EDUCATION AND THE INDIAN PLANTATION WORKER IN SRI LANKA

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by

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Contents

Foreword

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The author of this study was at one time a teacher in schools in the plantation areas and later an Assistant Commissioner of Labour. As a teacher Mr Gnanamuttu is concerned with the kind and quality of the education imparted to the children in estate schools. As an officer in charge of labour he is concerned with the larger problems of social welfare and national well-being. The result is a one-man research study of a much neglected field. The work is well documented, in fact too weighted with statistics and ordinances. The author prefers to let the documents speak for themselves and to unfold a story of failure and frustration. We would have gained much had he with his experience and understanding also given us some fresh insights and guide-lines for the future. There is room now for others to use his study as a reliable source book. Behind these pages is a grave problem of the waste of human resources and the neglect of human rights.

For this labour of love in the best traditions of the public service we are grateful. The author himself may well embark on a second study based on the material he has so carefully gathered from the history of the plantations. New faces, other minds are now in charge, and they need a new outlook. I am glad to write this foreword for a friend and fellow teacher on what has been a subject of common interest and concern to us.

✠ **Cyril L. Abenaike,**
Bishop of Colombo

Acknowledgements

I was asked by the Committee foı Social Study and Action of the Anglican Diocese of Colombo to write a pamphlet on the education of the children of plantation workers of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. It is not easy to confine oneself to a pamphlet on a subject on which there is so much to be said. The present monograph is the result.

I have to thank the Diocesan authorities who sponsored a visit to the Hatton-Dickoya District, Fr Cornelius Samuel, who accompanied me on this trip and helped me to interview persons I should not otherwise have been able to meet, and Fr Augustine Philips, whose functions as a host extended to those of providing the transport to the most inaccessible places.

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For the type of information that cannot be obtained from books or documents I am indebted to Mr C. V. Velupillai of the National Workers' Union and to Mr M. Jayaram of the Democratic Workers' Congress and to numerous other persons I met on my visits to the hill country—teachers, employers, trade union officials and above all the workers, in whose service this study was attempted.

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in Education, University of Sri Lanka, to whom I owe some of the suggestions contained in the last chapter, Mr S. J. Jegasothy, General Secretary of the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka, who finally edited the manuscript, and others who helped me in numerous ways, but would prefer to remain anonymous. I thank the Rt Reverend Cyril L. Abeynaike, Bishop of Colombo, for having so kindly written the foreword.

And finally, it is my pleasure to thank Christian Aid (British Council of Churches) for their generous aid, but for which this monograph might not have seen the light of day.

Introduction

The Indian plantation worker was introduced into this country by the British coffee planter nearly 150 years ago. His descendants, numbering over a million today, are the backbone of our tea industry, which provides a substantial portion of our national income and is the major source of our foreign exchange earnings.

Our concern in this study is with the facilities that have been provided for the education of the children belonging to this sector of our population. It will be necessary for our purpose to make a brief survey of the work of the various agencies, religious and secular, private and governmental, that have interested themselves in the education of these children, assess the achievements and failures of these agencies, analyse the causes and suggest remedies. This presentation will be made against the historical background of the estate Tamil community, their living and working conditions and their yet very uncertain political status—all of which have influenced not only their thinking and their actions, but also the attitudes of others towards them.

When H. W. Cave said in 1900 that 'a little too much education and unaccustomed luxury would unfit these children for their calling or indeed for anything', he was reflecting the prevalent attitude towards 'cooly education' and towards any type of social amelioration that would have upset the social structure the employer was determined to maintain. Our own 'progressiveness' appears to have been of little effect. In a country that boasts of a very high rate of literacy second only to that of Japan among Eastern countries, 38.9 per cent of the estate population have had no schooling, as against 11.4 and 15.8 respectively of those in the urban and rural sectors. Nearly 20 per cent of the children attending estate schools leave after the first year. The most illiterate of any group in this country are the women on our estates, with 58.8 per cent of them not having been to a school.

The employer has found it prudent to keep the plantation worker educationally backward, housed in barrack-type dwellings and segregated from the main stream of life outside the confines of his estate. The pattern is not very different in other countries or states which have depended on immigrants to meet their demand for a continuous supply of cheap labour. It is significant that in Kerala, where plantation labour is not only indigenous but has also a literacy rate of 87 per cent, such labour has been in the forefront of the movement for land reform.

A reason for the slow social mobility on estates is the caste structure, with the members of the supervisory staff, teachers and priests being generally of a higher caste than the majority of the workers. However, education has to some extent helped to overcome social disabilities. Denominational schools, chiefly those run by religious bodies to whom caste has no ritual significance, can claim a fair share of the credit for such achievements.

In Sri Lanka the 'estate school' has not changed very much from what it was nearly a century ago, and no serious attempts have been made by the State to enforce even the minimum requirements that the law prescribes. The children attending these schools have not been brought within the scope of the reforms that have been devised from time to time for the benefit of the other children in the country. What is, perhaps, not sufficiently known to many is that even the facilities for education that were available to these children some years ago have of late been reduced or completely removed. It is also a matter for regret that training in vocational skills is denied to a sector that is likely to take to such training more readily than any other.

We are concerned in this study with the problems not only of those who are citizens of this country, but also of those who, while waiting to be admitted as citizens of either Sri Lanka or India, will for several years not be legally entitled to any of the rights guaranteed by either country to her citizens. In fact, this category of persons will need our special care and attention during this period of suspense and anxiety, so that they may be equipped, when given the opportunity, to integrate themselves without difficulty with the community around them and to make a meaningful contribution to the life of the country; or if called upou to do so, face the challenges of a totally unfamiliar environment, sometimes at an age when adjustments are not easy.

The word 'Indian' will, for the sake of convenience, be used in this monograph to describe all persons of recent Indian origin, though it is claimed that over 80 per cent of them were born in this country and know no other.

Owing to a variety of reasons there has been an unavoidable time lag between the completion of the monograph and its final appearance in print. This has necessitated the making of a few alterations relating to facts either in the text or in the notes. There have also been of late definite pronouncements by persons speaking on behalf of the Government of its intention to take over all estate schools and integrate them with the national system of education. This will be discussed at an appropriate place at the end of this study.

G. A. Gnanamuttu

December 1976

1

Historical background

The beginnings of the plantation enterprise

The Kandyan Kingdom of Sri Lanka became a British dependency in 1815. This gave the British, who had already occupied the Maritime Provinces in 1796, not only control of the entire Island, but also direct access to sources of revenue that had not been available to the Portuguese or to the Dutch except by treaty with the King of Kandy. The central highlands, which were now British territory, were admirably suited to coffee. This had already been grown with some success by the inhabitants of the area, and it was to be the lot of a British Governor to pioneer an industry that was to have such far-reaching effects on the fortunes of the country in the years to come.

When Barnes[1] assumed office as Governor in 1824 the State till enjoyed the monopoly over cinnamon, but Europeans had already been allowed to acquire land outside Colombo,[2] and civil servants, though forbidden to engage in trade, had been permitted to invest in agriculture to compensate for the 'low' salaries they were being paid.[3] Barnes opened up a number of state plantations, using labour exacted in accordance with *rajakariya*,[4] and he also assisted the private investor by selling him what was described as crown land at the nominal price of 5 shillings an acre, and by exempting from their obligations under *rajakariya* those who were prepared to work in private plantations. He also introduced the necessary fiscal measures to encourage the cultivation and sale of the produce.[5] The roads he built or improved helped to reduce the cost of transport.

The first employers

The Colebrooke Reforms did away with both government monopolies and *rajakariya*, further reduced the salaries of civil servants and abolished their pensions.[6] The cultivation of coffee, therefore, presented itself to them and to others as the easiest means of augmenting their income. Local cinnamon could not compete with the product from Java; changes in drinking habits in Europe created a phenomenal demand for coffee; and the abolition of slavery in the West Indies eliminated a competitor in the field of coffee cultivation. Government sold or abandoned its plantations, but continued to sell land at nominal prices to whoever was willing to speculate, expecting to obtain its main income from export duties. It is said that the Governor and the Council, the military, the judges, the clergy and half the members of the civil service became purchasers of crown land; and among foreigners who were drawn to the country by the prospect of easy gain were 'not a few whose habits and conduct tended to diminish the respect in which the English character had previously been held'.[7] Between 1833 and 1843 alone a total of 258,072 acres of land was purchased by would-be coffee planters, most of this from the Crown.[8]

Land

The land thus alienated was largely forest and *chena*[9] situated on the upper slopes of the valleys in which the peasants themselves lived. Such land was used for grazing, for hunting, as a source of fuel and timber, and for the growing of subsidiary foodstuffs. It belonged to no one, but was used in common according to custom and with the implied consent of the Soveriegn. The British Governors thought, perhaps, that as representatives of the reigning Monarch they had the right to dispose of such land as they wished, and sought to give their actions legal sanction by enacting the Crown Lands (Encroachment) Ordinance No. 12 of 1840, by which all land to which the user could not prove legal title was deemed to be the property of the Crown.[10] The story of these sales is not always edifying, but there is also evidence that when prices increased many who owned land sold it to local and foreign capitalists, not realising at that time the gravity of their action.[11]

Labour

Labour was now required to work the plantations. The initial clearing of the forest was done by Sinhalese village labour, which was employed on such casual work as was offered to it at reasonable wages. Masons and carpenters from the low country were employed in building houses for the planters and in making their furniture; the transport of the coffee seed to the ports was done by contractors from the southern coastal towns; but labour from these areas which sought employment on the day-to-day work of the coffee estates did not remain for more than a season. What was required for the successful working of a coffee plantation was an active labour force that would work regularly during certain months of the year. This the Kandyan peasant would not provide; for he still had his own paddy fields, his cattle and his fruit trees, the managing of which took most of his time and attention, and he had no need to exchange such a life for the long hours of work, the low wages and the cramped conditions of life on an estate. There was the additional fact that, used as he was to the traditions of a feudal society, he would have felt that manual labour for hire involved a loss of 'caste'.[12] Even if these difficulties could have been overcome, the domestic supply would not have met the demands of a growing enterprise. Attempts appear to have been made at this time to recruit African and Chinese labour, but the project was abandoned as being 'unsuitable and expensive'.[13] The planter had, therefore, to look for his labour supply to the poverty-stricken and famine-prone districts of South India, where a landless peasantry dependent for its very existence on the bounty of the landlord and the vagaries of the elements was prepared to undergo any hardship in order to keep body and soul together.[14] It was from this source that labour was obtained for the building of the roads and the railways and for the development of the ports that went with the growth of the plantation industry.

The first recruits came from the Tamil-speaking districts of Tinnevely, Madura and Tanjore, and were mostly from the depressed classes.[15] They walked all the way from their villages in India to Rameshwaram, and again from Talaimannar or Arippu to their estates among the central hills of Sri Lanka. Hundreds perished on their way through the jungles, and the recruiters of the day were cynical enough to make allowance for 'wastage'.[16] Those who survived the march arrived on the estates exhausted and unfit for hard work, often relieved *en route* of whatever money or goods they carried.

Conditions on estates

On the estates they suffered all the evils of unrestricted private enterprise and the fate of displaced labour anywhere. The planter's aim was to make the maximum profit within the shortest possible time and with the least expense to himself. Labourers were housed in insanitary huts, sometimes ten of them huddled together in a room 10 ft by 12 ft. Wages were low and not regularly paid, and protests were 'silenced by blows and personal restraint'.[17] Little or no notice was taken of the sick; they were sometimes driven off to die on the roadside. Those who died were buried without inquest or inquiry.[18] It was found necessary in 1862 to enact an 'Ordinance to ascertain the proportion of Mortality amongst the Natives of India employed in Agricultural and other Labour in Ceylon.' It is reported that between 1841 and 1849 about 70,000 or 25 per cent of the immigrants died of various causes.[19]

In spite of all this they came in their thousands when conditions at home, such as a bad harvest, drove them hither, but stayed away — much to the consternation of the planter — when the harvest was good or employment could be found on such public works as the Government of India initiated from time to time. Besides, coffee was a seasonal crop and labour was required only during the picking season, which was between the months of October and December. The immigrant, therefore, arrived during what was a slack season for the Indian farmer and returned with his savings in time for the harvest and for such festivals as *Thaipongal*[20] and *Thaipoosam*,[21] which are celebrated in January.

The Government of the day made little effort either to regulate immigration or to improve the living conditions of the worker. This is not surprising, considering the fact that those who were responsible for the framing of labour policy were themselves employers of labour. In fact, the purpose of what is referred to as the 'first piece of labour legislation', viz. the Contract for Hire and Service Ordinance No. 5 of 1841, was to bind the worker to his contract, offences such as 'bolting', failure to complete the allotted task or impertinence to the employer being made punishable with imprisonment.[22] Government had its own problems, and had to find the money to finance its public works and to consolidate its rule. Conditions became aggravated with the

financial crisis of 1847 [23] and the disturbances of 1848.[24] Moreover, the Indian labourer was an alien without roots in the soil, and no one was concerned with his welfare. There was no agreement between governments regarding either recruitment or working conditions, as in the case of 'indentured' Indian labour that was sent to the West Indies, because the labour that came to Sri Lanka did so 'of its own accord and for short periods'.[25] Further, intervention in these matters either by the State or by the Colonial Government was not in accordance with the prevailing philosopby of *laissez-faire*.

The kangany system — its varied functions

It would be appropriate at this stage to refer to the *kangany* system, which until recently was closely interwoven with the very texture of life on estates. The first coffee planters obtained their labour from India through professional recruiters, glib-tongued men who enticed their listeners with tales of the glorious fortunes that awaited them in Sri Lanka. These men recked little whether those whom they recruited were fit to undertake the long and hazardous journey outward, and often misappropriated a good part of the 'coastal advances', or money given to them to meet the cost of food and passage. One reads also of the 'democratically elected leader of the gang' and of the 'crimp' who appeared in times of labour shortage.[26] But the system that was to last till recent times was the one that was based on the communal structure of the South Indian village. The head *kangany* (or labour supervisor) of an estate or division of a 'group' was the senior member of a family or clan, and was an influential person in his village. He came with his family and his relatives and those in his village who desired to work on the estates in Sri Lanka. He guided them on their journey, negotiated their engagements and finally supervised their work on the estate. Under him worked the *sillarai*- or sub-*kanganies* who were in charge of sub-divisions of the labour force. Both the head- and *sillarai kangany* were paid pence- or 'head' money on the basis of the attendance of the members of the gang—a curious type of incentive bonus which benefited not the worker but his supervisor.[27]

With the institution of the head *kangany* system came the pernicious *tundu*[28] system based on the labourer's indebtedness to the head *kangany*, from whom he would have initially borrowed money in order to settle his debts in the village before he could leave it, and to pay the

cost of his outward journey. To these debts would be added sundry borrowings for weddings, funerals, coming-of-age ceremonies and the cost of goods bought in the estate *kadai* (or shop) owned by the *kangany*. A planter who required the services of a gang of labourers would pay the *kangany* the total amount the gang owed him; he would then assume the role of creditor, and proceed to recover from his labourers the moneys they would now owe him. No new employer would take these workers into his service without a *tundu* or chit from their employer to the effect that he was prepared to release them on being paid the amount that was owing to him (as stated in the *tundu*). In times of labour shortage it was not unusual for planters to seek the services of a gang of labourers by offering to pay the *kangany* sums in excess of the total amount that was due to him from his labourers, and for the *kangany* to go about trying to sell the services of himself and of his gang to the highest bidder. The *tundu* was made illegal in 1921, but the worker's dependence on the *kangany* persisted for several years more.

The head *kangany* was not merely a labour supervisor and money-lender. He was also the provider of those emotional requirements that made life on estates bearable. He brought with him the *poosaries* or priests, the soothsayers and singers of ballads,[29] the teachers and reciters of the classics, the medicine men and the 'experts' who decided what was or was not to be done on particular occasions. With the cultivation of tea, a perennial plant requiring also the employment of women and children in large numbers, stabilisation began to take place. Head *kanganies* and their gangs of labourers settled on particular estates, returned to the 'coast' and came back to the same estates; so that in course of time each estate took the character of a village, practising its own customs and worshipping its own Gods. The head *kangany* retained his patriarchal position. In later years he represented his workers on wages boards. Today his descendants are leaders of trade unions.

Early social legislation

The first welfare measures dealt with the health of the worker. In 1850 'rest houses' were built and wells sunk on the 'line of march' or 'cooly road', and half the cost of these had to be borne by the planters. An elementary form of social insurance was introduced in 1865

by an amendment to the Service Contracts Ordinance, requiring the employer to provide a servant who was incapacitated by 'sickness from labour' with lodging, food and medical care during such incapacity, but not with wages. The Medical Wants Ordinance No. 14 of 1872 established the principle that the health of the worker was the responsibility of the employer. This gave place in due course to the Medical Wants Ordinance No. 9 of 1912 and the Diseases (Labourers) Ordinance No. 10 of 1912, which between them defined more clearly than before the employer's duties towards his workers in relation to their health, and also prescribed minimum standards regarding housing and sanitation. Among other welfare measures was the establishment of quarantine camps at Ragama and Tataparai in 1897 and at Mandapam in 1914.

The laws relating to wages and working conditions were slower in coming. The Service Contracts Ordinance was amended in 1884 to enable the Attorney-General to prosecute errant employers, as it had been brought to the notice of the authorities that wages had sometimes remained unpaid for as long as 25 months. Hitherto it had been left to the worker to take whatever legal action he could against his master. The Estate Labour (Indian) Ordinance No. 13 of 1889, as amended from time to time, assured the worker 6 days' work a week, regular payment of wages and freedom from arrest in civil process in execution of a decree for money.[30] Ordinance No. 43 of 1921 repealed the penal clauses for breach of civil contract in the Service Contracts Ordinance[31] and prohibited the issuing or accepting of *tundus*. The Indian Immigrant Labour Ordinance No. 1 of 1923 provided for the creation of a Department of Indian Immigrant Labour, and for the appointment of an Agent of the Government of India to watch the interests of his nationals. In 1927 was enacted the Minimum Wages Ordinance No. 27, which provided for the determination of minimum wages by tripartite wages boards, and prohibited the employment of children under the age of 10.

The factor that was chiefly responsible for these measures was pressure from the Indian Government, which kept a watchful eye on the conditions under which the Indian labourer lived and worked in Sri Lanka. India imposed her earliest ban on emigration in 1839. The provisions for the protection of Indian labour in the Indian Immigrant

Labour Ordinance No. 1 of 1923 were introduced to satisfy the Indian Government's conditions for the release of its labour as stipulated in the Indian Emigrants Ordinance No. 12 of 1922. Other factors were the advent of a more enlightened type of planter[32] than the early pioneers, the economic stability that came with tea after the collapse of coffee in the 1860s, the realisation both by the State and by the owners of estates that anything that was spent on worker welfare was in their own long-term interests, and the changes in social attitudes that were the result of the evangelical and liberal movements in England. And yet it took nearly a hundred years to prescribe a minimum wage and a minimum age for employment. Till 1909 it was legal to pay wages 'within 60 days of the expiration of the month during which such wages shall have been earned'. It was only in 1941 that it was made illegal to compel adults from different families to share a common line room. One has only to visit the best of estates to realise how the legal requirements regarding housing and sanitation are observed in practice.

Workers' movements

The worker had not yet learned to demand a better deal for himself, though on occasion he was known to have displayed a surprising assertiveness.[33] The reasons for his inaction are to be sought in his place in a caste-bound social system and the attitudes it had engendered, his ignorance and poverty, his dependence on his *kangany* and the regimented discipline of the estate which gave him no opportunity to have anything to do with the world outside, and, perhaps, in his religious beliefs which helped him to bear with fortitude a fate which he was taught to believe he had earned in a previous existence. Politically, his spokesmen until 1920 had been the Nominated Tamil Members in the Legislative Council. An Indian Tamil was nominated in 1921 to represent him. Provision was made for the election of two Indians to the reformed Legislative Council of 1924, but lack of the required property and educational qualifications precluded the Indian worker from exercising his vote. His first real champions were from the educated Ceylonese middle classes who had formed the Ceylon National Congress and the Ceylon Workers' Welfare League. Under the leadership of men like Ponnambalam Arunachalam they fought against the penal clauses in the Service Contracts Ordinance and made the first demands for basic rights, including the right to form workers' associations.[34] The depressing conditions of the early years after the First

World War and the Indian freedom movement had their influence on the estates, and the early 1920s saw the first stirrings of a workers' movement, with the formation of Ghandhi and Bose[35] *sangams* or associations on estates. They were soon to have a leader in the person of Natesa Iyer,[36] an Indian Brahmin, who with powerful tongue and pen challenged the might of the 'Planters' Raj', and the workers flocked in their thousands to join him. It is not surprising that such 'seditious' activities were suppressed by the authorities.

Progress and set-backs

The Donoughmore Reforms[37], which introduced universal adult franchise, gave the Indian worker the vote, and his representative was appointed Minister of Labour[38] in the first State Council of 1932-1936. The worker, whether Ceylonese or Indian, acquired a new status and dignity. Legislators sought to please him, and there followed a spate of labour laws relating to wages and hours of work, health and maternity benefits, industrial relations and trade union rights, which benefited all workers, Indian and Ceylonese alike; and legislation has continued to keep abreast of modern thinking on the rights of the worker.

But the years that gave the country responsible government also brought with them an economic depression and a national consciousness that evoked resentment against 'foreigners' who held jobs that it was felt should go to nationals. A large number of daily-paid Indian workers employed by the Government and the Colombo Municipality were discontinued in 1938, and when negotiations failed the Indian Government retaliated with a ban on the emigration of Indian labour for work in Ceylon.[39] Nehru, who had visited Sri Lanka in connexion with these negotiations, urged all Indians in this country to unite; this led to the formation of the Ceylon Indian Congress, and a year later the Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union.[40] The Indian worker still had the vote and in 1947 returned seven members to Parliament. The possession of the vote and the influence of the Marxist trade unions, which were making their presence felt at this time on the tea and rubber estates, might in the course of time have led to his integration with his fellow workers of other communities, but the first Parliament of independent Ceylon disenfranchised him. The Indian Government

disclaimed liability for those who were not its citizens according to its own laws, and a large number were accordingly declared 'stateless'. But the very laws that deprived the Indian worker of his citizenship rights were to be responsible for increasing the number of those who had never been to India.[41]

The Kandyan peasantry

No study of the Indian estate worker can be complete without reference to the effect the expansion of the plantations had on the Kandyan peasant, who had already suffered from the ruthlessness with which the rebellion of 1817 had been suppressed.[42] The purpose of both the Crown Lands (Encroachments) Ordinance No. 12 of 1840 and of the Waste Lands Ordinance No. 1 of 1897 [43] was to declare as crown property land to which the user could not prove legal title, and to make it available for the cultivation of coffee and later of tea. Instances have been reported of villagers having been driven out of house and home in order to make room for an expanding coffee estate; this was one of the causes of the uprising of 1848.[44]

Yet it would appear that Kandyan landlessness and poverty were due to processes that grew with the years, and the result of several causes.[45] When the first coffee estates were opened many Kandyan peasants owned land and some of them appear to have grown some coffee. The population of the entire Island, according to available estimates, was less than a million during the early part of the nineteenth century and that of the Kandyan provinces (excluding the population on estates) about a quarter of that number.[46] Towns like Nawalapitiya and Nuwara Eliya did not exist then, and Haputale, Talawakelle and Rangalla developed out of markets that began within estates. A good portion of the population of these towns and of the adjoining villages consists of persons who had been attracted towards them by the planting industry from other parts of the Island. Tea was cultivated not near traditional settlements, but at elevations where hardly anyone ever lived.[47]

But there can be no doubt that the growth of the plantations, from which many benefited, gave little room for the expansion of the Kandyan village with its growing population. Several villages continued to remain in the valleys, hemmed in as they were by estates.

around them, and cut off from each other, their only means of communication with the outer world being by narrow footpaths. The State did little towards providing them with adequate schooling and other amenities; and trade was in the hands of Indians, Moors and Low Country Sinhalese, who had the capital and the know-how. These factors contributed to the perpetuation of feudal attitudes and inhibited social mobility.

