre) on estate lands as an incentive to retain them on the estate. Initial efforts to induce these workers to accept a ten-acre plot for full-time cultivation did not meet with great success.

With the incentive provided by the Security of Tenure Ordinance (Rice Farmers) of 1956 and the initiation of the Tapakuma Drainage and Irrigation Project the initial reluctance disappeared. Since the large population was already present within easy access of the settlement lands and living in coastal villages, all lands were utilized within two years of completion of the first phase of the Tapakuma Project works. (2)

(1) See Annual Reports, Dept. of Agriculture, 1934, 1935.  
 (2) Narine, S.S. & Potter, K. : Some Papers on Water Development And Use in Guyana. Ministry of Works and Hydraulics  
 October, 1967 pp 1 - 10

## ADMINISTRATION

### i. TENANCY

In accordance with the recommendations of the Brown Report, leases were granted for holdings up to 10 acres, on a 21-year lease with right of renewal. A rental revision every five years was stipulated. By 1965 eight hundred families were settled on 7,549 acres, of which 633 were rice farmers.

### ii. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Land Settlement Division established a Workshop and agricultural machinery with a view to servicing the equipment of settlers, other government departments and private parties. The Workshop was also seen as a source of employment in the off-season and a source of revenue to the Department.

Fertilizers were sold to settlers at cost price by the Department and a rice milling facility erected by the British Guiana Rice Development Company at Anna Regina which was supervised by the land settlement Department.

### iii. HOUSING

A programme of aided self-help housing construction was initiated by the Department in 1956 under the supervision of the Department of Housing. In that year 34 houses were sold to settlers, in 1957 forty-four houses, in 1958 forty-four houses, and in 1959 a further thirty-four. A market in Anna Regina was also constructed under the supervision of the Department. The Pure Water Supply based on artesian wells was supplemented by construction of an over-head tank.

### iv. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1969 a Settlers Committee was established with a view to training settlers to take over the functions of a Local Authority when all leases had been issued. The following year a District Council came into existence at Three Friends-Walton Hall. The internal administration of the scheme was reinforced by the formation of the Essequibo Rice Action Committee which facilitated the allocation of machinery for land-clearing, supply of paid, fertilizers and the hiring of machinery.

v. EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT

In 1970 a portion of the Third Depth extending from Reliance to Anna Regina had been reserved for food crops. By 1971 a number of Land Societies were registered comprised of settlers who intended to farm co-operatively, namely, Whyaka/Mainstay Land Society, Redlock United Land Society, Relot Productive Co-operative Society Limited, and the Oakland Co-operative Group.

2. CANE GROVE/LA BONNE MERE

i. HISTORY

Formerly Cane Grove and La Bonne Mere were plantations situated on the Eastern bank of the Mahaica River. By a decision of the Legislative Council they were acquired by government in 1948 for land settlement purposes. La Bonne Mero was a productive rice and coconut estate. Total acreage comprised 7,233 acres of which approximately 3,000 were under rice cultivation.

In 1956 four hundred and fifty families had been settled, a figure which rose to 485 by 1961. Tenancy arrangements were on conditions as per Anna Regina except that plots varied from three to fifteen acres. In 1960 by government decision the Land Settlement Department relinquished administration of the scheme and the Department of Drainage and Irrigation assumed control.

ii. AGRICULTURE

The principal crops of the scheme were rice and dairy farming, coconuts and subsistence farming. Irrigation was provided by the East Demerara Water Conservancy.

Rice production in 1955 showed a yield of 38,439 bags from 2,856 acres, and in 1960 44,735 from 3,354 acres. Although the acreage had expanded there was little variation in yield.

Dairy farming was successfully introduced into the settlements and enabled milk production both for settler consumption and for sale. Although the initial number of animals, 576 in 1956 belonging to 91

settlers, did not greatly increase over the years, improved acreage and byres raised the milk yield considerably. Pasturage and byres were commonly managed. In 1956 annual sales to the Milk Marketing Corporation were 6,779 gallons as compared to 13,798 in 1959 even though the number of cattle in that year had slightly decreased to 570.

The coconut production declined from 1956 to 1959, the last year for which copra production figures are available. Supplies of coconuts remained constant, numbering 463,775 nuts in 1956 and 468,568 in 1959. Copra production, however, fell drastically from 250,097 lbs. in 1956 to 35,744 lbs. in 1958. In 1959 there appears to have been no conversion of nuts to copra at all. This situation can be partially explained by a drop in the price of copra but is not sufficient to account for such a total collapse of the industry.

Acreage under provisions rose from 540 in 1956 to 745 in 1959, and experiments were undertaken in cocoa, black-eye and cotton. Fertilizers were purchased in bulk by the Department and sold in bulk to the settlers. A Workshop similar to the one in Anna Regina was established to serve the similar purposes for the Cane Grove settlers.

iii. HOUSING

Shortly after the settlement was inaugurated a Government Rural Housing Scheme was established in the area. In 1950 houses were erected at a cost of \$1,500 per house. These were sold to settlers on the following terms; 1/6 of the cost as a deposit, 1/3 of the cost was given to settlers as a grant, and the remaining 1/2 was covered by a loan to the settler at 3 1/2% /interest/ repayable over 20 years. Seventy-five houses were built under this scheme before it was suspended in 1953.

Subsequently settlers were encouraged to build houses either by aided self-help or by contract. The Department of Housing built ten houses by contract in 1956 and fifty in 1957. No details are available subsequent to that year of houses built under the supervision of the Land Settlement Department as such.

Allocation of House Lots under the provisions of the scheme was undertaken on the basis of leasing 1/5 of an acre for house lots on a 21 - year lease with right of renewal. After a three-year probationary period, settlers were permitted to acquire a house lot. Provision for a housing area was based on a hundred acre being made available for this

purpose.

The final stage of creating a Local Authority has been hampered by the slowness with which leases have been issued, a problem which is discussed in some detail below.

By 1960 the arrears of revenue which had accumulated since the inception of the scheme was \$280,140.

### 3. VERGENOEGEN

#### i. History

Acquired in 1946 by government, the Land Settlement scheme was created from an amalgamation of four ex-plantations; Vergenoegen, Philadelphia, Greenwich Park and Barnwell. The total acreage amounted to 3,595 acres. Approximately 200 families occupied the settlement under conditions similar to those pertaining at Cane Grove/La Bonne Mere.

#### ii. Agriculture

Agricultural production centred on rice, dairy farming and subsistence farming. A rice mill operated by the Land Settlement Department in the initial stages was sold in 1960 to a group of settlers formed into the Vergenoegen Rice Mill Co-operative Society Limited.

Rice production occupied 2,024 acres in 1955 and rose to slightly less than 3,000 acres by 1961. Yields rose from 19,806 bags per acre in 1955 to 23,984 bags in 1961.

