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It is in this special context that I suggest you view this prize-giving occasion, and as you think of the future, I ask that you see in proper perspective, the kind of Guyana you want and the role you must play in it.

But first this afternoon, I extend my sincere congratulations to all who have worked over the past year to maintain the high standards of this institution. In this respect, I share your pride in that one of your number brilliantly topped the list of Scholarship students, and so was awarded one of the Guyana Scholarships for 1964. I wish to express to Mr. Charles Denbow, my personal congratulations and those of my Government on his exceptional achievement. I had the privilege at one stage of my university career of being closely associated with his father. I am sure that his son will follow in his father's foot-steps and will make an equally important contribution to our national life.

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Cheddi Jagan Research

The mention of my friend brings to mind the difficult educational situation which all Guyanese confronted in those bad old days. The educational system of the time had been geared to prevent the emergence of leadership. While primary education was free, almost all the schools were understaffed, underequipped and overcrowded. It was not uncommon to find 800 children admitted to a school designed for 400 and it was estimated that another 13,000 children between six and fourteen years of age did not attend school. The effects of the poor education facilities were shown in the widespread illiteracy. The few secondary schools, partly as a result of high fees, and the inability of workers to afford books and so on, and partly as a result of discriminatory selection of candidates, remained accessible only to a privileged few. And only a single scholarship was provided for University education which was available only overseas. If you were not lucky enough to win that scholarship, however brilliant you might be, you were doomed to a career in the lower rungs of the civil service or business.

Things have changed so much since then that there are many parents who may have forgotten them and you will know nothing about them at all. To take only one aspect, there are now three Guiana Scholarships and a large range of other scholarships which take our best students to Universities overseas. There is also now a generous loan scheme for students who have no resources but who are qualified for University education. In 1963, 132 students who were at overseas universities received \$200,000 in loans, and incidentally nearly all of these students are at Universities in Western countries. This year we have increased the loan scheme to the record amount of \$284,000.

But this is only one aspect of government's programme to make available to every Guyanese the best possible education irrespective of race, class or creed. Since 1961

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the educational system has been radically reorganised and expanded.

A large number of primary and secondary schools have been built. The school building scheme is now going ahead on a self-help basis with the communities building their own schools with Government assistance. All places at Government Secondary Schools are now free.

Ten years ago only two thousand children were pursuing secondary education. Today, fifty-eight thousand children are pursuing secondary studies. The training of teachers has been speeded up with the establishment of training centres throughout the country. Technical training has been broadened and improved to provide more effective training of craftsmen in eight basic trades. And university education has been brought within the reach of everyone. In 1963 the University of Guyana to which you act as host opened with 150 students in three faculties of Arts, Natural Sciences and Social

Sciences. This year another 150 students have entered the University. That is the general framework. Now I want to touch on some of the recent changes and decisions of Government which will have a direct effect on you and your future and that of your friends in other secondary schools. First, improvements in the Guiana Scholarship.

Government feels that Guiana scholars should be left free to pursue such academic and/or professional studies as their interests dictate, and this under the best conditions. So, Government has decided as from this year to increase the Guiana Scholarship award. A Guiana Scholar who wishes to pursue a three year course will now be granted the sum of \$8,784 instead of the usual \$7,804 and a scholar who is embarking on a four year course will have the value of his scholarship increased from \$10,334 to \$11,640. In the past, Guiana Scholars were only able to do a maximum of four years of University studies. This meant that Guiana Scholars could

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not embark on a five or six-year course such as Medicine, on the basis of the award. I am sure that you will be particularly glad to learn that Government has decided to grant the sum of \$17,352 to any Guiana Scholar who wishes to do a six-year course. For the first time therefore, Guianese students who win a Guiana Scholarship will be able to do a full six-year course.

Some of you who are now present, were not here when I spoke at last year's prize-giving. I refer, of course, to those who have entered the first forms as a result of the country-wide Secondary Schools examinations, and those who have entered the Sixth Forms on the strength of their performance at the G.C.E. examination at other schools. This year's intake into the First forms has been the largest to enter the school in any one year on the basis of a competitive examination open to all children of the required age. This is in keeping with our belief that education should be democratically organised. That is also why we have abolished

the payment of fees in Government Secondary Schools as from September this year. It means, therefore, that the remainder of you, like the 150 new boys will now be receiving your secondary education free of charge.

