

## **The Story of the Achimota School Endowment Trust Fund**

- **Events Eye witnessed, Researched, Collated and Narrated –  
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( Chairman / Initiator of ASETF)**

In 1902, the Colonial office dispatched a military officer and qualified surveyor/cartographer to the Gold Coast survey department, assigned to expedite the surveying and mapping of the lands which would be needed for the development of the colony in the century that had just begun, Frederick Gordon Guggisberg completed his assignment in 6 years instead of 8, was transferred to the sister colony of Nigeria in 1908, and was soon promoted the surveyor general and became a member of the Executive Council or Government of Nigeria.

When World War 1 broke out in 1914, he opted to revert to his military career, rejoined his regiment and went off to the front in France. His prowess and leadership qualities were outstanding, he was mentioned in dispatches, and decorated. By war's end in 1918, there had emerged a senior personality, ready for any top position in the Colonial empire, of which there were many in those times.

The end of the war also coincided with the terminal tour of the Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Hugh Clifford; the colonial office had no hesitation whatever in naming Brigadier General Frederick Gordon Giggisberg, CMG, DSO, of the Royal Engineers Regiment of the British Army, to succeed Sir Hugh Clifford.

His appointment caused some tension, because a purely administrative officer who had thrice acted as relief governor in the previous term had thought he would succeed. The colonial office, in its inimitable style diffused the tension, and confirmed Guggisberg's appointed. At the end of his earned leave, and armed with the tools and plans to justify his preferment, he arrived in the Gold Coast on October 9, 1919, and assumed office as Governor and Commander in Chief. At the first opportunity he got, he played a MASTER STROKE. Speaking in the Legislative Council on November 17, 1919, he unfolded the TEN YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN, which has left his name and fame in this country till today, and could be for

all time. His plan was of the class and caliber which politicians, with an eye on the next voting day put out, sometimes with disastrous results in implementation. Guggisberg had NO EYE on any horizons but he did it and well too. Ironically, he was honored with a KCMG in the Kings Birth Day honours following the promulgation of his 10 years D-Plan.

We have gathered here this afternoon in connection with one of the projects of his plan but it would not be amiss if mention was made of a few others. Within the first 4 years of his tenure **FIRST** a deep water harbor to facilitate bulk export and import trade had been built at Takoradi **SECOND** lengthy extensions had been made to rail and road transport. **THIRD** A large modern hospital (Korle – Bu) had been built in Accra, with special departments for the implementation of modern medical science discoveries. **FOURTH** A palace or citadel for the administration of JUSTICE which still dominates the skyline after 60 years, was being completed. These are enough to mention to prove that F.G.G ( as he used to initial himself) could have been a son of the soil dedicated to serving his people, instead of the imperialist appointee that he was.

The greatest of his plans ACHIMOTA, was to be an expression of his faith in and hopes for the future of the Gold Coast. A co-educational complex that would be second to none in the whole Colonial Empire. He was unrelenting in his pressure to get things moving. By the end of 1923, the following had been done:-

- a) All the **LAND** including the surrounding forest area had been acquired and secured for the project.
- b) The **DRAWINGS** and **PLANS** had been made and approved
- c) The **COSTING** had been completed and a block vote had been set aside to be dispensed in 5 yearly allotments according to progress of work.
- d) The **MAIN CONTRACT** had been awarded to the best Civil Engineering and Construction firm in the Gold Coast, Messrs. Thompson Moir & Galloway, and
- e) Before Christmas 1923, a good number of the staff of Achimota had arrived in the Gold Coast.

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