Dairy farming progressed steadily with the sale of 3,019 gallons of milk to the Milk Marketing Organization in 1955 to 19,964 gallons in 1960. In 1961 the communal collection of milk was discontinued for unexplained reasons. The number of dairy cattle increased considerably during the period in question, rising from 116 in 1955 to 430 in 1958. Cattle were communally held with an average of 1/3 acre fodder crop and 1/3 acre exercise ground per cow. 240 acres of land were allocated to provision crops in 1956, a number which reduced to 223 in 1960.

### iii. Housing

Forty acres were provided for house lots and 179 house lots laid out. Houses were provided under the same conditions as pertained at Cane Grove, that is to say, by aided self-help and by contract.

### iv. Development and Expansion

A Workshop and agricultural machinery similar to the arrangements at Anna Regina were installed and a Pure Water Supply from artesian wells established.

In 1961 the Land Settlement Department withdrew from the scheme and the responsibilities were assumed by various Departments. Drainage and Irrigation assumed control of drainage and irrigation works, the Department of Agriculture took over responsibility for agriculture. An Ad-Hoc Committee from Lands and Mines was established to organise land titles and the preparation of plans with a view to a Local Authority being established and assuming full control of the area. The distribution of titles has not been completed up to the time of writing this Report, thus hampering the development of full Local Authority status.

By 1969 yields were progressively poorer due to pegasse soil; rice cultivation was being abandoned in favour of sugar-cane. As with other settlement schemes, rent arrears were accumulating to quite considerable sums by the end of the 1960's.

## 4. GOVERNMENT ESTATES - WINDSOR FOREST, LA JALOUSIE, HAGUE

### i. History

The Annual Report for the year 1910 states that the government had bought the three above-named sugar estates on the West Bank Demerara in that year for default of payments. The owners of the Estates were unable to meet the payments to upkeep sea defences and the estates were acquired in lieu of payment. As with the acquisition of other ex-sugar estates during this period the principal aim of the government was to provide employment by making land available to estate workers. Gross acreage of the Estates amounted to 3846 acres, to which a further 787 acres were added and brought under the control of the Superintendent of Govern-

ment Estates. Responsibility for the administration of the estates as a land settlement scheme passed to the Land Settlement Department upon its formation in 1956. Tenancy arrangements for lands leased in the period 1910-1913 were for 99 year leases with no provision for renewal. In 1957 there were 460 families in the scheme, a number which has not varied much since.

ii. Agriculture

Agricultural production was centred mainly on rice and dairy farming, a small amount of cane sugar was also grown. Rice yields declined slightly, after 1958. Milk yields also registered a drop after 1960.

A possible explanation for decreasing milk yields may lie in the increased acreage devoted to cane cultivation at the expense of pasturage. The fact that ploughing by steers was giving way to mechanised ploughing in the rice industry meant that there was no need for cattle for these purposes. In 1968-69 this was certainly the case when the backland pastures were converted into cane beds.

iii. Expansion And Development

In 1961 the administration of the scheme was handed over to the Drainage and Irrigation Department by the Land Settlement Division as an interim measure until the formation of a Local Authority.

5. CHARITY - AMAZON

The land upon which this settlement is sited is situated on the right bank of the Pomeroun River. It was acquired by the government in 1944 and extended over 170.5 acres. Unlike the rest of the land settlement schemes, the principal reason for the Charity-Amazon settlement was to establish a township rather than settle people on the land. The Pomeroun River area required an entrepot to link the agricultural activities of the Pomeroun with coastal markets.

When first planned Charity-Amazon catered for 35 agricultural lots, 26 business lots and 140 house lots. In the early 1960's a market shed was constructed and streets metalled with burnt earth. This plan was revised in 1968 to accommodate the following activities; 268 house lots, 62



commercial lots, 1 market site, 2 petrol stations, 10 industrial sites, 33 reserve sites, 1 cinema, 1 church, 1 school, and 45 agricultural plots. On completion it was envisaged to become a Local Authority. A Settlers Advisory Committee was set up in 1968 as a first step in the direction of setting up a Local Authority.

## 6. ONVERWAGT LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME

### i. History

This former estate on the Abary River, West Coast Berbice was taken over by the Land Settlement Division in 1955 with an initial approval of \$10,000: authorised by the Legislative Council. The British Guiana Rice Development Company were the owners of the estate immediately prior to acquisition by the Land Settlement Division. Initially the objective of the scheme was to settle 108 families on the land and to provide land for a further 200 tenant farmers from nearby villages. Administrative delays prevented the scheme becoming fully operational as a land settlement scheme until 1965.

During the ten-year interim period land was leased to settlers and others on an annual basis at the cost of \$10. per acre. Numbers of farmers and acreage utilized increased steadily from year to year. In 1956, 271 farmers worked 2352 acres of land, a number which rose to 427 farmers on 5,198 acres by 1965. An additional 1,000 acres of pasturage was available to farmers as communal grazing land.

### ii. Agriculture

Agricultural production at Onverwagt was principally rice, cattle and coconuts. Cattle rearing suffered from poor drainage and the lack of drinking water for cattle.

Rice production rose from a yield of 5,000 bags from 600 acres in 1955 to 10,670 bags from 5,200 acres. Until 1968 little was done to improve drainage and irrigation; in that year a Settlers' Advisory Committee was set up and was possibly instrumental in getting improvements made in the drainage and irrigation. In 1969 the coconut estate within the settlement area was handed over to the Perseverance Co-operative So-

ciety but the Society never took up occupation of the Estate which was allowed to deteriorate and become overgrown.

## 7. MARA LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME

### i. History

An abandoned sugar estate on the East Bank of the Berbice River, Plantation was chosen as the site for a land settlement scheme. An area of 3,874 acres, the size suggested by a World Bank Advisory team as most advisable, was selected. A purchase price of \$50: per acre was agreed to in 1956. The scheme came into operation in 1957.

The Mara Land Settlement Scheme marked a new phase in land settlement activity in Guyana. Prior to this scheme the principal purpose of land settlement was to provide opportunities for work or for utilizing abandoned land. With Mara, a new concept was introduced which was expressed in the Land Settlement Department's Report for 1957 in the following words:

"The objective of Mara, as it will be in the case of future land settlement is not merely to bring more land under cultivation but to develop a contented peasantry deriving full occupation and an improved and reasonable standard of living from the land, thus contributing to the relief of unemployment and under-employment".

A more comprehensive concept of land settlement began to emerge in which the importance of social and community aspects of settlement was beginning to be recognized.

The new objectives influenced the implementation of the scheme in such aspects as allocation of land, house-building and selection of settlers.