Economic pressure and changes in social values had enabled the Kandyan peasant to overcome his initial reluctance to work on estates, but here too he found a rival with whom he had not cared to compete earlier. Again, a sizeable proportion of the population in places like Matale, Nuwara Eliya and Ratnapura were Indian Tamils, and the 7 Indian Members of Parliament elected in 1948 had been returned by Kandyan electorates. Politicians were not slow to make capital of these circumstances, ignoring the fact that the Indian labourer had been as much a victim of exploitation as the Kandyan villager.

The Indo-Ceylon pacts

A solution to the 'Indian problem' was expected to be provided by the two Indo-Ceylon pacts signed recently between the Prime Ministers of India and Sri Lanka, whereby India undertook to receive as her citizens 600,000 of those earlier categorised as 'stateless', and Sri Lanka 375,000, over a period of years.[48] But, by the very nature of the agreements, a considerable number will live in a sort of no-man's-land till the entire process is completed. Even those who will ultimately become citizens of Sri Lanka will be liable to be termed Indian Tamils or Indian Moors in official documents;[49] and the citizenship granted to them could be withdrawn by ministerial order.[50]

The processes set in motion by the operation of the Land Acquisition Ordinance Chapter 460 and the Land Reforms Laws No. 1 of 1972 and No. 39 of 1975 have further disorganised the life of a community already disturbed by a large-scale depletion in its ranks.[51] It has now become the centre of attention and subject of controversy as it has never been before, and many are interested in its welfare.

Population figures

According to the Census of 1971, out of a total population of 12,771,143 for the whole of Sri Lanka, that of the estate sector was 1,161,611. Of this number 951,785 were classified as Indian Tamils, 6,610 as Indian Moors, 71,191 as Ceylon Tamils and 6,402 as Ceylon Moors. The total number of Sinhalese on estates was 122,566 (71,626 Low Country and 50,940 Kandyan).

The Indian estate population is settled largely in the Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa Provinces, as the following table will show:

Province	*District*	*Total estate population*	*No. of Indian Tamils*
Central	Kandy	299,818	253,707
	Matale	43,422	36,501
	Nuwara Eliya	256,090	221,586
Uva	Badulla	209,747	187,727
	Monaragala	11,095	9,536
Sabaragamuva	Kegalle	78,867	58,518
	Ratnapura	125,834	106,334
Southern	Galle	24,927	14,203
	Matara	23,535	17,896
Western	Colombo	12,691	4,781
	Kalutara	48,607	34,116
North Western	Kurunegala	17,954	6,500

Sinhalese are found in significant numbers on estates in the following districts—Kandy: 6,587 Low Country and 16,113 Kandyan, Nuwara Eliya: 6,897 Low Country, 10,340 Kandyan, Badulla: 3,421 Low Country, 6,119 Kandyan, Ratnapura: 7,865 Low Country, 3,403 Kandyan, Kegalle: 6,020 Low Country, 4,698 Kandyan, Kurunegala: 6,309 Low Country 3,415 Kandyan, Colombo: 5,396 Low Country, Kalutara 8,863 Low Country, and Galle: 8,581 Low Country. A large percentage of Sinhalese labour employed chiefly on rubber estates is non-resident and does not appear to have been included in these statistics. It would also appear that a very large number of those who have been classified as Ceylon Tamils are of recent Indian origin, grouped as they are under districts which have no indigenous Tamil working-class

population, e.g. Kandy: 18,909, Nuwara Eliya: 15,106, and Kegalle: 8,513. The Ceylon Moor estate population at Badulla and Matara is shown as 3,500 and 3,326 respectively; Kandy has the largest number of Indian Moors on estates, namely 2,067.

The number of Indians who had already been registered as citizens of Sri Lanka prior to the signing of the Sirima-Sastri Pact was 134,276. According to Government sources, a further 102,418 had been granted citizenship by 31st August 1976 and 179,200 repatriated to India.[52] It is estimated that the processes contemplated by the two Indo-Ceylon pacts will take a minimum of 10 years to complete. The number of children of school age on estates was estimated to be between 180,000 and 220,000 in 1971. It is impossible to say what the numbers will be at the end of this 10-year period. However, our concern in regard to education should be not only for those children who become citizens of this country from year to year, but also for those who for several years will not be legally entitled to the rights of the citizens of either country.

2

Estate education — private initiative

Government inaction

The measures that the State was obliged to take from time to time during the nineteenth century for the welfare of the plantation worker did not include any that compelled the employer to provide for the education of the worker's children. In his Special Report on the State of Public Instruction in Ceylon, J. S. Laurie, Director of Public Instruction, recommended in 1869 that estate proprietors be placed on the same footing as mill owners in England in regard to the education of their workers' children. The majority of those he had met had assured him that they would be prepared to abide by 'any reasonable conditions' that might be decided to be fit and proper.[53] The State chose neither to act on Laurie's recommendation nor to take the responsibility on itself, but offered to pay a grant for the running of schools on estates to those who were prepared to provide this service.

Whatever education these children received during this period was, therefore, due largely to (1) the efforts of the workers themselves who ran what came to be called 'lines[54] schools' which they had gone out of their way to pay for and organize entirely of their own accord and with little or no prompting from above,[55] (2) those of the Christian missions which established schools on estates and in planting districts largely as an aid to evangelisation, (3) those of certain private bodies, not all of them interested in religion, and (4) the work of Buddhist and Hindu organisations, which starting amidst great handicaps towards the end of the century, established schools of their respective religious persuasions in these areas. All these factors, which are dealt with below, continued to operate during the present century.

Self-help

One would not have expected a burning desire for education to be manifested by people who lived so close to want as the early immigrants did. But there is evidence that from about the time that children were able to accompany their parents in sufficiently large numbers, the head *kangany* assumed the role of educator in addition to his other functions. On the estates he organised two types of 'schools', one for the children of *kanganies* and of members of the subordinate staff, (conductors,[56] *kanakapulles*[57], clerks et al.) and the other for the children of the rank and file. The former was somewhat like a tutory in which the *kangany's* personal clerk taught his pupils the 3 R's, and in course of time a little English to enable them to pursue their studies in schools in the towns. The latter was really a night school, where the sons of labourers were taught (after the customary salutation to the Deity and to the teacher) to read and to recite the *Aathi soodi*[58] and similar verses containing the popular moral precepts which every Tamil child was expected to know and to practise. Some see in this type of school a reproduction of the traditionally Tamil *thinnai pallikudam*[59] (literally, verandah school), which was in existence in South India and in Jaffna till recent times.

The functions of the teacher of the *kangany's* school were not confined to teaching. He was the one to whom those who could not read took their letters from 'home', the one who recited the *puranas* (ancient tales) in the evenings, or was asked on important occasions to read and interpret the *panchangam* or ephemeris.

A third type of educator made his presence felt during festivals. He was the *annavi*[60] who organised folk plays and taught girls to dance the *kummi*[61] and the boys the *kolattam*.[62] Observers have remarked that on certain estates cultural forms persist which even in India have disappeared before the forces of modernisation.[63]

While the type of 'education' provided by the head *kanganies'* schools was admittedly rudimentary, these schools served a purpose when no other means of education was available. Government records [64] show that as late as in 1904 there were 179 schools held in 'cooly lines', and 120 in buildings provided by the employer, whereas the total number of schools run on estates with government aid

was only 60. But the *kanganies'* schools did more than teach school subjects. They kept the community together, preserved its institutions, its values and its unwritten codes of conduct, and were a bulwark against disintegration. Such factors contributed, perhaps, to the total complex of an ethos characterised by a very low incidence of crime among these people, a sense of honour in the repayment of debts, (remarked on by more than one Western observer),[65] and a very high standard of sex morality and marital fidelity, considering their low level of literacy and the sub-human conditions in which they were compelled to live.

Even after the break-up of the head *kangany* system 'lines schools' have continued to function on estates which provide no other means of instruction. These are usually organised by parents. But often educated and unemployed sons of labourers teach children on estates not only the 3 R's in their language, but also English and Sinhala. Some give 'private tuition' to those who have not been able to profit by the instruction imparted in the estate school. The more enterprising run tutories outside the estates.

The Christian missions

The efforts made by the Christian missions and the success achieved by them varied with their aims and objectives, their human and financial resources, and the support they received from the State and from the public. The work done by these missions is described below.

The Baptists were the first to plan a mission to the coffee plantations around Kandy 'in an anxious concern for this class of our fellow creatures'.[66] The Rev. C. Dawson who headed this mission met with severe opposition, but he went ahead with his project, and 'neither the Jamaican planters nor the Anglicans (sic) were in a position to prevent its establishment, for unlike Jamaica, Ceylon was...a land of freedom, and obstacles which once existed in Jamaica were not to be met here'.[67] In 1842 a school was established for the education of immigrant labourers, but greater emphasis was laid on instruction by 'Exhortation, reading the word of God, distributing religious tracts, private conversations and prayer'.[68] However, by 1844 'owing to the circumstances of the case it was found requisite to discontinue' this

school.[69] Another school was started in 1846, but does not appear to have lasted very long. The Baptist Missionary Report for 1850 refers to two schools in Matale—one Sinhala and the other Tamil.

The names of two proprietors of estates who took an interest in the education of their workers are worthy of mention—George Bird of Kundasale, who was anxious to establish a school for the children of his labourers, and A. M. Ferguson, who built and maintained a school at Abbotsford Estate, Lindula, entirely at his own expense.[70] J. A. Ewing refers in his book, *The Resplendent Isle—a Hundred Years' Witness in Ceylon*, to the influence on their labourers of planters who were members of the Baptist Church at Cinnamon Gardens, the value of Christian schools on estates, the conversion of several Tamil labourers, and of their baptism by immersion in the Lindula lake.[71]

The main reason for the failure of the Baptists to pursue their aims on estates would appear to be their lack of resources, human and financial. It is also claimed that they had refused to accept government grant for the running of schools when the conditions attached to it forbade the teaching of religion. It is also likely that by the time this stipulation was removed they did not wish to risk disorganising their work in other fields in which they had already established themselves.[72] Moreover, by this time other missions were already at work. The Baptists also appear to have become unpopular with certain sections of the Kandyans who viewed with disfavour their work with the depressed classes among them, and as a consequence suffered during the Rebellion of 1848 when everything foreign was attacked. Curiously enough they were misunderstood by the Government too, and T. Garnier, a Ceylonese mission worker who did much of the 'Tamil work', was imprisoned on a charge of conspiracy. He was released later on, but the animosity of Lord Torrington[73] towards Dr Christopher Elliott, editor of the Colombo Observer and a prominent Baptist, led Government to regard all Baptists as potential trouble-makers.[74]

Evangelistic work among Tamil estate workers continued to be done by the Mission during the lifetimes of Philip Pulle 'a cooly on Pallekelle Estate, but a man of good education', P. Ondaatje and Ambrose (Report of the BMS (Ceylon) 1878). Two educational

institutions established by the Mission in planting districts and still continuing to provide education in the Tamil medium are the Baptist Mission Girls' School, Matale, and Ferguson High School, Ratnapura.

The Anglicans. The organisation that contributed most towards the education of the children of immigrant Tamil workers on estates was the Tamil Cooly Mission, now called the Tamil Church Mission (CMS) which was formed in 1854 'not as a result of an urge from a religious or missionary body or from the Diocese, but from a desire of the early British planters...to see that the labourers they obtained from India were not to be without spiritual ministration'.[75] However, the need for supervision by a religious body was soon felt, and though the majority of the planters were Scottish Presbyterians, the Church Missionary Society was asked to take over the management of the Mission.

The Mission was supported in its early years mainly by contributions from the planters themselves, prominent among whom were H. C. Bird, R. B. Tytler and George Wall. This was the period of evangelical Christianity in England, and many of the planters who were products of this movement were committed Christians who not only contributed generously towards the work of the Mission, but actually visited the lines, distributed tracts and engaged in religious discussions with their labourers. Two planters, A. K. Finnimore (of Helbodde Estate, Pussellawa) and S. M. Simmons, resigned their posts, entered holy orders and served as missionaries among these workers.[76]

Contributions came also from mercantile firms, from a Tea Cooly Mission in London, from Christians from Tinnevely, who desired to keep in touch with the '*coolies* (chiefly Christians) when away from their Indian homes', from the labourers, who have been described as 'cheerful givers', from members of estate staffs and *kanganies*, and from Ceylonese Christians and non-Christians. Among Sinhalese Christians who gave generously to the Mission were C. H. de Soysa, who established a school and paid the salary of a teacher-catechist at Hanguranketa, and Dr and Mrs E. A. Cooray who founded a trust for the running of a school at Maskeliya (which is still managed by the Tamil Church Mission).

The Mission sought to establish two types of schools, viz. what are still called 'estate schools' providing a rudimentary type of education for the children of labourers on the estates, and a superior type of school in the towns for the sons and daughters of members of the subordinate staff. The Christian religion was taught in both these types of schools, and the estate school sometimes served as a chapel on Sundays.

The very first report of the Tamil Cooly Mission (1857) refers to the efforts that were made to establish schools on estates and to the poor results achieved, for 'the children who were old enough to learn were old enough to work', and 'after working 10 hours a day the poor children had little inclination to learn'. One of the young men employed in endeavouring to establish a school was 'extremely discouraged, and symptoms of mental aberration supervened, which were followed by confirmed lunacy'. A subsequent report refers to employers who offered to pay all the expenses of schools on their estates and to send children to school 3 hours a day for 4 days in the week, but 'educated Tamils of good character and acquainted with the English language' were hard to find (1858); another, to a school attended by 40 men and boys (1868); others speak of employers who made schooling compulsory and allowed boys to leave their work places at 3 p.m. (1872); of female education in estate schools, and of writing on *olas* (palm leaves) as a suggested discipline (1876). To meet the shortage of teachers it was suggested that Christian conductors and *kanganies* be encouraged to spend a portion of their time in the instruction of the young. Later the Mission obtained teachers from Tinnevely and subsequently from Jaffna, and appointed their own inspectors.

The report of the Tamil Cooly Mission for 1858 refers to the function of a sound general education as a useful auxiliary to the teaching of religion, and to the opening of a fee-levying school in Kandy in which instruction was imparted in the Tamil and English languages. After a hesitant start the Kandy Bazaar school, as it came to be known later, was able to produce students who in 1866 could boast of a 'respectable knowledge' of English, arithmetic and geography. A school that was meant to provide education for the children of 'conductors, writers, head *kanganies* and others' was the Badulla Boys' Day and Boarding School, which was started in 1872 and attended in

that year by '15 Mohamedans, 9 Roman Catholics, 9 heathens and 17 Protestants' who were taught, besides the 3 R's, scripture, geography, grammar, history, map-drawing and singing. Perhaps better known than these were the Borella Boarding School for Girls (1867) and that for Boys (1875) established on land obtained from the Crown by 'Padre' Rowlands. The purpose of these schools was 'to provide education for Christian children from up-country districts'. The boys' school supplied for several years the conductors, tea-makers and clerks for the estates, and with other schools produced many teachers, priests and trade union leaders. In 1923 it was amalgamated with Christian College, Kotte. The same year the girls' school was removed to Kandy and became part of Mowbray College, which is today a private fee-levying school run mainly for the daughters of clerks, conductors and tea-makers. The Badulla Boys' School has been succeeded by Uva College, and a Government Junior School stands on the site of the Kandy Bazaar School; it is attended by Tamil and Muslim children from the town of Kandy and the adjoining estates.

The building of churches in the planting districts and the growth of the grant-in-aid system in education led to the establishment of yet another type of school mostly attached to the churches in the smaller towns. An example of such a school is St Mary's, Bogawantalawa. With the creation of Native Tamil Pastorates[77] from 1907 onwards both town and estate school came under the management of Tamil-speaking priests most of them estate-born. Further changes in administration brought them first under the Diocesan Board of Missions and later under the Diocesan Committee of Education. Since then all estate schools, except the North Maskeliya Estate Tamil Mixed School,[78] have been returned to the owners of the estates. Today they serve only those who cannot afford to attend the better schools in the towns. Owing to a lack of interest on the part of later planters, the new government policy regarding the teaching of religion in schools, the departure of Christian teachers who had come from Tinnevely and their replacement by teachers from Jaffna, mostly Hindus, these schools ceased to serve the purpose for which they were first established. The functions they perform at present will be discussed at a later stage.

The Tamil Church Mission has been associated, in all, with over 400 schools. The greater contribution of the Anglican Church, however, has been through the secondary schools it established in the planting districts. Examples of such schools are Uva College, Badulla, St Andrew's College, Nawalapitiya, Holy Trinity College, Nuwara Eliya, Christ Church College, Wattegama, and the girls' schools run by the Church of England Zenana Mission. Children of labourers have been known to walk several miles to attend these schools. Trinity College, Kandy, a leading Anglican school, has among its alumni and present students the sons of estate *kanganies* and supervisory staff. S. Thomas' College, Mt Lavinia, and, to a much larger extent, St John's College, Jaffna, have also been attended by students from the plantations, but hardly ever by the sons of labourers.

The Methodists. The first Methodist missionaries to Sri Lanka arrived in 1814. Pettah (Colombo) was their first station. From there they proceeded to Jaffna, Batticaloa, Matara and Galle. Methodism entered Kandy in 1836, led by converts from the coast who settled there, and the first missionaries to Uva were stationed at Bandarawela and Badulla in 1885.

In Colombo missionary work was carried on among the Tamil working class population, along with others, from the very early years and schools were established for the education of their young. 'Tamil agents' and catechists are mentioned in connection with work at Galle and Kandy from the 1870s.

At Kalutara the Methodists appear to have taken over an area that had been abandoned by the Anglicans. The report of the South Ceylon District of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in 1881 refers to work among immigrant Tamil labourers on the Kalutara coffee estates, and makes mention of a boys' vernacular school with an average attendance of 7 (out of 12 on the roll), which had not qualified for grant. The number of Tamil schools at that time in this region was 10 (5 boys' schools, 1 girls' school and 4 mixed schools); they gave instruction to 281 boys and 78 girls. A mixed vernacular school is mentioned in connexion with work in the area from 1882 to 1884. By this time coffee had ceased to be 'king' and the reference from 1885

onwards is to a Tea Estates Mission. In that year a school was opened at Tebuwana, and a suggestion was made that a day school be established with Sinhala and Tamil streams. By 1886 an English missionary was appointed because of the growing work on the estates and later, a missionary having special oversight of the Estates Circuit, but the number of schools declined. Between 1926 and 1930 there were only 5 estate schools under the Kalutara Tea Estates Mission, including one each at Neboda and Tebuwana. After this date the number further declined; there was only one in 1944, and that too appears to have been given up in the early 1950s. However, missionary work continued to be done among the Tamil estate population and religion taught in the schools managed by the owners of estates.

The Methodists were the first in the field of estate education in the Hatton District according to a report appearing in the Jubilee Souvenir of the Ceylon Methodist Mission published in 1964.[79] A church built at Hatton in 1899 was used as a school on week days. The first estate schools at Marlborough and Alakola were opened in the same year. Strathedon and Carolina followed in 1900, and in the same year a Sinhala school was started at Ambegamuwa. From there the work spread to Nawalapitiya, Gampola, Nuwara Eliya and Kandapola in the succeeding years. But, though in view of the educational changes that were being contemplated by Government employers urged the Mission to establish and run schools on their estates, the grant received from England was inadequate to meet these demands.[80]

No educational or missionary work on estates appears to have been attempted by the Methodists at Kandy. In the Uva Province, where the Mission had done such work as the establishment of a Boys' Reformatory and Industrial School at Diyatalawa, (later amalgamated with the Boys' Industrial Home, Wellawatte), a home for orphaned girls at Badulla and a women's hospital and dispensary at Welimada, little was done in the sphere of education on estates. There is mention of a school at Lunugala. But the last that is heard of the work of the Methodist Mission on estates in this region is about some preaching shared with the Anglican priest at Passara and about a *crèche* for the children of estate workers at Lunugala in 1954.[81]

A Methodist missionary publication that appeared in 1927 mentions only 23 estate schools with a total attendance of 1,022 children as being managed by the Mission,[82] and the history of the Methodist Church that appeared several years later repeats this modest claim.[83] The reason for the inaction that this indicates does not appear to have been a lack of resources or the difficulty of obtaining teachers. It should be looked for in a resolution of the Local Committee of the South Ceylon District Synod which had no use for any schools that 'fail to serve (their) legitimate purpose as a distinct Christian agency'.[84] The number of estate schools managed by the Mission dwindled after the 30s, and a few that were managed by the Swabasha Board of the Church were handed back to their owners in 1961 when all the other vernacular schools were handed over to the State.[85]

The Mission's greatest contribution towards the education of the children of estate employees was in schools like Highlands, Hatton, Kingswood College, Kandy, and the Kandy and Badulla High Schools (for girls). The last two have, since the take-over of assisted schools by the State, ceased to teach in the Tamil medium.

Other Protestant missions. One of these was the Quakers or the Society of Friends. A member of this mission bought Clodagh Estate, Matale, and was later joined by several others. Some educational work was done among Tamil workers, but their main work, both religious and educational, was among the Sinhalese. A few Sinhala schools run by this mission on estates were handed over to the Baptists in the late 30s; they were managed by the latter till 1961, when they were handed over to the owners of the estates.[86]

The Seventh Day Adventist Mission runs a school at Mylapitiya, a few miles off Kandy, which provides in its curriculum practical education in the two national media. This school, run as it is on a residential and fee-levying basis, is beyond the means of the average plantation worker, but it serves as a model that others can follow.

The Lutheran Mission, which operates largely on estates in Hatton and Nuwara Eliya, does not have many adherents in Sri Lanka. Its first essay in education was an evening school in Labukelle Estate, Labukelle, for about 50 children of estate workers.

The Roman Catholics did not build schools on estates, but only chapels and churches, as apparently at that time they felt that evangelisation should precede education. Besides, wherever planters were prepared to co-operate, other missions had already started their educational work. In course of time, however, they established schools in planting districts where education of a good standard was made available both to children from estates and to those in the towns and nearby villages. Examples of these are St John Bosco's, Hatton, and St Anthony's, Dehiowita, and girls' schools like St Ursula's Convent, Badulla, and St Gabriel's Convent, Hatton. Children of the subordinate staff on estates and those who had the means to travel and to pay fees attended the bigger schools like St Sylvester's, Kandy, St Anthony's Kandy, and St Bede's, Badulla. Even after the take-over of assisted schools by the Government, dedicated priests and nuns have continued to serve on the staffs of these schools. The Roman Catholics also run a fee-levying school primarily for the children of estate workers, viz. St Patrick's College, Talawakelle, attached to the church of the same name. This church was built in 1872 on land gifted to the Mission by Patrick Ryan, one of the few Roman Catholic planters of that time.

Following the pronouncements made at Vatican II the Ceylon National Synod of the Roman Catholic Church decided in 1969 that:

1. A National Pastorate Institute be set up for *study research, formation and encounter...to preach the word of God* relevantly in the Socio-Economic and Cultural context of our country;

2. There should be an .Inter-Diocesan Commission for the *Apostolate among the Estate population*...The Commission should be concerned with *the pastoral and missionary effort* in estate areas.

