

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

T R A N S P O R T & H A R B O U R S D E P A R T M E N T

For the year 1959.

(Ref. 429/14 .)

Georgetown, Demerara,
British Guiana.
30th May, 1960.

429/24.
GBT/IMP:

TRANSPORT & HARBOURS DEPARTMENT.

48-49, Main Street,
Georgetown, Demerara,
British Guiana.
30th May, 1960.

Sir,

I have the honour to report on the Transport and Harbours Department for the year ending 1959.

The report encompasses:

The East Coast Railway 62 miles of standard gauge (4'8½") single line.

The West Coast Railway ... 18½ miles of 3'6" gauge single line.

Coastal & River Shipping and Ferry Services 12 general purpose vessels, launches and cargo pontoons.

Passenger & Cargo Road Service from Bartica to Potaro and Issano. 6 diesel powered vehicles running 125 miles into the interior.

Harbour Services Pilotage, Navigation Aids, Hydrographic Survey and Enactment of River Navigation Regulations.

EAST COAST RAILWAY:

Since 1953 cargo has been diverted as much as possible from the East Coast Railway to the Department's coastal shipping service between Georgetown and New Amsterdam. This was done not only to cut out expensive and cumbersome transshipping across the Berbice River by pontoon services, but also to pave the way for the eventual replacement of the railway by road transport services.

Apart from padi and rice traffic to and from the Government sponsored central mill at the Mahaicony/Abary Scheme, and some sugar and molasses from factories at Enmore and La Bonne Intention, the railway is almost solely a passenger carrying line. Passenger traffic has steadily increased year by year

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The Honourable Minister
of Communications & Works.

during the past five years and the trend continues. Passenger journeys have risen by 500,000 since 1955, the total for 1959 was 1,576,348. This number would have been greater but for a strike of Government employees in which the railways were involved, in December; the railways were stopped for fifteen days.

Increasing passenger traffic presents a problem because all available rolling stock and motive power are in full use, there are no reserve passenger coaches and some locomotives require replacement.

WEST COAST RAILWAY:

The West Coast Railway has always been primarily a passenger carrying line, serving villages and settlements on the coastal plain between the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers, but it also serves as a link with the Essequibo Islands and villages on the West side of the Essequibo.

Passenger traffic has steadily increased on this line also; passenger journeys amounted to 1,283,595 in 1959 as opposed to 891,299 in 1955. Rolling stock and motive power urgently require replacement; the situation is even more acute than on the East Coast Railway. Reconstruction of the coastal roads has not kept pace with the growth of the population and industrial expansion, and a change-over to road passenger services is not yet possible. A decision as to whether the road reconstruction programme can be accelerated or whether the railways should be rehabilitated for a few years more is urgently necessary.

Financial results from the Railways are shown below. It is not possible to make the railways self supporting on passenger traffic alone and increased fares would not help. Fares were sharply increased in 1952 and heavy losses to competitive bus and taxi services resulted; the situation was gradually restored by the introduction of reduced fares. Bus and taxi competition is very keen and higher passenger fares would be offset by a diversion of railway users to road services. In any event the present level of passenger fares does not leave much scope for increases. The basis of standard fares is:

1st Class	6¢ (3d) a mile
3rd Class	4¢ (2d) " " up to 22 miles
	3¢ (1½d) " " above " "

In the United Kingdom the British Railways have been empowered to increase fares to the maximum shown below but have not yet introduced the maximum:

1st Class	4½d (9¢) a mile
3rd Class	3d (6¢) " "

Financial Results:

Revenue:

	1958	1959	Decrease
East Coast Railway ...	\$752,690	\$716,310	\$36,380
West Coast Railway ...	403,311	399,065	4,246

Decreases caused by stoppage of the railways by a strike lasting 15 days in December.

Expenditure:

	1958	1959	Decrease- Increase+
East Coast Railway ...	\$1,413,732	\$1,412,857	\$ -875
West Coast Railway ...	546,176	555,296	+9,120

The increase on the West Coast Railway was caused by extensive maintenance of locomotives and rolling stock.

COASTAL & RIVER SHIPPING
AND FERRY SERVICES:

The following services were maintained:

- (i) A thrice-weekly passenger and cargo service between Georgetown and Bartica.
- (ii) A twice-weekly cargo service between Georgetown, Essequibo Islands and Essequibo Coast.
- (iii) A twice-weekly cargo service between Georgetown and New Amsterdam.
- (iv) A weekly Passenger and Cargo Service between Georgetown and the North West District.
- (v) A fortnightly Passenger and Cargo Service between Georgetown and the Pomeroun District.
- (vi) A weekly Passenger and Cargo Service between New Amsterdam and Ituni, Berbice River.
- (vii) A weekly launch service between New Amsterdam and Kwakwani, Berbice River.
- (viii) A weekly launch service between New Amsterdam and Ikuruwa, Canje River.
- (ix) Demerara Ferry Service between Georgetown and Vreed-en-Hoop.
- (x) Berbice Ferry Service between Rosignol and New Amsterdam.
- (xi) Essequibo Ferry Service between Parika, Essequibo Islands and Adventure.

There was a moderate upwards trend in passenger and cargo traffic on some shipping services, notably on the Demerara Ferry and North West District weekly service. The overall result was an increase of approximately \$23,000.

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There was a further decline on the Pomeroon fortnightly service; more than adequate privately owned sloop and power driven craft operate on this run and consideration is being given to closing the Government service.