### ii. Agriculture

Allocation of land was based on a 15-acre plot for rice production and a 2.5 acre plot for a homestead. Non-rice farmers were allocated a farmstead plot of 15 acres. Under a plan drawn up by the Land Settlement Division the total area was divided into 1,365 acres of 15 acre rice plots, 215 acres for 2.5 acre homestead, 1,025 acre farmstead

plots (general cultivation plus homestead), 717 acres for coconut cultivation on 12 acre plots and 144 acres for homesteads of 3 acres each.

The selection process of settlers began in 1957. The Selection Committee was directed by Dr. S.K. Fitzgerald, an Advisor on Land Settlement from Maryland University. Despite the clear intention to institute a careful process of selection the desertion rate from Mara has been singularly disastrous. In January, 1957 seventy settlers had been selected but by October of that year this number was down to 45. Between 1958-61 the number was reduced to 41 settlers, in 1969 it had fallen to 26 homesteads and 6 farmsteads. By 1971 there were 7 homesteads and 2 farmsteads for all practical purposes; the land settlement programme had been a total failure.

A number of reasons have been advanced to explain the high desertion rates. On report (1) notes that the selection of persons accustomed to working as agricultural labourers for wages meant that they had to be given manual employment as settlers and to receive a wage during the period in which they awaited their first rice crop. This would appear, prima facie, to be a very questionable practice, since it effectively recreates a master-servant relationship and undermines the initiative and capacity for independent decision-making which is indispensable for successful land settlement. Further reasons extended for the failure rate are:

- (a) poor irrigation;
- (b) poor soil fertility;
- (c) poor husbandry as practised by the settlers;
- (d) lack of interest and frustration on the part of settlers;
- (e) no community spirit.

Under a supervised credit scheme loans were contracted from the British Guiana Credit Corporation for agricultural purposes. Loans were also extended to settlers for house-building purposes. The Land Settlement Department had established a large machinery pool at Mara, which in 1968 included 6 D-6 Caterpillar tractors, one D-4 caterpillar tractor, and one 10 R.B. Dragline.

In 1970 a World Bank Mission advised that the settlement be converted from agriculture to livestock. Administration of the scheme subsequently passed to the Guyana Livestock Development Company.

7. (b) LA RETRAITE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

With the Mara Scheme, a co-operative society was formed in 1963 consisting of 51 members with 796 acres of land. The La Retraite Co-operative obtained credit from the British Guiana Credit Corporation. By 1969 only 10 of the original settlers remained and no work was being done. That same year an Audit Report of Accounts was called for with a view to winding up the society. Members had ceased to co-operate. A curious illustration of the mentality of the co-operative members, especially given the economic disaster which the cooperative society had suffered, was a request to the Senior Cooperative Officer to re-organize the co-operative to allow members to take holidays individually rather than in common.

8. GARDEN OF EDEN

This land settlement scheme is situated on the East Bank of the Demerara River about 14 miles from Georgetown. An area of 1,000 acres was purchased for \$75,000 with a view to mounting a land settlement pilot project in 1955. Engineering, topographical and cadastral surveys were carried out by the Lands and Mines Department, followed by a soil survey by the Department of Agriculture.

In 1959 seventy-eight families were settled, 54 on lots of approximately 7.5 acres, and 24 on dairying lots of 25 acres. In 1960 one of the dairy lots was turned into a demonstration farm. The pilot nature of the project appears to have receded during the 1960's, since between 1964-69 there was a shift over to cane-farming assisted by loans from the Demerara Company. This view is supported by the fact that the Land Settlement Division moved out of the scheme in 1960 and in 1968 the area was declared a Local Authority.

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(1) Land Settlement Division Annual Report, 1971.

## 9. BLACK BUSH POLDER

### i. History

The Black Bush Polder scheme is the most important land settlement project in Guyana. Its importance rests on several factors, its origin, size and success. Unlike all previous land settlement schemes, Black Bush was not started on abandoned, or ex-sugar plantation but was established on re-claimed swamp lands. The significance of this fact lies in the lay-out of agricultural lands including the net-work of canals and drainage trenches required for sugar cultivation which provide a serious obstacle for cultivation of other crops. Development of land settlement projects on former plantations must conform to the straight-jacket which this legacy constitutes.

The upper limit of settlement of families on Black Bush was placed at 1,441 in 1960 when settlement began and by 1969 this number was reached. As a result, the scheme now faces a land shortage since a second generation of settlers' families has grown up also looking to settle in the Polder. This is a problem of success rather than mis-management, since most schemes both in Guyana and in other countries with large-scale land settlement programme have experienced precisely the opposite problem of how to keep people from deserting the scheme.

This is not to say that Black Bush Polder is an unmitigated success story. There have been and continue to be serious problems related to both the production and the human sides of settlement. Distribution of land titles is still unnecessarily slow, substantial rent subsidies are absorbed by the government and the amount of land controlled by persons who are not genuine settlers is beginning to create serious difficulties.

Project design and construction works on the Polder were contracted to Sr. William Halcrow and Partners Limited (London) and Pauling Contracting (Overseas) Company, Limited. These companies completed the infra-structural works in the Polder between 1957 and 1961. The total area of the Polder is 27,000 acres.

ii. Terms of Settlement

Tenancy arrangements in the Polder, which became standard terms for leases in later land settlement schemes included the following provisions:

- (a) Land is leased for 25 years and is renewable.
- (b) A house lot of 2.5 acres plus a 10 acre rice plot, or a farmstead plot of 15 acres, constitute the standard sizes of allotments.
- (c) The settler must take up residence within 12 months of being given permission to occupy the lot.
- (d) Holdings must not be mortgaged or sub-let, but must be held by one person who must not own any land outside of the Polder.
- (e) The house-lot may not be sub-divided to allow a second house to be built on the lot.

The final clause referred to above in (e) is causing difficulties for many settlers at present; the typical case is that of the settler whose children marry, wish to remain in the Polder and to erect a second house on the lot.

Narain and Potter have commented on the advantages of the "gathered" nature of settlement in the Polder. No farm is more than three miles from a settlers' homestead, an arrangement which favours the social, organizational and security arrangements in the Polder.<sup>(2)</sup>

iii. Agriculture

Size of holdings is becoming uneconomical given the increasing mechanization of individual farmers. This leads to an under-utilization of equipment and points to the need for a communally or cooperatively owned pool of machinery. The problem arises from the heavy demands for machinery at the same time and farmers in a position to acquire tractors

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(2) See Naraine & Potter, Op. Cit.

and harvesters will do so rather than risk depending upon machinery not completely under their control. This has led to a serious over-mechanizing of the rice industry in general. In the early stages of settlement 35 combines were operating in the Polder owned by Cooperative Societies. Government later bought 55 combines to be rented out to settlers.