The Synod stressed the duty of the Church to be alive to the poverty, social degradation and *inhuman living conditions* of workers on plantations, the need for the worshipping community to be 'present at the points of crisis, growth and liberation of Society', and the desirability of pastors *'to live closer to the ordinary man'*.[87]

The Institute that was set up has carried out a sociological survey of the estate worker.[88] Some priests and nuns live and work among the people who are the objects of their pastoral concern. Most of the work is religious and social. An attempt is being made in some cases to help children of estate workers to attend schools in the towns by providing hostels for such students. There is at Dehiowita (on land belonging to St Anthony's Church) a training centre in agricultural and animal husbandry mainly for youth on estates. An attempt is also being made to train girls in housecraft and in the care of children. A workshop for the teaching of handicrafts has been completed.

Some of the young men who have been trained at the training centre have found gainful employment outside the estates, but the main aim of its founders is to train its students to be effective leaders of the community and agents of change. Some of the students hold evening classes and are paid an honorarium; others train children to take part in plays with religious and moral themes.

The priest in charge of St Anne's Church, Kahawatta, has around him a group that is actively engaged in the service of estate workers, both Sinhalese and Tamil. The activities of this group include visits to estates and seminars for estate workers with the co-operation of both employers and workers in the district. It has constituted itself into an 'Estate People's Services', an organisation which aims, among other things, to improve *crèches* on estates, to encourage estate workers to engage in food production and to keep their lines and their surroundings clean. It also aims by means of cultural meetings etc. to 'educate the uneducated and to increase the education of the educated'. Some of its members trained in the principles of *sarvodaya*[89] serve at milk-feeding centres on estates and help with the care of pre-school children.

The Centre for Religion and Society at Dean's Road, Maradana, attempts, among other things, to make an objective and analytical study of the living and working conditions of the plantation worker. The education imparted to the estate worker's children is one of their concerns. The Centre's main function, however, is to serve as a place for study and dialogue for those engaged or interested in social change.

Educational work is carried on also by churches situated in the planting districts. At Haputale the priest in charge of the Church of St Paul the Pilgrim runs a nursery school, which is attended largely by children from neighbouring estates, and a weaving school for girls. Children attending the nearby government school attend his English classes.

Private bodies

There is mention in the early reports of the Tamil Church Mission of schools run by private persons for the children of plantation workers. There was a private school at Borders Estate in 1870. The *Diocesan Gazette* of the 3rd November 1877 advertises, for the benefit of planters, the existence of St Stephen's Tamil Boarding School at Kandy, where boys would be 'received, lodged, fed and educated' for Rs 5 per month. Sometimes, as at Badulla in 1875, a local committee took over and ran a school the Mission found difficult to manage. The souvenir of the Planters' Association of Ceylon (1854-1964) records the existence of 2 private schools on estates in 1904.[90]

Today there are a few private establishments which serve these children. The Asoka Students' Hostel at Kandy was started in 1927 with the object of providing a home during term time for the sons of estate employees. From there these boys have attended schools in the town of Kandy and have made good in many walks of life. The proprietor also runs a private school, viz. Asoka Vidyalaya, for about 300 boys from the estates who would otherwise have been kept out of school by the operation of the '2 mile rule'.[91] St Christopher's College, Peradeniya, established by a retired master from Trinity College, Kandy, is another example of a private school attended by children of estate employees.

Mahinda College, Uduwara, and Siddhartha Vidyalaya, Badulla both of them registered and approved for examinations and teaching in the two national media, are run by Buddhist monks, chiefly for over-age students. The Moorthy Institute at Bellekatuwa, 3 miles from Namunukula, caters to children of all ages who have no government schools to attend within reasonable distance from their homes. All,

these schools are fee-levying. The fact that they are patronised by children of parents who belong to a very low income group is proof both of a consciousness among these people of the need for learning and of the inadequacy of the provision made for it by the State.

The Buddhists and Hindus

Education was largely in the hands of the Christian missions during the nineteenth century. The Government was pro-Christian and encouraged the establishment of Christian schools. The School Commissions[92] that preceded the secular Department of Public Instruction (1867) were dominated by Protestant Christian clergymen. The Christian religion was taught even in government schools. It was the Christian missions that were able to profit by the introduction of the grant-in-aid system in 1843, because they had the resources, the personnel and the necessary influence with the Government to start schools. A knowledge of English was a necessary qualification for admission to government service and the professions; this the Christian missions were able to provide in their bigger schools.[93]

The opposition to this state of affairs was spearheaded by English-educated products of the mission schools, and the names of Anagarika Dharmapala[94] and Arumuga Navalar[95] are familiar to those acquainted with the history of this period. A feature of the times was the religious debate in press and on platform both in Jaffna and in the south of Ceylon. A report appearing in the English papers of the now famous Panadura Controversy[96] is said to have drawn to our shores Colonel Olcott, an American, who was to be responsible for the founding of the Buddhist Theosophical Society in 1886. He was followed by other Westerners who were the products of the Rationalist movement that influenced the thinking of many in England and other European countries at that time. Some of these served as heads of schools founded by the Society or by private persons. The Hindu religious and educational movements were entirely of indigenous origin, though graduates from India served on the staffs of some of the schools founded by the Hindu Educational Board or by private benefactors.

When Buddhist schools were established in planting districts they readily admitted Tamil children from the estates and showed no discrimination against them. Tamils too served on the staffs of these schools with acceptance, and were sometimes even appointed heads of these institutions. At that time Buddhists made common cause with the Hindus against both the State and the Christians, united as they were by a common grievance against the two. This did not, however, prevent them from employing in their institutions Christians who had the requisite qualifications and were faithful to their tasks, or from giving them places of honour and responsibility. It was the era of fee-levying assisted schools and of English as the medium of instruction in the secondary schools, At that time schools were graded according to the facilities provided by them, and many of the Buddhist schools in the planting districts were C grade and charged lower fees. Tamil children from estates attended such schools in large numbers along with the poorer children of other communities. What they paid as fees helped to augment the rather meagre resources of these schools during their difficult years. Examples of such schools are Sri Pada College, Hatton, Jinaraja Vidyalaya, Gampola, Anuruddha College, Nawalapitiya, and for several years Dharmaduta College, Badulla, and Dharmarajah College, Kandy. Students from estates also attended schools like Ananda and Nalanda Colleges, Colombo, and many remember with affection and gratitude teachers and heads of schools who had taught them and taken an interest in their welfare. Most of these schools are closed to Tamil children now, and have thereby ceased to be truly national.

The Buddhists do not appear to have attempted any religious or educational work on estates. There is mention of a Buddhist Tamil Cooly Mission[97] that operated in the Hatton-Dickoya District in the late 1920s, but few appear to remember it now.

There appears to have been little objecton to the activities of the Christian missions on the estates from the workers themselves or their *kanganies*, perhaps the only recorded protest from any leader of note being that of the late Natesa Iyer[98] in the second session of the State Council against the Christianising influence of schools run by the Tamil Church Mission. Those who became Christians were committed to their new religion, but the majority remained loyal to the faith of

their fathers, made their petitions and their sacrifices to 'the Gods that never fail', and celebrated the traditional festivals which were occasions of general rejoicing. Hindu *kanganies* have been known to contribute towards the salaries of Christian catechists, and even today there are Hindu members of the staff who allow the holding of Sunday services in their homes.

The initiative for Hindu educational activity in the planting districts came generally from societies like the Young Men's Hindu Association and the *Saiva Paripalana Sabhai*[99] (Society for the preservation of *Saivaism*) in the towns, having in their membership government servants and teachers, professional men, proprietors of business establishments, and other public and private persons. Examples of schools founded by such associations or persons are Kathairesan College, Nawalapitiya, founded by the Nawalapitiya Young Men's Hindu Association (and later managed by the Hindu Board of Education), Saraswathy Vidyalaya, Pussellawa, founded by K. Rajalingam, Pakiya Vidyalayam, Matale, founded by S. S. Kandaswamy, and Saraswathy Vidyalaya, Badulla, founded by the *Saiva Paripalana Sabhai*. These schools were handed over to the Hindu Board of Education to be managed by them. After the take-over by the State of assisted schools in 1961 they are often the only schools available in these areas for Tamil children.

The Hindu Senior School at Kandy owes its existence to the dedication of Swami Vipulananda of the Ramakrishna Order, renowned alike for his spirituality and for his great learning, who founded the *Saiva Maha Sabhai* in that town, and to the generosity and public-spiritedness of several philanthropists, Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim, who urged on him the need for a school for Hindu children living in and around Kandy. Scholarships founded by altruistic persons have also enabled plantation youths to attend schools like Shivananda Vidyalaya, Batticaloa, Mahajana College, Tellipalai, and Hindu College, Jaffna.

3

Estate education and the State, c. 1870 - 1946

General position

Soon after the Maritime Provinces of Sri Lanka came under the control of the British, Government took over the schools that had been provided by the Dutch, in which the media of instruction were Sinhala and Tamil. Some of these were closed in 1803 as a measure of economy and were later opened as missionary schools. From about 1812 missionary schools were opened for Europeans and for the children of the *mudaliyar*[100] class. Later, schooling was extended to the villages, where education was provided in the mother tongue.

The system of assisting missionary schools by means of grants dates from 1842, when government English schools in the Jaffna Peninsula were closed owing to difficulties of administration and grants were given instead to missionary societies. Elsewhere in the country Government returned to the practice of establishing Sinhala schools.

A certain amount of educational activity is recorded between 1841 and 1847, the early years of the Central School Commission.[101] Governor Mackenzie, who had established this Commission, had also required that schools should be open to children of all denominations and that they should be taught to read their own language before they were taught English. But the financial depression of 1847[102] and the events of 1848[103] proved a set-back to the progress of education. In 1848 the Government had 24 vernacular schools, 52 English schools, 3 central schools for boys, 3 'superior' schools for girls, and

the Colombo Academy, now Royal College. For the rest, education was provided by missionary societies, though in the Jaffna District Government provided grants to 28 English schools.

In the 1860s there was general dissatisfaction over the combination of government and missionary education, and a sub-committee of the Legislative Council was appointed in 1867 to go into the whole question of education in the country.[104] Its main recommendations were that Government should establish more schools, principally elementary Sinhala and Tamil schools, but that it should also encourage denominational bodies. In the grant-in-aid schools all religious bodies were allowed to teach whatever religion they pleased.

The missionary bodies had their schools mainly in the maritime districts. Government operated in the interior, but its activities were hampered by a lack of finances. A government proposal made in 1884 that English schools be maintained by local authorities with government grant, though accepted, was not found to be feasible. Soon all English schools, except Royal College and a few elementary schools, were handed over to existing missionary agencies willing to take them over.[105]

This unsatisfactory state of affairs was effectively brought to the notice of the public by Ponnambalam Arunachalam, Registrar-General and Superintendent of Census, in his Census Report of 1901. Taking his statistics from the Report of the Director of Public Instruction for 1900, he pointed out that out of 867,103 children of school age in the country, about 650,000, i.e. nearly three-fourths, received no education, either because there were no schools to attend or because there was no means of enforcing attendance. Government had in many instances abolished its schools and 'retired in favour of private enterprise', utilising the funds thus saved to further education in interior villages which had not come under the influence of other educational agencies. Thus in 1900 Government had a total of 500 schools attended by 48,642 children, while there were 1,328 grant-in-aid schools attended by 120,751 children; there were also 2,089 private schools with an attendance of 38,881. Government had also closed the majority of its English schools on the advice of H. W. Green, Director

of Public Instruction in 1893, that they served no useful purpose, and in 1900 had only 4 such schools. Arunachalam supported the view that elementary rural education should be the chief concern of Government, whereas higher urban and English education could be left to private and municipal enterprise.[106]

The Burrows Report

Arunachalam, who was to campaign so strenuously in later years for the rights of the Indian estate worker, had apparently failed to address his mind to the question of the education of the estate worker's children. In fact he had not treated the Indian Tamils as a separate entity, but had grouped them along with Ceylon Tamils for purposes of literacy and other statistics. The initiative for action on this matter came from an entirely different quarter, the East India Association, London, which, in a memorial addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the 18th January 1804, submitted that the Tamil immigrants from Southern India to Ceylon had during many years shown themselves a hard-working community in that Island, and that the planting industry had in no small degree contributed to the increasing wealth and prosperity of Ceylon, and urged the desirability of 'raising this most deserving class from their present condition by the establishment, at an early date, of schools on every estate throughout the planting districts of Ceylon, at which primary vernacular education should be procurable at suitable hours by all Tamil children of school-going age'.[107] The subject was discussed in the British House of Commons, and a copy of the memorial sent to Sir Henry Blake, Governor of Ceylon. S. M. Burrows, a former Director of Public Instruction, was commissioned to 'go about among the estates and examine closely on the spot into the requirements of the case'.

According to the information available to Burrows, a total of 406,821 immigrant Tamils were employed on 1,851 estates; the number of boys of school age (6 to 12 years) was about 25,000; and there were 43 registered schools, of which 2 were run by the Government, 5 were under private management and 36 managed by missionary bodies. 1,765 children attended these schools; of these 1,598 were boys, but the 'enormous majority' of them did not get beyond the second standard.

The information that Burrows himself was able to obtain from 725 estates which had replied to a circular that had been sent out by him was as follows:

Average number of immigrant Tamil boys of school-going age	21,045
Boys who had already acquired the rudiments of education	7,721
Number of estates where teaching arrangements existed	409
Number of estates taking advantage of schools in the neighbourhood	119
Number of estates not taking advantage of schools in the neighbourhood	89
Number of estates in which no teaching whatsoever existed	145
Number of estates in which the principal kanganies sent their children elsewhere to be educated	65

Burrows admitted that a great deal of the instruction received by these children was what was imparted to them in the 'lines schools', but claimed that this though 'too accidental and irregular to be worthy of the name' was exactly what the immigrant *cooly* and his *kanganies* saw to be necessary. Burrows had his own definition of the type of education that was suitable to the 'Tamil *cooly*'. It was advisable that he should be able to sign his name and recognise signatures, read and write simple sentences in his mother tongue, and do such arithmetic as was implied in the very simple accounts that came into his daily life, e.g. his pay and his personal expenses. Moreover, Burrows argued, the *cooly* who worked under the direct influence of a European superintendent was subjected to 'educational influences of a disciplinary kind'. The hope for the *cooly* then lay in putting into practice the lessons so learnt; he might rise in life and become a *kangany* or *kanakapulle*, and he would then be able to secure for his family on reasonable terms a better education than he had had himself.

A system of grants to estate schools, based on attendance and results, had been in existence for some years, but on easier terms than for other schools,[108] but the planters had shown little interest in it. J. Howard, Burrows's predecessor in office, had suggested an arrangement by which the building and furniture were to be supplied by the planter, the Government bearing from the first a definite proportion of the cost of maintenance. He had also suggested the grouping of estates for the establishment of 'central' schools. Burrows did not favour either of these suggestions, the argument against the latter being that the 'mountainous character' of the country in which a large proportion of the tea estates lay would, in most cases, make it impossible for boys to attend a central school after their working hours without undue fatigue. He would instead suggest the continuance of 'lines schools' on every estate on which there were 10 or more boys of school age, which would meet for a sufficient number of days to give them a fair chance of learning the rudiments of Tamil and arithmetic. Annual returns could be called for by the Planters' Association, which would also report to the Government any member who did not co-operate; but such instances would, he felt, be extremely few. Blake endorsed these recommendations, and reported accordingly.[109]

The Rural Schools Ordinance

Arunachalam's revelations had come at a time when an English-educated and politically conscious Ceylonese *élite* had begun to take an active interest in the welfare of their countrymen and had already shown their dissatisfaction with the Government's record in the field of education. This report caused such a stir both in Sri Lanka and in England that it was hotly debated in the British House of Commons, and a Commission was appointed in January 1905 to report on the question of elementary education. The Wace Commission, as it was popularly called, suggested a system of District School Committees (with the Government Agent or Assistant Government Agent as chairman) and Divisional School Committees (with the Chief Headman as chairman), compulsory education for boys, free education in Sinhala and Tamil schools, the restriction of the teaching of religion in assisted schools to specified periods in the time-table and the prohibition of such teaching to children of unlike denominations without the consent of the parents. The whole cost of education was to be borne by Government, but Village Committees were to continue to provide

new school buildings and extensions to existing ones.[110] These suggestions were embodied with slight modifications in Ordinance No. 8 of 1907, also known as the Rural Schools Ordinance. The District Committee could decide on the establishment of schools for boys (and if they thought fit, for girls). The clause regarding religious instruction required that religion should not be taught if the parents objected. The compulsory school age was 6 to 12, except for Muslim and Tamil girls, for whom it was 6 to 10.

The Commission considered also the question of the education of the children on plantations. In their view the education of the children of Tamil *coolies* should not 'form part of the local organisation' they were recommending for the rest of the population, nor were they in favour of 'enforcing for the present, at any rate, any rigorous system of compulsory education during fixed hours'. The natural line of development, they said, would be to encourage grant-in-aid schools, but to accept the 'lines schools' as sufficient, leaving it to the planter to make his own arrangements. A certain degree of government supervision was, however, recommended, and Inspectors were to be authorised to certify boys who had passed the 4th standard in reading, writing and arithmetic 'as being in need of no more learning'. The planter should satisfy the Department that he had 'provided, set apart or assigned a room, building or a part of a building suitable for use for purposes of instruction, and that instruction was being imparted therein'. The Government would also be entitled to build a school on an estate and recover the cost from the employer if he failed, after warning, to comply with government requirements. A session should be of not more than two hours' duration; for nothing should be done that would affect the labour supply on the estates.[111]

Part V of the Rural Schools Ordinance provided for the establishment of estate 'schools', it being made obligatory for the superintendent of every estate '...to provide for the vernacular education of the children of labourers employed on the estate between the ages of 6 and 10, and to set apart and keep in repair a suitable school room'. Two or more estates could combine to establish a common school; and there was also provision to exempt employers from the obligation to provide for the education of the children on their estates, if the Director of Public Instruction certified that a satisfactory school was available

in the neighbourhood. Provision was also made for annual returns, registers of students and attendance registers, for inspections after notice, and for government action where the employer failed, after warning, to provide for the education of the children of his labourers as required by the law. No mention was made of the qualifications required of the teacher, nor was there any provision to compel attendance.

Ordinance No. 1 of 1920

The experiment in localising the responsibility for education by using as far as possible the existing administrative divisions and authorities for educational purposes was not as successful as its promoters had expected it would be, one of the reasons for this failure being inadequacy of funds. There had also been deep resentment over the Government's policy regarding the teaching of religion in schools. The Conscience Clause[112] did not apply to English schools, and though Government had considerably increased its expenditure on education, missionary schools had been set up in areas where the population was largely non-Christian in character. To cure all these ills there was need for fresh legislation.

Ordinance No. 1 of 1920, which covered both English and Vernacular schools sought to centralise control over education, with an Education Board empowered to frame regulations—the Education Code—and the whole cost of education was to be charged to revenue. The Conscience Clause was applied to all schools; assisted schools were forbidden to refuse admission to pupils not belonging to the religion of their founders, and provision was made for the teaching of religion in government schools. In the part relating to estate schools superintendents were also obliged to 'appoint competent teachers' as it had been brought to the notice of the legislators that those who had been entrusted with the education of the young were sometimes *kanganies* of the gang.[113] The employment before 10 a.m. of children between the ages of 6 and 10 on the estate was forbidden,[114] and parents too were required to see that their children attended schools. Severe penalties were attached to breaches of the law.

Ordinance No. 31 of 1939

The Constitution of 1931 which granted responsible government to the country also placed on its elected representatives the responsibility for shaping her educational policies. The Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 was the first attempt by a Ceylonese Minister and his Executive Committee to frame educational legislation that was meant to meet the demands of those who elected them.

Under this ordinance the Department of Education was to be subject to the general direction and control of the Executive Committee of Education. There were to be a Board of Education nominated by the Governor to advise the Director, and Local Advisory Committees in charge of the administrative areas of the Municipal and Urban Councils and other areas proclaimed by the Governor. The Governor was entitled (under Part III of the ordinance), if he was satisfied that all or part of the educational needs of the area within the administrative limits of a Municipal or Urban or Village Council should be borne by that body, to make order to that effect by proclamation. These authorities would then be entitled to levy a special rate on property for that purpose and even acquire land. Estate property was specially exempted from this levy.

This part of the ordinance was never proclaimed, and the responsibility for providing schools was not vested in any other body. Under Part V of this ordinance the Executive Committee of Education was authorised to enact regulations giving effect to the principles and provisions of the ordinance. One of the subjects on which it was empowered to frame regulations was compulsory attendance at schools, but up to date no such regulations have been framed, and the only provision in law to compel attendance at schools are the by-laws framed under the older laws in certain areas.

The clauses relating to the teaching of religion were stricter. The teacher of religion had to be one of the same denomination as the pupil, and the prior written consent of the parent or guardian was necessary not only for a child to be taught religion but even for him to be allowed to attend 'Sunday school or any place of religious observance or instruction'.

Estate schools

The part dealing with estate schools was applicable only to estates on which there were more than 25 children 'between the ages of 6 and 10 of labourers employed on the estate and residing thereon.'

The superintendent of the estate was required not merely to provide for 'vernacular education', as in the earlier ordinances, but to make such provision as may be prescribed for the education of the children on his estate. The amendment enabled the Director both to require the teaching of a language like English and to make provision for broadening the scope of the education imparted in estate schools; but he does not appear to have made use of these powers. The penalty on parents for not sending children to school during the prescribed hours was not imprisonment, but a fine of Re 1 on conviction and an additional fine of 50 cents per day for a continuing offence. The superintendent was obliged to report or cause to be reported to the prescribed authority any parent who failed to send his child to school. Such a provision was not contained in the earlier ordinances. No mention was made of the notice required to be given for the inspection of schools, but 12 days' notice was necessary for the purpose of checking records.

The Report of the Special Committee on Education[115]

Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 had done little more than provide for the machinery for the administration and control of education. An awareness of the need for more radical measures to cure the educational ills of the country and to combat their social and economic consequences was no doubt behind the resolution moved by E. A. Nugawela in the State Council in June 1936, calling for the appointment of a commission under the chairmanship of an expert from abroad 'to report on the existing system of education in Ceylon, and having regard to the changed conditions of the day and the future development of the country, to recommend the needed changes'.[116] The Executive Committee of Education considered this and other resolutions of a similar nature, and in April 1940 decided to appoint a Special Committee composed of itself and of local educationists to undertake the 'task of investigating the defects of the present educational system and recommending measures of reform necessitated by changed conditions'.

The Kannangara Committee, as it was popularly called, after the name of the chairman who was Minister of Education at that time, held 80 sittings during a period of over 3 years, received submissions on such subjects as the control of education, the medium of instruction, religion in schools, diversification of curricula and educational finance, and made very far-reaching recommendations.

The Report highlighted four major defects in the educational system that had grown up without adequate planning during a period of over 125 years of British rule. They were:

1. The existence of two types of education according to the medium of instruction used, and the consequent division of the country into a privileged English-speaking *élite* and the 'multitude' which spoke only Sinhala or Tamil. It was the conviction of the Committee that Sinhala and Tamil were the 'natural' media of instruction for the Sinhala and Tamil communities and the only media through which they could effectively contribute to the world of literature and art.

2. The purely academic nature of the existing system of education which had little relevance to the needs of the country and had only created a class of educated unemployed.