Moreover, so as to provide more and better facilities in other secondary schools, Government over a year ago entered into negotiations with the aided secondary schools to secure improved conditions for teachers and to provide relief for parents. Government's aim was at the time, and still is, to pay the full salaries of all teachers who had the minimum qualifications and to abolish the payment of school fees. In addition, Government intends to provide leave and pension conditions for the staff of such schools on par with those which exist for All-Age School Teachers.

So far four schools - Berbice Educational Institute, Tagore Memorial High School, Corentyne High School and Guiana Oriental College have agreed to the conditions as set out by the Government and we are now awaiting the agreement of

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Central High School, Tutorial High School, Indian Education Trust College, Cambridge Academy, St. Stanislaus College, St.

Rose's High School, St. Joseph's High School and the others, so that Government's determined intention of free secondary education for all can become a reality throughout Guyana.

In this connexion, I may say that the Government is committed to a policy of religious freedom, and parents will be free to have their children instructed in the religion of their choice.

The pace of educational expansion is so great that every week sees a striking new development. Thus a few weeks ago a contract was awarded for the construction of a new building to house the present Anna Regina Secondary School and it is expected that this will be completed in time for the pupils to move over at the beginning of the new school year. In other areas, with community assistance new schools have been built and there are now fourteen more Government Secondary Schools. These schools have indeed been started on a modest scale but I am confident that in a very short time they will blossom into institutions which will form a network of secondary schools to meet the growing needs of an Independent Guyana.

Speaking of community awareness, I am glad to hear that the Parent Teachers' Association and the Old Boys' Association have again risen to the occasion in providing funds for the prizes which boys will receive. I wish to congratulate both organisations on the way in which they have identified themselves with their civil responsibilities.

Now nothing that I have said so far, should lead you to set yourself apart from the general stream of education in Guyana today. You have a fine tradition as a Grammar School. Yours is, therefore, a role of leadership, so that as we continue to establish more secondary schools, they can look to you for standards, though possibly varying in form and organisation.

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I have noted the concern expressed by your Headmaster on the question of staffing. It has always been the policy of Government (and it will remain so) to employ competent graduate masters to teach at Queens. With present university scholarships and the loan scheme I am confident that whatever staffing problems you face now, can only be temporary. The establishment of the University of Guyana and the stepping up of Government's external Training scheme are all bound to result in a supply of Graduates from which secondary schools should be adequately staffed.

In the meantime, I am satisfied that the present staff is doing a very commendable job and I am confident that you will use your opportunities to set and maintain standards which other secondary schools can emulate.

And now I turn to some more developments in education which affect you. Government is convinced that the education

received in our schools must at all times bear relevance to our situation. With that in mind a Curriculum Committee has been set up by Government and headed by your Headmaster, Mr. Hetram and with Miss L. Dewar, and Mr. C.C. Blackman as Vice Chairmen, to review existing curricula and to recommend to what extent they could be brought in line with modern concepts of education and new trends in the Guyanese situation. In the meantime the Minister of Education has directed that certain subjects - Economics, Community Development, Co-operatives and the History of British Guiana must be taught in the secondary divisions of our educational institutions to ensure that our education bears relevance to the needs of our society.

A step in the same direction is the decision that this country will be a participating member in the Caribbean Examination Council, which has been formed to take over as the overseas examining body. This body will fashion examinations to Caribbean needs while maintaining international standards.

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In other fields, Government has gone boldly ahead with imaginative plans designed to help along the educational revolution. Next year a great deal of money will be spent on new schools or the extension of existing schools. Nearly a million dollars will be spent on all-age schools and more than two million on secondary schools. Fifty eight per cent of our all-age projects with which the World Food Programme is assisting, will provide another 8,000 places. I have already referred to the erection of a new secondary school at Anna Regina. There is also provision for furniture, science laboratories, Home Economics facilities and laboratory equipment at the Ruinveldt secondary school and at other schools throughout the country. New Equipment and training facilities will be provided for the Teachers Training College in Port Mourant. Two junior technical colleges which it is proposed to establish will expand the work of the Government Technical Institute into new areas where technical training is urgently required. These junior technical colleges will be sited in Berbice and Essequibo and should play a great part in training the craftsmen and technicians so urgently needed in carrying out our development programme.

You are living in exciting times. All over the world people are putting aside their age-old ways of thinking and doing. They have cut their moorings with the past and while it is not always clear where they are going, within their hearts there is the certainty that they want a world in which poverty will be abolished and in which there will be opportunities for all to develop themselves to the full. You will be called up to play a part of leadership in this revolution. I know that armed with the standards and traditions of this, your school, you will play your part well.