An idea of how heavily subsidized is rice production in Black Bush Polder can be gleaned from the following calculations of current rents being paid by the farmer in the Polder:

i.	Drainage & Irrigation	- \$7.50	per acre
ii.	Land Improvement	- \$9.75	" "
iii.	Rent	- .25	" "
	Total:	<u>\$17.50</u>	per acre

The Drainage and Irrigation Board calculates fixed charges at \$34.30 per acre. The government is, therefore, subsidizing the farmers at a rate of \$16.80 per acre - almost 50% of the total rental costs. In the Tapakuma Project area rents per acre are significantly higher, the charges per acre are:

Drainage & Irrigation	- \$20.89	per acre
Rent	- 1.00	" "
	<u>\$21.89</u>	per acre

iv. Development

The goal of an economically self-sustaining scheme was further complicated by the uneconomical operation of the three rice mills on the Polder. Originally the rice mills had been operated by Cooperative Societies formed from among the settlers. Legislation was introduced to prevent padi being taken to private millers outside of the Polder. Apart from ensuring a sufficient supply of padi to the Polder mills this measure was seen as a mechanism to ensure the payments of rent arrears, which by 1969 had risen to over \$1,300,000. In 1969 the three mills were sold by public auction to the Guyana Credit Corporation due to the inability of the cooperatives to repay debts to the Guyana Credit Corpor-

ation. Arrears collection improved notably in 1969 after writs had been served on a number of settlers.

Between 1972-75 an 11-man Chinese Mission was resident in the Polder undertaking demonstration work in rice and running trials on new strains of padi.

A canning factory came into operation in April, 1974 and produced 56,039 bottles of tomato paste before closing in June, 1974. The following year the factory operated for a six-month period under the Guyana Agricultural Products Corporation processing papaw and guava before closing in October.

#### v. Human Settlement

The organization of the Polder was divided into four settlements: Mibikuri, Yakasari, Joanna and Lesbeholden. Each settlement had a school and was serviced by mobile dental, medical, postal and police services. Mibikuri served as the administrative centre for the Polder. In 1969 a staff of ten full-time personnel worked in the Polder attached to the Land Settlement Division; by 1973 this had risen to twenty. Organizations of the settlers themselves appear to have been ineffectual prior to 1973 when an attempt was made to coordinate operations at two levels. In that year weekly meetings were inaugurated at which all governmental agencies operating in the Polder were represented under the coordination of the Administrator of the Polder who was a land settlement officer. The persons represented at the meetings were the Agricultural Officer of the Polder, Superintendent of Works (Water Drainage and Irrigation Board) together with his three overseers, the Manager of the Guyana Rice Board, the Mechanical Supervisor (G.R.B.), the Pure Line Padi Supervisor and the Public Health Officer.

The following year four community committees came into existence but they functioned in an haphazard and irregular fashion. No Rules and Regulations had been formulated either by the Head Office or by the settlers themselves, nor had elections been held for the formation of Settlers' Committees.



vi. Some Problems

The main administrative problems facing the Polder currently relate to the delay in issuing leases, squatting, loss of crops and the use of land in the rear of the Polder.

Despite the relatively long period since the commencement of the scheme, land title distribution in the Polder is still incomplete. Until this is effected the settlers are not in a position to take full responsibility for management of the scheme.

Related to the lease problem is that of unauthorized persons farming land in the Polder to which they have no title. A Committee has been set up to enquire into and resolve this problem, but its fundamental resolution will be difficult to achieve without land titles being distributed. A further problem related to land ownership is the acquisition of land by people living outside of the Polder by using third parties.

The lands at the rear of the Polder, close to the main distributory canal have been taken over by the Guyana Rice Board. This area of the Polder has always presented problems and was abandoned by settlers in the early years. Cattle being grazed on the backlands would cross the canal and destroy crops, in some cases they were driven across by unscrupulous owners. The magnitude of the problem can be estimated by the amounts collected in pound fees for straying cattle. In some years these fees amounted to over 140,000. A further problem which discouraged settlement was the high level of the land which affected drainage and irrigation. The Guyana Rice Board is utilizing about 2,000 acres as a state farm for rice cultivation.

Agencies Operating in Black Bush Polder

Between 1957-75 the following agencies were active in the Polder:

Guyana Rice Board	-	rice mill operations
Lands Division	-	issue of leases
Private Contractors	-	road building
Guyana Timbers Co.	-	construction of administration offices and houses
Agricultural Department	-	agricultural production

Guyana Agricultural Products Corporation	-	Canning Factory
Police	-	Mibikuri Police Station
Ministry of Health	-	Resident dispenser
	-	Mobile dental and medical unit
	-	Public Health Officer
	-	ante-natal and pre-school clinics (weekly visits by a nurse)
Ministry of Education	-	Four Schools
Whim Hydraulics Div.	-	Drainage and Irrigation
Ministry of Comms.	-	Postal agencies and Mobile Post Office
	-	Air Strip
Guyana Electricity Corp.	-	Electrification programme.

10: WAUNA - YARAKITA

The decision was taken in 1960 to establish the Wauna-Yarakita Land Settlement Scheme in the North-West District. An initial pilot scheme of 1,500 acres was established to accommodate 50 families. In total, the area of the scheme was 34,000 acres. Of the original, 49 settlers selected only 32 took up occupation in 1964 and by 1971, 43 bona fide farmers were settled.

In 1969 an agronomist from the FAO organized Demonstrations and Research plots but this initiative was not backed up by sustained technical assistance and credit. The World Food Programme contributed to the scheme between 1964-1970 in a programme in which food stuffs were made available to settlers during the initial period of clearing and planting.

The problem of constructing a road to link the two major areas of the scheme proved difficult and slowed down the initial effort. Equipment for establishing a Pure Water Supply in 1969 was obtained and the Ministry of Education provided teachers for the district. Settlers were never attracted to this scheme in adequate numbers and it fell into abeyance in the early 1970's.

At present a large tract of land has been taken over by GUYSUCO with a view to palm-oil production.

Agencies Involved in the Scheme

Ministry of Agriculture	-	Agricultural Officer and assistant to advise on crops
Land Settlement Division	-	Project Administrator
Lands and Mines Department	-	Preparation of leases
Ministry of Works, Hydraulics & Supply	-	Maintenance of roads
Pure Water Supply Div.	-	Pure Water Supply
Ministry of Education	-	School teachers
Food & Agric. Organization	-	Demonstration & research
World Food Programme	-	Food Aid
Hydrometeorological Office	-	Hydrometeorological Officer

11. BRANDWAGT - SARI

The Brandwagt-Sari scheme was envisaged as pilot scheme to test the feasibility of re-opening old Dutch estates on the middle of the Berbice river. Some of the best alluvial soils on the coast were to be found in this region. The scheme was located some six miles South of Mara.

