

CEYLON *Today*

**The Preservation of
Wild Life in Ceylon**

**The Kamma Doctrine of
the Buddha**

WILLIAM PEIRIS

**Some Rural Practices and
Customs in Ceylon**

S. V. O. SOMANADER

**A Foreigner's View of
Jaffna**

DR. W. ROBERT HOLMES

Foreign Affairs

South Coast Scene



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The Preservation of Wild Life in Ceylon

THE Report of the Committee on Preservation of Wild Life has just been issued by the Government as a Sessional Paper. The Committee was appointed in December, 1957, by the Minister of Lands and Land Development—

- (1) to examine the status of the National Reserves and Sanctuaries as are existing at present, and advise on what measures should be adopted for their revision, improvement and redefinition of their boundaries where necessary ;
- (2) to enquire and report on the location of any new Fauna and Flora Protection reserves in relation to development schemes ;
- (3) to enquire and report on what measures should be adopted for the control and conservation of Wild Life with special reference to the wild elephant, and what amendments should be made to the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance, No. 2 of 1937, as amended by Act No. 38 of 1949, for such purpose ;
- (4) to enquire and report on the provision of Forest Corridors to connect up the Fauna and Flora Protection Reserves and for other forest reserves in order to increase living space for Wild Life ;
- (5) to enquire and report on what measures should be adopted to make the National Parks and Sanctuaries more attractive to the visitor and to increase their education value for young folk ; and
- (6) to examine the present organization of the Wild Life Department and advise on what measures should be adopted to effect its improvement.

The Committee had Mr. K. Somasuntheram as Chairman, and was composed of Dr. R. L. Spittel, Col. C. P. Jayawardena, Mr. S. V. O. Somanader, Mr. Gorton Coombe, Mr. C. E. Norris, S. A. I. Elapata Dissawa, the Land Commissioner, the Director of Irrigation, the Director of Agriculture, the Conservator of Forests, and the Warden of the Department of Wild Life. Mr. W. G. Weeraratne was Secretary to the Committee from December,

1957, to August, 1958, and Mr. A. S. A. Packeer was Acting Secretary from September, 1958.

The following excerpts of chapters, taken from the Committee's Report, should be of interest to our readers:—

From time immemorial when man became aware of his own personality and needs, he has had to struggle for existence among his own kind and among other living beings. This struggle as well as the struggle he has had with the forces of nature evolved the human being of today. In this development various religious and other educational influences played their part. We are now said to have a civilisation and culture which make man a being quite apart from animals; the motivation of his animal instincts such as the satisfaction of hunger, being controlled by his will in relation to the needs of others and his desire to live in harmony with others.

Our Terms of Reference indicate that the Government desires, as far as it can, to preserve and maintain as long as possible the wild life of Ceylon. The needs of man in Ceylon has been very much on the increase. It is of course the duty of the Government to see that his needs are met and he is given satisfaction; but in doing so the needs of wild life should not be overlooked.

The various colonisation and land development schemes which have been introduced since the attainment of self-government in Ceylon are an attempt to provide and satisfy man's needs. How efficient they would be in satisfying their purposes and how long their completion will take, is a matter of scientific investigation. But one point stands out and that is, that the satisfaction which the land can give to the needs of man depends on the nature of the land, its soil make-up, its water supply, the vegetation it can have and the climatic conditions in which it exists; and there are large tracts of land which cannot give this satisfaction.

We do feel strongly that, in providing for man's needs in Ceylon, we can also provide definitely for the existence of its wild life for all time. Whatever action the Government may take in land development, and however efficient and expeditious the heavy machinery it may use for the purpose may be, there will yet inevitably be large tracts of land in which the animals can always roam and which cannot ever be brought under active, useful cultivation.

There must always be climatic reserves without which an even fall of rain will cease and desert conditions supervene as has happened in many parts of the world. In Ceylon, the mountain-mass in the central and south-western part of the Island with its hill slopes covered with forests intercept and precipitate the rain-clouds of both monsoons for the benefit of the Island. It is of course very essential that these forests should be maintained as such. Soil conservation requires forest cover for the low-lands to preserve the moisture in the soil and to permit regulation of the flow of water through them, thus preventing overflow of rivers and washing away of the soil. Further, it is estimated that in a normally populated country, a minimum of half an acre of well-stocked forest is required per head of population, that is, for Ceylon's population there should be about four million acres of forest land. Again, it has been said that soil conservation and the distribution of rainfall demand that a minimum of 25 per cent (in India this figure has been fixed at 30 per cent) of the area of a country must be preserved in forest. In Ceylon this would amount to about four million acres. Further, experts have declared that all the water resulting from the rainfall of the Island could never be properly utilised to cultivate all the otherwise available cultivable land, even if dry land crops are introduced. It has been said that with our rainfall only about 40 per cent of the land could be cultivated. That means 60 per cent of the land—namely about 9.6 million acres—



Sambhur

would have to be in forest, jungle, or arid land, unusable by man for cultivation.

It is said that Sinhalese kings of old had given protection to wild animals, birds and fishes in fulfilment of their duty as kings and these are recorded in chronicles and inscriptions. Several of the large tanks were said to have been decreed wild life sanctuaries. Hence there is nothing new or western in the protection offered to our wild life.

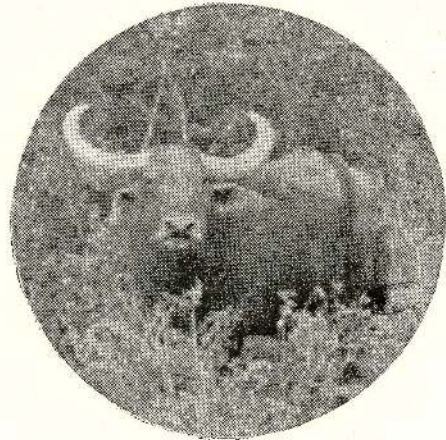
It is in the spirit set out above that our recommendations are made. We feel that in this Island in which Lord Buddha has taught that killing even for one's food is abhorrent to him, the idea of the preservation of life even of our wild animals, birds, fishes and insects should be welcome and actively supported.

Preservation

THE preservation of wild life of Ceylon has been the cause of much concern to the public for several years now. Representations have been made to the Government; numerous articles have appeared in the newspapers; and urgent pleas have been made to the authorities concerned that something positive should be done about it. The Hon'ble Minister referred to this in Parliament on 6th August, 1957, and appointed this Committee soon after. The provisions of the

Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance are now antiquated and wholly unsuited to present-day needs. The Department of Wild Life began to function as a separate Department with limited staff from October, 1950, and is unable to cope with its work owing to the serious lack of personnel and funds.

The elephant and the buffalo are animals very useful to man and are of immense help in his agricultural activities. Is it not, therefore, the wiser course to encourage them to breed rather than to adopt the lackadaisical attitude of allowing them to be killed off?



Wild buffalo

A further point for emphasis is that wild life thrives best in the habitat it has been accustomed to for generations. Their development in a changed atmosphere, necessitating an alteration in their ingrained habits, cannot be forced on them ad hoc by human control. Wild animals require certain types of land, vegetation, climate and resources of food and water; and particular species develop in particular areas owing to the existence of these facilities, for example, the "marsh" elephant in the Mahaweli Ganga basin. If we wish to preserve particular species of animals and birds, we must allow them the continued use of such areas as are best suited to them. Otherwise, the chances are that the species will in due course become

extinct and not be available to man for use in his service or for scientific study.

Varied Vegetation

IN Ceylon, fortunately, we have varied vegetation, climate and configuration of land ; if we wish to preserve the indigenous wild life in the different areas, we must have Reserves for them in these areas, uninterfered with by man. Unfortunately for our fauna, man's needs have forced them from the wet and fertile regions of our land to the dry and not so fertile regions in the north-west and south-east. The two big Reserves set apart for the wild life, namely, Yala National Reserve and Sanctuary and Wilpattu National Reserve and Sanctuary, are in such regions. In ancient times, we know that some of these regions were occupied by man. But in those days apparently the wet zones were covered with dense forests in which wild life thrive. We have now driven them away from these fertile areas, and there is serious danger now to them even in the arid regions of Yala and Wilpattu owing to encroachments upon their habitats in Yala from the south-west, and in Wilpattu from the east and north.

We would most earnestly urge on the Government that these encroachments be not allowed to continue and that the Government should leave these bastions of wild life to be the last to be considered in priority in connection with land usage for the needs of man.

If Government really desires to preserve the indigenous wild life as we feel certain it does, not only for the use of man, but also as a national heritage, we would strongly urge that these Reserves be extended and the facilities available for wild life in them such as water, food, etc., be improved as recommended later in this Report.

It is an accepted scientific fact that the forest has a marked effect on the causation of rain and the retention of water. A forest with a rich layer of humus prevents soil erosion and siltation. By opening up land in



Wild boar

the mid and low countries, siltation has been accentuated. Our tanks get silted up and cannot hold the volume of water for which they were meant ; our rivers too get silted and water overflows the banks and results in much greater flooding. It is, therefore, a matter of great importance that the immediate catchment areas of our tanks (not less than 5 miles from the upper reaches of the tank) should be allowed to stand in vegetation, jungle and forest so that the silt going through may be held up ; thus conserving the soil and keeping the tanks free of silts. The Land Commission has strongly recommended that the Sancturaries set apart by the Irrigation Department for the major tanks should be so declared and we are glad to note that this principle has been accepted by the Department.

We are glad to note that there is an order of the Government that the hills above 5,000 ft. should not be opened up in cultivation. All such land should be declared National Reserves or Sancturaries.

A further important factor which should gain recognition in connection with the preservation of wild life is the support that it

(Continued on page 7)

The Kamma Doctrine of the Buddha

WILLIAM PEIRIS

OF the teachings of the Buddha that follow from his central doctrine of Suffering and the escape from Suffering, one of the most important is Kamma—action, good or bad.

The Buddha divides truth into two classes : those that can be proved by a process of reasoning and those that can be realised by a process of deep concentration.