3. The absence of equality of opportunity following from the fact that only the comparatively well-to-do could afford to attend the better schools, which were fee-levying. It was pointed out that as a consequence a great deal of talent was going waste, with resultant loss to the country.

4. The absence of any provision to compel school attendance. The law itself was lax. The other reasons for poor attendance at schools were a paucity of schools, poverty and parental apathy. It was the opinion of the Committee that our educational system could not be considered satisfactory 'until schools are provided for all children in the Island without exception.'

No reference was made in the Report to estate schools, and no representation appears to have been made by organisations concerned with the welfare of estate workers.

4

Estate education and the State, 1947-1976

Ordinance No. 26 of 1947

This ordinance (which was an amendment to Ordinance No. 31 of 1939) is said to have embodied 'the more innocuous recommendations' of the Kannangara Committee. It provided for the establishment of Examinations Councils and Educational Research Councils, and gave added powers to the Executive Committee of Education. There was provision for practical education, and the ages during which education was sought to be made compulsory were 5 to 16. State schools and assisted schools were to exist side by side, and instruction in the religion of the parent was introduced into government schools (as part of the curriculum), subject to exemption from such instruction at the request of the parent.

This ordinance became an important landmark in the history of education in this country, for it required that instruction be free in all government and state-aided schools, and in the case of citizens, at the University. It also established the principle that instruction should be in the mother tongue. These reforms were followed by the establishment of Central Schools[117] in places barely heard of in educational circles before, and have resulted (even in the absence of any legislation to compel school attendance) in Sri Lanka's present high rate of literacy,[118] and in the attainment to leading positions in the country's public life by many a peasant's son who could not have dreamt of such a possibility before.

Provision for estate schools

It had not been the intention of the legislators to extend to the children of the plantation worker the benefits of the progressive measures that were meant for the other children of the country. In the opening debate on the recommendations based on the Report of the Special Committee the Minister had said that the question of education in estate schools had been 'dropped for the present'. However, during the concluding stages of the debate, an amendment moved by I. X. Pereira (on behalf of S. P. Vythilingam) and seconded by B. H. Aluvihare 'that all estate schools shall be converted into primary State Schools and shall form part of the system of National Education' was accepted without division,[119] and provision was later made in Part VI of the ordinance to give effect to this resolution.

Under this part:

The owner of an estate with over 27 children between the ages of 5 and 16 whose parents were resident on the estate was obliged to set apart on the estate premises consisting of:

a. a building which conformed to such standard as might be prescribed and which was to be used for educating the children of the estate who were required to attend school,

b. a habitable house for a married head teacher, and

c. an area of uncultivated land not less than one acre in extent situated in the vicinity of the aforesaid building and suitable for use partly as a school playground and partly as a school garden.

Where the owner defaulted, and continued to do so after warning, it was lawful for the Director of Education or a person authorised by him to enter the estate, make good the default and recover the cost from the owner. It was permissible for two or more owners to combine to put up the buildings and provide such other facilities as were required by the law. Owners were exempt from these obligations if there were suitable schools in the vicinity.

It was also required of the owner and the person for the time being in charge of the estate to permit the Director to establish and maintain a government school on the premises set apart for this purpose (for which rent would be payable at prescribed rates) and also to keep in repair such building, as long as this rent was paid. Where the owner failed to carry out the necessary repairs, and continued to do so after warning, the Director could cause these repairs to be effected and deduct the cost from the rent payable to him.

But it was no longer obligatory for the owner 'to make such provision as may be prescribed for the education of the children...' or 'to appoint competent teachers'. He would have fulfilled his obligations under the law if he merely provided the buildings and the acre of land, and carried out the necessary repairs. Again, while he was required to permit the Director to establish and maintain government schools using the facilities he provided, no corresponding obligation was placed on the Director that he should establish and maintain such schools.[120]

An explanation for this apparent lacuna in the law may perhaps be looked for in the Statement of Aims and Objects attached to the draft Bill, wherein the Minister said, 'It is proposed that Government should take charge of the education of the children of estate labourers. In order to give effect to this proposal the owners will be required to set apart on the estate suitable buildings and grounds for establishing and maintaining government schools on payment of rent at prescribed rates at prescribed times'.[121] Kannangara failed to be elected to the new Parliament, which a year later deprived the Indian worker of his vote.[122]

The White Paper on Education, 1950, and the Education (Amendment) Act No. 5 of 1951

Both the White Paper of 1950 and the Act which implemented its recommendations are perhaps best remembered for the efforts that were made to introduce curricular diversification in schools and to suit education to the pupil's capabilities; but the experiment was not a success, and had to be abandoned after some time. The law provided that at the end of the primary stage (i.e. at about the age of 11 plus)

pupils were to be sorted out for academic or practical education in the post-primary classes, on the basis of their cumulative records and on simple tests in language and number. At the end of another 3 years those who were pursuing an academic course would again, on the basis of a test, be selected either for academic or practical studies in Senior Secondary Schools, those not selected having the option of leaving school or of following vocational studies in Vocational Schools conducted by other government departments. On the question of the medium of instruction, Sinhalese and Tamil children had the option of choosing either Sinhala or Tamil with English as a compulsory second language; others could choose Sinhala, Tamil or English, but for those choosing English the compulsory second language was to be one of the two national languages. The higher compulsory age limit was reduced from 16 to 14.[123]

No mention was made in the White Paper of estate schools, but the amending Act contained a clause authorising legal action against estate owners who failed to provide the facilities required by the earlier ordinance, the penalty on conviction being a fine not exceeding Rs 500 and in case of a continuing offence an additional fine of Rs 50 per day. The upper age limit for compulsory schooling was as for other children.[124]

The following regulations were introduced regarding the buildings the owner was required to put up:

a. The building must be capable of providing not less than ten square feet of accommodation for each of those children on the estate who were required to attend school.

b. The building must be so constructed as to admit sufficient light and air.

c. The interior of the building must be adequately protected from wind and rain.

d. The building must not adjoin or form part of any other building except the house of a teacher.[125]

Planters' reactions

But the planting interests were not slow to voice their protests against what they claimed were unduly heavy demands made on them by the provisions of the 1947 and 1951 amendments to the Education Ordinance. At a meeting held on the 11th December 1952 the General Committee of the Planters' Association unanimously adopted the following resolution:

'This Association is of opinion that the scheme of education for estate children set out in Education Ordinance No. 26 of 1947 is intrinsically unsound and that the implementation of the requirements thereof is in the present circumstances injudicious. The Association, therefore, urges the Government to suspend further action pending a thorough review of the problems'.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Association held on the 27th March 1953 it was agreed that the Act would be throwing heavy burdens upon the planting industry if estate owners were required to provide land and to erect buildings for schools and teachers. The Association objected to valuable land having to be cleared for extensions to buildings, playgrounds and vegetable gardens. It was submitted that an intelligent appreciation of the necessity of ensuring the economy of the Island was a prerequisite to any grandiose scheme which was bound to involve a never ceasing drain on Ceylon's fast dwindling coffers. Government itself had curtailed its educational development policy. It was therefore urged that this 'wholly unrealistic scheme' be put off for a period of 5 years.

The Year Book of the Association for the year ended April 1953 advised members to categorise their schools as follows:

A. Estate schools which could be closed down as a result of the school-going population being catered for by existing government or assisted schools in the immediate neighbourhood.

B. Estate schools of two or more adjoining estates which could be amalgamated into one unit to be run as a government school, possibly also catering to nearby villages.

C. Estate schools which did not come into either of the above categories and which would, therefore, have to be brought in line with the provisions of the ordinance.

However, we are informed later that the Minister of Education had been 'good enough' to receive a deputation from the Association on the 20th May 1953, when the following decisions were reached:

a. The requirement regarding the setting apart of an area of uncultivated land not less than one acre in extent for use as a school playground and school garden would not be insisted on in cases where it was difficult to set apart such an area, e.g. where tea would have to be uprooted.

b. The requirement that the school building should be capable of providing not less than 10 square feet of accommodation per child might be relaxed to the extent that double sessions might be permitted in schools.

The Association undertook to inform the Director of Education as soon as possible:

a. which estate school buildings were already in conformity with the requirements of 10 square feet per child (on a single session basis) and with the other building requirements, or would be in the near future;

b. which estate school buildings could be adapted without difficulty to conform with the requirements of 10 square feet per child (on a single session basis) and with the other building requirements;

c. which buildings had sufficient accommodation for the conduct of schools on a double session basis.

The Association informed the Minister shortly afterwards that they were in a position to hand over 63 schools, which already conformed with the requirements of the law.[126] The action taken by the Government in this matter will be referred to in detail in a later section.

The present law regarding estate schools

The law relating to estate schools is contained in Part VI of Chapter 185 of the Legislative Enactments of Ceylon (1956 Revision), and the regulations framed thereunder.

Under this law :

1. The owner or superintendent of an estate is not compelled to make provision for the education of the children on his estate or to appoint competent teachers.

2. The clauses requiring him to provide the necessary facilities such as buildings and land are of no effect, owing to the administrative relaxation referred to earlier.

3. The Director is under no obligation to use whatever facilities there are on the estate to establish and run a government school. He is merely given the authority to do so.[127]

Where, however, schools exist on estates they must fulfil certain conditions in order to be registered as estate schools. They are as follows:

a. The building must, in the opinion of the Director, be a satisfactory one, and must have a floor space of 10 square feet for each child on the school register.

b. Bench and desk accommodation must be provided for each child on the school register.

c. A competent teacher, or teachers, must be employed.

d. The registers must be correctly and properly kept.

e. The minimum number of sessions must be of two hours' duration per day for at least 180 days in the year and no class must be held after 4 p.m., provided, however, that a session between 4 and 6 p.m. may be held for pupils over 10 years of age.

f. In order to qualify for grant, the average attendance of eligible pupils must be at least 15 in boys' and mixed schools, and 10 in girls' schools.

Such schools will be paid grants based on results and attendance as follows:

a. Attendance grant: Rs 11 per unit of average attendance for the year. (The average attendance is obtained by taking the mean of the monthly average attendances).

b. Results grant: for each child presented for examination at the annual inspection according to the percentage of passes in all subjects:

Rs 6 if the percentage is not less than 80;

Rs 5 if it is less than 80 and not less than 65;

Rs 4 if it is less than 65 and not less than 50.

This grant will not be paid unless at least 75 per cent of the average attendance of pupils or 75 per cent of the number on roll on the day of the inspection, whichever number is less, have been presented at the inspection.

The total grant paid will not exceed the expenditure incurred on the approved salaries of teachers and the maintenance of the school calculated at Re 1 per unit of average attendance of eligible pupils.

No grant will be payable in respect of the following pupils in estate schools:

a. Pupils below 5 years or above 18 years of age.

b. Pupils in excess of the floor space allowed, i.e. 10 square feet per pupil.

c. Pupils for whom no desk or bench accommodation is provided.

d. Pupils presented for examination in a standard they have already passed.

Results grant was abolished in respect of English schools in 1914, and of vernacular and bilingual schools in 1925. The basic maintenance grant for assisted schools (prior to their take-over by the State in 1961) was Rs 2.50 per unit of average attendance of eligible pupils.[128] They had an additional advantage over estate schools in that the grant due for a year was payable during that year in quarterly instalments. They were also entitled to grants towards the cost of books and equipment supplied to poor students.

Teachers, school hours and curriculum

No qualifications were prescribed for teachers in estate schools for a very long time, and the Administration Reports of the Director of Education for the 1920s refer constantly to the poor quality of the teachers in these schools. Attempts were made to improve standards of teaching by means of conferences and the appointment of a special inspectorate for these schools. In 1936, the minimum qualification required was the Junior School Certificate; it has now been raised to the Senior School Certificate with 6 passes, two of which should be credit passes. Language and arithmetic have been made compulsory. Teachers in estate schools are appointed by the management of the estate with the approval of the Ministry of Education.

The prescribed basic salary varies between Rs 35 and Rs 45 p.m. for teachers in single-session schools, and Rs 55 for those teaching in double-session schools, with a dearness allowance of 30 per cent of the basic salary. However, since 1950, estates in the membership of the Ceylon Estates Employers' Federation have adopted a scheme which enabled teachers in their schools to draw better salaries than what they would be entitled to by law. This scheme was amended from time to time, and single-session and double-session teachers are able today to earn maximum salaries of about Rs 240 and Rs 310 per month respectively. Most estates give their teachers annual bonuses and such fringe benefits as free tea and firewood, in addition to the free quarters that are required to be given them under the law. These scales do not, however, apply to non-member estates, most of which pay their teachers very much less. This is true also of the one estate school managed by the Anglican Church.[129] Salaries of teachers have been reduced on some of the estates which were taken over during the first phase of land reform in 1964.

The sessions are generally from 8 to 10.45 a.m. and from 10.45 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and one teacher takes 2 or 3 classes at the same time. As the law does not require separate classrooms, all the children in the school are accommodated in a common hall. The curriculum requires the teaching of the 3 R's, a little speech, and some drill and games. In 1936 the syllabus of estate schools was revised and brought in line with that of ordinary assisted schools in respect of reading, writing and speech, and lately environmental studies have been made a requirement for the higher classes.

The 'take-over' of Assisted Schools and Training Colleges

Though the Kannangara Committee had advocated the existence of state and denominational schools side by side, opposition to the denominational system had been mounting for some time and several reasons were given for its abolition. It was urged that denominational schools run by the Christian missions had enjoyed certain advantages earlier, and were continuing to receive favoured treatment; that they were instruments of proselytization; that Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim children attending them were being denied religious education; that the existence of schools of so many denominations led to undue waste

and duplication, unhealthy rivalry among religious groups, and religious segregation. All these arguments were contained in the Report of the Buddhist Commission [130] that was presented to the late S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike prior to the elections of 1956. He had, while taking note of their demand, held that any action in respect of it could be taken only 'after due discussion with the parties concerned and in a manner that will not hurt the feelings of others'.

When the Sri Lanka Freedom Party[130a] Government of 1960 finally decided to proceed with the taking over of the schools, the assurance was given that what was sought to be achieved was 'a system which is devised to ensure equality of educational opportunity to all children regardless of race, religion, economic conditions or social status, and which is national in its scope, aims and objects and in conformity with the cultural, religious and economic aspirations of the people devoid of all the anti-national influence and fissiparous tendencies, and which is organised on the basis of the country's technical developmental needs, and administered by the one and only impartial authority that has a mandate from the people to be in charge of the education of their children'.[131]

The Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (Special Provisions) Act No. 5 of 1960, and the Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (Supplementary Provisions) Act No. 8 of 1961, however, provided for the existence also of two classes of unaided private schools, fee-levying and non-fee-levying, subject to the conditions that arrangements be made for the religious instruction of those belonging to 'unlike' religions or religious denominations. No reference was made in either of these Acts to estate schools.

The National Education Commission, also called the Jayasuriya Commission,[132] in its Final Report (1962) recommended that schools be set up on a zonal basis, and that the children of estate workers be admitted to them along with the children of the area, provided that their education was to be through the Sinhala medium. A levy of Rs 100 per acre was to be made from the owners of estates to be utilised for the building of schools. The White Paper on Education,

1964, proposed that all estate schools should be taken over by the State and run as Basic Schools with the official language as the medium of education.[133] The White Paper of 1966 made no mention of the State's obligation in respect of these schools or of the medium of instruction in estate schools. It reiterated the employer's duty to provide suitable buildings etc. as required by Ordinance No. 26 of 1947, but left it to the proprietor or any other person or body of persons authorised by him to use them to run a private school with the authority of the Minister.[134]

Estate schools and the national system of education—Government's record

According to the Administration Reports of the Director of Public Instruction two estate schools started by the Tamil Church Mission, viz. Spring Valley and Tonacombe, were taken over by the Government and run as state schools during the last decade of the nineteenth century. This does not appear to have been in accordance with any new policy initiated by Government in respect of estate schools, for generally the estates continued to be petty kingdoms with the superintendent being in charge of everything including justice, education and health.

The Government's failure to undertake duties which in other countries were regarded as falling within its province was commented upon by Orde Browne in his Report on Labour Conditions in Ceylon, Malaya and Mauritius, wherein he pointed out the anomaly of leaving the supervision and management of such institutions as a school or a hospital to the estate manager who had none of the technical qualifications necessary for the office, and who was, in any case, fully occupied with the carrying out of his normal work. All that the Government was doing in the matter of schools was the payment of a 'generally inadequate contribution to the teacher's salary'. It was possible (with the development of motor transport and a fine system of roads) to build schools and hospitals around central institutions, which would admit of a higher standard of inspection by the appropriate government officers. It appeared inevitable that there must eventually be a change-over to state management of education, public health and welfare measures, from a system which left these mainly to private control.[135]

It has been stated earlier in this monograph that though there had been no reference to estate schools in the Report of the Special Committee on Education, Kannangara had been ready to make the necessary provisions for the education of the children of estate workers in the ordinance that was meant to implement the recommendations of the Committee. His concern for the education of this category of worker can be judged from his utterances during the debate on the ordinance, when he said 'The House is aware of the present condition of estate schools. Owing to the ignorance of the labourers this state of affairs has gone on, and a mere smattering of education is being given to the children of these labourers, an education that leads them nowhere...' He had held conferences with the Ceylon Estates Proprietors' Association, the Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union, the Independent Members of the State Council and the Agent of the Government of India, and they were all in favour of converting these estate schools into state schools. He also referred to the resolution passed in the State Council that 'All estate schools shall be converted into primary State Schools and shall form part of the system of national education'. One of those who had supported Kannangara was S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike.[136]

In the debate on the amending Act No. 5 of 1951 W. A. de Silva complained that the children on most estates got an 'even more shoddy education' than what Government provided for others, and expressed the hope that in any new education Act it would be made perfectly clear that the State assumed equal responsibility for the education of all children whether on estates or elsewhere.[137] S. J. V. Chelvanayakam too complained that the White Paper of 1950 had been silent on the subject of estate schools, and gave as a reason the fact that those who were thus affected did not have the power to force the Government to think of their problems. The Minister's predecessor (Kannangara) had made better provision for improving the condition of estate schools than had been done throughout the existence of the 'present Parliament and the present Government'.[138]

It was certainly unfortunate that Kannangara who had fought for so many progressive measures could not remain in office long enough to carry out his proposals for the betterment of the children of the estate worker. But it is possible that even if he had remained in office, he

would have been a voice in the wilderness. His successor, E. A. Nugawela, Minister of the first Parliament of independent Ceylon, who had stated in the House of Representatives on 1st March 1949 that 'Steps are being taken under this Ordinance to take over schools which comply with the conditions'[139] again said on the 10th August, 1951, 'We have made provision to take over 150 schools in 1951-1952'[140]. There indeed appears to have been such a scheme. A survey of all existing estate schools had been made, and a plan prepared, according to which it had been proposed to close 80 schools which were in the vicinity of government or assisted schools, and to amalgamate schools in neighbouring estates or divisions, thus reducing their number from 273 to 118, and to let the rest (602) continue. Thus the total number of estate schools was to be reduced from 955 to 720, which were over a period of years to be taken over by Government.[141] Altogether 24 estate schools were taken over by the State between 1951 and 1954, after which, on representations made by planting interests, the legal requirement to provide building and land was administratively relaxed.[142]

Promises continued to be made punctuating periods of inaction, and commissions continued to recommend the taking over of estate schools and integrating them into a national system. Thus in August 1954 the then Minister of Education said, 'I shall gradually take over the estate schools'.[143] This was soon after the granting of the concession referred to in the previous paragraph. Nothing was done in this direction by successive governments. However, on the 4th May 1965 a statement was made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education that 'it is proposed to include a suitable scheme in regard to estate schools in the proposals for a National Education Scheme which is now being prepared'[144] Nothing came of the 'scheme' as has been observed earlier.

The Government of the United Front[145] is committed to the taking over of estate schools and integrating them into the national system of education, and expressed its intentions clearly and unequivocally both in its election manifesto and in its first Throne Speech. In pursuance of its objectives it entered into dialogue with plantation trade unions irrespective of political affiliations and set up a Tamil Division in its Ministry of Education. The request was made jointly

by these unions that all estate schools be taken over immediately and run as feeder schools to *maha vidyalayas*.[146] The Ministry of Plantations, however, asked them to suggest the names of 100 schools that were centrally situated, which could be gradually raised to the status of secondary schools; the unions suggested the names of 165, but no agreement appears to have been reached on this matter. Altogether 14 schools were taken over. Later the Ministry of Education sent its own officers round and on their report selected 52 other schools. No action appears to have been taken since then, the reason suggested by some being the lack of proper buildings. In the meantime, a certain disorganisation has been caused by the processes set in motion by repatriation and the take-over of estates under the Land Reform Law.

5
The position today

Estate schools

Schools and school attendance

The following statistics relating to the education of children on estates, appearing in the Administration Reports of the Commissioner of Labour (based on information supplied by the Director of Education), will be of interest:

Year	*No. of estate schools*	*No. of children attending school*	*No. of children of school age*
1948	968	51,451	88,475
1955	891	67,110	118,856
1965/66	880	80,911	Not given

No statistics regarding estate schools have been given in this from in the Administration Reports of either the Department of Labour or the Ministry of Education since the year last mentioned, but according to the Schools Census for 1972 there were 8 Sinhala schools with 682 children on the roll, and 771 Tamil schools with 76,237 pupils. In 1973 the total number of students, both Sinhalese and Tamil, was 76,376. Only 24 estate schools were taken over by Government between 1948 and 1955, hence the reason for the reduction in the number of schools will have to be looked for elsewhere. The decline in the number of schools and in school attendance since 1965/66 could be

partly due to the repatriation of Indian labour under the Sirima-Sastri Pact (1964) and the taking over by the Government of a few estate schools since 1970. A constant factor has been the neglect of estate education by both the Government and the employer, resulting in the closure of a number of estate schools over the years.

It is reported that since 1973 schools that were on estates taken over under the Land Reform Law of 1972 and managed by the Land Reform Commission or distributed among villagers have been closed.[147] Some of these were the schools on:

Narthupana Estate, Neboda	—	Kalutara
Woodstock Estate, Radella	—	Kandy
Attabage Estate, Pussellawa	—	Kandy
Pupuressa Estate, Pupuressa	—	Kandy
Kirimetiya Estate, Menikdiwela	—	Kandy
Thamaravalli Estate, Dolosbage	—	Kandy
Kurunduwatte Estate, Peradeniya	—	Kandy
Patiyagama Estate, Deltota	—	Kandy
Giridiella Estate, Rangalla	—	Kandy
Yataderiya Estate, Undugoda	—	Kegalle
Friedland Estate, Bogawantalawa	—	Nuwara Eliya
Wariyapola Estate, Matale	—	Matale

The Tamil school at Gona Adika Estate, Gampola, has been converted into a Sinhala school.

In some cases a school has continued to function in the part of the estate vested in the Land Reform Commission, but those who live on the portion allowed to the owner and his family have no access to it; in other cases the school may be located in the portion allowed to the owner, but the number of children of school age left there may not be sufficient for him to run a school.

Even before nationalisation certain company-managed estates were reported to have closed the schools in some divisions, so that children in those divisions were compelled to walk long distances to

schools in other divisions or to abandon schooling altogether. According to the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Agency Houses and Brokering Firms about 100,000 children of school age on estates were without schooling in 1974.[148]

School attendance has dropped further since then owing to the food shortage, which affected estate workers more than others. Children of school age have during the last two years gone out to work either as domestic servants or as employees in eating houses in the city of Colombo and elsewhere. It is reported that those who are not old enough to leave their homes in search of such work stay away from school to attend to duties normally performed by their elder brothers and sisters. Lack of the means to buy adequate clothing is given as another reason for the present decline in school attendance.