A plan was prepared by the Town and Country Planning Authority in 1964, designed originally to accommodate 500 families. 150 settlers were selected in that year and 84 took up occupation. Houses were constructed to accommodate a nurse/midwife, the headmaster of the school, the agricultural field Assistant and the Supervisor of the Co-operative Society. The settlers lived in bush huts erected by government. 68 of the members formed a co-operative society and requested a loan for housing from the Guyana Credit Corporation on similar terms as had been granted at Mara. The government recommended \$500: loans instead of the \$1,000: requested. Flood assistance was provided by the WFP. A block of 200 acres for communal farming by the cooperative was allocated and 2 acre homesteads to the 50 people who were still on the land in 1965. The number of settlers halved in the following year and by 1967 was reduced to only 6 families. Delays in providing machinery to plough the land

had caused great frustration and eventual desertion. No funds had been allocated for Drainage and Irrigation and the access road was in an appalling condition.

The following table summarises the present status of land settlement schemes. Two further schemes, which are not included, namely Soesdyke - Linden and Matthew's Ridge, have been eliminated from consideration because they are not strictly speaking land-settlement schemes. Soesdyke-Linden is being farmed by many non-residents or semi-residents and is being developed in a piece-meal, rather than comprehensive way. A further difference from existing schemes is that Soesdyke-Linden is tied into a re-patriation scheme to attract Guyanese to return and settle in Guyana.

In the case of Matthew's Ridge the development occurring there is part of a general drive towards economic development of the region. Matthew's Ridge is no longer an autonomous scheme but is part of the MATAKAI Development Authority which falls within the portfolio of the Ministry of Economic Development.

/Table overleaf.....

SUMMARY OF LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEMES IN GUYANA

<u>Project</u>	<u>Year Started</u>	<u>Approx. Acreage</u>	<u>Expected Settlers</u>	<u>Crops</u>	<u>Present Status</u>
Garden of Eden East Bank Dem.	1956	1000	75	cane	Local Authority
Cane Grove/LBM E. Coast Dem.	1947	7323	500	rice, dairy provisions	Local Authority
Vergenoegen E. Bank Ess'bo	1946	3595	200	rice, cane	Local Authority
Mara, East Bank Berbice	1957	3874	130	formerly rice & cit- rus	Lands taken over by Livestock Develop- ment Company
Brandwagt/Sari E. Bank Berbice	1963	11000	50	provisions	Small co-op. 8 people under Co-op. Department
Onverwagt, West Coast Berbice	1955	6000	400	rice	Proceeding slowly
Anna Regina/ Tapakuma	1934 1963	8747 35000	750	rice	District Council 1970, proceeding to Local Authority
Charity/Amazon Pomeroon	1944	170	180	provisions	Local Authority
Black Bush Pol- der, Corentyne	1959	27000	1500	rice, pro- visions	L.A. delayed by slow processing of titles
Wauna/Yarakita	1959	34000	45	food crops	Little development - section of land taken over by GUYSUCO.

Note: This Table is a modified and up-dated version of R.W. Nathan Associates, Guyana Food Crop System: An Analysis for Development Planning, Washington, 1974 - Table 51 p. 278.

## KIMBIA LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME

### BACKGROUND

Originally conceived as a Land Settlement Scheme which would draw settlers from the National Service Pioneers based at the Kimbia National Service Centre, this scheme was initiated in 1975. Unlike traditional Land Settlement Schemes several decisions were taken in relation to the Kimbia project prior to the establishment of the scheme. The most important of these in terms of land use was that the land would be farmed as a 500 acre block rather than parcelled out in individual holdings. This decision was based on three primary considerations; firstly the nature of the soil - sand, loams susceptible to erosion but easier to control on a block basis; secondly, the expensive nature of the land form making it more suited to large-scale farming; and, thirdly the age and lack of agricultural background of the prospective settlers.

The Pioneer group from which settlers were to be drawn were predominantly late teenagers with little previous agricultural experience and an urban or coastal background. Together with this group, a number of National Service Staff members were also incorporated into the scheme. Consequently, it was felt that these obstacles to successful settlement would be more successfully overcome by a more 'directed' form of settlement in the initial stages.

### DEVELOPMENT

Infra-structural work and basic amenities such as potable water and housing were undertaken by the Centre (KIMBIA) beginning prior to and continuing while the settlers occupied the land. The continued relationship between the Centre and the Scheme was to be an important influence on the future development and outcome of the project. The administration of the scheme was never fully independent of the Centre because of the dependency of the former on the latter for construction, agricultural, machinery, certain domestic facilities, such as food supply and for credit in the form of agricultural inputs. A less tangible form of dependency arose in the form of a carry-over of the para-military habits and practices in such things as decision-making, staff-pioneer divisions and so on.

Initially planned to accommodate one hundred settlers approximately, the Scheme went into operation with about thirty-five, a number which dwindled eventually to a hand-full of people. All settlement programmes expect an attritious process to occur, especially in the early stages, until a stable core remains which then slowly increases in numbers. In the KIMBIA case the defection rate is unusually high for reasons which are in part, no doubt, related to the circumstances noted earlier in which it originated. Since, however, other settlement schemes have suffered equally disastrous loss of members (notably Mara and La Retraite) the explanation would for the Kimbia defections not appear to be entirely in its relationship with the para-military centre but rather point to a problem underlying land settlement ventures in general.

The agricultural production in the first year concentrated on a pea-nut crop of 125 acres which did well. Unfortunately the exceptionally heavy rains of that year (which affected agricultural production in general) took a heavy toll and the financial returns were not particularly encouraging.

#### OBSERVATIONS

The continued development of the scheme in the following year was affected by financial restrictions and the fact that, in general, a successful formula had not been encountered to resolve the problems arising from the Centre - Scheme relationship.

Some of these problems were the following:

1. Levels of Decision-making

Given the dependency on the Centre for the use of machinery, decisions relating to the agricultural process were always dependent upon the availability of machines controlled by the Centre. An original policy of making smaller tractors and other equipment available exclusively for the scheme was not implemented and exacerbated this problem.

2. Use of Land

A tract of some two hundred acres was taken over by the Centre to expand its cotton production programme, a decision which caused some frustration among settlers who felt it lessened their own production possibilities and high-lighted the lack of communication between the two groups.

### 3. Allocation of Housing

Within the settlement community all settlers were not treated equally. Staff settlers were allocated individual houses, sometimes equipped with a fridge and stove while Pioneer settlers were accommodated in more communal, dormitory-type facilities.

Given the differences of age between the Pioneers and Staff settlers, together with more family responsibilities among the latter, a case could no doubt be made that their needs were unequal.