Kamma belongs to the latter class of truth. It can be realised only by a highly concentrated mind which can rivet all its energies in that direction. As the axioms in geometry cannot be proved and are taken for granted, so is Kamma, a first principle, which can be realised only by intuition. Just because the savour of an orange cannot be proved, it does not mean that the orange has no taste. Kamma may be seen only by the powerful light of intuition just as dust in the air can be seen by the rays of the evening sun. The text says that Kamma in all its fulness can be realised only by one who has attained the state of an Enlightened One—a Buddha.

The Buddha describes the universe as a continuous vibration and an infinite growth bound by an iron chain of causality in which there are five processes, viz :—

- (1) *Utu Niyama*—physical inorganic order—for example, the seasonal rain and wind.
- (2) *Bija Niyama*—the order of germs and seeds—for example, the mango tree from the mango seed.
- (3) *Citta Niyama*—the process of consciousness.
- (4) *Dhamma Niyama*—the order of the Norm which includes such phenomena as gravitation.

- (5) *Kamma Niyama*—the order of action—good and bad results from good and bad actions.

The discoveries of modern science support the Buddha's concept of the world as a huge process. No longer is the world regarded as static, but is recognised as dynamic continuous energy.

The Buddha states that Kamma is the living being, and the living being is Kamma. Apart from Kamma there is no living being. Kamma always changes, is made anew and remade, moulded and remoulded, added to and subtracted from, and exhausted. It therefore follows that the Buddha does not recognise an unchanging permanent entity, a soul, as an actual fact.

But where does Kamma begin? The answer is : where is the beginning of electricity? Kamma like electricity has no discernible beginning, for it is a force, a form of energy. It is like fire or wind. It is not stored up anywhere in the universe, but comes into being under certain conditions. Just as mangoes are not stored up in the mango-tree but dependent on certain conditions spring into being, so does Kamma. Every living being is an electric current of life which operates on the automatic switch of Kamma.

The dominant fact that confronts us in this apparently ill-balanced world is its cruel inequalities of distribution of pain and pleasure? Why does this unevenness exist? It is because of Kamma, the Buddha explains. Because we experience sensation, pleasant, painful or indifferent, craving springs up—craving to have and hold or to reject and put away. Craving causes clinging

to life. This clinging leads to further becoming and this becoming is the Kamma that leads ever to birth and rebirth, ensuing all the Suffering which only those who tread the Buddha's Noble Path can bring to an end.

But sensation varies. Because of the unevenness of sensation, craving varies, clinging varies, becoming varies, Kamma varies. Thus, because of the unevenness of past-craving, because of its merit or demerit, every one of us has amassed a vast ocean of Kamma which unerringly reveal itself about us in the unevenness of our present lives. Kamma keeps on feeding us—both sweet and bitter food. It is both our friend and foe.

Scientists attribute inequalities and differences to heredity and environment. But they do not satisfactorily explain why offsprings of stupid parents are sometimes extraordinarily clever or why twins brought up under identical conditions are radically different. Nor has scientific theory found an adequate answer to the birth of child prodigies and geniuses.

The Buddha says that Kamma is the volition that gives birth to thought, word and deed. Kamma is the setting of the seed: the reaping comes with the fruit of the resultant tree. One may reap bitter weed or sweet fruit, according to the sowing. It is an inherent property of the mind or thought-force, states the Buddha, that with every volition or Kamma, a seed is set that involves a future fruition, near or far. He therefore advises us to see to it that such sowing as is unavoidable is done with skill. Then he teaches us a skill that leads us to the place where sowing and reaping are no more.

The Buddha does not state that a man's present is the direct and inevitable consequence of his past, nor that a man's future is the direct and inevitable consequence of his present. What he says is that a man's present *accords* with his past and his future

accords with his present. Thus, the Buddhist law of Kamma is not predestination or fatalism.

The text lists sixteen different classes of Kamma. Of these, weighty kamma, good or bad, operates before all others. None can escape the result of this class of Kamma which includes parricide and matricide. The fruit of bad weighty Kamma is held to preclude the emergence of the fruit of good weighty Kamma until the bad harvest be reaped. A Kamma of the present life may be operative in this life itself. But if a Kamma of a past life opposes it, it becomes non-effective. Another class of Kamma is remotely effective. If it is not powerful enough to cause reproduction, it becomes non-effective. What is described as indefinitely-effective Kamma will operate at any time in any future existence after the next until Nibbana be attained. This never becomes non-effective but chases the being through existence. It is evident that most of a being's Kamma is of this class—Kamma now experienced and Kamma now made. Of the Kamma of the last birth, nothing is harvested in the present. The Kamma now experienced is that of all "lives" before that immediately preceding. Again, the Kamma now made will yield fruit only in the births that come after the next, but the Kamma of the last life will begin to operate in the next.

A fruit of a past Kamma, good or bad, may be supported, obstructed or overcome by a fruit also of the past. A fruit of the past may be supported, obstructed or overcome by a seed of the present life. A seed of the present life may be supported, obstructed or overcome by a fruit of past Kamma. A seed of the present life may be supported, obstructed or overcome by a seed of the present life.

The only way by which past bad Kamma can be overcome is by performing good Kamma. Superstition yields place to the splendour of virtue in Buddhism. Prayer,

penance, spell and sacrifice cannot erase bad Kamma. The performance of good deeds not only acts as a destroyer of the bad Kamma of the past but also as a protector of the present and a builder of the future.

The Buddha states that repetition makes a Kamma effective enough to preponderate after a while as constant dripping can wear away a stone. He advises us to recall and renew good thoughts, words and deeds, again and again, but never to brood over the evil acts done in the past. This is described as habitual Kamma. It helps one at the moment of his death to gain a good rebirth.

Besides Kamma there are 24 other causes that condition the events and occurrences of the universe, according to Buddhism. Every time your fingers are pricked by a thorn you are not suffering the result of a past Kamma. Various factors like environment, earthquakes and famines are due to *Utu Niyama*. Our lives are also influenced by *Dhamma Niyama*.

Ignorance of Truth—impermanence, suffering and no-soul—breeds Kamma, says the Buddha. Good Kamma is only a means and not an end. Virtue, concentration and wisdom alone can carve away all Kamma—that is cessation of Suffering.

THE PRESERVATION OF WILD LIFE IN CEYLON

(Continued from page 4)

gives to the Tourist Industry of Ceylon. It has been said that this industry is sixth in order of contribution to the national income. It will be conceded by all who know anything of the Tourist Industry that the possibilities of seeing our wild life in the jungle is a strong attraction for many of the visitors to the Island. Such a facility would be an asset to the economy of the country and should not be despised.

There is also the great cultural value of wild life to our own people. "The sight of wild animals living in untouched surroundings" as Julian Huxley has said, "is profoundly stirring and indeed one of the valuable things in life." Apart from this aesthetic enjoyment, the study of wild life is of great educational and scientific value. It is our duty to hand down to future generations our fine heritage of fauna.

Some Rural Practices and Customs in Ceylon

S. V. O. SOMANADER

THERE is perhaps no nation in the world which has not its own peculiar superstitions, its own quaint customs and practices. Ever since man walked the face of the earth, there has been superstition.

Most of these superstitions are tied up with religion and with religious belief, and that is how the dictionary comes to define superstition as "an unreasonable awe or fear of something unknown or mysterious, especially in connection with religion, religious belief founded on fear or ignorance".

It has been said that what distinguishes primitive man from the animal is, broadly speaking, superstition. It is the starting point in the mind's awakening to a sense of the supernatural and of the hidden laws in nature.

One of the commonest superstitions, shared by the folk of all nations, including those considered civilized, is the dread of the evil eye. Certain individuals are feared to cause injury to desirable objects by their look, the effect being greater when the look is intentional. Even enlightened governments of the ancient world believed in the evil eye.

Fortunately, every human ill has a remedy and there are various prophylactic and curative measures against the evil eye. In Ceylon, a common form of protection for crops is by scarecrows which are said to avert the evil eye.

There is a number of other such devices which the Ceylon villager employs to avert disaster which arises out of superstition, and the accompanying photographs depict the quaint customs and practices which he follows in order that he might ensure happiness and prosperity for him and his family.



▲ Invoking gods for rain during drought

When prolonged dry weather prevails in the village, and folks suffer from various ailments, apart from water shortage, religious ceremonies are performed by the Hindus to invoke the Gods for rain, and also to solicit their favour to free the people from various diseases.

The picture shows devotees in procession, after "pujas" in the temple, with the suppliant carrying on his head, under a canopy, a "kumbam". It is composed of a brass vessel, with a coconut on top, besides flowers, and also the leaves of the mango and the margosa.



Kandyan Drummer



▲ Averting harm from poisonous snakes.

A special "pongal" sometimes takes place during Hindu Festivals for the appeasement of "Naga-Thambiran" (Cobra-God, or Snake God). Here, a woman devotee is preparing a "pongal" composed of rice, milk and brown sugar as a propitiatory offering to the cobra, regarded as tenanted the hole of the gnarled trunk of an old giant "Marutha" tree (seen alongside) standing on the temple grounds.

In Hindu mythology, the cobra, which has the frightening quality of erecting its hood, is invested with supernatural and mysterious powers owing to its death-dealing bites, and so is regarded with much awe and veneration; so much so, that some Hindus will never kill—or even hurt—this snake.

The "pongal", when ready, is poured into the opening, or placed in a "chatty" on an elevated place near the snake-hole, for the cobra to partake of the contents at leisure. Before the ceremony closes, "pujas" are performed, and incantations recited, amidst the burning of camphor.

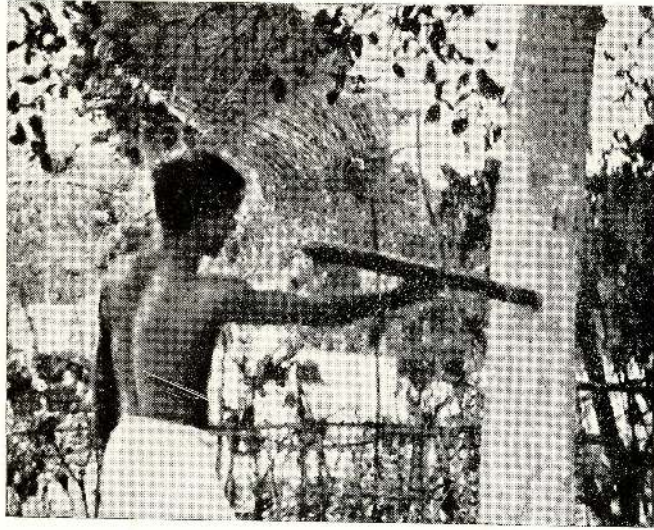


◀ Thwarting goblins from pilfering paddy.