On 30th November a new ferry ship (m.v. "Makouria") was introduced on the Demerara River between Georgetown and Vreed-en-Hoop. This ship carries 30 cars and 1,200 passengers on two decks; the lower deck is for vehicles, bicycles etc. etc. If no vehicles are carried and the lower deck is used for passengers only, nearly 3,000 passengers could be carried under crush conditions. The ship was specially designed to meet local conditions as to draft requirements and was planned to fulfil expanding demands from industrial development and increased population. When necessary a sister ship can be introduced to double the service or increase the hours of operation.

The vessel was built on the Clyde and a sister ship is being built on the same drawings by local shipbuilders; the sister ship was three-quarters finished by the end of the year. Special features of the new ferries are one class only to obtain maximum use of space, high safety factor, a shallow draft of 7'6", a fast operating turntable on the vehicle deck for quick disposal of vehicles, excellent toilet facilities and complete coverage for passengers. The new ferry is attracting increased traffic and opening up road traffic across the Demerara River.

Financial results from the combined shipping services are shown below:

	1958	1959	Increase+ Decrease-
Revenue ...	\$1,221,415	\$1,244,408	+\$22,993*
Expenditure ...	1,924,849	1,848,987	- 75,862

* Increase of \$22,993 despite the strike in December lasting 15 days.

The decrease in expenditure was due to a number of reasons e.g. lower operating cost of the new ferry "Makouria", compression of shipping repairs and labour costs. It should be specially mentioned that an award to seamen by a Tribunal set up under the Public Utility Undertakings and Public Health Services Arbitration Ordinance of 1954 had not become fully effective. The award will heavily increase labour costs in 1960 and thereafter.

BARTICA ROAD SERVICES:

The following services were maintained:

- (a) Bartica to Issano on the Upper Mazaruni River.
- (b) Bartica to the Potaro River District.

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The former fleet of 14 petrol powered 4-ton cargo capacity trucks was reduced to 6 diesel powered 7-ton cargo capacity trucks and two of the existing petrol powered units.

Considerable operating savings were obtained and revenue increased rapidly through the last quarter of the year because of the influx of an unusually large number of diamond miners into the Upper Mazaruni and Kurupung areas.

Due to the closing down of the Colonial Development Corporation supported British Guiana Consolidated Gold Mining Company which was dredging alluvial deposits in the Potaro River, some cargo and passenger traffic ceased.

Financial Results:

	1958	1959	Increase + Decrease -
Revenue	\$119,800	\$129,394	+\$ 9,594
Expenditure	169,613	158,446	- 11,167

HARBOUR SERVICES:

The main shipping tonnage and revenue arises from the export of bauxite ore, principally from Mackenzie on the Demerara River and to a lesser extent from Everton on the Berbice River. During the year, bauxite exports fell considerably below that of previous years and Harbours revenue fell in proportion.

There was a tendency towards improvement in the bauxite industry towards the end of the year, but not enough to close the gap through the year.

Financial results are shown below. Despite the decrease in traffic, expenditure rose unavoidably because it was necessary to carry out heavy repairs to dredgers and other craft.

Revenue:

Year	Tonnage Dues.	Light Dues.	Pilotage Dues.	Surveying & Dredging	Misc.	Total
1959	\$433,385	\$92,718	\$105,340	\$16,702	\$3,901	\$652,046
1958	422,110	87,285	100,812	-	45,111	655,318

Note: In 1958 Surveying and dredging was shown under Miscellaneous. The decrease under this head was caused by the comparatively small amount of hire dredging undertaken on account of extensive overhaul and repairs to dredgers.

Expenditure

Expenditure:

	<u>1959</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Harbour and Pilotage Services ..	\$500,791	\$462,012	\$38,779.

During the year an approach was made by Government to the United Nations Special Fund Administration for financial assistance to carry out hydraulic research on the Demerara River estuary bar, ship channel and seaboard where coastal erosion and breaches of the sea defence have occurred.

A preliminary examination of the physical aspects of the bar and seaboard was made by a Hydraulics Research Expert engaged by the Special Fund and by an Expert brought by Government from the Department of Scientific Research in the U.K. It is hoped that there will be a successful outcome and that valuable research on the problems of deepening the ship channel through the bar, improving Harbours and protecting the coast against erosion, may be assisted by the United Nations Special Fund in 1960.

GENERAL:Excursion Traffic:

An attempt to increase revenue by running excursions by ship and railway was resumed a few years ago, subsequent to a stoppage during the last war and post war years. Revenue amounting to approximately \$75,000 from this and other special services was earned, an increase of approximately \$13,000 over the previous year.

Training:

A favourable start was made in lectures covering all branches of the service from executive to lower supervisory levels. The lectures were well received and will be extended in 1960.

There is an exceptional scarcity of efficient, well trained supervisory personnel at intermediate levels and training schemes within the Department must be intensified in following years to enable the expansion of the public transport services to be carried out efficiently and economically.

Development:

The main development project underway is the Demerara Ferry Modernisation Scheme. Unfortunately funds for this project were not available at the beginning of the year and work on the reconstruction of the terminals was held up. The new ferry vessel "Makouria", which is part of the scheme, arrived in October and had to be put into service under makeshift arrangements on shore. The vessel proved to be very successful and when the complete scheme is finished, communications across the river will be vastly improved.

/Personnel