In conclusion, bearing in mind that the above is merely a description and not an analysis of the KIMBIA Land Settlement Scheme, one might suggest that a detailed evaluation of this experience would be worthwhile. In the first place it represents a departure from the traditional type of land settlement project. Secondly, settlement on block-farming rather than individual lots has not been attempted in Guyana previously. Thirdly the commitment to interior settlement through the National Service appears sufficiently serious to warrant reflection on the initial effort. Finally, given the relatively long and disappointing history of land settlement ventures on this continent, it would be idealistic to think that any new approach is going to be completely successful on first application.

## PART IV:

### OBSERVATIONS

If one were to state the goal or aim of land settlement in its broadest sense it would be to create conditions in which people will find it attractive to settle in and develop the project. Clearly this embraces a very wide range of economic, social and technical aspects of settlement; everything in fact which relates to human promotion and economic feasibility. It also suggests that within the range of these possible interventions in the settlement process any land settlement agency must set priorities in accordance with limited resources.

In Guyana the possibility of a balanced approach to settlement in which the human and the economic aspects are given equal priority has always been frustrated by the enormous resources which have necessarily been absorbed by one item, namely, drainage and irrigation. The heritage of many failures for reasons related to this problem of settlement explain the over-



riding pre-occupation with this aspect. A corollary of this imbalance has been the considerable importance given to the question of rent collection as an attempt to recoup some of the initial investment. Possibly the shift to hinterland development may liberate the planners to a certain extent and allow them greater flexibility in the use of limited resources. This point, among other aspects of land settlement planning, appears to have escaped 'Vining' in his generally unsympathetic, if not negative article on land settlement in Guyana.<sup>(1)</sup>

A problem which appears to confront land settlement planners in Guyana and is not present in any other part of this continent is a lack of hunger for land. This means that conditions must be made more attractive for the potential settler than elsewhere and creates additional problems for planners. Whereas in other areas of settlement the promise of land is sufficient to motivate the average settler, with a view to gradually acquiring educational, medical and housing facilities; it would appear that in Guyana it is necessary to provide or ensure their rapid provision in order for settlers to be attracted. The serious problem which this feature creates is that a significant degree of dependency on governmental agencies is already established from the inception. Payment of settlers for clearing land is a further example of the need to provide greater incentive to settlers.

Coordination of the many government agencies involved in land settlement poses serious difficulties for the smooth running of the schemes. The Land Development Division coordinates these services but does not wield the necessary authority to ensure that the timing and scheduling of services is adequate. Successful articulation of services requires a high degree of cooperation from all agencies involved, something which the Land Development Division cannot of course compell.

Related to the above observation is the question of the responsibility of the settlers themselves in the planning and implementation of land development. At present complete control only passes to the settlement when it attains the status of a Local Authority. There appears to be a strong case for involving settlers in the decision-making process from the earliest stages.

Land Settlement Schemes to date have been individualistic rather than cooperative in the sense that land is held individually and people

are simply encouraged to cooperate. Thorough-going cooperation requires a "new man" with a new outlook, so far there is no sign of him appearing and no real indication of how he is to come into being. Although the Land Development Division is not equipped to produce him entirely, there would seem to be sound reasons for considering a more communal or cooperative oriented approach to land settlement.

The schemes we have described in this Report fall into three clearly identifiable categories:

those started in the last century which no longer have any claim to be considered settlements in any special sense;

those which originated on former plantation and are in varying degrees being assimilated into Local Authority structures; and

those which originated on virgin territory, namely Black Bush Polder and Wauna-Yarakita.

Of the last two categories only the third one offers examples which merit further study from the point of view of future schemes. The W.C.D. Estates, Cane Grove, Charity-Amazon, Tapakuma/Anna Regina, Converwagt, Garden of Eden and Brandwagt-Sari point to an inescapable conclusion, namely that settlement which cannot be freely planned is almost certain to fail. Or, in other words, if considerable adaptation of a land settlement plan is demanded by the physical limitation of the area of settlement, the goals of the scheme are unlikely to be fulfilled.

An additional reason which reduces the value of further study of this group of settlements is the priority now being given to hinterland development for which further study of settlement on ex-sugar plantations will not throw much light.

Of the two schemes which were planned free of any physical constraint only Black Bush Polder remains as a viable land settlement project. One arrives, therefore, by a process of elimination, at the conclusion that the only scheme which merits in depth study is Black Bush Polder.

APPENDIX I

Rules and Conditions for the Regulation of  
Grants of Land At Plantation Huis't Dieren to In-  
dian Immigrants in lieu of Back Passage to India.  
(1).

1. Each adult immigrant who may desire to relinquish all claim to a back passage to India may have an allotment of 2 acres of land for cultivation and one-fourth of an acre suitable for a place of residence.
2. Children between 10 and 15 years of age may receive two acres of land for cultivation, but no village lot.
3. Children between the age of one and ten years may receive a grant of half an acre of land.
4. The lands shall be allotted to the applicants in regular and ~~contin-~~  
~~uous order~~ according to the priority of their applications; provided that His Excellency the Governor reserves to himself the right to refuse an allotment to any immigrant whom, on account of physical incapacity or moral obliquity, he may consider unsuited for settlement.
5. The Government will fence in a portion of ground for a grazing ground to be used by settlers in common in such proportions as the Zamindar may decide.
6. The Government will deliver to the settlers the front and back dam, kokers, main drainage trenches and the public road in thorough order and repair, and will continue to maintain the same; but after the first cost of repair has been paid by the Government, the land will be held liable to subsequent expenses under such special or general scheme as may hereafter be determined.
7. The settlers will have the opportunity of being employed in these works at a reasonable rate of wages.
8. The Government will be prepared to carry out any scheme of irrigation which may be devised by the settlers and the cost of which, with interest, they agree to repay a water rate.
9. The Government will take all necessary proceedings to eject all squatters from Huis't Dieren and Middlesex.

10. Transports of all lands will be given to settlers as soon as possible after the lands are allocated and occupied; provided that at the same time and place each settler shall release the Government of British Guiana from all obligation to furnish him or her with a free passage to India.
11. The Zamindar under the direction of the Immigrant Agent General, shall exercise a general supervision over immigrants and shall settle any title disputes that may arise between them.
12. It is proposed to establish a dispensary on the estate, to be visited at least twice a week by the district medical officer; the fee for his advice to be 32 cents for immigrants applying at the dispensary and 48 cents for visits to their houses.

Settled and approved by the Governor and the Court  
of Policy, this 16th day of December, 1881.

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(1) Comins, D.W.D. Surgeon-Major.

Notes on Emigration from India  
to British Guiana, 1893, Bengal.

A P P E N D I X        II

LAND SETTLEMENT ORDINANCE No. 13 of 1957.

The legal instrument governing land settlement in Guyana deals with the conditions under which government may acquire land for the purposes of land settlement, terms of compensation and the conditions under which settlers may acquire land.