The paddy-cultivator holds the belief that "poothams" (evil goblins or demons) spirit away, unseen by mortal eyes, his reaped grain from the threshing floor, and thus cause him loss. So he resorts to charms to thwart the evil spirits from doing secret, but serious, damage.

As salt water is detested by these goblins, he takes some water from the sea in an earthen pot, and sprinkles it on the stored grain to ward off their attack. A clump of margosa leaves dipped in the briny liquid serves as an additional precaution against their raids. Furthermore, he plants "esims" (charms written in Arabic letters on slips of paper), attaches them to sticks—they then resemble white flags, as seen in the picture—and sticks them on the scattered paddy-heap to prevent the stealthy havoc supposed to be wrought by these wicked monsters.

1*—J. N. R 7714—(1/60)



◀ Making sterile trees fertile during eclipse.

A peculiar practice is followed in some rural parts, to make barren trees bear, when an eclipse is on.

When fruit trees, like the mango, jak, guava, lime or orange, do not yield any fruit in the garden, the householder resorts to a strange device to correct them.

Choosing the period of the eclipse, he walks up to the sterile tree, and administers a few hits or lashes on the trunk with a strong and heavy rice-pounder, if not a long, thick pole, to induce the tree to fertility.

The common belief is that, after this aggressive treatment, the erring tree, being prodded on to a sense of shame, begins in due course to bear buds and yield fruit. It is also believed by the superstitious folks that, if the strokes are given by a person (usually a man) when he is in a state of complete nudity, the results will be even more beneficial.

The picture shows a scantily-clad villager hitting the trunk of a barren jak tree on a partial eclipse day, with a view to making it yield produce.

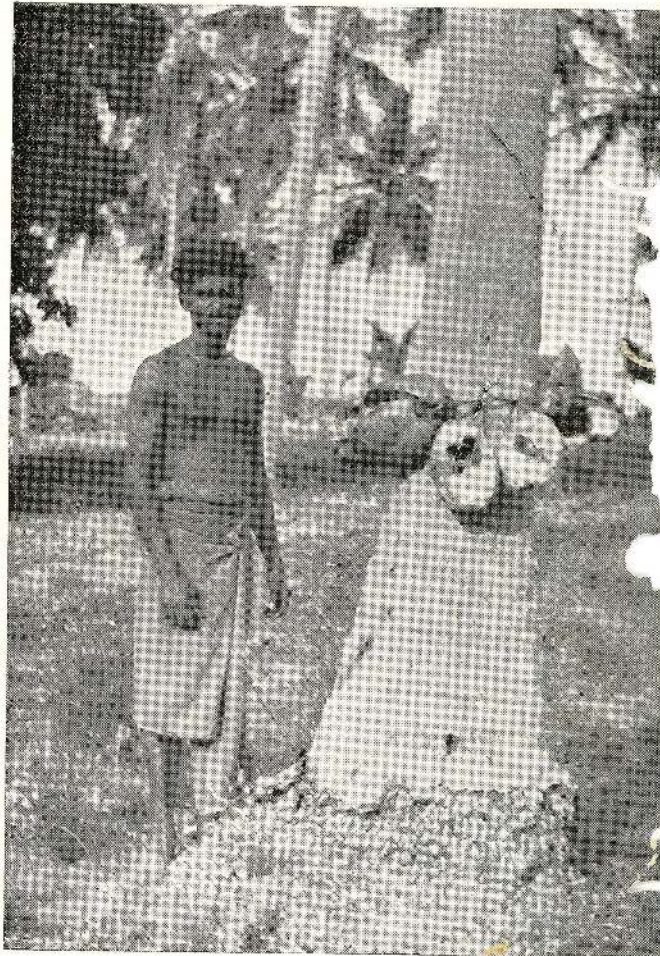
And, strange to state, at least some of the trees so "punished" have been found to bear fruit thereafter.

▶ Humiliating the delinquent coconut palm.

Rural folks believe that the coconut palm is endowed with life and sense, such as we humans possess; and so, they think it can be shamed into behaving better when its faults are exposed to public ridicule.

For this reason, when a palm bears "puchee" nuts—that is nuts with no kernel in them—the owner cuts a number of such empty nuts longitudinally into two, and strings them into a sort of garland, which he ties with coir-rope round its trunk. He believes that the delinquent palm, so treated sarcastically, will then be put on its mettle, and be roused to a sense of self-respect (following a feeling of shame), and will never again bear "puchee" nuts.

Curiously enough, he finds that, in some cases at least, the palm, which had been made to eat humble pie, never lets itself, or the owner, down again.





◀ Offering dowry to gipsy bridegroom.

It is a custom among the gipsy parents to offer a dowry to the bridegroom. The dowry, however, is a queer one, not being composed of cash (sometimes fabulous sums) and expensive jewellery and so forth, as Sinhalese and Tamils often offer. It consists usually of a cobra in a rattan basket (in order to make the snake perform and thus enable the groom to earn his livelihood on his own), a gourd-shaped flute to charm it with, a javelin for hunting such animals as the wild boar, deer and iguana in the sylvan glades, and a country mongrel (pariah dog) to assist in the chase.

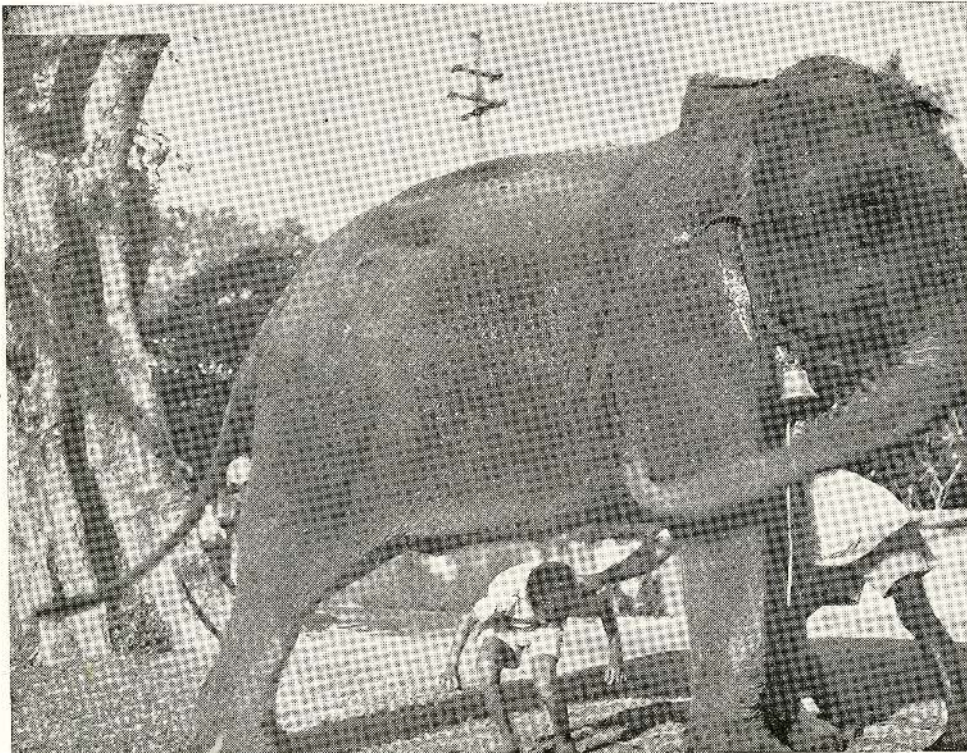
The picture shows a gipsy bride-elect, with the dowry she hopes to offer to her groom.

Of course, more well-to-do gipsy parents also give the bridegroom cattle and goats to ensure their daughter's happiness.

Would that our Sinhalese and Tamil dowry-hunting grooms take a leaf out of the gipsy's book !

▼ Acquiring an elephant's strength.

Rural folks, who would like to see their children grow healthy and strong, cherish the superstitious belief that, if the latter are made to walk under the body of an elephant, then go round the animal, and finally creep between its trunk and forelegs, they will develop, so to speak, an elephant's strength, possessing in later life (and also as they grow up) great powers of endurance, and freedom from various ailments which man is subject to. In this picture, a village urchin is being helped to walk under the belly of the huge beast from one side to the other. There is no doubt that, in rural psychology, such a method of "auto-suggestion" plays a great part in directing the "young hopeful's" upbringing, and ensuring the budding boy's strength, health and general well-being.





◀ Eating off the same plate for fellowship.

Rural Muslim folk, true to their religion, have a great sense of fellowship and brotherhood.

In this picture, at a Muslim marriage feast, no less than five Muslim guests are partaking of a wedding lunch—the meal being served together for various groups, each group sitting on the ground and eating off the same plate. The plate or tray is a very large one, on which are served delicious ghee-rice, (with chunks of mutton or beef hidden in the heap), highly-spiced curries, sambol and other savoury preparations.

The sumptuous meal is rounded off with the traditional “vaddy-lappang”, which takes the place of the pudding or dessert.

This happy custom obtains also at the “Kanth.” and other Muslim festivals.

▼ Proclaiming notices by beat of tom-tom.

From time immemorial, public announcements and Government proclamations are made known in the village by the beat of the tom-tom. To the rural folks announcements by the radio, or through the Press, are practically unknown.

With the antiquated drum hanging by a cord round his neck, the tom-tom beater, who is employed to give out the notice, goes about the streets and corners, making a big noise with the drum-stick he holds in one hand. In the other, he holds the notice, usually signed by a responsible officer.

As soon as the sound is heard in the highways and byways, interested inquirers, not excluding street urchins (as shown in the picture) want to know what it is all about. The beater patiently reads the notice aloud. It may be about a temple or cultivation meeting to be held, or matters relating to the sale of cattle or auctioning of articles, or the payment of irrigation rates or other taxes before a certain date, or about conserving water or observing sanitation especially with reference to infectious diseases, or information regarding the fixed prices of articles like rice, sugar and so forth, to prevent marketeers profiteering.



