

B.G. News

Commemorating Death of Enmore Riot Victims

Thousands of Sugar Estates Workers Make Pilgrimage to Graves

Touching Scenes at Le Repentir Cemetery

Yesterday's scenes, but for the fact that there was a lengthy political meeting on Bourda Green, were reminiscent of June 16, 1948, as thousands of sugar estate workers trekked to the City to commemorate the death of five of their fellow workers, shot during the East Coast labour unrest a year ago.

As far as the East Coast was concerned, some two thousand men and women tramped along the dusty road, from Enmore, 16 miles away. They carried shoulder high a *Doli* packed about three feet high with wreaths, the while Indian lads struck gongs and blew shells and played Indian tunes on a bugle, according to Oriental custom.

At Bourda Green the large gathering was addressed by several well-known labour leaders and a number of resolutions were passed.

One of these called upon Government to establish central cane factories in the three counties and to recommend to the Home Government the nationalisation of the local sugar industry.

Sugar estate workers started arriving in Georgetown from early morning. Using every available means of transportation, they came from the East and West Banks and West Coast; but the largest numbers travelled on foot from the East Coast.

SLOGANS

'As they entered the city they carried banners bearing such slogans as: 'We don't want any more shooting in British Guiana. This is the end.'

'We asked for bread, they gave us stones.'



A view of the monster procession led by field secretary Perry (wearing black tie) as it entered the City from the East Coast, Demerara.



A section of the crowd surrounding the *Doli* with wreaths piled some three feet high.

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us bullets.' 'Mother India is free. Her children chained in sugar estates.' 'High time for shooting of human beings like birds to end. Yes, time.' 'Our leaders cannot even visit us.' 'Away with cut and load. Cut and load is slow murder.' 'Reorganise the Labour Department. We don't want Joint Committees.' 'Feed us with the bill of human rights.' 'The Union we want must represent us. No time for joint and company unions.' 'The Labour Department not protecting labour. Abolish it.' 'In loving memory of our beloved brothers who were shot at Enmore.' 'What has been done for the five widows?' 'What has been done for the ten fatherless?' 'Nationalise the sugar industry.'

SHOOTING INCIDENTS RECALLED

Addressing the gathering at Bourda Green, Dr. J. P. Lachmansingh, Vice-President of the B.G. East Indian Association, said they had come to the city to commemorate the death of the five workers shot at Enmore a year ago and to record their protest against the shooting. He told the workers that nine instances of shootings had occurred in the Colony within the past 76 years. These shootings he said, were as follows:

Pln. Devonshire Castle, Essequibo—1872. Pln. Non Pareil, East Coast, Demerara—1899. Pln. Friends, East Bank, Berbice—1903. Pln. Ruimveldt, East Bank, Demerara—1905. Pln. Lusignan, East Coast, Demerara—1912. Pln. Rose Hall, Canje, Berbice—1913. Pln. Ruimveldt, East Bank, Demerara—1924. Pln. Leonora, West Coast, Demerara—1939. Pln. Enmore, East Coast, Demerara—1948.

Dr. Lachmansingh said the people of Enmore had made up their minds that never again must there be a recurrence of such a deplorable state of affairs in British Guiana and they intended making an annual pilgrimage to the graves of their fellow workers, thereby keeping alive that memorable day, June 16, 1948.

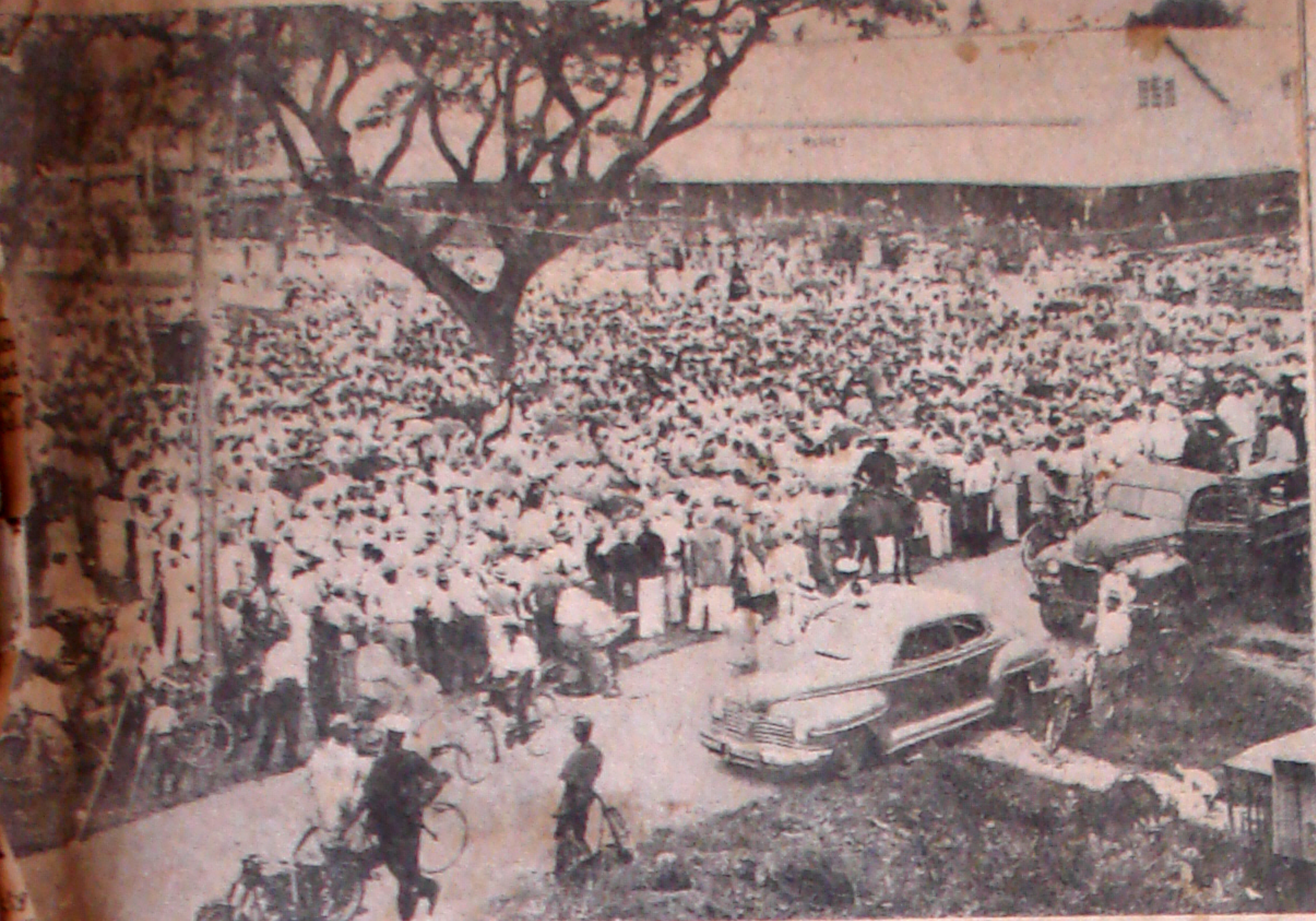
Mr. Ramlogan in a short address stressed the need for the workers to have a voice in conducting the affairs of the colony as this, he emphasised, was the only means of ensuring for them fair play. He said that they were making a large contribution towards the Colony's economy and, therefore, had every right to enjoy such a privilege.