In certain areas, chiefly in the Southern Province, Tamil children from estates attend Sinhala schools in the villages. This occurs especially where the estate school is so poorly equipped that boys walk to the school in the villages while the girls attend the estate school. Though Tamil remains the language of the home, and religious and social festivals are observed with strict adherence to tradition, both parents and children speak Sinhala fluently and maintain friendly relations with their neighbours. Perhaps in a few generations they will be assimilated into the community around them—unless they are repatriated or are refused work on the estates taken over by the State.

Buildings and equipment

According to a senior official attached to the Ministry of Education only 38 estate schools satisfied the minimum requirements of the law in regard to buildings and land in 1971.[149] One of the difficulties that stand in the way of the take-over of estate schools by the present Government is said to be the lack of adequate buildings. The best estate schools consist of a single hall without partitions. A good many others are housed in half-walled buildings adjoining a temple, creche, store-room or weighing shed, and some in lines or in buildings originally meant for purposes other than schools; a few buildings are said to be new, but not planned specially for schools.

A type plan for schools was sent by the Department of Education to the Planters' Association some years ago, but the owners were often satisfied with converting existing buildings, like abandoned factories, into schools.

The furniture in the best equipped schools consists of long benches and desks, and a blackboard for each group of classes, but it is not unusual to see even in such schools a large number of children in the lower classes huddled together on one long bench (with no desks), or even seated on the floor. Maps are supplied where geography is taught, and books are given free on most estates, but abuses by teachers, who misappropriate the new books and foist on the children books of the previous year, are not unknown.

Teachers

The stipulations made so far for teachers in estate schools have been only in regard to their minimum educational qualifications and have no reference to their fitness to teach. According to the Administration Report of the Director of Education for 1963, 766 out of the 1197 teachers (in 875 schools), i.e. 64 per cent of them, were uncertificated. Some of them with qualifications equivalent to grade 8 have earned Service Certificates by virtue of their long service. A few years ago provision was made for estate teachers of 10 years' standing to enter Teacher Training Colleges, but very few of them took advantage of this offer, because they were either not paid salaries during their period of study leave or were obliged to pay their substitutes out of the salaries they were being paid. Those who entered Teacher Training Colleges under these conditions did not return to estate schools because the management would not pay them the salaries they were entitled to as trained teachers. According to a recent directive from the Ministry of Education,[150] teachers in estate schools approved by the Ministry who do 20 hours' teaching per week in normal classes and have served 7 years as teachers are eligible to apply for entry into Government Teacher Training Colleges for a three-year training course. They will, however, be required to produce documentary proof that they will be paid a salary or allowance by their employers during this period and that they will be re-employed by them on completion of their training, as there could be no promise of employment under

Government. They are subject to the further handicap that they will have to compete with those who are in many ways better qualified. There are, in spite of all these difficulties, a few who have entered Teacher Training Colleges. Since 1970 a few trained teachers and graduates have been teaching in estate schools, but they are not paid the salaries they are entitled to on their qualifications.

The pupil-teacher quota in estate schools is higher than in other schools, being 64 pupils to 1 teacher as against 24 to 1 in government schools, according to the Statistical Abstract for 1970/71 compiled by the Ministry of Education and published in 1974. It is not uncommon for one teacher to be called upon to teach between 50 and 100 children in grades 1 to 5 within a single session of 2 to 2½ hours or to be made to repeat this performance in another school (sometimes on another estate) and be paid as a 2-session teacher. Most schools have two teachers, generally a husband and wife team, and most owners of estates prefer such an arrangement owing to the legal requirement about quarters for married teachers. Complaints are often made that, as a result of this, students are not given sufficient attention and that they are even employed during school hours on the teacher's private work. Some schools employ only one teacher, and instances have been reported of schools remaining closed for several months on his death or transfer or when he goes on leave.

In spite of all these handicaps several of these teachers are dedicated to their work and occupy positions of respect in the estate community.

Curriculum

In spite of the efforts made in 1936 to raise the standards of teaching in the 3 R's and the introduction of environmental studies in recent years, the curriculum in most estate schools remains practically what it was in 1907. This can be partly explained by the poor qualifications of the teachers and the utter impossibility of teaching so many children of varying ages and grades anything that requires effort or attention, within the two hours prescribed by the law. Nevertheless, several schools on estates teach more than the minimum number of hours required by the law, and provide a more varied course of studies than one

would expect under such limitations. Extra-curricular activities such as scouting and dancing are provided for in some schools; some even teach a little English.

In recent years dedicated Education Officers, chiefly of estate Tamil origin, have with the co-operation of the teachers raised the standard of teaching by means of conferences and seminars and 'Tamil Festivals'. In the Nuwara Eliya District (which includes Hatton), a standard 5 test has been introduced. Success in this test would enable students from estate schools to pursue their studies in the secondary schools in the town. But the majority of those who pass out of estate schools find it difficult to fit into the appropriate grade in the secondary schools in the towns, and pose a problem to the teacher who will have to cater to children of widely varying attainments in one and the same class.

Health and medical care

Children attending estate schools were not entitled to the milk and buns gifted to Government by CARE (Committee for American Relief Everywhere) when they were issued free to children in state schools, or to free dental examination by School Medical Officers or to free spectacles. Nourishment for school children is now given in the form of biscuits made out of THRIPOSHA, a wheat-soya bean powder.[151] Managers of estates who wish to provide such nourishment to the children in their schools are required to pay Re 1 per month as packaging charges.

The medical facilities available on estates have often been overrated. It is perhaps not sufficiently known that the medical ordinances applicable to estates make no distinction between indigenous and Indian labour, and that the provisions relating to housing and sanitation are not observed by most estates. Under the Minimum Wages (Indian Labour) Ordinance No. 27 of 1927 Indian male workers of and above 16 years of age and resident widows having children under the age of 10 years dependent on them are each entitled to receive 4 measures of rice free per month; it is also lawful to issue cooked meals to children instead. Employers were allowed at various

times to issue free rations or cash in lieu of the free rice. Today only the cash value of 4 measures of flour is given. On most estates this concession has been extended to resident indigenous labour as well.

General

It will be seen that the present condition of estate schools stems from the fact that they are an anachronism today and that no serious efforts were ever made to bring them into line with the rest of the schools in the country, even after Independence. One has only to study the ruses that the teacher has often to employ to see that a sufficient number of students are present at an inspection to satisfy the Inspector and so earn the grant on which his salary depends, to understand the tragedy that is enacted in the name of education on estates.

Schools in planting districts

The grossly inadequate facilities for primary education, the almost total absence of facilities for secondary education and the very poor quality of such instruction as is possible in estate schools have compelled many children from estates to seek admission to schools in neighbouring towns. But such openings are very meagre and unsatisfactory and in many areas totally absent.

1. There are many areas where there are no government Tamil schools, and where if instruction is provided at all in the Tamil medium, it is in Muslim schools, which owing to the very purpose for which they were established are obliged to limit the admission of children who are not of the faith. There are no government Tamil schools at Roebury (which is 38 miles from Badulla and 25 miles from Passara) at Monaragala, at Rangalla, between Namunukula and Bandarawela, between Horana and Alutgama, at Kotagala, Patana, and Bogahawatte, in North Matale, and between Kandagedera and Hali Ela—to cite only a few examples.

2. Often where instruction is given in the Tamil medium it is in very poorly equipped schools. What goes by the name of the Tamil Maha Vidyalaya at Welimada, for instance, consists of two half-walled buildings. The senior section of the school with its brick half-walls and floor space of 25ft by 100ft adjoins, and is a few feet below, the main

road. It has to compete with a bi-weekly fair with its dust, its noise and its smells. The junior section with its half-walls of wood is dangerously near the river, which in January 1975 was reported to have invaded the school and carried away its furniture. This school, which has on its roll 300 boys and 200 girls and employs 16 teachers, was founded by the Tamil Young Men's Association of Welimada in 1937, and was opened for use on the 3rd February 1941 by Mrs F. R. Basset the wife of a planter. There is no science laboratory in the school, no provision for games and no room in the grounds for extra buildings. In spite of all these handicaps this school has on occasion fared very creditably at public examinations. The nearest Tamil schools of similar grade are those at Nuwara Eliya, Bandarawela and Badulla, which are from 12 to 18 miles away. The Welimada Central School on the other hand, which provides education only in the Sinhala medium, is a *madhya maha vidyalaya*[152] and perhaps one of the best equipped schools of its class in the Island, with fine buildings and spacious playgrounds, facilities for the teaching of science, commerce, and music and for vocational training. It also provides hostel accommodation at subsidised rates to scholarship-holders.

3. There is no 'All-Island'[153] Tamil school in the planting districts, no *madhya maha vidyalaya* for Tamil children, no technical institute teaching in the Tamil medium, and hardly any Tamil schools with hostel accommodation. In the whole of the Southern Province there is not a single Tamil *maha vidyalaya*. The only school teaching science in the GCE Advanced Level in Tamil in the whole of the Uva Province is St Joseph's College, Bandarawela, which has to cater for pupils from as far away as Nuwara Eliya and Hatton.[153a] The Tamil Maha Vidyalaya at Bandarawela, sited in a rather inaccessible place, has no science laboratory. At Deniyaya instruction in Tamil is given at St Matthew's College, and not at the better equipped Central College. At Passara, Tamil students were shifted from the Central College to the Tamil Maha Vidyalaya started in an old government building a mile away from the town. One can hardly fail to notice the difference between the facilities provided in the Sinhala Vidyalaya and and those in the Tamil Vidyalaya at Punduluoya. In certain places, as at Ragalla, parents have been obliged to put up the necessary buildings themselves.

4. Tamil children have also suffered as a result of the process of reorganisation that was initiated in 1961. One result was that Tamil streams in some of the well established and better equipped schools were closed and Tamil children transferred to ill-equipped and poorly staffed schools which did not have the basic amenities. At Badulla, the Tamil streams at Dharmaduta and St Bede's Colleges were closed and Tamil children sent to Saraswathy Vidyalaya, a school that was started by the *Saiva Paripalana Sabhai* of Badulla, which, however, did not have the resources to put up adequate buildings. The closing of the Tamil classes at Uva College was completed in 1975. The present Tamil Girls' School in Badulla accommodates girls who had to leave Badulla High School (now Visakha Vidyalaya) and St Ursula's Convent (now Viharamahadevi Vidyalaya). Similar processes have been at work in various degrees at Matale, Gampola, Nawalapitiya and Rakwana. In Colombo 'reorganisation' has resulted in the closing of the Tamil stream at Christian College, Kotte, (now Jayawardenapura Maha Vidyalaya), the *alma mater* of many a student from the planting districts. The newly formed Tamil schools often have no assembly halls, no facilities for the teaching of science or handwork and no playgrounds. The complaint is also made that teachers qualified in science in Tamil are sent to more favoured schools.

5. It appears to be a general rule in the planting districts that where schools provide instruction in both the national media, the Tamil stream is relegated to the afternoon session. Examples of such schools are the government *maha vidyalayas* at Haputale, Attampitiya, Lindulla, and Kahawatte, Sumana Maha Vidyalaya, Talawakelle, the Matugama Central College and St Mary's College, Matugama. Children attending the afternoon sessions have no scope for sports or extra-curricular activities and are almost always denied the use of the science laboratory. The Tamil stream of Sumana Maha Vidyalaya is not merely relegated to the afternoon sessions, but also confined to the classrooms in the primary section of the school, in spite of the law that school furniture should be suited to the physical requirements of the pupils.[154] The parents of the children attending the Haputale Maha Vidyalaya in the afternoon complained that girls and young children were being obliged to return home late. They have now been given a piece of land on an estate close by for the building of a new school, and are clearing it by *shramadana* (voluntary labour.)

6. Complaints are frequently made of the closing of Tamil streams in government schools or of their gradual reduction, even in schools which the parents of these children have helped to build. Kingswood College, Kandy, ceased to teach in Tamil even before the schools' take-over. St Andrew's College, Nawalapitiya, is now a girls' school where the Tamil stream is very poorly staffed. Tamil streams are being reduced at St Gabriel's, Hatton, and Vijaya College, Matale. Other examples are the Kadienlena Bazaar School, which was put up by the Tamils of the area and later handed over to the Government, the Tawalantenne Government School, built by the Hindu Mahasabhai, and catering for both Sinhala and Tamil students, and the Rambukpitiya Government School. The move to close the Tamil stream at Christ Church College, Wattegama, was temporarily stayed by Court action instituted by the Parent-Teachers' Association. A settlement has since been reached whereby alternative accommodation was promised to the Tamil students; the carrying out of the promise is still awaited.

7. Tamil children from the estates have also been adversely affected along with other Tamil children by two new principles introduced by the Ministry of Education since 1956. In that year the Minister of Education divided Tamil medium schools into Tamil majority schools and Muslim schools, in accordance with the relative numerical strength of the two communities. It was subsequently ruled that in these schools the head should be one who professes the faith of the majority of the students. In the calculation of majorities the children of the 'stateless' are not taken into account. This has resulted in several Tamil medium schools being converted into Muslim schools, such as St Mary's Kumara Vidyalaya, Nawalapitiya, and the Muslim Vidyalaya at Hali Ela. Charges are also made by Tamil parents that their children are refused admission to certain schools for fear that this would change their 'character'[155].

The following letter addressed to the headmaster of a school in a planting district will explain in part some of the discrimination shown to children on plantations in the sphere of education:

My No. UPD/7098

The Headmaster,
B/Passara T.M.S., Passara.

Admission of Children to Bd/Passara T.M.S.

Please do not admit the following categories of children in view of the overcrowding at your school:—

(1) Children under the 6th standard and above who come from estate schools;

(2) Children in standard 6 and above who are not citizens of Ceylon;

(3) Children who have other Tamil schools or Tamil streams closer to their homes.

Education Office,
Bandarawela.
3.12.62.

(*Sgd.*) **B. P. M. Senanayake**
A.D.E. (Uva).

The Minister of Education in reply to a request made by the Member for Bulathsinhala to withdraw 'this most inhuman circular' immediately, said that non-nationals would be admitted to government and Director-managed schools as before, but only after all nationals who sought admission had been provided for. No promise was made, however, that steps would be taken to provide accommodation for those who were being kept out.[156] The principle contained in this letter does not appear to be strictly enforced now. Perhaps it does not have its old relevance. The letter merely serves as a reminder of the discrimination that children of estate workers frequently encounter.

And so it has come about that to a sizeable section of the children living in this country two of the educational measures that were meant to be progressive have at best been but a mixed blessing. Free education created a rush to schools and led to the edging out of many already attending them. In the process those who suffered most were the children of plantation workers. The class segregation which it

was sought to avoid by the State taking over assisted schools appears in practice to have been replaced (or augmented) by a racial, religious and linguistic segregation. It is ironical that the only hope of a fair education for some of these children is the denominational school, the very type that it was sought to discourage; and that some of the government schools that accommodate them are those which the parents have to help liberally to enlarge and maintain.

Pre-school, practical and tertiary education

Pre-school education

It is often maintained by trade union leaders that the chief purpose of the estate school is to keep young and restless fingers from damaging tea bushes and that of the estate *crèche* nothing more altruistic than to see that working mothers were not disturbed while at work.

On most estates the *crèche* is a bare, unused room, and the *crèche* attendant a retired woman worker no longer fit for active work in the field, whose main duty is to rock to sleep little babies cradled in *sarees* hung from the roof. Sometimes she has in addition to look after a few children below school age, but no toys or picture books are provided. A suggestion was made some time ago that educated and unemployed girls on estates be trained to look after and teach little children and to instruct working mothers in child care and sanitation, but nothing came of it owing to the dearth of institutions which train nursery teachers in the Tamil medium. In September 1975 a course of training in pre-school teaching and child care was started at St Joseph's Institute, Piliyandala, under the sponsorship of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Here 25 girls from the planting districts constituted the first batch of trainees.

Practical education

The Technical Training Centres run by the various government departments are not open to the 'stateless', and are virtually closed even to children from estates who are citizens. A partial solution to this problem will be the setting up of technical and agricultural training centres by private bodies, like the one attached to St Anthony's Church, Dehiowita.

Tertiary education

Although non-citizens are entitled to free education in primary and secondary schools, they are not allowed this privilege in the University under the present regulations. They are charged tuition and examination fees, and are not entitled to bursaries, scholarships or even to the bank loans which other undergraduates can take.

Students of Indian origin from the planting districts are further handicapped by the present method of 'standardisation'[157] which requires a higher standard of performance in the General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) of all students sitting the examination in the Tamil medium, before they can qualify for entrance into certain faculties of the University. Nor will selection on the basis of district quotas for admission to the University confer more than a marginal benefit on candidates from the estates, because the few who survive 'standardisation' may not be able to afford the fees non-citizens are charged at the University. According to teachers of Indian origin in the University of Sri Lanka, only about 250 students belonging to thie community have graduated so far, and the number currently at the University is about 100. The number of those who are Children of labourers in either of these categories is negligible. (The total number of undergraduates at the 6 campuses of the University is over 15,000)

Many of those of Indian origin who attend the University are those who have the means to pay fees; others are helped entirely or in part by one of the plantation trade unions or by funds provided by the Indian High Commission.[158] A few have been able to pursue their studies in India on scholarships awarded by the same donors.

A reason given by one of these young men of Indian origin who had graduated from the University of Sri Lanka why even those with means do not pursue higher studies is pessimism regarding employment opportunities on graduation. It was also his view that the reason why trade unions could not combine to start a fund for higher education was the difficulty of choosing candidates who would be acceptable to all parties.

A few have entered Teacher Training Colleges and are occupying posts in the country's educational service, but their numbers are negligible.

6

Results of the system

Limited success

It was only those who were fortunate enough to be able to escape the limitations of the estate school who achieved any success in the sphere of education. They were mainly the children of *kanganies* and of members of the subordinate staff, who had the means to attend the bigger schools in the towns. A few of the children of labourers walked several miles to the smaller schools. Some of them were helped by scholarships established by private bodies or occasionally by well-intentioned employers.

Those who were given the opportunities strove to profit from them. A few were prize-winners, 'coloursmen' or senior prefects in leading schools. Some of them made good in various walks of life, or chose to serve as teachers, priests or trade union leaders. One of them became Sri Lanka's first Minister of Labour.[159]

A few sons of labourers who benefited from the reforms of the 40s—free education and the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction—took to business, or entered government service or the professions. There are among them also several writers in Tamil, and a few poets.[160] Some of them were influenced by truly national Indian poets like Subramania Bharathi,[161] others by writers with left leanings. Among those with or without formal schooling are many who are able to make intelligent contributions at workers' seminars.[162]

The education thus received has contributed to some extent to the breaking down of caste barriers, the emancipation of women and the creation of a body of men and women who have had the training to work for the betterment of their community.

Failure

The rate of literacy and the level of education on estates are the lowest in the Island, with more than 50 per cent of the women not having been to a school, and the repetition and leaving rates the highest, in spite of (or, perhaps, because of) the very limited curriculum followed in estate schools. The following statistics obtained from Government sources, will illustrate these facts.

Literacy—Those over 10 years of age (percentages)

All Island	*Urban Sector*	*Rural Sector*	*Estate Sector*
82.6	88.7	84.3	61.2

Source: Socio-Economic Survey, 1969/70, preliminary report, October 1971, p. 8, Table 6.0.

It may be noted that the Census Department's definition of literacy is merely the ability to read and to write a few simple sentences in the mother tongue. (On estates the decision on matters of this nature is made at the office).

Level of education—Total population—5 years and over (percentages)

	All Sectors	*Urban Sector*	*Rural Sector*	*Estate Sector*
No schooling ..	17.5	11.4	15.8	38.9
Primary ..	44.6	37.8	45.4	51.0
Middle grade ..	30.4	37.9	31.7	8.8
GCE (Ordinary Level)	6.6	11.0	6.3	1.3
GCE (Advanced Level)	0.9	1.9	0.8	0.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: As above. Table 7.1

Those with no schooling—classified according to sex (percentages)

	All Island	*Urban Sector*	*Rural Sector*	*Estate Sector*
Males ..	11.6	7.2	10.4	26.8
Females ..	23.4	15.7	21.2	51.8
	17.5	11.4	15.8	38.9

Source: As above. Table 7.1

Level of education—Employed persons (percentages)

	All Sectors	*Urban Sector*	*Rural Sector*	*Estate Sector*
No schooling ..	16.7	8.2	12.3	39.5
Primary ..	42.7	31.4	42.8	51.9
Middle grade ..	29.7	36.6	34.5	7.1
Passed GCE (O/L) ..	9.5	20.1	9.2	1.5
Passed GCE (A/L) ..	1.4	3.7	1.2	—
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: As above. Tables 20.0 and 20.1 (pp. 28 and 29).

Dudley Seers [163], taking his figures from an earlier report of the survey (based on the first round of the investigations), gives the percentages of those without schooling for all sectors as 16 and those for the urban, the rural, and the estate sectors as 7, 10 and 43 respectively. He further analyses the educational structure of the non-estate sector to show that the educational attainments of the younger age groups are on the increase, as indicated below:

Non-estate labour force by education and age, 1969/70 (thousands)

Age groups	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59
No schooling	51	43	106	77	29
Primary: Grades 1-5	316	232	289	239	73
Middle: Grades 6-10	460	286	228	163	43
Passed O/L	167	140	78	47	10
Passed A/L and above	15	23	7	3	1
	1009	724	708	529	156

In the second part of the Dudley Seers Report[164] the following particulars of repetition and leaving rates, in what he calls first level education, for 1968 are given:

Repetition and leaving rates in first level education by region, 1968 (percentages)

Grade	*Colombo*		*Rest of Island*		*Estate*	
	Repet.	*Leaving*	*Repet.*	*Leaving*	*Repet.*	*Leaving*
1.	22.9	1.0	31.1	2.0	41.0	19.0
2.	14.3	1.0	23.9	4.3	40.0	20.0
3.	16.8	1.5	20.0	4.9	37.0	23.0
4.	13.4	1.8	17.2	7.8	34.0	26.0
5.	12.6	3.5	13.9	7.0	28.0	27.0
6.	8.4	3.9	18.4	4.0	—	—
7.	9.4	4.5	14.2	5.2	—	—
8.	9.6	10.7	9.9	10.4	—	—

The Schools Census for 1974 gives the following analysis of students in estate schools and in other schools in the Island, respectively, for the year, as follows:

Grade	*Estate schools*	*Other schools*
1	23,131	361,493
2	15,248	298,807
3	11,115	215,127
4	7,553	320,853
5	5,470	273,150
Total	64,511	1.469,470

The drop in attendance at grade 3 level in non-estate schools is explained by the raising of the minimum school age from 5 years to 6 as from 1972. The fact that this is not evident in the figures for estate schools may be attributed to irregular attendance, heavy repetition and high drop-out rates. The figures reveal that estate schools apart, wastage rates are low in primary schools in Sri Lanka. One might note in this connexion the comments made on our educational system by the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (International Development Association) which visited Sri Lanka in September 1966. It reported that the first level of enrolment in Ceylon in 1964 was 90 per cent of the age group 6-12, which totalled 2,189,000, and added that 'To judge from its Education Pyramid alone it might be said that Ceylon, after Japan, had the best developed educational system in Asia. A very high proportion of children attend school, the wastage rates are relatively low, and the numbers of girls are little lower than those of boys, schools at secondary level are well attended and very large numbers take the school certificate at the end of the tenth year'.[165]

However, although the above comments are no doubt true in regard to Sri Lanka's educational achievements when compared with those of other Eastern countries, the over-all picture of conditions here is by no means rosy, as the following statistics of all-Island attendance in grades 6 to 12 will show;

Grade 6	.. 230,719	Grade 10 Commerce	.. 50,570
Grade 7	.. 206,744	Grade 11 Arts	.. 17,204
Grade 8	.. 162,9	Grade 11 Science	.. 10,397
Grade 9 Arts	.. 104,575	Grade 11 Commerce	.. 3,319
Grade 9 Science	.. 47,091	Grade 12 Arts	.. 18,454
Grade 9 Commerce	.. 30,522	Grade 12 Science	.. 13,231
Grade 10 Arts	.. 142,363	Grade 12 Commerce	.. 2,989
Grade 10 Science	.. 84,036		

Only 10 per cent of those who begin at grade 1 reach the 12th grade, and only half of 1 per cent enter the University. The inadequacies of the present educational system and the problems of overcrowding at the University and of unemployment among the educated have for some time been the active concern of educationists and planners. The purpose of the educational reforms of 1972 was to rectify these defects and imbalances. To give effect to these reforms it was considered necessary that schools should be suitably equipped and teachers given the requisite training at the primary and secondary levels. Government announced its intention to carry out such a programme in its statement of its Five Year Plan of 1972-1976.[165a] But these measures have so far not reached the children of plantation workers.