Propitiating the gods for safe journey. ▶

In this picture, a motor-car driver is seen dropping money into the crack of a margosa tree on the wayside along the Batticaloa-Trincomalee Road.

This is done as a favour to implore the gods to grant the travellers safety along a route which runs through forest country frequented by elephants and other wild animals. The money is dropped to invoke also the grace of the gods against possible accidents like car collisions, engine trouble, tyre punctures and the like, as one careers along the lonesome, and often dangerous, forest road.

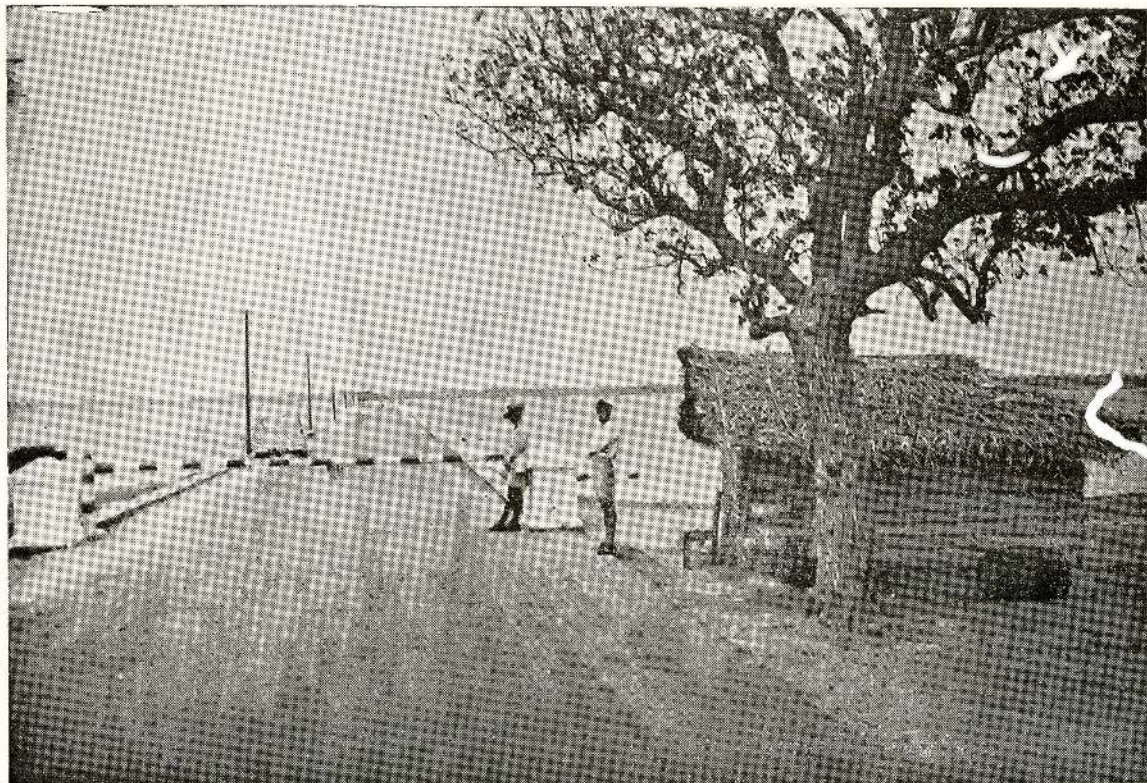
On the return journey, too, the car is halted at this spot, and a "collection" dropped as a thank-offering into the hole for divine mercies shown. Sometimes, this act is performed also at wayside shrines en route, where, in addition to dropping coins, camphor is burnt as incense, and coconuts are broken on a stone as a token of thanksgiving.



▼ Tying clothes round coconut palm for good luck.

Here is a village couple, at a coconut estate, cooking the first family meal in the open in a new earthen pot for the Hindu New Year—in order to start life under happy auspices. While the culinary activities are in progress, the new clothes to be worn on the auspicious day after the bath (and prior to the meal) are wound around the trunk of a well-bearing coconut palm. As this very useful palm, which supports, and even enriches, so many people, is regarded as a symbol of good luck, this practice of tying the clothes around its stem is followed in order to ensure prosperity for the forthcoming New Year.





Elephant Pass—the entrance to the Peninsula

A Foreigner's View of Jaffna

DR. W. ROBERT HOLMES

WHAT sort of place is Jaffna? It is a flat and often sandy area, the size of a country in England or Mid-Western U. S. A. (approximately 25 by 15 miles). In its 380 square miles over 400,000 people live. The highest point in the peninsula is 35 feet above sea level and no place is more than ten miles from the sea. The land itself is generally poor, though parts are fertile, and the industry of the people is such that a surprising number of them are maintained by their intensive cultivation of the inhospitable soil.

Because of his frugal ways and dour temperament, the Jaffna man is often called the

Scotsman of the East. The Jaffna man can also fairly be called "weatherbeaten," for the climate is not as kind to him as to the rest of Ceylon. He receives plenty of rain (50 inches) but nearly all of it falls between mid October and early January. We have witnessed 10, 12 and 13 inches falling in a single day. By June, Jaffna is burned down and the livestock, wandering over the parched fields and up and down the streets and roads are reduced to eating rope, banana stems and paper.

When at last blessed relief arrives with a paddy sowing rain in September one feels

that his life has just been saved. The temperature of Jaffna rarely reach 90° and this only in April and May. The windy summer months of June, July and August generally hover around 85° to 88°.

The most marked feature of the climate of Jaffna perhaps is that from mid-October to mid-March a firm but gradually declining breeze blows from the north-east. Then after a lull in late March until mid-May a furious wind sets in from the south-west and blows quite steadily until the shift of winds in October. Both of these winds are called monsoons. They both bring rain to southern Ceylon but only the north-east brings rain to Jaffna.

Villages thickly dot the country-side. Small, very small and large, their numbers run into hundreds. Between them and even within them are sunken fields which the

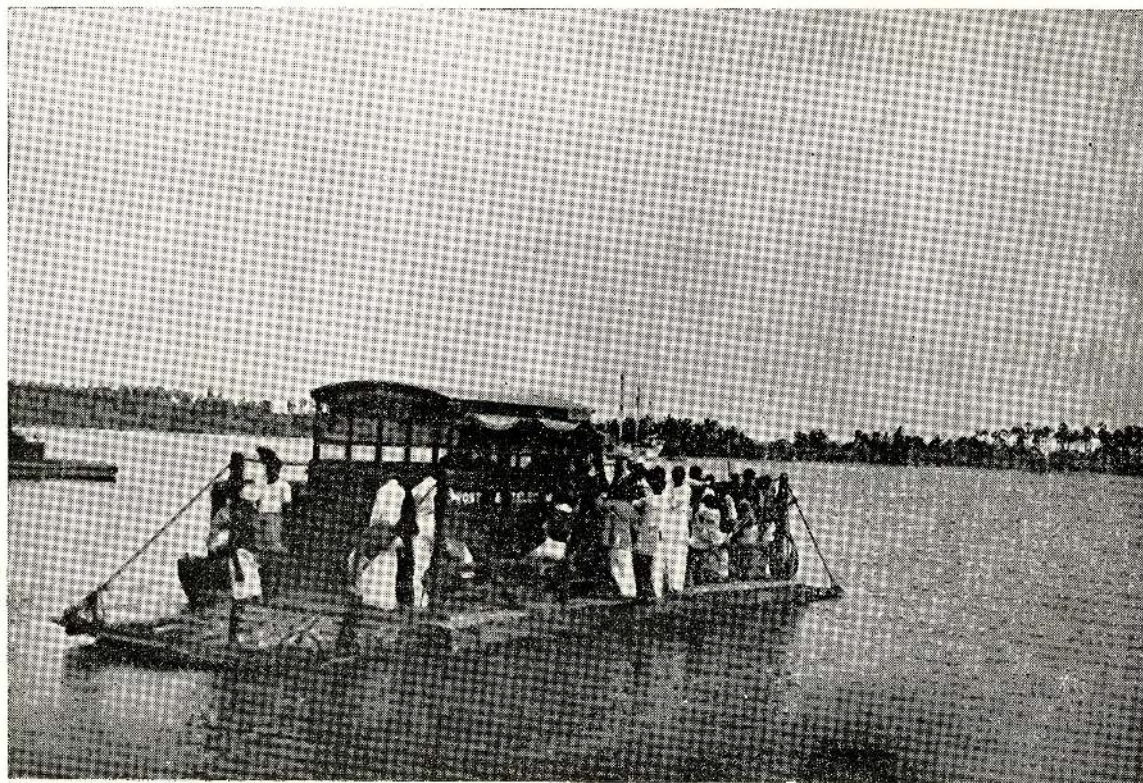
November rains flood annually for rice and all about the scenery is full of palm trees—the coconut and the palmyra. Here and there a natural pond, a “tank”, retains the waters of the rains after the fields have dried up.

The whole peninsula is underlaid by coral which outcrops in many places and is overlaid in other places by as much as twenty feet of soil. A vast number of wells, four to eight or ten feet wide, are down into this coral, normally to a depth of less than twenty feet. Black-top roads are numerous, testifying to the large population.

One of the most striking things about the Jaffna scene is its palm leaf fences. Every house or compound except the poorest, is surrounded by a fence five or six feet high and generally too thick to be seen through.

The Jaffna man loves his privacy and his fence enables him to relax about his house,

The ferry to the islands



garden and verandahs without feeling himself too much under the eye of his very curious neighbours. In addition the fence keeps out the thieves who would otherwise (and indeed do anyway) remove his poultry, coconuts, vegetables and fruit under cover of darkness. Because of the fences, landscaping is unknown.