Asked to say a few words, Mr. J. I. Ramphal, Inspector of Labour, congratulated the people on the orderly way in which they were behaving. He assured them that there was not a single Government official who wanted ever to see repeated what occurred on the East Coast on June 16 last year.

DR. JAGAN'S SPEECH

The Hon. Dr. Cheddi B. Jagan referred to the fact that although he was an officer of one of the trade unions recognised by the proprietors of sugar estates, he could not enter those estates, because the proprietors had served on him a trespass notice and the Court had granted a temporary injunction restraining him from entering the properties. He said it was clear to him that the proprietors had decided

STATE WORKERS HONOUR DEAD COLLEAGUES



Top picture by Benny Bishop shows a panoramic view of the crowd which assembled at Bourda Green yesterday for more than three hours while political leaders of both sexes addressed them, on the commemoration of the first anniversary of the death of several Enmore sugar estate workers. Below Hon. Dr. Cheddi Jagan, Member of the Legislative Council and Dr. J. P. Lachmarsingh, vice-president of the B.G. East Indian Association snapped by Louis Chung as they addressed the assembly.

Mrs. Jagan also spoke.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED

Among the resolutions passed were the following:

RESOLVED, in view of the inhumane treatment to the poor working class people, particularly those who are working on the sugar estates, which is definitely keeping back the progress of the Colony as a whole, Government see the advisability to establish central cane factories in the three Counties and/or recommend to the British Government in Parliament the nationalisation of the sugar industry of British Guiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Government establish a Social Welfare Committee without delay, with wide powers to function throughout the Colony.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this meeting of workers from all parts of the Colony, assembled this 16th day of June, 1949, at the Bourda Ground, Georgetown, request the Hon. W. L. Heape, C.M.G., Officer Administering the Government, to receive a deputation of six (6) persons to discuss this important matter as early as possible.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this meeting request and empower the Guiana Industrial Workers' Union to make representation, and to sign and transmit all documents concerning this important matter.

Another resolution protested against the actions taken by Government in industrial disputes in the past and sought the introduction of legislation to enable representatives of employees to meet them wherever they may be in order that the representatives may be able to act on their behalf.

Yet another resolution requested Government to view sympathetically the cases of the dependents of those men who were killed and injured during the shooting at Enmore last year.

The resolution asked the Officer Administering the Government to receive a small deputation shortly after the arrival in the Colony of Pandit Satya Charran Shastri, Indian Commissioner in the British Caribbean, to discuss the matter.

At about 3.00 p.m. the meeting ended and the workers wended their way to Le Repentir Cemetery where touching scenes were witnessed. Women, including the wives of the five men over whose graves tombs were recently built with marble slabs bearing inscriptions, wept as two Pandits performed Hindu rites. The graves were afterwards covered with wreaths.

On First Anniversary Of Pln. RIDAY, JUNE 17, 1949
Enmore Tragedy

Enmore Riot Victims

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that certain people must not represent the estate workers and he was sure they would exert every effort to prevent him sitting with them around a table to bargain on behalf of the workers. However, he added that whatever the proprietors had done or might do, he was not going to allow them to defeat him: Until the Venn report was released, he was sure the proprietors would do all they could to subjugate and disorganise the workers.

Speaking for fully half an hour, Dr. Jagan referred to the Boland report stating that he had enquired some time ago what action Government intended taking against the people responsible for the shooting at Enmore, but 'nothing had come of his enquiry'.

He also spoke on the question of the withdrawal of the sworn weighers from sugar estates and said he had told the Finance Committee that Government had given an undertaking to continue the supervision of weighing until the Venn report was submitted.

After making a few more observations, Dr. Jagan said the only way the people would get anything was to march and demonstrate. "You must make a noise. You must demonstrate. That is the only way Government will listen to you", he



A close-up of the bearers of the flowers being taken to the five graves of the men who met their death a year ago yesterday, during the Enmore labour disturbances. Picture by Louis Chung.