

Dr. Jagan Visits Canada

AT THE BEGINNING of October an invitation was extended by the Canadian Government to the Premier of British Guiana, Dr. Cheddi B. Jagan, to pay a two-day official visit to Ottawa on October 18 and 19. In his message of invitation, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Howard Green, said that such a visit would not only afford Canadians an opportunity of learning at first hand of the constitutional advances taking place in British Guiana but would also give the Premier an opportunity of seeing something of another part of the Commonwealth.

British Guiana is the only British possession on the mainland of the South American continent. The country has a 270-mile coastline on the Atlantic Ocean and an area of 83,000 square miles. Its population is 558,000, of which 48 per cent is of East Indian descent and 34 per cent of African descent, the remainder being of mixed Amerind, Chinese, Portuguese or other European origin. The two main bases of British Guiana's economic life are the production of sugar and bauxite. Since 1953, when a new constitution was introduced which repealed the property and income qualifications for voters and provided for universal adult suffrage, three general elections have been held and the People's Progressive Party under Dr. Jagan's leadership has won all three of these elections. The third election, which took place on August 21, 1961, resulted in the People's Progressive Party winning 20 seats in a Legislative Council of 35 seats, with the two opposition parties — the People's National Congress led by Mr. Forbes Burham and the United Force under the leadership of Mr. Peter D'Aguiar — winning 11 seats and 4 seats respectively. At present, the colony of British Guiana has virtually full self-government (foreign affairs and defence are still the responsibility of the British Government) and is looking forward to achieving its complete independence in the near future.

Ottawa Schedule

A busy two-day programme in Ottawa was arranged for Dr. Jagan and his party of four, which included the Minister of Trade and Industry of British Guiana, Senator H. J. M. Hubbard. The Premier was received by the Governor General and had discussions with the Prime Minister of Canada and with the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In addition, Dr. Jagan and his party had the opportunity of outlining British Guiana's problems and needs to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Donald Fleming, to the Acting Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, to officials of the Department of Agriculture and the Co-operative Union of Canada, and to the Director-General of the External Aid Office.