The visitor to Jaffna is surprised to find that his road takes him through village after village and past house after house but he only glimpses the roof or the upper part of most residences. Only those houses built very near the front fence can easily be seen. One goes down a road solidly lined with fences which makes travel singularly dull but the motorist cannot afford to be distracted by the sight of palatial residences anyway as he has to devote his attention to keeping a narrow passage for his car cleared of livestock, other motorists, bicycles, and pedestrians. It will be a great day in Jaffna when the standard of living rises to the point where the country can afford side walks for pedestrians and permanent concrete roads can be laid.

The city of Jaffna is a collection of a large number of caste villages which have been merged by the growth of population. This partly accounts for Jaffna's town not looking like a city but rather like an overgrown village. Within it, residents can clearly call by name at least 35 villages, in an area of eight square miles.

Agriculture

OF Jaffna peninsula's 380 square miles perhaps one-quarter or one-fifth is not arable and perhaps another fifth is planted to paddy, that is, rice.* After the September rain, the rice is sown and in February-March, harvested. Everything is done by hand as the fields are very small, rarely measuring more than 100 or 150 feet on a side. Each is surrounded by a wall of earth a foot or two

high, called a bund. Tractor ploughing is coming in a bit, but slowly. The Japanese method of rice cultivation is little used because the level of water cannot be controlled.

After the rice harvest many fields lie fallow for nine months, but many others are sown to gingelly, a plant which produces a small seed from which oil is extracted by whose health-producing qualities the Jaffna man swears. The rest of the year the rice fields lie fallow except that occasional fields located near a well may be irrigated and produce vegetables. The Jaffna man is a model farmer with respect to crop rotation and fertilizing his fields and is careful to put enough vegetable matter each year into the soil to produce a crop. Green leaves or old palm leaves discarded from the fences are the commonest materials. Cow manure is carefully collected by hand even from the roads for the same purpose. During the dry season especially, flocks of cattle or sheep are driven about by herders over the withered fields. These flocks produce no milk but are simply fertilizer factories. People give their livestock to be thus "grazed" through the time when fodder is scarce and the herdsman is paid a little for the care and by selling the manure he collects. Field-owners will pay ten cents per head for the flock to spend the night on one of their fields.

Most Jaffna soil is a grey or yellowish loam but perhaps 25% of the peninsula is covered by red soil. Red soil is found in higher areas so that paddy cultivation is out of the question. Instead tobacco, chillies, small bananas, onions, other vegetables and dry grains like millet or sorghums are cultivated.

The palmyrah is considered to be the *katpaha virudsham* (a term meaning a tree that supplies the needs of man) of the people of the island because it provides timber and roofing material for

* The term "paddy" is used for all forms of rice whether as plant or grain until the grain is hulled. One buys paddy but eats rice.



The Buddhist Temple at Nagadipa

their houses : *Pannaddu* (a sweet) from the pulp of the fruits and *kilangu* (the roots coming out of the germinating nuts) is an addition to the diet of the peasants ; then the tender leaves are used as fodder for his animals and the decayed leaves as manure for his gardens ; toddy is an exhilarating drink and sweet toddy a suitable raw material for the production of palm sugar. *

Although there are 29 varieties of palm in Ceylon, only six or eight are found in Jaffna. Most abundant is the palmyrah palm which is virtually a weed (though forty to eighty feet tall), followed by the coconut and the arecanut palm. The arecanut is shaved fine like sawdust and mixed with betel leaf and lime to form the "chewing tobacco" of Ceylon.

A very common product of Jaffna is the small banana (3-5 inches in length) which is called a plantain. An estimated 200,000 bunches are grown each year. A plantain tree takes ten to twelve months to develop. Twenty-five per cent of the Jaffna plantains are sent to Colombo (260 miles away). The Plantain Sales Co-operative Society in Jaffna has a contract to supply all the government hospitals in the island.

Agriculture is connected with land prices but the land prices in Jaffna are little short of fantastic, showing that they are connected with other considerations than mere agriculture. They are driven sky-high by the passion of a conservative people to own land, a passion which is strengthened by the convenience of land as dowry, by the fact that the Jaffna man has not formed the habit of

* Dr. Luther Jayasingham, *The Urban Geography of Jaffna*, 175.

investing in the tea, rubber or coconut estates of the land and has few capital enterprises in Jaffna in which to invest and possibly also strengthened by the fact that the highest caste is farmer (so landowning has unusual prestige).

Jaffna Town

THE city of Jaffna, usually referred to as "Jaffna town" has a population of 80,000 and is the "Capital" of the peninsula as well as the Tamil capital of Ceylon. Despite its small size, Jaffna is the second city of Ceylon, exceeded in size only by Colombo. The city has hardly any manufacturing except for gold jewellery and cigar making. Many small places turn out leather goods and furniture or mill rice or bake bread. The importance of the city is in its nature

as capital—the functions which are performed through its educational facilities (six large boys' high schools of which none are co-educational), the great Civil Hospital, government offices, courts and temples. The major facilities for recreation include five cinemas, religious festivals, occasional dramas and athletic events. Jaffna town is also a port, and a small trade, brisk in tiles and tobacco, is carried on with South India.

A relic of imperialism excites the interest of visitors. The star-shaped Jaffna Fort, covering an area of 55 acres, commands the water approaches to the city. Built by the Portuguese in 1624, rebuilt by the Dutch in 1695, it fell to the British in 1795 and is still kept in a good state of repair. A prison, a church and an unused gallows are within its walls, along with two tennis courts and the homes of several government officials.

Festival season at the Nallur Temple, Jaffna



The peninsula's network of black-top (tar and cracked coral) roads converge on Jaffna. The Ceylon Government railway comes through Jaffna on its way to its terminal twelve miles away at the northern tip of the island. Near that terminal is the Jaffna airport where planes are available to Colombo; and to India (Madras and Trichinopoly).

Jaffna town has no centralized water system although the idea was first broached in 1926. Water comes from wells and water carts, and two wards have a partial pipe system. It is a major deficiency but so far leaders have been overawed by the large cost of a city-wide water supply.

Fuel is a great problem in an urban area where many people are poor and mineral fuels are absent. Electricity is just beginning to be used for cooking. The poor man's fuel is waste from palm trees and scraps of wood but in a city many are shut off from all such supplies. So they have to buy, in the most meagre quantities what people who are better off buy a bit more generously: firewood cut in the jungles a hundred miles south and distributed all over Jaffna through firewood depots. And each year kerosene stoves are purchased in greater numbers.

Society and Religion

FOREIGNERS are fascinated by the institution of caste, little realizing that it is all too similar to the class system in some countries and the colour bar in others. Deplorable as all these barriers are, there can be no doubt as to their strength and reality. Caste is a very important part of Ceylon society.

Wits have observed that in Jaffna every family is of a different caste, by which is meant that no two families will admit (especially in marriage arrangements) that they are exactly equal, but each claims to be slightly above its equals. Seriously,

however, though there are numerous sub-castes, Jaffna society contains about 25 main castes.

It must be emphasised that a man's caste, though socially important, especially in Jaffna, furnishes little guide as to his actual work. At least half the people are engaged in work different from what the caste occupation was originally and in an archaic caste like the palanquin-bearers, or one outmoded by machinery as the weavers, nobody is engaged in that work any longer. (A few hand-weavers still remain, however.) If a man enters an occupation different from his caste's traditional occupation, he rarely takes up the work of another caste but goes into a new or miscellaneous (daily wage) occupation. However, occasionally a lower caste man moves into a higher occupation. There is an aversion to doing the work of another caste, unless the work can be mechanized. Nobody except a dhoby would dream of doing laundry but if washing machines are introduced, others would then take up the job. Mechanization cancels caste.

One of the interesting and ameliorating facts about the caste system is that half the population is in the top caste (farmers). Of course, all the members of this caste are by no means farmers. Rather they compose the "respectable" (better educated) people of the society. Most school teachers, government servants, clerks, and students are of the farmer caste.

Noteworthy in our list is the fact that the famous Brahmin or priestly caste which would head any list of the caste of India—and does so in Ceylon too, is much less important than in India. Occasionally one sees a man riding a bicycle, with a thread across one shoulder and around his waist the invariable sign of a Brahmin. Sometimes he is a priest, sometimes a farmer.

It's a man's world in Jaffna. Even though she has the right to vote, the Jaffna lady "knows her place." When married couples

walk down the road, the wife customarily trails behind the husband two or three feet. This difference is not only emphasized by Hindu scriptures but it is the Tamil way of life and it is reinforced by the fact that the bride's parents pay dowry to the groom; therefore sons are economic assets and daughters economic liabilities. Jaffna families tend to pet their sons more than the daughters. Man's superiority is wittily proclaimed by the proverb: "If the hen crows, will the sun rise".

The language of Jaffna is Tamil, which nearly two million speak in Ceylon and 25 million speak in South India. It is not an easy language to speak because of its complexity and especially because of the great difference between the literary Tamil and the spoken language. Beginners are shocked to learn that it has 247 characters in the alphabet but since most of these follow a regular pattern it is not hard to learn to write the alphabet.

Sixty-one per cent. of the people of Jaffna town are Hindus. A small number of Buddhists (3 per cent.), Muslims (7 per cent.) and Christians (27 per cent.) make up most of the rest. The proportion of Christians in the whole peninsula however, is only 12 per cent. In Jaffna town there are eight mosques, one Buddhist temple, twelve Roman Catholic churches and eight Protestant churches.

In contrast to the organized religions of the West, Hinduism has an informality, a lack of hierarchy, a congregationalism which is at times refreshingly simple and at other times maddeningly disorganized. There is no united Hindu voice or view on any subject. There are no Hindu theological seminaries to point up opinion. It is even hard to get agreement as to what the essential teachings of Hinduism are. It has been said that a belief in the truth of all religions, karma and the reincarnation of the soul, the Vedas and the Agamas and the practice of vegetarianism and casteism are the essentials of Hinduism but one or another of the great

Hindu thinkers of modern times, such as Vivekananda or Radhakrishnan, has questioned these fundamentals. At any rate these five elements are commonly regarded as true and characteristic by most Hindus in Ceylon.

There are two outstanding temples (in Jaffna town), the Sivan Kovil in the Grand Bazaar and the Kandasamy Kovil in Nallur. The latter is the premier temple of the peninsula, although several others rival the Sivan Kovil. All draw large crowds in their respective festival times. The Nallur temple is more ancient and belongs to the period of the Tamil Kings although the actual temple building of that date was destroyed by the Portuguese and the present building is of the eighteenth century. Sivan Kovil was built during the Dutch period by a businessman and is now well endowed.