The definition of a land settlement scheme contained in the Ordinance is broad, covering:

"any project intended to secure land for the establishment of farmers as an organised settlement, or for distribution by sale, leave or otherwise to persons individually for agricultural purposes".

Two methods of assessment of compensation are outlined for land acquired by government. These are:

- (1) The capitalised value of net annual income which could be derived from agricultural production, net of capital investment necessary to bring the land into a fit state for such use; or
- (2) The price paid for the land by the person owning it on 1st. of July 1955,

whichever is greater.

The compensation to be paid for Buildings, Plant and Machinery is to be its market value, having regard to its general condition.

Conditions for leasing land by government follow the same categories. Rent is to be calculated on the following terms:

- (1) The annual rent should be equivalent to 6% of the price paid for land by the person who owned it on July 1st, 1955.
- (2) The annual rent should be equivalent to the net annual income derived from the agricultural use of land at the time of its acquisition.

Similarly the rental of Buildings, Plant and Machinery should be equal to 6% of its market value.

As regards the distribution of land to settlers, there are a number of restricting clauses as to the use and manner in which it must be maintained by settlers. These conditions have been inserted into the title documents distributed to settlers, a specimen of which is contained in appendix 3.

The only condition on which land titles may be revoked, apart from violations of the conditions referred to above is that it may be taken in execution by the State in respect of recovery of debts or taxes owed to any statutory authority.

A P P E N D I X III

TERMS OF LEASE OF STATE LANDS IN BLACK  
BUSH POLDER

2

Rent

1. Subject as hereinafter provided, the lessee shall pay to the Commissioner of Lands and Mines (hereinafter referred to as the Commissioner which term shall be deemed to include his successor in office or any officer duly

authorised in that behalf) an annual rental\* of

Dollars and

cents (\$ ) for the land hereby leased, payable in advance either wholly by the 1st day of January in each and every year during the continuance of this lease or in moieties by the 1st day of January and the 1st day of July in each and every year during the continuance of this lease:

Provided that upon the Commissioner giving six months notice in writing to the Lessee the rental hereby reserved may be revised with effect from the 1st day of January 197 and/or at the expiry of every period of 5 years thereafter; and that such revision shall not exceed the maximum rent payable under any enactment for the time being in force in respect to other lands of similar type.

Lessee to bear all rates, taxes, etc.

2. The Lessee shall bear, pay and discharge all existing and future rates, taxes, assessments and outgoings imposed or charged upon the Holding by any local or other statutory body or in accordance with the provisions of any Ordinance.

Provided that so long as there is no local authority established with jurisdiction over the Holding, the Lessee shall pay to the Commissioner in addition to the rental

reserved under this lease an annual charge of

Dollars and

cents towards the cost of the services provided by the Lessor.

And provided further such annual charge may be assessed and varied annually by the Commissioner in accordance with the cost of the services provided.

Note: \*Calculated at the rate - basic rent 25 cents, plus development charge of \$9.75 making a total of \$10.00 per acre per annum.

Lessee to take up residence

3. (a) The Lessee shall take up residence at the Homestead Lot within twelve months of the date on which he was given permission of the said Homestead Lot hereby leased and thereafter shall continue to reside on the said Homestead Lot during the continuance of this lease.

Use of the Homestead Lot

(b) Except with the consent in writing of the Commissioner the Lessee shall use the Homestead Lot for the following purposes and none other:-

(1) Residential purposes:

Provided that the Lessee shall at his own expense drain and otherwise keep the Homestead Lot in good sanitary condition to the satisfaction of the Commissioner and/or the Local Sanitary Authority and shall at his own expense construct and maintain such works as the Commissioner and/or the Local Sanitary Authority may from time to time require to be constructed and maintained and shall otherwise comply with all notices, requirements or directions received by him from the Commissioner or the Local Sanitary Authority:

(2) The cultivation thereon of such garden or other crops as may be approved by the Commissioner from time to time:

(3) The keeping of livestock:

Provided that the lessee shall keep such livestock under proper control and for that purpose shall erect and maintain proper fences to the satisfaction of the Commissioner.

And provided further that he shall not keep on the Homestead Lot a larger number of livestock of any kind than such number as may at any time be prescribed by the Commissioner.

(4) The Lessee shall himself cultivate and manage the Holding in a husband-like manner and care for such livestock as may be kept on the Homestead Lot to the satisfaction of the Commissioner and shall take all necessary steps to control pests, diseases and weeds on the Holding and shall not leave uncultivated for more than one year any land which is suitable for cultivation except with the approval of the Commissioner.

Use of the Cultivation Lot

4. The Lessee shall use the cultivation lot for the cultivation of such crops as may be specified in writing by the Commissioner.

Disposal of crops

5. The Lessee shall dispose of all paddy or other crops grown on the Cultivation Lot to such purchasers as may be specified from time to time by the Commissioner.



Processing  
of paddy

6. The Lessee shall process all paddy grown on the Cultivation Lot at a mill specified by the Commissioner.

Transport  
of Crops

7. The Lessee shall comply with any directions of the Commissioner for the transport by any means of any paddy or other crop produced on the Holding.

Paals

8. The Lessee shall keep the boundary paals on the Holding visible and in good condition and in their correct positions to the satisfaction of the Commissioner.

Control  
of water

9. The Lessee shall not waste or cause to be wasted any irrigation water, nor damage or cause to be damaged any drainage or irrigation trench or obstruct the flow of water therein. If he does not immediately remedy any such waste, damage or obstruction, when called upon to do so, by any person authorised in that behalf by the Commissioner, the Commissioner may cause the necessary works to be done and may recover the cost thereof from the Lessee.

Inspection

10. The Commissioner shall be entitled to enter upon the land hereby leased at such time as may be reasonable to inspect the cultivation or stock and the boundary lines, notice boards and paals placed thereon and to do all things necessary to ascertain whether the conditions under which this lease is held are being complied with.

Holding  
not to be  
mortgaged

11. The Lessee shall not mortgage or charge his interest in the lands hereby leased or any part thereof except with the approval in writing of the Commissioner.

Sub-letting  
assignment  
& Transfer

12. (1) The Lessee shall not sub-let nor assign his interest in the holding or any part thereof.

(2) The Lessee shall not transfer his interest in the Holding except in accordance with the provisions of Clauses 13, 17 and 18(1) of this lease and then only as prescribed by the Crown Lands Regulations.

Land to be  
held by  
one person

13. If by any testamentary disposition made by the Lessee or by reason of his death intestate or for any other reason his interest in this lease devolves on two or more persons, the Commissioner shall give to such persons or to the executor or administrator of the estate of the deceased, notice in writing requiring them to take such steps as may be necessary to transfer the said interest to one only of such heirs. If no such transfer is made within six months of the service of the notice the Lessor shall have the right to terminate this lease.