Causes of the failure

The blame for this unsatisfactory state of affairs has to be shared by many. Among them are (1) the employer, (2) the State, (3) the Churches, (4) the people of Sri Lanka, (5) the plantation workers themselves, (6) their leaders.

The employer. One is tempted to think that the employer's views on the subject were placed on record for all time by the anonymous writer of a hundred years ago who said, 'There can be no manner of doubt that the primary object of a coffee estate is to remunerate the proprietor, and that the first duty of the Superintendent is to attain that end', and added that his views on education and his spirit of philanthropy should be 'compatible with the simpler and less showy duty of keeping the estate in good order at the least possible cost'.[166] However, a reading of the correspondence attached to the Burrows

Report (to which reference has been made earlier), the annals of the Planters' Association and the Administration Reports of the Director of Education will show that there were many superintendents of estates who did their best for their workers within the limits imposed on them. There were those who thought that an educated labour force was an asset to the estate, and those who encouraged children to attend school by reducing their hours of work without reducing their pay, or even used such unorthodox methods to improve attendance as refusing to issue them their rations unless they attended school. The better established estates have a school in each division and employ persons to escort children to school. Superintendents have been known to visit schools, take an interest in folk dance and drama and allow the use of estate transport to enable children to take part in competitions, or to use their influence to help a bright boy to get into a good school and even give him financial assistance. As mentioned earlier, estates in the membership of the Ceylon Estate Employers' Federation paid their teachers salaries well in excess of what could have been met from government grants.

But a few splendid exceptions only prove the rule. The Report of the Commission on Agency Houses and Brokering Firms referred to earlier has commented on the low priority given to education by the estate employer. The Planters' Association, it has observed, makes no mention of schools in its annual reports. On one estate the expense on schools came under the category of 'building and materials'. It has also pointed out that while workers' unions have often helped poor students to pursue their studies by the offer of scholarships, there is no known instance of an employers' association having rendered such assistance to the children of their employees.[167] Young planters who could be called progressive in their views bemoan the fact that they are hindered from carrying out their programmes for a better deal for their workers by the inadequacy of the funds allotted to them for such purposes. Others admit that while they had always scrupulously obeyed government regulations, they had made no effort to go beyond the minimum requirements of the law, even when they had the means.

The Report referred to above is critical of the qualifications required of the planter and the necessarily limited nature of his vision. The social mobility and independence of thought that would be the consequences of an educated labour force would be incompatible with the need for a 'continuous supply of cheap labour'. But there appear to have been other reasons too. One of them was a dislike of government control. Burrows remarked in his Report that planters did not like to be bothered with government circulars. A suggestion made by the Punduloya Planters' Association (in 1918) that Government should build and maintain schools at reasonable distances from the lines was not acceptable to the parent body. Again, although a suggestion was made in or about 1938 (according to a booklet issued by the Association) that estates could pay for the extension of government schools to accommodate children from the estates, the planters as a body objected to the putting up of buildings on estates, which Government could take over and use for schools.

A charge that could perhaps be levelled against the average employer is that he is not even conscious of the enormity of the crime that is being committed against generations of children under his care. The following extract taken from a recent report will illustrate this.[168]

> On a large, efficient estate in the Nuwara Eliya estate area the present writer discovered a few years ago that the school contained more than 100 children scattered through Grades 1-5. To teach them there was only one teacher. When the Superintendent, a kind-hearted man, was asked why he did not ask his boss for more teachers for his school, he replied, "They'll think I'm mad; nobody has yet pointed this out, but now that you tell me, I admit it's a farce".

The State. The Agency Houses Report referred to above blames the State equally with the employer for their common preoccupation with the need for a 'continuous supply of cheap labour' to the exclusion of any concern for its welfare. It is on record that when civil servants were allowed to invest in coffee they even defied the orders of the Colonial Office which had insisted on the introduction

of certain clauses into the Service Contracts Ordinance for the protection of the worker.[169] Later the opposition to social reform came from the planters, who with the European Members continued to wield much influence in the Legislative Council during the greater part of the nineteenth century. But both Government and employer had to yield perforce to pressure from the Indian Government, which from time to time laid down certain minimum conditions for the supply of the cheap labour which both employer and Government so greatly desired. It is unfortunate that a minimum standard of education was not one of these conditions.

But though planters objected to almost every measure of social reform for which they were called upon to pay (as can be seen from a reading of the reports of the proceedings of the legislature on all such measures) they were not slow to co-operate once the State passed these measures. The sudden increase of missionary schools on estates during the early years of the twentieth century was not due to a sudden outburst of missionary activity, but to Government's decision to make primary education compulsory. The missionary societies were at that time better equipped than the owners of estates to establish schools. Had the State been equally firm in enforcing even the existing law on education on estates, the picture would have been much brighter today.

Several reasons have been given for the State's failure in this regard. One of them is the cost involved. This was the reason given by the late D. S. Senanayake (who was never sympathetic to the Indian estate worker) in answer to a question raised by A. Aziz during the debate on the White Paper of 1950.[170]

This argument has been countered several times over by trade unions representing plantation labour and left wing trade unions, who have always complained that the children of plantation workers whose labour provides the income required to meet the increasing cost of education have to rest content with an elementary knowledge of the 3 R's. In a recent representation it was pointed out that the expenditure presently incurred by Government on the payment of salaries and maintenance grants to estate schools was only Rs 1,000,000 per year,

and that if all schools were taken over the cost would be in the region of Rs 8,000,000. This would certainly be a small sum to spend on a group that helps to bring in 65 per cent of our foreign exchange earnings and a sizeable portion of our national income.[171]

A more potent reason for this neglect was given by S. J. V. Chelvanayakam during the same debate, viz. that the estate workers do not have the power to force the Government to think of their problems.[172] This point of view was also supported by Colvin R. de Silva, who said 'The responses of a Parliament are ordinarily to pressures of the electors. It is only in exceptional situations that the pressures, demands and needs of the unenfranchised reflect themselves in the Parliamentary process. The reason, of course, is that a member of Parliament is answerable to his electors, who after all determine whether he shall be in Parliament at all. Parliamentary Government too responds in the same way. Accordingly, those who fall out of the electoral process, just like those who have never come into it, lose their power to influence Parliament ordinarily, directly and continuously. And this is precisely what happened to the Ceylon "Indians" when they lost the franchise and lost representatives whom they had helped to elect to Parliament'.[173]

It would also appear that there is a reluctance to spend money on the education of a people whose fortunes are still in a state of flux. That would perhaps explain at least in part the relegation of the Tamil streams in plantation areas to the poorer equipped schools or to the afternoon sessions of two-stream schools, their being kept away from the developing Central Schools and the general failure to incur expenditure on buildings and equipment in schools attended by children of estate workers. Though on a superficial consideration such an attitude may appear natural, it is the very disturbed conditions in which these people find themselves that makes a proper education for their children imperative.

The Churches. The failure of the Churches in Sri Lanka to take an interest in the social welfare of the estate worker has been commented on by more than one historian of the times.[174] The reports of the Tamil Church Mission have recorded with pride the evangelistic enterprise of the early missionaries, the dedicated ministry

of 'Padre' Rowlands and the elegant Tamil of Horsley's sermons, but one looks in vain for any mention of a protest against the sub-human conditions under which the faithful lived and the enormous toll of human lives among them and their kin. Kingsley de Silva in his book, *Social Policy and Missionary Organisations in Ceylon*, 1840-1855, comments on the utter inaction of the missionaries in this country in the face of the evils which were within their knowledge and the absence of any effort on their part to influence either the employer or the Government, and contrasts it with the action of their colleagues in Bengal who were in the forefront of the movement against abuses on the indigo plantations.[175] Perhaps the dominant theology of the period saw concern for the material welfare of the under-privileged as of marginal importance.

One of the reasons why missionaries could not take an open interest in the welfare of the estate worker was the fact that they would not have been allowed access to the estates if they did. Another was their dependence on the planters and merchants for financial support. Missionary educators of the day saw it to be expedient to assure employers that 'raising the cooly above his position so as to unfit him for his duties to his employers' was not their object. The education the Mission was likely to impart would only have the effect at the most of 'bringing out a few conductors and writers who would prove themselves useful to Managers of estates'. There would always be a sufficient number to act '*as hewers of wood and drawers of water*'. (emphasis added).[176] It is reported that the Bishop of the day saw it fit to defend planters against the attacks made by missionary organisations in India.

Those who were to identify themselves with these workers were to come in later years. The Reverend Eric L. Robinson of the Methodist Church, who served in the Hatton District in the 1940s was one of them. Of him it was said that his easy manner with the estate labourers was no pose but an expression of his affection for them and of his understanding of their way of life.[177] He was perhaps the first missionary who protested against the deprivation of their voting rights. Another was Bishop Regno of the Roman Catholic Church, affectionately nicknamed the 'Cooly Bishop'. The work of this Church and of its National Pastorate Institute has already been mentioned. The

National Christian Council of Ceylon sent a memorandum of protest to the Government of the day when workers of Indian origin were disenfranchised. It has also been actively involved in affording relief to those who have been thrown out of work as a result of the take-over of estates, and in the formulation of long-term measures to rehabilitate those who are without work.

But the work of the Church has so far been within the existing framework of society, mainly affording relief to those who are victims of certain circumstances. It has also acted though slowly and indirectly by working for the eradication of social inequalities and by the production of a leadership that is actively involved in the welfare of the common man. There are already signs of a more direct involvement in the struggle for a better social order. A militant group of Christians somewhat impatient of the restraints of the established Church is the Christian Workers' Fellowship, which has been hitherto engaged in an active ministry of welfare among workers in the city and has now directed its attention to those on estates. The Satyodaya Study Centre at Kandy has not only set up a secretariat to deal with the problems of the estate worker, but is also engaged in study and dialogue with other groups.

The Socio-Economics Training Institute, Kandy, (SETIK) has as its aim the regeneration of both the peasant and the estate worker. It has established over a dozen centres in rural areas where training is given in such skills as carpentry and lace-making to young persons from village and estate. It also conducts weekly seminars at grass-roots level for estate workers, making use of assistance from both Christians and others. The Centre for Religion and Society at Maradana through research, documentation and discussion seeks, among other things, to inform those who seek knowledge on social and national affairs.

The people of Sri Lanka. It has already been pointed out that the Indian worker, introduced into this country by a foreign power for its own benefit, has become 'nobody's baby' and his welfare for a long time nobody's concern. The fact that the majority of these people were from the depressed classes of South India and their living

and cultural standards below those of the rest of the country prevented even the Tamil-speaking people from accepting them; and it was only recently that the Tamil political parties sought them as allies. The Federal Party[178] has since 1948 campaigned for the Indian workers' citizenship and other rights; but it will be a very long time before any integration can take place.

The Indian worker appears at first to have been ignored by the Kandyan peasantry around him, but changed circumstances have placed him in the role of competitor. It is at times maintained that some of the demonstrations of hostility that accompanied the take-over of estates in the hill country under the Land Reform Law were the expression of a deeply felt resentment against his presence. Such a view is not necessarily correct. The Indian worker has been treated with courtesy by the Sinhalese peasant wherever the two have had occasion to mix. During the revolt of 1848 the Indian worker appears to have been left untouched; it is recorded that he too did not panic.[179] Kandyan peasants are known to have helped in the feeding of Indian workers who were displaced during the first take-over of estates by the Land Reform Commission. It is also the experience of Labour Officers that workers making representations before them as members of their trade unions show a surprising lack of race consciousness.

That the Kandyan peasant has suffered neglect and exploitation for long cannot be denied. The blame should be shared both by the foreign ruler and his own leaders. It is recorded that even in the appropriation of his lands there were local collaborators.[180] As late as in 1937 a motion introduced by a Marxist labour leader to restrict immigration was defeated by a Ceylonese legislature.[181] A conciousness of the sins of commission and omission of an earlier era and a recognition of the delay in rectifying them may perhaps have been behind the impulsiveness and the excesses that were reported to have characterised the first phase of land reform in certain areas. It is the duty of local leaders to see that the processes of restitution are carried out with a ense of responsibility in order not to defeat the objectives they are seeking to achieve. This has been realised by those in authority.[182]

The plantation workers themselves. One of the causes of the backwardness of the plantation worker is said to be his ignorance of the value of education when it is offered to him. It is often forgotten by those who make such a charge that education is a luxury to those who are engaged in a constant battle against starvation. The plantation worker's wages are low in comparison with the earnings of workers in other sectors of the economy for comparable types of work, and in the determination of his wages the fact is taken into account that other members of his family work to enable the family to live above want.[183] Compulsory education and the prohibition of the employment of children under 14 have not prevented such children being employed on contract work along with their parents under the greater compulsion of economic necessity. Such necessity, as well as the lack of adequate facilities for the care of children in the absence of their parents, compels children of school age to remain at home and attend to domestic duties that should more properly be done by their elders. Again, the unattractive environment of the school and conditions at home which are hardly congenial to study have stood in the way of educational progress even on estates which provide schools. A sense of hopelessness regarding the future has been an added factor.

Despite all this the Indian estate worker has shown a remarkable tenacity of character and a willingness to make sacrifices for what he considers worth while. Among those who made the hazardous journey to Sri Lanka, in search of employment, doing most of their journey on foot, were those who carried their Bibles and prayer books with them.[184] Estate labourers have been known to be very regular in the payment of fees and generous in contributing towards the buildings of schools.

Isolationism and a lack of willingness to change are often given as reasons for the Indian worker's misfortunes. While these charges are partly true, one should also be wary of confusing effect with cause and putting all the blame on those who have been victims of circumstances. Isolationism has been due to several factors, both physical and emotional. Among the latter are an attachment to one's religion and culture and an absence of a knowledge of those of the people around one, the institution of the joint family[185] with its roots in India, an

excessive dependence on the *kangany*, and above all a sense of not being wanted, which it is alleged, has tempted some at least to look to militant leaders across the sea.[186] Employers have always been careful, in the interest of 'discipline' it is said, not to let their labour mix with villagers and workers outside their estates. The first workers' movement started in Colombo would not have anything to do with estate workers.[187] But members of Indian labour unions were willing to join Marxist-led organisations when they started operating in the estates, and the Indian unions too were not slow to lose their 'Indianness' in course of time, and to admit into their fold several thousands of Sinhalese workers. Where Indian workers have moved socially with those living around them one can notice changes even in their manners and speech.[188] It is also remarkable that even in the face of complaints of discrimination several Indian workers are content to remain in Marxist and pro-Government Trade Unions, trusting in the possibility of an ultimate solution to their problems with the co-operation of the majority of the people of the country.

The leaders of the plantation workers. It is said that superintendents of estates expressly forbade members of their subordinate staff to fraternise with the workers, and educators too have accepted the existence of two classes to be educated—a principle observed by the *kanganies* themselves in the schools run by them. Members of the community who own estates are not noted for any measures they have introduced to improve the lot of their workers educationally or in any other manner. The complaint has also been made that even trade union leaders and Christian pastors who belong to the higher classes (on estates) have not shown the concern they should have for those workers.

A relentless exploiter of the Indian worker is the jeweller cum pawn broker, who continues to thrive on the helplessness of his compatriots. Of course there have always been among the Indian trading community many who have been generous in their contributions towards the building of schools and temples. But the take-over of the assisted schools attended by their children, the relegation of these children to inferior institutions, and the general sense of insecurity which the Indian community faces today have dried up the springs of

their generosity. Some send their children to private fee-levying schools, thus helping to create a new *élite* divorced from the rest of their community.

One of the reasons given for the apparent inaction of trade union leaders is their fear of an educated working class, for, as has been remarked, there is hardly any worker in the trade union leadership. During the operation of the *tundu* system, when workers were tied to *kanganies* by their indebtedness, it was customary for a *kangany* to leave the estate with his gang at short notice, and it was claimed by employers that this was one of the factors that stood in the way of their education. *Kanganies*, according to the evidence led before the Labour Commission of 1908, were not always dishonest;[189] some of them kept very strict accounts and were known not to charge an interest on loans. But they could hardly have been expected as a class to favour the emancipation of the worker on whose exploitation they thrived.

The Christian pastors of estate Tamil origin are themselves often the sons of members of the subordinate staff, and therefore members of a class above the workers. The complaint is sometimes made of them that they have a tendency to be mere 'planting chaplains' showing little interest in the welfare of their flock and that they made no effort to broaden the scope or improve the quality of education in the estate schools they managed. It is perhaps a reflection not only on their ministry but also on the Christian leadership in the estates that with the refreshing exception of the two Ceylonese pastors in the Lutheran Church, no worker's son has taken holy orders. The Indian Christian community cannot entirely escape the charge of self-centredness.

Natesa Iyer is reported, during a debate in the State Council in 1936,[190] to have complained of the Government's failure to enforce its own laws regarding estate schools. Some years later, in a document that was meant only for private circulation, he accused the employer of not wishing to see the labourer's son rise above his station, but does not appear to have taken any further action on this subject. One of the objects of the Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union, as stated in its Rules published in 1940, was to promote the education of workers

and their children by establishing schools and providing scholarships for higher education.[191] Its successor, the Ceylon Workers' Congress, has a department dealing with workers' education and a fund to pay for the higher education of poor but talented students. A reason given by even the unions that are labelled 'progressive' why more has not been done in this direction is that their attention is perforce so occupied in fighting for the satisfaction of basic needs that education has taken second place. The inference is, however, inescapable that much more could have been done by trade unions than has been done so far. Had they helped to evolve a more informed leadership in the districts, some of the problems that face workers today might not have arisen.

Since 1961, trade unions have shown a greater interest in workers' education than before, as can be seen from the memoranda addressed to the Government from time to time and from the utterances of their leaders at home and abroad.[192] Since 1971, following the protestations of the present Government, they have joined together in spite of ideological differences and conflicting political affiliations to enter into dialogue with the Government and to make concrete suggestions.

There are also several associations and *sangams* interested in this subject, which have made representations to Government.[193]

7

Remedies

Commitments

The National Education Commission, to which reference was made earlier, was of the opinion that all children residing in this country should be given an education that would equip them to participate fully in the life of the country. Such a course was in the nation's own interest, 'for there can be no greater danger to the economic and social development of the country than that there should exist in scattered areas pockets of unschooled or barely schooled adults segregated from the country in which they live. To allow them to exist in that state is to ensure a source of permanent tension which may disrupt plans for economic and social development'.[194]

Sri Lanka is a member of the United Nations Organisation Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights states:

1. Every one has the right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally. available to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 1 of the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education defines 'discrimination' as including 'any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference based on race, colour, sex. language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth.'

In Article 3 of the same Convention the signatories have agreed 'To give foreign nationals resident within their territory the same access to education as that given to their nationals.'

Our own Education Ordinance lays down in section 34 that 'No applicant shall be refused admission to any assisted school on account of the religion, nationality, race, caste, social status or language of such applicant or of either of his parents'.[195] One infers that the State would observe the same principles in the schools that it runs.

Some suggestions

With the nationalisation of estates the responsibility for the education of the children of plantation workers devolves squarely on the State, as every estate school automatically becomes the property of the State. The programme of action that has to be taken to improve these schools will depend on several factors, such as repatriation programmes, the use that is to be made of estates taken over and the internal migrations that will take place. The State will, therefore, not only be guided by its Education Officers serving in plantation areas,, but will also consult workers' representatives and local associations as well as the Ministers concerned with the management of the plantations. While the above considerations will weigh in the selection and siting of schools, it will be necessary to ensure that there is no further deterioration in the standard of education afforded to the children of plantation workers. The following suggestions are made with this end in view:

Schools on estates

1. The State should immediately take control of what are today called 'estate schools' and introduce the necessary machinery for their proper supervision by the appointment of the requisite staff in the local Education Offices.

2. Schools on estates should be brought into line with the other primary schools in the country as regards buildings and equipment, schemes of studies and teaching staff. This may involve re-siting some of these schools, as they may form parts of other buildings or may have been built in places where no expansion is possible. In deciding on sites, factors such as accessibility to roads and nearness to playgrounds should be taken into account.

3. The schools that have been closed should be reopened, and Tamil streams reintroduced into Tamil schools which have been converted into Sinhala schools.

4. Two-media schools (i.e. schools teaching in both Sinhala and Tamil) should be established wherever there is a mixed population, as it is essential that children of the two communities should learn to associate with each other at an early age.

5. The request made by leaders of plantation trade unions that Sinhala should be taught as a second language to Tamil students in schools in the planting districts should be complied with; Sinhalese students in these areas too should be encouraged to learn the language of their neighbours.

6. The request has also been made by certain unions representing plantation workers that in the appointment of teachers to schools on estates and in the plantation areas preference should be given to youth from the plantations with the requisite qualifications. This should be allowed at least for a few years. However, the dangers of undue segregation should be borne in mind, and necessary adjustments made from time to time. The teachers should be persons with the necessary understanding and commitment so that they can provide an informed leadership and be a link between the home and the school.

7. Early action should be taken to train an adequate number of teachers. It may be necessary for some time to make it easier for young persons from the plantations to enter Teacher Training Colleges.[196] Such concessions should, however, be given with care and be consistent with the maintenance of proper academic standards. The possibility of introducing a Tamil stream in at least one of the Teacher Training Colleges in the hill country should be considered.

8. Schools on estates may continue for some time as feeder schools for the secondary schools in the towns, thereby reducing overcrowding in the latter. These schools could create in the children attending them a sense of pride in their environment and act as a brake on the craze for urbanisation that is beginning to affect youth from the plantations. Some of these schools will, however, have to be upgraded and converted gradually into *maha vidyalayas*. Factors such as the elevation of the estate and distance from the nearest town should be taken into consideration in making such decisions.

Secondary schools

1. The barriers that stand in the way of a proper secondary education for children from estates should be removed. Children of estate employees other than those of the supervisory and minor staff are as a rule not admitted to the primary classes of the better equipped schools in the towns. This discrimination should be removed. The 'majority' rule should also be relaxed where it stands in the way of a fair deal for these children.

2. Tamil medium schools in the planting districts should be provided with the same facilities as the other schools for the teaching of all academic, cultural and vocational subjects, and for sports and other activities. Teachers should be appointed on the basis of qualifications and ability to teach, but with fair and just representation of religious interests.

3. The relegation of Tamil streams to the afternoon sessions (a practice that has been introduced into some of the schools in Colombo too)[197] should be stopped. A method should be devised to ensure that the two language streams should be treated in exactly the same

manner, either by providing the necessary accommodation or by arranging that certain classes in both the streams are held in the afternoons. It is not sufficiently realised that such differential treatment is a barrier to integration, introducing, as it does, a 'class' character into a division based purely on language.