Beside the big temples, Hindu temples of a twenty or thirty foot dimension are thickly scattered over the countryside. These are neighbourhood, or family temples in which no priest is resident. Local residents come there and worship without a priest, particularly on Fridays. Even in a rural area these temples, large and small, may be as numerous as 30 in a circle of four miles diameter.

Hindus believe that all religions lead to God and are willing to take parts of other religions into their own. This tendency is well illustrated by the bus and lorry drivers who will have above their windscreens pictures of several Hindu gods and goddesses in addition to those of the Buddha, Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary.

Hindus put a value on vegetarianism, even though many of them have become willing to eat goat meat ("mutton"). Only the most liberal will eat beef.

Occupations

THE Portuguese introduced tobacco to Ceylon in the first decade of the seventeenth

century. Nowadays a good share of the tobacco cultivation of the island (half of the total production) is done in Jaffna. Besides that, the processing of tobacco is one of Jaffna's few industries.

The Tamil word for cigar is cheroot which means "to roll". The cheroot produced in Ceylon is of two varieties: wet and dry. The wet type means that the cigar is soaked in a brew palm beer, spices and the stalks and veins of the tobacco plant, which, of course, makes the cigar very strong. The cigars are made in simple factory rooms, ranging from 5 to 75 employees. Rings of four or five men or boys work together, the best craftsman beginning the rolling and passing it to the others. The production per worker is 500 or more per day and he can earn from Rs. 4 to 8 or even 10 per day, but the work is seasonal, varying with the market and supplies. It is estimated that Ceylon manufactures 250 - 400,000,000 cheroots per year and Jaffna's share is about one seventh of the total production. Cigarettes are not manufactured in Jaffna.

The poor man's cigarette is called a beedi. It is hardly half the size of an ordinary cigarette, medium brown colour, made of a cheap tobacco imported from India. Beedies are a favourite item for smuggling into Ceylon as their import is being restricted. They retail for one cent (Ceylon) as compared with four for the cheapest cigarette.

Jaffna has for generations produced salt-treated chewing tobacco which is exported to Travancore, South India. It is rarely chewed in Jaffna. The salt water treatment is given by quickly dipping the bundle of six or eight dozen dried tobacco leaves into a vat of sea water taken from the Jaffna lagoon. The tobacco chewers of Travancore evidently feel that the salinity of the lagoon is just right. After dipping, the bundles are stored for three weeks, dried, baled and shipped. This business, however, is about to be wiped out by an enormous duty and a

quota system put on this tobacco by the Government of India.

Another small but important industry is the manufacture of coir into rope. Coir comes from the fibre of the husk of the coconut after it has been rotted in sea water for six months. The fibre is then beaten, dried and spun into yarn from which either rope or coarse but attractively dyed mats are made. The quality of coir is appreciably coarser than the jute from which gunny bags are made.

Of all the occupations of Jaffna, perhaps the one which seems most picturesque to the tourist is the toddy tapper or tree-climber.

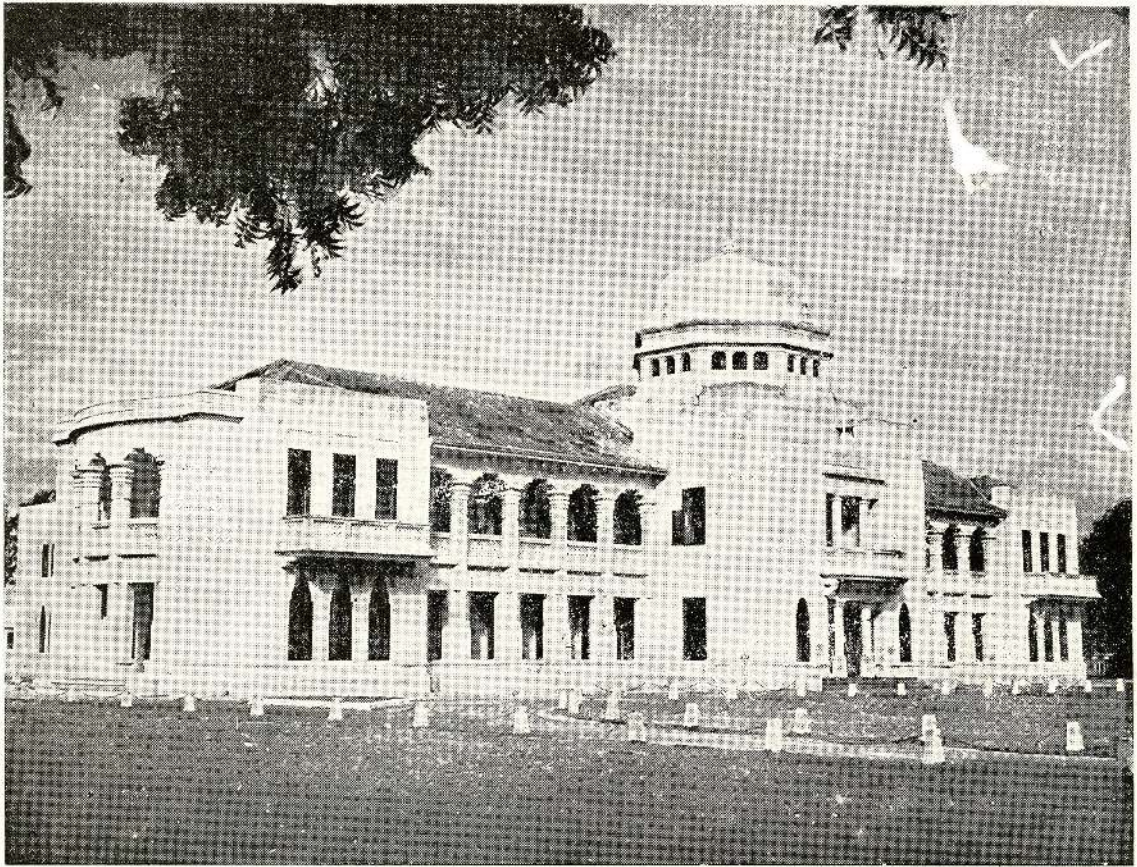
Toddy is the sap collected from the spathes of the palms during flowering time. The spathes are sliced off finely at their tips by very sharp knives and the oozing sap is collected in earthen vessels attached to them. The collection is made by men who climb the trees twice a day.

Unhappily, the work of a toddy-tapper is hazardous. Scarcely a day goes by without mention in a Ceylon newspaper of a tapper falling from a tree, and death is the usual result.

One of the great problems of the Jaffna man, which is likely to be solved in the next 15 years, is the laundry. The caste which had done this work traditionally is called dhoby. These workmen are the same as those who Mark Twain said were trying to crack a rock by beating it with his shirt!

Jaffna has one example of heavy industry in the modern industrial sense and it is the only such plant in the island. Ten years ago the government built a modern cement plant with a capacity of one hundred thousand tons per year, at Kankasanturai, which employs 600 men.

It is apparent that manufacturing is quite small in Jaffna peninsula and that great economic development along this line is



The Jaffna Town Hall

necessary if the people are to improve their standard of life.

Education

THE chief industry of Jaffna is education. English and American missionaries began it as early as 1816. Today every old Protestant church in Jaffna peninsula except one has a school beside it. And many of the Catholic churches also.

The British Government furthered this Christian educational enterprise from the 1830's on in order that plenty of youth educated in English, would be available for government service. In fact, their numbers were sufficient not only to man the services in Ceylon but also in Malaya and a few

went to Burma and India as well. At present about 10 per cent of the population of Ceylon speaks English, and a higher percentage in Jaffna does so. The population of Ceylon is about 82 per cent literate.

Today there are 53 high schools in Jaffna peninsula; 18 are private Hindu institutions, 18 are Protestant, 9 are government managed, 7 are Catholic and one is run by the Ramakrishna Mission.

Food

THE "meat and potatoes" of Jaffna is rice and curry, but the analogy is poor as so many Jaffnese are vegetarians as good Hindus are expected to be. The flavour of chillies and chilli pepper is so strong in most

curries that few foreigners can take much of them at first. But as one learns fire prevention devices in tackling curries (best: eat a banana along with the curry) one generally develops a fearful passion for the food so that a whiff of flavour from someone's kitchen will quite literally make one's mouth water.

One of the most deplorable facts about food in Jaffna is that rice is the basic food, for rice is a very difficult grain to make ready for eating. Fortunately, machinery (especially in Jaffna town) is being relied on more and more to hull the paddy, grind it into flour and grind chillies into pepper.

Jaffna town consumes about 10,000 pounds of bread per day, made from wheat flour. People prefer the taste of rice flour but because of its cheapness and convenience bread seems to have established itself in the diet of the Jaffna man.

Houses

IN general there are three types of houses. The most expensive are of concrete, crowned with a tile roof. Next are mud walled houses, usually with a palm leaf roof, which is cooler than tile but must be renewed biennially. Poorest are huts made of palm leaves, often in the form of cadjan. Cadjan is a panel of woven coconut palm leaf made as follows: The coconut leaf is split down the middle (so each leaf produces two cadjans). Then each half is split along its natural notch so that it looks tattered. These streamers are then braided together and end up as a stiff panel, good for a life of two years, and of the size of 36 to 40 inches by 10 or 12 inches. These cadjans sell for three American cents (15 cents Ceylon) per pair and are an important part of the housing of the poor. They are also commonly used for fencing, partitions and shields and covers of all sorts.

Health

THE state of one's health is a very serious subject among Tamil people. The standard greeting, How is your health? is significant.

The Jaffna Civil Hospital, founded in 1840, has a staff now of over 25 doctors, 300 nurses and attendants and 400 beds. It treats more than a thousand patients per day.

Native medical treatment, called ayurveda, is equally popular in Jaffna. Using no surgery but only herbs and intuition plus the experience taught them by their fathers, some ayurvedic physicians have developed a great reputation and demonstrate undoubted skill but in general, native medicine suffers from quacks and the failure to establish professional standards and safeguards.