Lessee not to  
have interest  
in any other  
land

14. (1) During the continuance of this lease, the Lessee shall not be entitled to acquire by purchase or otherwise or to retain, whether jointly or through anyone on his behalf, any interest as owner, Lessee, Licensee, permittee or otherwise in any agricultural lands other than the lands held under this lease.

Provided that if the Lessee owns or acquires ownership of any land outside the Black Bush Polder through inheritance or by way of gift or in any other way he shall not be entitled to cultivate either by himself or by any other person on his behalf such land but shall forthwith lease such land to another person approved by the Commissioner.

(2) Subject to the proviso to paragraph (1) of this condition, if at any time during the continuance of this lease the Lessor acquires or holds any interest in any agricultural lands contrary to the provisions of paragraph (1) of this Clause and within twelve months of the service of a notice by the Commissioner calling upon him to elect between such other interest that he has acquired or holds and his interest under this lease he has not divested himself of one or the other of such interests, the Commissioner may terminate this lease.

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (2) of this condition, the Lessor shall be entitled to require the Lessee within six months of the service of notice thereof to transfer his right, title and interest in any agricultural lands held by him under any lease not being land held by him under this lease to a person approved by the Commissioner and if the Lessee fails to comply with such notices within the time stipulated thereby, the Lessor shall be entitled to terminate this lease.

False information

15. The Lessor reserves the right to terminate the lease if at any time during the continuance thereof it has been established to the satisfaction of the lessor that the Lessee supplied false information in his application for the said holding.

Breach of condition

16. In case of a breach by the Lessee of any one or more of the conditions of this lease or in case of any rent or any sum of money payable in accordance with the terms of this lease being three (3) months or more overdue the Commissioner may give to the Lessee notice in writing specifying the nature of the breach or default and requiring him to remedy the same within three (3) months of the service of this notice. If the Lessee fails to comply with such notice the Lessor shall have the right to terminate this lease.

Provided that where the breach is a breach of paragraph 3 (4) of these conditions, the period within which the breach is to be remedied shall be such period as the Commissioner shall prescribe.

Voluntary transfer or disposal of interest

17. (1) No voluntary transfer or disposal of the interest of the Lessee nor any transfer or disposal of that interest in accordance with a notice served on him by the Commissioner shall be made except to a person approved by the Commissioner and then only in accordance with the provisions of the Crown Lands Regulations.

(2) The Commissioner shall not give his approval to any transaction that would result in the sub-division or separation of the lands comprised in this lease.

Compensation

18. (1) Upon the termination of this lease by the Commissioner or upon the expiry of this lease by effluxion of time or upon transfer of the interest made with the approval of the Commissioner, the Lessee shall be entitled to receive by way of compensation or purchase price as the case may be a sum equal to the value of the improvements to the land whether made by the Lessee himself or by his predecessors in title.

(2) The improvements shall include:-

- (a) growing crops which the Lessee has not been able to reap or harvest,
- (b) unexhausted residual and manurial values remaining on the land,
- (c) fruit trees or other productive trees established on the holding, and
- (d) permanent buildings and works.

Provided that the Lessee shall not be entitled to compensation for any buildings and works unless the Commissioner had agreed in writing to their construction.

(3) The value of the improvements shall be assessed by a Board consisting of a Government Officer appointed by the Commissioner, one member appointed by the Lessee and one member appointed by the incoming Lessee. The Government Officer shall be Chairman of the Board.

(4) The value of the improvements as aforesaid shall be payable to the Lessee or to the Commissioner as the case may be by the incoming Lessee provided that the Commissioner shall be entitled to receive and/or deduct therefrom all sums due and payable to the Commissioner by the Lessee, all expenses incurred by the Commissioner in connection with any breach of condition by the Lessee and all arrears of rates, taxes, assessment and outgoings imposed or charged upon the holding.

Minerals

19. This lease shall not confer on the Lessee the right to any gold, silver or other minerals, ores, bauxite, rock, gems or precious stones, coal, mineral oil or radio-active minerals in or under the land hereby leased which shall be saved and reserved to the Lessor with the right to enter upon any part or parts of the land hereby leased (whether by himself or by his servants or agents or by any person authorised by him in that behalf) to search and mine therefor subject however to the payment to the Lessee of compensation as provided in Regulation 43 of the Crown Lands Regulations.

Resumption  
for a public  
purpose

20. The Lessor shall have full power and authority at all times during the term of this lease to re-enter and enter into possession of any part of the land hereby leased which he may deem necessary to be used for any town site, village, railway, tramway, canal, telegraph line, road, wireless or radio station or power transmission or for any other public purpose, use utility or convenience or to sell, lease, licence or otherwise dispose of to any person or persons any part or parts of the said land for any purpose as aforesaid without making any compensation in respect of any part so resumed, or sold, leased, licensed or otherwise disposed of.

Provided that the lands to be so resumed or disposed of shall not exceed one-tenth part of the holding.

And provided further that where any part or parts of the holding is or are disposed of as herein provided this lease shall immediately determine over such part or parts and the rental reserved by this lease shall be proportionately reduced.

Right of  
enforcement

21. (1) The Commissioner may exercise his right to enforce any condition of this lease notwithstanding that he may have omitted to exercise such right on any previous occasion.

(2) The receipt by the Commissioner of any rent or other money payable by the Lessee shall not affect the right of the Commissioner to enforce the conditions of this lease in respect of any breach committed by the Lessee and whether or not known to the Commissioner before such receipt.

Service of  
notice

22. For the purpose of this lease any notice shall be deemed to be duly served on the Lessee or the mortgagee as the case may be if sent to him by registered post, or, if service in this manner cannot be made by posting a copy of the notice in a conspicuous place on the Holding.

Expiry

23. On the expiry or this lease by effluxion of time or upon the surrender or cancellation thereof, all buildings or erections and all improvements on the land hereby leased shall belong absolutely to the Lessor.

Provided that if the Holding is again leased within two years of the date of expiry, surrender or cancellation as aforesaid, the Lessee shall be entitled to receive from the succeeding Lessee the full value of all lawful improvements existing on the land computed as at the date of such termination and the amount of compensation payable in respect of such improvements shall be assessed as provided for in Condition 19 (1) of this lease.

Covenant for  
peaceful  
possession

24. The Lessee paying the rent and other sums of money hereby reserved and performing all the covenants and conditions herein contained and to be by him observed and fulfilled shall and may peaceably and quietly possess and enjoy the land hereby leased without undue interference by the Lessor or any person claiming to be lawfully acting under him and upon giving three months notice in writing to the Commissioner shall be entitled

to a renewal of his lease for a further term of twenty-five years upon the same terms and conditions including this present condition and such rental that may be fixed by the lessor under the provisions of paragraph (1) of this lease.

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