4. As far as possible children of the two linguistic groups should be admitted to the same schools. Where this is not possible, every effort should be made to get children of the different schools to meet for sports and common cultural activities. In two-stream schools students studying in the two media should be encouraged to play in the same teams or be members of a common scout troop or cadet battalion.

5. There should be at least one 'All-Island' school in the hill country for Tamil children and a Central School catering to them in each district, with hostel accommodation. *Maha Vidyalayas* should be opened where they are necessary.

Tertiary education

The present disabilities that the 'stateless' face in regard to University education should be removed. University education should be free, and bursaries and scholarships be open to all those who qualify, whether citizens or 'stateless'. Bank loans too should be allowed subject to conditions that guarantee repayment.

Pre-school education

Early action should be taken regarding pre-school education. *Crèches* should be placed in the charge, not of old women who are unfit for work in the field, as is the practice at present, but of educated girls, who should be able not only to look after and teach young children, but also educate mothers in child care and sanitation.

Technical education

In the teaching of vocational subjects stress should be laid on those that are relevant to the environment of the student, like agriculture and animal husbandry, tea research and labour relations.

The present barriers against the children of the stateless entering vocational training centres should be removed. Courses in the Tamil medium should be introduced in the Technical Schools in the planting districts.

Prerequisites

No efforts at raising the educational level of the plantation worker can be successful unless steps are also taken to raise his standard of living. He should be assured of an adequate wage, and provided with suitable housing; and measures should also be taken to improve his health and physical fitness.

Wages

The rather meagre wage increases that the plantation worker has been able to obtain for himself from time to time have hardly kept pace with the increases in the cost of living, and have often been offset by a decrease in the number of days on which he is offered work. It is true that regulations were introduced recently requiring the offer of 108 days' work in 6 months, and that wages have increased so that in February 1976 a male worker could earn Rs 6.32 per working day, a female worker Rs 4.79 and a child worker Rs 4.34. The wages of an unskilled worker in the Engineering Trade for the same month was Rs 8.26 per day, but by a Collective Agreement[198] reached with his employer he has been placed on a monthly salary of Rs 180 rising in 26 stages to Rs 292, working only 5 days in the week. He is also paid a 'non-recurring cost of living gratuity' which enables him to earn an additional Rs 112 per month.

A reason given for the low wages paid to the plantation worker is the poor prices fetched by our tea. Efforts are now being made to secure higher prices and to reach wider markets. It will also be necessary to ensure that the plantation worker is given a sufficient number of days of work each month. This may be done through improved programmes of estate maintenance and crop diversification.

Housing

The minimum standards that have been laid down from time to time regarding housing and sanitation are clear and simple. Government has power to demolish insanitary lines, reconstruct them and charge all expenses to the management of the estate. The employer is required by law to see that lines and their surroundings are maintained in a sanitary condition, the lines lime- or cement-washed annually and the premises inspected at least twice a week. Yet 90 per cent of the lines are of the barrack type, with 70 per cent of the estate population living in single-roomed dwellings. Instances are not unknown of as many as 10 persons occupying a single room 12 ft by 10 ft, meant only for 4, or even of two families sharing a room divided by a jute-hessian partition.[199]

A programme of improving existing lines and converting some of them into dwellings approaching the cottage type was started recently on some British-owned estates partly on instructions from their principals in London following the furore created by the 'exposure' of living conditions on these estates by the Granada Television Company,[200] and partly because of a directive from the Plantation Ministry, requiring them to spend 3 cents of the profits on each pound of tea on improvements in housing. The Government as the new owners must now continue this programme, meanwhile ensuring that the minimum requirements with regard to housing and sanitation are carried out. Workers' dewlling houses should in the future be so structured that families consisting of persons of varying ages can live in decency and comfort. They should be grouped into settlements within easy reach of schools, hospitals and other social amenities.

Health

The requirements of the law relating to such matters as the issue of milk to infants and food rations to children under the age of 10, the removal of the sick to hospitals and the payment of maternity benefits are observed as a rule. But the law itself is inadequate. There is no law that requires the establishment of hospitals, maternity wards or dispensaries on estates. On the 489 estates that were in the membership of the Planter's Association Estates' Health Scheme before the operation of the Land Reform Laws, there were 68 hospitals,

101 maternity homes and 379 dispensaries; they employed 394 medical assistants (of whom 264 were qualified) and 263 midwives (of whom 138 were registered).[201] The hospitals and dispensaries were handicapped by a shortage of drugs. The particulars regarding those not in the membership of the Scheme (which number over 1000) are not known.

Estate workers of Indian origin are not admitted to government hospitals except on 'chits' from the superintendents. Estate co-ops supply only certain items of food, and estate workers of Indian origin have no access to co-ops in the towns. During the food shortage of 1974 workers of Indian origin on estates suffered more than others; the rate of infant mortality rose from 10 per cent to 14 per cent and the general death rate was nearly double that of the previous year.[202] Recent surveys have shown a very high rate of anaemia among working women, and an alarmingly low level of nutrition among children. In one district it was noted that poor sanitation, damp floors and leaky roofs were the causes of a high incidence of bowel and chest ailments[203] The action taken by the State to make American flour available, helped by the increase in the wages of the plantation worker, had its results. Private agencies gave assistance to those who were desperately in need.

It has been suggested that estate hospitals should be taken over by the State and all hospitals made equally available to both villagers and to workers on estates. For such a move to be effective not only should more hospitals be built on estates, but more trained staff and an adequate supply of essential drugs should be made available. Steps should also be taken to assure an adequate food supply at all times. Estate co-operatives should be run on the same basis as those in the towns, and workers of Indian origin on estates should be issued rice ration books in the same way as their counterparts in the towns. Estate labour should also be employed on an intensive programme of food production. Children attending schools on estates and children from estates attending the schools in the towns should be treated like other school children in the provision of food, milk and medical facilities. The State should also launch out on a health and nutrition programme on estates, utilising where possible help that is offered by private bodies and international organisations.

The 200 'polyclinics' that have been established since 1975 for the benefit of plantation workers and their families function at present only one day in the month on an estate; and some of them are at great distances from the estates which they are intended to serve.

Social stability

The carrying out of the measures suggested above has been made somewhat difficult by the unsettling conditions caused by the operation of the Indo-Ceylon pacts and the Land Reform Laws. It is for this reason that the State should ensure that whatever is done in the furtherance of its objectives should be done without adding to the hardships of those who have already had more than their fair share of suffering.

In the implementation of the Indo-Ceylon pacts, those who are accepted as citizens of this country should be treated as equals with the rest of the Ceylonese community and enabled to integrate with them. To achieve this end it will be necessary that they be given full political rights and their religious, cultural and linguistic traditions and aspirations respected. The present distinction between citizens by descent and citizens by registration (who under the present laws will continue to be categorised as Indian Tamils or Indian Moors) should also be abolished. They should, further, be encouraged to take part in common programmes on days of national import like Sahitiya (Literature) Day and Republic Day. Some of the radio programmes that are put across by hill country youth in Tamil should be made available in Sinhala also.

Those who are granted Indian citizenship should be enabled to return to their motherland without undue delay and without harassment. Steps have already been taken to expedite the payment of wages, provident fund benefits and the gratuities that are payable to them. They should also be provided with rest rooms and improved travel facilities. There will be many who will ultimately go to India but who, in the nature of things and as provided for in the pacts, will remain in this country for several years more. Their welfare and the education of their children must also be our concern.

The implementation of the Land Reform Laws presents more difficult problems. A social reform of such magnitude, which can get dislocated even under normal conditions, becomes more difficult of operation owing to the presence in the area concerned of persons of uncertain political status. The Government has, however, declared its policy in no uncertain terms, and has assured the workers of Indian origin that none of them will be displaced or in any way harassed. But it is not always easy for those at the centre to keep in touch with what happens at the periphery, and casualties are of more frequent occurrence than the authorities appear to realize.

1. Several workers of Indian origin were displaced during the first phase of the take-over of estates. This happened mainly on those estates which were fragmented and given over to villagers or handed over to the *Usawasama*[204] and to *Janawasas*.[204a] Those who suffered most in this process were the very old, the very young and women. As observed earlier, the men went to other parts of the country in search of work, while children were often compelled to seek employment in eating houses or as domestic servants. Measures were taken, chiefly by private agencies, to afford relief to these displaced persons or to rehabilitate them. Displaced workers have also sometimes been helped to find work on other estates requiring labour.

2. Even on estates where there was no physical displacement of persons from the lines occupied by them, the influx of village labour had in many cases thrown Indian labour out of work. The latter were then compelled either to look elsewhere for employment or to resort to begging as a means of livelihood.

3. The position of trade unions functioning on plantations appears to have been weakened for two reasons—(a) The Labour Department does not intervene as a matter of policy in disputes in government corporations except at the request of the Minister concerned. (b) Indigenous labour working on estates managed by the Usawasama are considered to be shareholders and not employees, and hence not entitled to be members of trade unions. Indian labour employed on estates managed by the co-operatives are, however, in the anomalous position of not being shareholders but employees without,

in most cases, enjoying the benefits of trade union representation. Complaints are made that trade unions are not allowed 'check off'[205] facilities, and that certain unions are discriminated against.

Duties of the State

1. It will be the duty of the State to ensure that workers of Indian origin are not adversely affected by the manner in which the reforms their representatives have consistently supported are now being enforced. That those who starve will have to be fed, and those displaced rehabilitated or found employment will not be disputed. But the problem becomes more difficult of solution in the matter of land distribution or in cases where the management of an estate is vested in the workers. So far workers of Indian origin have neither been allotted land nor made shareholders in the co-operatives that manage some of the estates, even though they have been citizens for several years.

2. While it will be difficult for political leaders to resist the claims of the indigenous population for preferential treatment, the State cannot continue indefinitely to refuse to allot land either on estates or elsewhere to those who are accepted as citizens of Sri Lanka merely because of their Indian origin. Those who would appear to be qualified for eventual citizenship could be given land on a temporary basis; it should not be difficult for Government to decide as to who these persons will be. Those who are due to leave later should be guaranteed employment until they leave.

3. Trade unions in the plantation sector have had a long and proud history. They have fought and won many a battle against recalcitrant employers, and have on their roll of honour the names of martyrs who by their deaths have secured for them rights that are today taken for granted. Even in the present context, where the employer is no longer the foreigner bent on earning the maximum profits and spiriting them away, trade unions have a part to play. While co-operating with the State in its efforts to maximise production, they will continue to be jealous watchdogs of the worker's rights. It will be a tragedy if a Government that had secured so many rights for trade unions, should as an employer, suddenly refuse to recognise their right to function.[206]

Duties of private organisations

The State's efforts in all these matters will have to be supplemented by those of non-government organizations, such as workers' associations, religious bodies, study circles, social action groups, youth fronts, school societies, service clubs, the YMCA, the YMBA etc., parent-teacher associations and persons of good will among all communities. There will also be scope for the generosity of private philanthropists and of the better placed members of the Indian Tamil community. All of them must realise that the problems that confront the Indian estate worker are the concern of the entire nation and also that their solution should be sought within the framework of a solution to the problems of the society around them and of the country itself. A sovereign and independent country will no longer be subject to the pressures that were behind the reforms of an earlier era, but the co-operation of the Indian Government and of the governments of other countries and of international agencies will also be necessary for a complete solution to our problems.

Some of the ways in which the agencies mentioned above can help are:

Education

1. Offering scholarships to gifted but needy students to enable them to pursue their studies in the schools in the towns or in the better equipped institutions in the other parts of the Island, in the University or Teacher Training Colleges; or paying the cost of books and other items of personal expenditure.

2. Offering special prizes or scholarships to universities and other institutions outside Sri Lanka to encourage those with exceptional merit.

3. Running or sponsoring hostels where accommodation is provided at reduced charges.

4. Donating books and sports and other equipment to schools or contributing towards building or extending classrooms, laboratories etc.

5. Sponsoring institutions—
   a. for teaching children of pre-school age:
   b. for training teachers of such children;
   c. for teaching skills necessary for employment.

6. Operating a system whereby students are enabled to work in order to pay for what they receive, and arranging, where necessary, for the sale of the products of their labour.

7. Encouraging or sponsoring sports, literary and cultural activities, scout troops, youth clubs etc.

8. Organising or sponsoring literacy campaigns for adults. (This would involve, among other things, setting up libraries equipped with suitable books and periodicals, holding seminars and using for educational purposes the radio, the theatre and the cinema.)

9. Encouraging or sponsoring study and documentation. (In these activities the assistance of trade unions and of students and teachers in schools and at the University may be sought.)

10. Engaging in dialogue with the local Member of Parliament, Education Officers, local associations, the Education Ministry and the Government.

Supportive services

The services that have been attempted by the private organisations under this heading include the following:

1. **Emergency services,** such as the issue of food and clothing to displaced persons. This was, perhaps, pioneered by the Diocese of Kurunegala, which set up a special fund for the purpose out of Sunday collections, donations of a month's stipend by priests of the Diocese and voluntary contributions. The National Christian Council of Sri Lanka, with aid obtained from the World Council of Churches,

is performing similar services through its local representatives at Kandy, Hatton and Nuwara Eliya. Among the others in the field are the Badulla District Council of Social Services and the Trinity College Social Service League, which has a long history of service among the poor in and around Kandy.

2. Rehabilitative services. Attempts have been made at Kandy and Badulla to rehabilitate beggars and displaced persons and set them on their feet. The Board for the Rehabilitation of Destitutes at Kandy, in which government departments, the Police, the Army and the National Christian Council are represented, has so far been able to enlist the co-operation of the people of the area in their programme of feeding the hungry. The District Council of Social Services, Badulla, of which the Minister of Social Services is patron, has already started work on a rehabilitation project, and has also been able to assist displaced persons and direct them to estates on which there was a shortage of labour. The moving spirit behind this project is the Roman Catholic Bishop of Badulla. Rehabilitative work is also being done by the Rotary Club of Nuwara Eliya which has launched out on a programme of health education in the estates in the District, and the *Sarvodaya* movement,[207] which has made an attempt to involve the workers on certain estates at Talawakelle in a nutritional programme.

3. **Enabling services.** The efforts that are being made by organisations like SETIK and by certain churches to train youth in the skills needed for employment have been mentioned earlier. The Hatton Social Centre (HATSAC), which aims at enabling workers on estates to realise their worth and dignity, began with a programme of seminars to teach them to help themselves and to integrate with the people around them. It has since launched out on a nutritional programme on estates, set up three small farms and begun courses in dairy farming etc. There is need for more such work. Those who complete their training may also have to be provided with the means to set themselves up in a trade or may have to be given land for agricultural projects.

4. Development of human resources

That the worker's initiative and his inner resources should be developed, that he should be made politically aware, and that he should be enabled to take an intelligent interest in his welfare has not been sufficiently realised in the history of either social service or the working class movement. Attempts to educate the worker through seminars and discussions held at grass roots level are being made by some of the organisations mentioned earlier and by youth fronts.

5. Informative services

Mention was made earlier of the work done by the Satyodaya Centre at Kandy and the Centre for Society and Religion at Dean's Road, Maradana. The methods they employ are study and publication of material, and holding of seminars and conferences which provide forums for an exchange of views.

6. **Miscellaneous**

Under this heading may be grouped the efforts that are being made by certain bodies to serve those who are leaving for India. The *Thayaham Thirumpuvor Sangam* (association of those returning to the motherland) aims at conditioning repatriates to the life and culture of the land to which they are returning. An Indian Roman Catholic priest has not only reported on the difficulties encountered by repatriates at various points on their journey from the estate to their villages in South India, but has also issued a booklet that instructs them on how these difficulties may be overcome and informs them of facilities for employment at home.[208] A suggestion has been made that voluntary organisations should assist repatriates in such matters as the processing of their applications.

The need for a central organisation

The above mentioned services will have to be strengthened and extended. There is also a need of a central organisation, which by itself or in co-operation with others should plan strategies and draw up courses of action. Such a body or bodies should:

a. Seek to gather information by means of study, research, surveys, discussion and dialogue, and by constant contact with workers and peasants.

b. Disseminate information through conferences and seminars and publication in local and foreign languages both of original material and translations of available material that is relevant.

c. Enter into dialogue with Government, with local groups, with organisations in India and elsewhere, and with international agencies, campaign for better prices for our primary products, give publicity to Government's intentions and programmes and be a source on which Government can rely for accurate information.

d. Co-ordinate the work of the various organisations, and in form each of what the others are doing.

e. Reconcile opposing forces, help each to understand the other and work towards stability.

All this will involve expenditure of time, money and human resources; but this will be more than justified by the gains that will be achieved in material welfare and human happiness.

Epilogue

We have been concerned in this study with a class of workers who constitute a tenth of the population of Sri Lanka. Their enforced cultural backwardness and the denial of a proper education to their children have been a cause of their continued exploitation as cheap labour. The depressing conditions of their existence and their undefined political status have in turn stood in the way of their edutional and cultural aspirations.

It is not sought to suggest that there are no other areas of exploitation in this country or that any particular group should be given special consideration to the disadvantage of the others. But a plea can be made for more humane treatment of a class whose labour contributes substantially to our national wealth and makes possible the provision of the social amenities that others enjoy.

Bold steps have been taken recently to solve problems that had defied solution hitherto and to rectify long-standing injustices. There is danger, however, that when sweeping social changes are brought about of neglecting one sector in our preoccupation with the welfare of the others. It will, therefore, be necessary to ensure that this less articulate section of our working class is not in any way adversely affected.

Our Government has accepted responsibility for a certain number of persons who until recently were political orphans. It would be our duty to see that they are enabled to integrate with the community around them with dignity and self-respect, enjoying the rights and privileges that other citizens enjoy and called upon to perform the duties that others are called upon to perform. This would involve a radical change in their life-styles, a departure from their segregated existence in labour lines and their being admitted on a basis of equality into local and national institutions. An adequate education is a requisite

for such integration. Without it, they would continue to be second class citizens or even constitute a depressed community that would be a drag on the progress of the nation.

The Government has announced its intention of taking over 200 estate schools as a prelude to all such schools being integrated with the national system of education. (See *Ceylon Daily News* of 6-12-76). If such a scheme is to be seriously implemented, the entire educational system in the plantation areas will have to be looked into and the gates opened for the children of plantation workers to enter all forms of higher and continued education.

It is also essential that the education imparted to these children should equip them to enter fully into the life of the people around them and into the larger life of the nation. This does not necessitate the sinking of their individualities or the repudiation of their culture and their traditions; for a willingness to live by a genuine commitment to national unity and to share the social and cultural life of one's neighbours is not inconsistent with a consciousness of one's personal and racial identity and an attachment to one's native speech, literature, folk ways and religion. Fortunately, a fair proportion both of the plantation youth and of the people who inhabit the plantation areas are bilingual and have a tradition of taking part in common religious and cultural festivals. This bilingualism and this sharing of experiences should be encouraged at school and in all other areas and at all other levels of national life.

Further, if the changes that are contemplated are to bear fruit, they should be preceded by a serious and well informed dialogue between the Government's representatives and those who can authentically speak for the community concerned. For the involvement of those concerned is essential both for a relevant education and for successful social change. Perhaps a White Paper stating the Government's policies and programmes will keep the country informed. One also hopes that those who are committed to the service of the workers and of the nation will by disciplined study, dialogue and presentation of facts, contribute to the success of this vital national undertaking.

Appendix

A note on national integration and the medium of instruction.

A difficulty that some educators and administrators appear to have with regard to the education of the estate worker in an integrated national system is in respect of the medium of instruction. C. W. W. Kannangara, who seconded without reservation the motion brought up by A. Canagaratnam in 1926 urging the making of the mother tongue the medium of instruction,[209] appears to have been convinced that 'Sinhalese or Tamil is the natural medium for the Sinhalese or Tamil people and the only medium through which they can effectively contribute to the world of literature and art',[210] although he accepted B. H. Aluvihare's amendment to I. X. Pereira's motion regarding estate schools 'that Sinhalese be made compulsory, and Sinhalese of such a standard... that these boys can take the fullest part in the life of the community'. There had been no objection to such a proposition, and the amendment had been passed without a division,[211] Aluvihare, who had made this suggestion as early as in 1942, had as his intention 'to establish contact, and if possible absorb it (permanently settled labour) into the general population'.[212] Again, in 1947, blaming Government for having departed from its earlier intention to erect its schools near estate areas and to get estate children educated along with the other children in the country, he said 'My experience is that once on Indian is settled in a village, very often, in 99 cases out of 100, he just goes and becomes a Sinhalese, and you simply cannot tell the difference between them. It is that we want, not the maintenance of segregation, the maintenance of an educated class who have no real interests, no real community, with the people among whom they live.'[213]

The National Education Commission, which recommended the granting of full educational opportunities to estate children irrespective of their civic status, had stated that 'one of the objects of a national system of education should be to ensure that all children residing in the

country are given an education which would permit them, in adult life, to make a productive contribution to the economic development of the country, to exercise individual and social responsibility, and to participate in and enrich the cultural life of the community in which they live'. But on the subject of the medium of instruction the Commission, which had conceded to Ceylon Tamils the right to be educated at all levels in the Tamil Language, expressed the view that the emphasis attached to the formula of 'instruction in the mother tongue' had a definite historical origin and derived its meaning from a specific socio-political context. The question had never been an issue in countries which did not have the experience of foreign rule over a period of time, and in countries like England, France and Germany in the West, or Japan and Thailand in the East, it was axiomatic that the medium of instruction should be the traditional medium of social intercourse among the population of the country. It was only in countries where, in the interests of foreign rule and administration, the language of the ruler was introduced as the medium of instruction in schools that the importance of instruction through the mother tongue was asserted as a protest against or as a corrective to the alienation that resulted within the population between those who, as a result of instruction through another language, accommodated themselves to an official world at the expense of their integration into the 'general and indigenous environ.' Earlier it had been stated that social integration for Tamil children from the estates was possible only through education in the Sinhala medium (the language of the environment), and in the same classes as the other children of the locality.

More extreme attitudes were expressed by the Kandyan Youth League and a deputation led by L. H. Methananda. The former requested the Commission 'to liquidate these manifestly anti-national pockets lock, stock, and barrel, and to divert the school-going population to the nearest State Institutions'. Methananda's delegation recommended that all children of estate workers who were Ceylon citizens should attend National Schools providing instruction through the medium of the official language, and that those who were not should attend the existing estate schools put up by the estate concerned.

The view that the use of Sinhala as the medium of instruction for children from estates was the best means to their integration with the community around them was not unanimous. S. H. Perinbanayagam, a senior Tamil educationist, pointed out that integration

could not be achieved by the forcible imposition of a language upon an unwilling people. Wherever such integration had been achieved it took place gradually and spontaneously, and was spread over centuries, if not millenia. Moreover, it was not the Sinhalese people alone who had awakened to a realization of the grass roots significance of a people's native speech, ways, folk literature, traditional pastimes etc. C. E. Simithraaratchy, a Sinhalese Christian and the retired principal of a leading school, said that while the task of integrating the estate population with the indigenous population was an urgent one, absorption, not integration, appeared to be the intention of the recommendation. He was not in agreement with the proposal, as it appeared to be coercive and therefore likely to 'create a standstill' in the education of estate children.