A hundred years ago epidemics were common and life expectancy was not very great. Then cholera could wipe out a whole family in a single night. But now a well-distributed system of socialized medicine has reduced the death rate so dramatically, while the birth rate has scarcely been controlled at all with the result that Ceylon in recent years has topped the world in lists of rates of population increase.

Thanks to extensive spraying with DDT, malaria has been nearly destroyed and at the same time leprosy is fast disappearing and tuberculosis being checked. The practice of having every new arrival in the island report to a doctor for the first two weeks of his stay has almost eliminated cholera and smallpox and has entirely stopped plague, though all three are great killers in nearby India.

Marriage Customs

VISITORS from the West are always dismayed to learn that marriages in Ceylon are usually arranged. Was it a love marriage or arranged? is a question asked in Ceylon sometimes, and the answer is usually: "arranged". As wisdom would cause one to suspect, however, circumstances alter even the case of arranged marriages and this custom has much to commend it in the society of Ceylon.

The author once asked a college senior girl if she liked the idea of her father arranging

her marriage. She replied quietly, "I don't think my father would do anything to make me unhappy". Her marriage was a very happy one indeed.

The Jaffna view, shared by the rest of Ceylon and India, and shared by young and old alike is, "Who is better equipped by knowledge and experience to select a marriage partner—a married person or an unmarried one?"

One Jaffna leader justified the ways of his people in this matter by saying, "In the West you fall in love and get married; here we get married and fall in love".

It is usually true that the young person is consulted to some extent and is given a choice among several possible mates. But there are

abuses in every system, and when parents decide that their child must marry someone whom the child loathes or after their child has come to love someone else, great crimes are committed. Balancing this against the divorce rate in the West, however, causes one to feel that the system of marriage in Ceylon has little to apologize for. Divorce is very rare in Ceylon (though increasing rapidly in Colombo) and marriage arrangements are getting a little freer.

One takes a more tolerant view of arranged marriages in Jaffna when he realizes that a marriage in Ceylon and India is very much more a marriage of two families than of two individuals. So it is but fair that the families should be consulted and play a larger part than in the individualist society of the West.



The exhibits shown at the UNESCO Science Exhibition on "Energy and its Transformation" were handed over to Ceylon by Mr. P. C. Bandyopadhyay, Director of the Exhibition, on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO. Mr. H. Jinadasa, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education, received the exhibits on behalf of the Government of Ceylon.

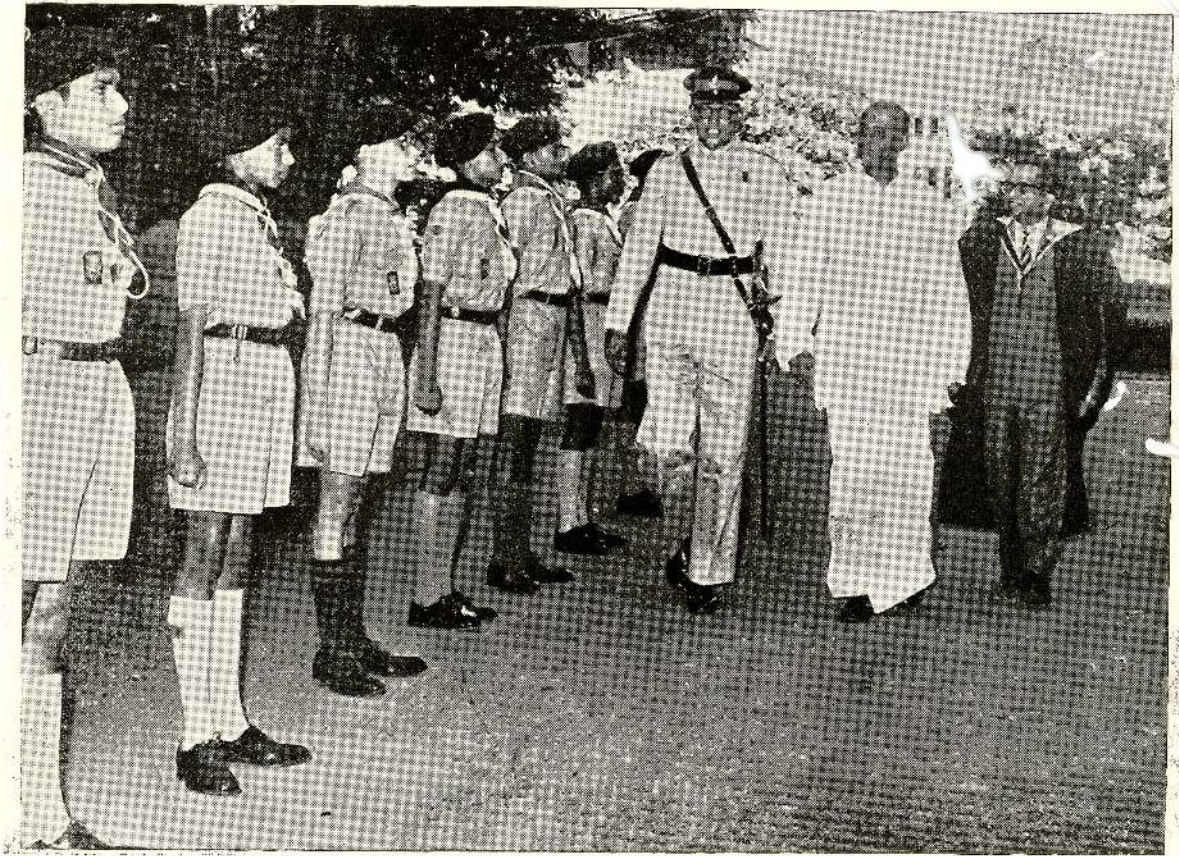
Foreign Affairs

THE Sessions of the International Rice Commission were inaugurated on December 14, by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon, Sir Nicholas Attygalle, at the Hilda Obeysekera Hall, Peradeniya.

In the course of his speech Sir Nicholas said: "Ceylon proposes exploiting to the full both methods of increasing rice production, viz., the expansion of acreage and the raising of acre yields. The area of new lands asweddumized and provided with irrigation water over the period 1959-68, will be 270,000 acres. Moreover, it is envisaged that by repairs and improvements

to existing irrigation works double cropping would be possible on a further extent of 250,000 acres that at present carries only one crop a year.

"The total sown acreage would then rise in 1968 to 1.74 million and the net harvested acreage would be approximately 1.60 million. Government has set itself the modest target of 48 bushels of paddy per acre in 1968. If this yield is attained Ceylon's output of paddy in 1968 would be 77 million bushels, and would meet 75 per cent. of the consumption requirements of 103 million bushels.



The Premier inspects a Guard-of-honour at Royal College, Colombo, on the day of the prize-giving. On his left is Mr. Dudley de Silva, Principal.

"I may, at this stage examine the present position in regard to rice yields in Ceylon, and the potentialities for further yields increase in the future. Yields of rice in 1958, both in the North East and South West Monsoon season, were the highest ever recorded in Ceylon. The Island average for the North East Monsoon season, 1957-1958, was nearly 35 bushels of paddy per acre, the highest yield previously recorded for that season was under 33 bushels an acre.

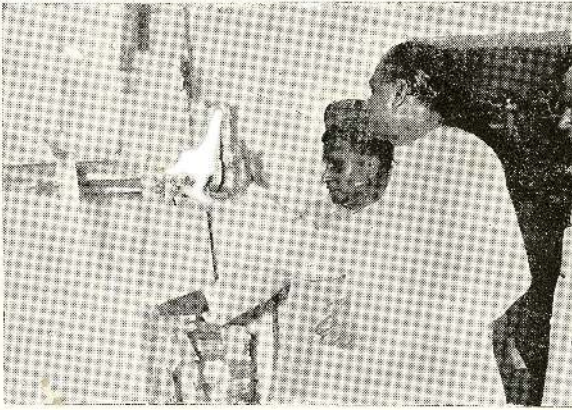
"In the South West Monsoon season last year, the Island's average yield reached the unprecedented figure of 35.5 bushels per acre; the highest acre yield ever obtained before in that season was 33.5. The yield obtained in individual districts were

phenomenal. The aggregate yield for the two seasons in 1958 averaged over 120 bushels an acre. The Badulla and Nuwara Eliya Districts recorded average yields of over 61 and 66 bushels per acre respectively in the North East Monsoon Season 1958."

Dr. W. H. Cummings, Regional Representative of the Director-General of the F. A. O., was also one of the speakers. The Director of Agriculture, Dr. M. F. Chandraratne, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Working Party on Rice Production and Protection.

U. S. Commerce Secretary in Ceylon

THE U. S. Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Frederick H. Mueller, arrived in Ceylon on



The Prime Minister, Mr. W. Dahanayake, looking round the new premises of the Co-operative Wholesale Establishment in Prince Street, Colombo, after he had opened the new store.

December 14. He was met at the airport by the then Minister of Food, Commerce and Trade, Mr. R. G. Senanayake, and the U. S. Ambassador in Ceylon, Mr. Bernard A. Gufler.

Making a brief statement at the airport, he said: "I believe it has been generally accepted that close and frequent contact between peoples everywhere serves to advance the cause of freedom, progress and understanding. For my part, I firmly believe that one of the most important kinds of such contacts are those which involve mutually profitable transactions among private businessmen.

"It is my earnest hope that there will be an increasing number of such transactions

Mr. W. Dahanayake, Prime Minister, inspecting a model of the New Army Buildings at Panagoda, near Colombo



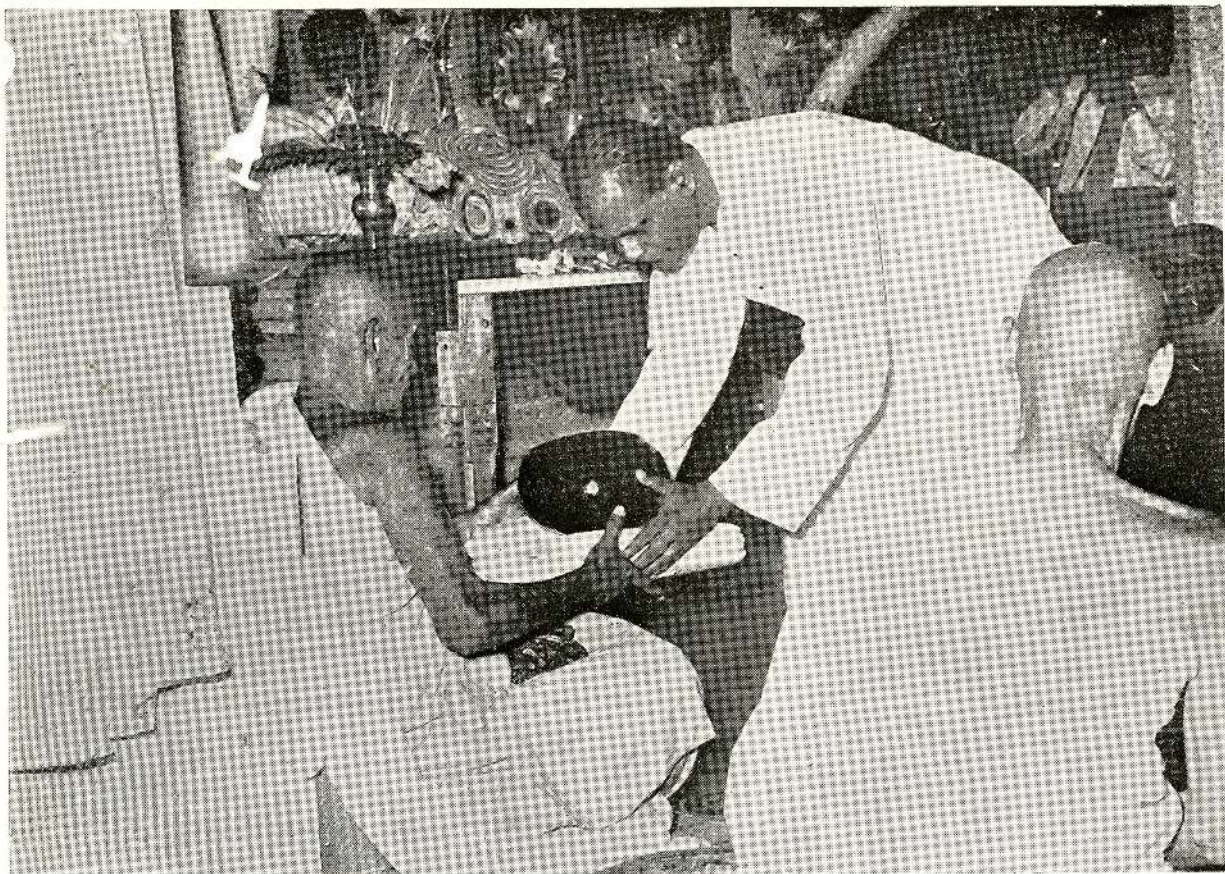


The Prime Minister, Mr. W. Dahanayake, at the opening of the Army Buildings at Panagoda, near Colombo

between Ceylonese and American businessmen resulting in a growing volume of two-way trade between our nations.

"During my brief stay I will have the privilege of meeting and discussing matters for mutual interest with Prime Minister Dahanayake as well as with important government officials and business leaders."

Speaking at a Press Conference subsequently, Mr. Mueller said he was here on a goodwill mission to express to Ceylon the good wishes of the U. S. Administration, to study Ceylon's economic development programmes and to pledge their assistance. He concluded: "No matter what the outcome of the forthcoming elections, both parties in



The Prime Minister at the Asgiriya Temple, in Kandy

the U. S. have to continue to support and assist Ceylon and South East Asian countries, if we can help assist in the development of their economics and raise standards of living."

Trade and Payments Agreement with Poland

A Trade Agreement and a Payments Agreement between Ceylon and the People's Republic of Poland were signed on 27th November, 1959. A number of letters was also exchanged in regard to various topics.

The Trade Agreement, in addition to extending the grant of most-favoured-nation-treatment to each other included a list of goods to be exchanged between the two countries. Poland also agreed to recognise the Ceylonisation Policy in trade

and to encourage the appointment of Ceylonese Agents for Polish goods.

Both Agreements will come into force on 1st January, 1960, and continue indefinitely unless either party decides otherwise. The existing Agreement is for period of one year at a time which requires annual re-negotiation of the Agreement.

Among the letters exchanged was one in regard to Technical and Scientific Co-operation and covers such provisions as exchange of scientific documentation, provision of experts, training facilities for Technicians and Engineers and grants of Scholarships.

Another letter expressed Poland's readiness to supply Ceylon a range of capital goods to the various Ministries of the Gov-

ernment and to private trade. An important concession made by Poland was to agree to extend credit facilities to the Ceylonese private sector which was prepared to buy Polish capital goods.

The new Agreement supersedes the existing Trade and Payment Agreement, which has been in force since 1956.

Afro-Asian Legal Consultative Committee to meet here

THE third annual conference of the Asian African Legal Consultative Committee is due to be held in Ceylon from January 20th to February 3rd. This conference which was originally to have been held from 5th to 19th November last year was postponed because of the death of the late Prime Minister.

Last year the Committee met in Cairo and the Ceylon delegation consisted of the Hon. H. H. Basnayake, Chief Justice (Leader); Mr. H. W. Thambyah, Q.C., Commissioner of Assize; Mr. G. P. A. Silva, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Justice, and Mr. R. S. Wanasundera, Crown Counsel. The President of the Cour de Cassation, United Arab Republic, Mr. Abdel Aziz Mohamed, who was the leader of the U. A. R. delegation, was elected President of that conference, following the practice of electing as President the leader of the delegation of the country, where the meeting is held.

The Committee, which was originally called the Asian Legal Consultative Committee, was established with seven original members consisting of representatives of

The Premier at the Malwatte Temple





The Commissioner of Prisons, Mr. V. N. Pillai, speaking in Colombo at the Annual General Meeting of the Prisoners' Welfare Association

Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan and Syria. The United Arab Republic became a member upon the formation of the Republic with the merger of Syria and Egypt. Sudan was admitted to participate in the Committee during its second session held in Cairo last year.

It has been announced that Pakistan has now joined the Committee, bringing its membership to nine. The legal expert nominated by the Government of Pakistan to serve on this Committee is the Attorney-General of Pakistan. The Deputy High Commissioner for Pakistan in India will act as the Liaison Officer of his Government with the Secretariat of the Committee.

The Committee has been set up essentially for the purpose of examining questions that

are under consideration by the International Law Commission, and to arrange for its views to be placed before the Commission. It has also to consider legal problems that may be referred to it by any of the participating countries and to make such recommendations to Governments, as may be determined suitable. Another function of the Committee is to exchange views and information on legal matters of common concern.

New High Commissioner for Pakistan

THE Government of Ceylon has, with the concurrence of the Government of Pakistan, decided to appoint Major-General A. M. Muttukumaru, O.B.E., as High Commissioner for Ceylon in Pakistan in succession to His Excellency Mr. M. M. Maharroof.

High Commissioner for Ghana

THE Government of Ceylon has, with the concurrence of the Government of Ghana, decided to appoint Mr. A. I. H. A. Wahab Hadjar as Ceylon's first High Commissioner in Accra.

Soviet-Ceylon Friendship Society

A meeting to inaugurate the USSR-Ceylon Friendship Society in USSR was held on 30th November in the House of Friendship. There was a very large and representative gathering present. Mrs. T. M. Zueva, Deputy Chairman of the Praesidium of the Union of the Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Exchange, who presided over the meeting, expressed the desire of the Soviet people to establish that Society for the purpose of strengthening and increasing the many contacts that now exist between USSR and Ceylon. Mrs. Zueva reviewed the friendly contacts that had existed between the two countries and said that the establishment of this Society would greatly help mutual understanding between the peoples of USSR and Ceylon. She said that the Organizers had received a large number of messages of goodwill from all parts of the Soviet Union and the decision to establish the Friendship Society had been received with great enthusiasm and keenness.

Among those accommodated on the platform were: Mrs. Zueva, H. E. the Ambassador of Ceylon in USSR, H. E. the Ambassador for USSR in Ceylon, Y. E. Kosyakina, Chief of the South-East Asia Department of the Union of Friendship Societies; V. I. Likhachev, Chief of the S. E. Asia Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Prof. Y. N. Roerich, Chief of the Department of the Oriental Studies Institute of the Academy of Sciences, Prof. N. N. Suskine of the Moscow State University, P. P. Kabanov, a member of the Collegium of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR; V. I. Gogyaev, Deputy Chairman of the Moscow Union of Artists, Prof. A. I. Petrov, a member of the Collegium

of the State Scientific and Economic Council of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

The inaugural address was delivered by Mr. V. Y. Aboltin, Ph.D. (Econ.), Deputy Director of the Institute of World Economics and International Relations of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Mr. Aboltin said that Ceylon and the Ceylonese people were not strangers to the people of the Soviet Union. For a long period of time the Soviet people had been interested in the ancient, rich and original culture of Ceylon. In recent years contacts between Ceylon and USSR had been growing steadily. Many delegations from Ceylon had visited the USSR and several Russian delegations had been in Ceylon. The Russian people and the people of Ceylon have had the opportunity of seeing various exhibitions of each other's culture and achievements and with the signing of the economic and cultural agreements between the two countries, contact had become even closer.

He expressed his strong conviction that the setting up of the USSR-Ceylon Friendship Society in the USSR would help to multiply and strengthen these contacts, and lead to mutual understanding and friendship between the two countries. Several other speakers, representing Soviet youth, cultural life, workers of various parts of the Soviet Union and delegations that had visited Ceylon, spoke on the friendliness and hospitality of Ceylon and the Ceylonese people towards the Soviet people. They stressed the fact that the Ceylonese people, together with the people of Russia, seek an end to the armaments race and looked forward to the realization of a genuine and lasting peace. The establishment of the USSR-Ceylon Friendship Society was characterized as evidence of the growing togetherness between USSR and Ceylon.

H. E. the Ambassador for Ceylon in USSR delivered an address welcoming the setting up of the Friendship Society and pledged all co-operation and help in its work.

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