The unions representing the estate workers themselves refuted any charge that they wished to remain isolated. In a memorandum to the Commission submitted by the Ceylon Workers' Congress it was asked, 'We may pose the question, whatever may have been the justification in the colonial past, in the imperial era... to keep the estate workers isolated from the rest of the community and immunised from any interest in the history, tradition, problems and affairs of this country, can that system have any validity today?' While the commissioners considered education in the Sinhala medium as the obvious remedy to an unsatisfactory state of affairs, the unions felt that the remedy lay in making compulsory the study of Sinhala as a second language. It was also pointed out that there would be a large number who would be returning to India over a period of years, and that to educate them in any language other than that which they would use in their homeland would be cruel.[214]

The White paper on Education (1964) referred to the introduction of the mother tongue as the medium of education as a revolutionary change, which had, moreover, reflected itself in the vast volume of books published in the mother tongue and in the rise of a national drama. In the section on basic education it maintained that one of the purposes of such education was to assist the pupil to know his heritage and to understand it. It had mentioned earlier that 'in accordance with world practice' non-citizens would have the right to obtain their education through the medium of the official language.[215]

It appears to have been forgotten that, unlike the countries cited by the National Education Commission, which are monolingual, Sri Lanka is largely a bilingual country, that Tamil is already a language of instruction in schools, that estate workers of Indian origin are not newcomers to this country, and that their children are now being educated in the Tamil medium; whereas those who go to live either temporarily or permanently in countries like Great Britain do so having consciously accepted the language of the country of their choice as the medium of communication and instruction. The suggestion that non-citizens should be educated in the official language has no meaning now, as it has been agreed that those who do not become citizens of Sri Lanka will ultimately leave for India.

Abbreviations

ch.	chapter
CHJ	Ceylon Historical Journal
CJHSS	Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies
col./cols	column/columns
ed.	editor
edn	edition
Fr	Father
H	Hansard
HR	House of Representatives
LC	Legislative Council
LEC	Legislative Enactments of Ceylon
MCS	Modern Ceylon Studies
n./nn.	note/notes
NLR	New Law Reports
no.	number
para.	paragraph
reg.	regulation
Rev.	Reverend
rev.	revision
SC	State Council
SP	Sessional Paper
Ven.	Venerable
vol/vols	volume/volumes
YS	Young Socialist

Notes

1. Sir Edward Barnes, Lieutenant Governor, 1820-1822; Governor, 1824-1831.

2. According to the regulations of the East India Company Europeans could not occupy lands outside Colombo. This restriction was removed in 1810 by Sir Thomas Maitland (Governor, 1805-1811) in order to develop British commerce and increase revenue. Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British*, Colombo, 1944, p. 22; Perera, *Fr* S. G. *History of Ceylon for schools*-ii: *The British period*, 1796-1956, Colombo, 1956, p. 71; Hulugalle, H. A. J. *British governors of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1963, pp. 21 and 22.

3. This concession was removed in 1844. Sir Frederick North (Governor, 1798-1805) had allowed civil servants to engage in trade; Maitland stopped this, but made an exception as regards agriculture. Hulugalle, pp. 21 and 70; *Fr* Perera, 1956, p. 71; Mills, Lennox A. *Ceylon under British rule*, London, 1963, p. 77; Dickman. C. *The civil service manual*, Colombo, 1865, p. 50.

4. *Rajakariya* was service rendered to the king. It was either (a) compulsory and gratuitous or (b) compulsory and paid. All citizens according to their castes had to render some service to the king, and take their share in works of public utility, like the building of roads and bridges and irrigation tanks; no payment was made for work of this nature done within one's own district. Barnes, in using this system for building roads and working coffee estates, did not observe this principle. *Fr* Perera, 1956, p. 67; De Silva, Colvin R. *Ceylon under the British occupation*, 1795-1833, Colombo, 1942, vol. ii, pp. 385 ff.

5. e.g. in 1825 Barnes abolished the export duty on coffee and cotton, and in 1829 waived the land tax for 12 years from coffee, cotton, sugar, indigo and opium plantations. Mendis, p. 23.

6. Mendis, pp. 28-35; *Fr* Perera, pp. 86-94.

7. Perera, *Fr* S. G. *History of Ceylon for schools*—ii : the British period, 1795-1946, Colombo, 1946, p. 98.

8. Vanden Driesen, I. H. Coffee cultivation in Ceylon, *CHJ*, vol. iii, no. 1, July 1953, p. 43.

9. *Chena* cultivation is done by clearing an area of jungle or burning off grass on open downs and raising one or two crops there, then moving off to another patch. Pakeman, S. A. *Ceylon*, London, 1964, p. 70 f.n.

10. Clause 6. For varying views of the effects of this and other pieces of legislation, see: Abeysinghe, Ariya. Land reform in Sri Lanka, *Quest* 46, pp. 12-23; Sanmugathasan, M. *A Marxist looks at the history of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1974, pp. 26 and 27; Ludowyk, E. F. C. *The story of Ceylon* (revised edn), London, 1967, pp. 192-194; Roberts, Michael. The impact of the waste lands legislation and the growth of plantations on the techniques of paddy cultivation in British Ceylon—a critique. *MCS* vol. i no. 2, July 1970, pp. 157-198; Roberts, Michael. A selection of documentary evidence for the lecture on 'The administration of the Waste Lands Ordinance No. 12 of 1840 and its impact in the coffee period, 1840-1880s' in the *Archives Lecture Series*, 20th June 1969, (mimeographed paper).

11. Ludowyk, E. F. C. *The modern history of Ceylon*, London, 1966, p. 65.

12. Kuruppu, N. S. G. Labour and the rise of capitalism—an outline to the year 1935. *CHJ* vol. i nc. 2, Oct. 1951, p. 133; De Silva, K. M. *Social policy and missionary organizations in Ceylon*, 1840-1855, pp. 235 and 236; Jayawardena, Visakha Kumari. *The rise of the labor movement in Ceylon*, North Carolina, 1972, p. 16; Ludowyk, 1966, pp. 65-68; University of Ceylon. *History of Ceylon*, vol. 3, pp. 98 and 99.

13. Sundaram, Lanka, Article on Indian labour in Ceylon, *International Labour Review* xxiii, no. 3, Geneva, 1921, pp. 369-387; de Silva, K. M. p. 257.

14. For a cause of the poverty of the peasant in India, see Nehru, Jawaharlal. *The discovery of India*, London, 1951, p. 276; University of Ceylon. *History of Ceylon*, vol. 3, pp. 99-101.

15. Later there were Telugu-speakers from Andhra, a few Malayalese and the 'Muslims commonly known as *Tulicans*'. These castes were chiefly the *Parians* and the *Pallans*. In course of time a fair proportion of the higher castes, like the *Chetties*, *Vellalas*, *Reddys* (Telugu corresponding to the *Vellalas*), *Kallans*,

Maravans and *Nadars*, followed. For definitions and functions of these castes see Green, Lewis B. *A planter's book of caste and custom*, Colombo, 1956.

16. De Silva, K. M. p. 265.

17. *ibid.* p. 247.

18. *ibid.* p. 247.

19. *ibid.* 249.

20. A harvest festival of 2 to 4 days, commencing on the first day of the Tamil month of *Thai* (January-February). It derives its name from *pongal* or the boiling over of the rice taken from the first harvest, which is part of the ceremonial of the first day, or day of the *veetu* (house) *pongal*. On estates in Sri Lanka ritual homage is paid to cattle on the second day, the day of the *maatu* (cattle) *pongal*. For further particulars, see Arasaratnam, S. *Indian festivals in Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur, 1966, pp. 7-10.

21. An essentially religious festival that falls on the full moon day of the month of *Thai* devoted to the worship of Lord Subramania (or Murugan to the Tamils in South India and Sri Lanka) the war God, and son of Lord Shiva. According to tradition the *vel* or javelin was bestowed on him on this day. *Madras Lexicon* (1928), p. 2075; Arsaratnam, pp. 13-18.

22. Ordinance No. 5 of 1841, (known also as the Service Contracts Ordinance) secs 7 and 8. See also Ordinances No. 4 of 1840 (which was disallowed), and No. 16 of 1840 (which was later repealed). De Silva, K. M. pp. 241 ff; Roberts, Michael. The master - servant laws of 1840 and immigrant labour in Ceylon. *CJHSS*, vol. 8, 1960, pp. 24-32. Sec 23. of Ordinance No. 11 of 1865 empowered Court to redirect deserters to return to work under their former employers.

23. *Fr* Perera, 1956, p. 148; Mendis, p. 42.

24. Due largely to discontent over the new taxes imposed in 1848— the shop tax, the gun tax, the dog tax, and the Road Ordinance. There were also the inconveniences suffered by the peasantry owing to the coffee estates. De Silva, K. M. ed. *Letters on Ceylon*, 1846-50. *The administration of Viscount Torrington and the 'rebellion' of* 1848, Kandy, 1965, p. 5; *Fr* Perera, 1956, pp. 95-102; Mendis, pp. 42-50; Ludowyk, 1967, pp. 192-194.

25. They were compared to the Irish agricultural labour that went to England in the nineteenth century. Moreover, under the Contract for Hire and Service Ordinance the labourer was technically a free agent who could leave the employer's service after due notice.

26. De Silva, K. M. (1), p. 240.

27. Report of the Labour Commission, 1908, pp. 5-7.

28. *ibid*, p. 12. The *tundu* was recognised by law. See sec. 24 (1) of the Estate Labour (Indian) Ordinance No. 13 of 1889 as amended by Ordinance No. 9 of 1909. See also n. 30 below.

29. Some of them depict with simplicity and a touch of humour the conditions under which the workers lived. Velupillai, C. V. Songs of the tea estates (transliterated into English and translated), *Ceylon Tea*, 1867-1967, a *Times of Ceylon* supplement to mark the Ceylon Tea Centenary, Colombo, 1967.

30. Sec. 5 of Ordinance No. 9 of 1909, now sec. 19 of the Estate Labour (Indian) Ordinance, ch. 133, 1956 rev. But this did not prevent the *tundu* continuing to be legal till 1921.

31. The penal clauses referred to (see n. 22 above) were repealed by sec. 6 of Ordinance No. 43 of 1921. The *tundu* was made illegal by sec. 5 of the same ordinance. The Tundu Prohibition Ordinance is now ch. 134 of LEC, 1956 rev.

32. '..Many of them were University men who had taken an ordinary degree, and finding nothing but the scholastic professions or Holy Orders before them, had come out to Ceylon in the hopes of finding more congenial work.' F.E.F.P. *Fickle Fortune in Ceylon*, Madras, 1887, pp. 36 and 37.

33. The first recorded strike of estate labourers was in 1854, when Government raised the daily wages for road labourers from 6d to 7½ d, and 'whole gangs of labourers had struck work on the estates for the same amount of pay, and the planters were compelled to raise their wages'. Balasingham, S. V. *The administration of Sir Henry Ward, Governor of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1968, p. 53; Kuruppu, p. 137. The reference is to instances of 'direct action'. A potential food riot was averted by the personal intervention of the Government Agent, Kandy. Fernando, Shelton, C. *S. C. Fernando and Bros*, 1859-1959 (a cyclostyled pamphlet for private circulation) p. 5. Also see article

by the same writer in the *Ceylon Observer* of 8.5.59 entitled 'Ceylonese enterprise and initiative with a hundred year old history'.

34. The Ceylon Workers' Welfare League was founded in 1919. Kuruppu, p. 140.

35. Subas Chandra Bose, a militant Indian leader who took part in the struggle for Indian independence.

36. Journalist, trade union leader and member of the Legislative Council, 1927-1931, and of the State Council, 1936-1947. He began his career as a trade unionist in the early 1920s as vice-president, of the Ceylon Labour Union of which A. E. Goonesinha was president, but later left it, accusing Goonesinha of being anti-Indian. He worked for some time as sub-editor at Lake House, but soon devoted his full time and attention to the plantation workers, and formed first the All-Ceylon Estate Labourers' Federation and later the Ceylon Indian Workers' Federation. A prolific writer, he edited *Tholilalan* (The worker) and *Desa-bakthan* (The patriot), the latter in collaboration with Sri Nelliah, and wrote such books as *Neemayanguvathane*? (Why be faint-hearted?). His best remembered books are '*The planters' raj*' and '*The burning question*' (referring to the Indo-Ceylon problem).

37. *Fr* Perera, 1956, pp. 205-210.

38. M. Peri Sunderam, M.A., Ll.B. (Cantab.), Bar-at-Law, was member of the first State Council and Minister of Labour from 1932-1936, and member and Vice-President of the Senate of the first Parliament of Ceylon from 1947-1952. He was the son of a head *kangany*-cum-conductor.

39. Imposed in 1939, but relaxed during the war years in respect of *palayals* or old labourers.

40. The inaugural meeting of the Congress was held at No. 301, Sea Street, Colombo 11, on 2nd August, 1939, when V. R. M. V. A. Letchumanan Chettiar was elected president, and H. M. Desai and A. Aziz hon'y secretaries. The president of the Labour Union was by convention the president of the Congress; Madhava Ram was elected general secretary. (The registered address of the Union was 77½ Chatham Street, Colombo 1).

41. Owing to the residence qualifications required under the Citizenship Acts. The periodic visits of large numbers of Indian plantation workers to the 'coast' helped them to retain their links with their villages in India (to which they are now strangers), and many returned to the places of their births to lay their bones.

42. De Silva, Colvin R. vol. i. pp. 158-188, chiefly, pp. 177 and 178.

43. See n. 10.

44. Ludowyk, 1967, p. 194.

45. Roberts, 1969 and 1970, and n. 10.

46. Roberts, 1970, pp. 176, 177, 199; University of Ceylon. *History of Ceylon*, vol. 3, p. 96.

47. Marby, Heidrun. *Tea in Ceylon.* Wiesbaden, 1972, pp. 9, 25 and 119.

48. Under the Sirima-Sastri Pact (1964) it was agreed that India would accept as her citizens 525,000 out of the total of 975,000 categorised hitherto as 'stateless', and Sri Lanka, 300,000, in addition to those already granted citizenship under the earlier agreements, the entire process being spread over a period of 15 years. By an agreement signed between Mrs Indira Gandhi and Mrs Bandaranaike in 1971, it was agreed that the two countries take 75,000 each (out of the balance 150,000) as their citizens.

49. In *Pasangna vs Registrar-General* (1965) 67 NLR 33 a bench of three judges of the Supreme Court held that the son of an Indian Tamil registered as a citizen of Ceylon under the Indian and Pakistani Residents (Citizenship) Act *must be described in the birth register* maintained in terms of the Births and Deaths Registration Act *as the son of 'Indian Tamils'*, but that this fact did not cause him any prejudice in respect of the rights of citizenship under the former Act. But it may be questioned whether some administrative officers may not interpret the above decision in such a way as to cause prejudice to registered citizens in spheres of employment, land alientation, etc.

50. cf. Constitution of Sri Lanka, Ch. XI, Proviso to Sec. 67.

51. The Land Reform Laws provide for the vesting in the Land Reform Commission of privately owned land in excess of 50

acres per person (25 acres in the case of paddy land) and of land owned by private and public companies. The lands thus vested are managed by state institutions like the State Plantation Corporation, the Janawasama (a newly formed organisation that manages estates previously run by Agency Houses) and various co-operatives, alienated to private persons or distributed among villagers. Land belonging to religious bodies has so far been exempt from the operation of these laws. For details see Abeysinghe, pp. 27-30, and 46-48; and 'Agricola'. The aftermath of the take-over, *Marga*, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 65-74. The Land Acquisition Ordinance enables the State to take over land of any acreage for 'public purposes,' such as village expansion.

52. Obtained from the Department of Immigration and Emigration in October, 1976.

53. SP V of 1869, Recommendation 28. The State's responsibility for the education of the children of estate workers was urged perhaps for the first time by Orde Brown in his Report on labour conditions in Ceylon, SP XIX of 1943, paras 61 and 62.

54. In 1877 a line was described as 'one long building partitioned off into different apartments each 10 x 12 ft, opening into the general verandah 5 or 6 ft in width'. The 'school' was held on the verandah.

55. Papers relating to the education of immigrant Tamil cooly children employed on estates, SP IV of 1905, p. 7, para. 1.

56. Field officers supervising workers employed on an estate/division of an estate, and responsible directly to the superintendent/assistant superintendent in charge of the estate/division of the estate.

57. Literally accountants. A *kanakapulle* on an estate is a minor supervisor who is responsible for maintaining the 'pocket check roll' in which is recorded the attendance of daily-paid workers, and the quantum of work done by those who are paid at piece rates.

58. So called because the first couplet begins with these words, and is a call to worship the Lord who wears on his head a couplet of Aathi flowers (Bahunia racemosa) i.e. Shiva. The couplets

are arranged in alphabetical order of their initial letter, and are among the first lessons a Tamil child learns to recite.

59. There is a reference to the 'interminable chant of the Tamil verandah school' in the chapter on Education by J. Howard, Director of Public Instruction, in the *Official Handbook, Ceylon Court—The World's Fair, St Louis*, 1904, p. 26. In more ancient times it was customary for pupils to attach themselves to the teacher's household, and to remain there till they had completed their studies, which included all the higher branches of learning. Payment was generally in kind—the fruits of the earth and costly raiment on festival days.

60. Director of theatrical performances.

61. Dance, with clapping of hands to time and singing, especially among girls.

62. A children's game in which they sing and dance in a ring, marking time which beats of short coloured sticks.

63. e.g. the dances connected with *Arichunan thavasu* (Penance of Arjuna) are said to be dying out in India, while they are still in vogue on certain estates. Again, on estates the songs accompanying the *Kaaman koothu* (Dance of Cupid) are the original ones, whereas in India they are said to be giving way to extempore improvisations sung to modern film tunes. Information obtained from M. Jaya Ram of the Democratic Workers' Congress.

64. Report of the Commission on Elementary Education in Ceylon, SP XXVIII of 1905, p. 11, para 47 (from reports sent to the Director of Public Instruction by 898 estates early in the year).

65. Report of the Labour Commission, 1908, p. 10; Elliott, E. C. and Whitehead, F. J. *Tea planting in Ceylon*, Colombo, 1931, p. 275.

66. De Silva, K. M. (1), p. 271.

67. *ibid.* p. 270.

68. *ibid.* p. 271.

69. Annual Report of the Baptist Missionary Society (Ceylon) 1844.

70. De Silva, K. M. (1), p. 272; Hanwella, D. W. M. *The educational activities of the Baptist Missionary Society in Ceylon*, 1842—1942, unpublished thesis for M.A. London, 1965, p. 30; Annual Report of the Baptist Missionary Society for 1858, p. 20.

71. Ewing, J. A. *Resplendent isle—A hundred years' witness in Ceylon*, London, 1912, pp. 73 and 74.

72. Hanwella, ch. 4; Annual Report of the Baptist Missionary Society (England), 1847.

73. Lord Torrington, Governor, 1847-1850, who was recalled for mishandling the disturbances of 1848. *Fr* Perera, 1956, pp. 97-102; Mendis, pp. 47-40.

74. De Silva, K. M. (1), p. 273; Hanwella, ch. 4.

75. Beven, *Ven.* F. Lorensz. ed. *A history of the Diocese of Colombo*, Colombo, 1946, p. 178.

76. Thomas, *Canon* S. M. *Tamil Church Mission*, 1854-1953, Colombo, 1953, pp. 14 and 16.

77. *ibid.* p. 15 ff.

78. The North Maskeliya Estate Tamil Mixed School, Upcot Road, Maskeliya, managed by the Incumbent of the Dickoya Tamil Parish.

79. Jacob, *Rev.* S. M. Article on the Hatton Circuit in *Methodist Church, Ceylon, Jubilee Souvenir*, 1814-1964, pp. 60 and 61.

80. Minutes of a meeting of the Kandy District Synod of the Methodist Church (European missionaries only) held at Negombo on January 22, 1900; also minutes of a session of the Synod of the Methodist Church held at Kandy in 1904, Resolution 1 (B).

81. Minutes of the South Ceylon District Synod of the Methodist Church, 1897 and 1949; Fernando, *Rev.* H. L. Article on the Uva Circuit, in *Methodist Church, Ceylon, Jubilee Souvenir*, 1814-1964, p. 59.

82. *Ten years*: *A survey of the work of the Wesleyan Mission in South Ceylon*, 1918-1927.

83. Small, *Rev.* W. J. T. ed. *A history of the Methodist Church in Ceylon*, 1814-1964, p. 395.

84. Report of the Local Committee of the South Ceylon District of the Methodist Church, 1909.

85. *Calendar and Year Book of the Methodist Church in Ceylon* for 1958 ff.

86. Letter dated 1.9.71 received by the author from the Friends' Service Council, Friends' House, Euston Road, London NW1-2BJ, and information obtained locally from the Baptist Headquarters.

87. Stefanizzi, *Fr* Angelo, S.J. *The Ceylon estates' Indian labourers* —A social survey of the Indian immigrants working in Ceylon tea and rubber plantations, Colombo, 1971, p. 1.

88. See n. 87

89. See n. 207.

90. *The Planters' Association of Ceylon*, 1854-1954, Colombo, 1954, p. 36.

91. Conveyed by a Departmental Circular instructing heads of schools to admit only those who lived within a radius of 2 miles from the schools. This was later replaced by the 'Proximity Rule', which required that preference for admission should be determined by the nearness of the pupil's residence to the school, the total number of admissions being based on the amount of space prescribed per pupil by regulation.

92. See n. 101.

93. The establishment of English schools for the purpose of qualifying Ceylonese for government employment was one of the recommendations of the Colebrooke Commission. The Christian schools, which had on their staffs Europeans both as principals and teachers, were at an advantage.

94. Don David Hewavitarne (1864-1933) took the name of Dharmapala (protector of the Doctrine) in 1888, and was thereafter known as *Anagarika* (celibate) Dharmapala. He was ordained a *bhikku* (monk) in 1933. He took an active part along with Colonel Olcott in the revival of Buddhism and in the establishment of Buddhist schools. See also Rutnam, James T. The Rev. A. G. Fraser and the riots of 1915. *CJHSS* (*new series*) vol. 1, no. 2, f.n. 23 on p. 155.

95. For particulars of the life of Arumuga Navalar, leader of the Hindu revival and the Tamil renaissance, see Muttucumaraswamy, V. *Arumuga Navalar, the champion reformer of the Hindus*, Colombo, 1965.

96. This was in 1873. The participants were the *Ven.* Migetuwatte Gunananda *Thero* and *Rev.* David Silva of the Methodist Mission. An English translation of the proceedings was serialised by Capper in the *Times*. They were also published in book form. (*Thero*, elder, used after the names of Buddhist monks)

97. *Canon* Thomas, p. 18.

98. *Statement of K. Natesa Iyer, M.S.C., on the present condition of the Indians in Ceylon*, p. 3. item 4 (8). This document was meant for private circulation only; See also H (LC) 22.9.26. p. 2459.

99. Founded in 1888 in Jaffna by leaders of the Hindu community.

100. The aristocracy, a *mudaliyar* or superior headman being chosen from among the leading families.

101. The first School Commission (1834-1841) instituted by Sir Wilmot Horton, Governor of Ceylon, consisted of the chief government officials and all the English clergy in Colombo. Subordinate committees, consisting of the Government Agent, the District Judge and the resident clergy, were established in Colombo, Galle, Trincomalee and Jaffna. A Central School Commission was set up by Governor Sir Stewart Mackenzie in 1841 with more lay representation, with one clergyman each from the Anglican, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic denominations. This Commission functioned till 1869, when the Department of Public Instruction was established. *Fr* Perera, 1956, pp. 176-178.

102. See n. 23.

103. See n. 24.

104. Report of the Special Committee on Education, SP XXIV of 1943, p. 17. The report of the sub-committee referred to was published in SP VIII of 1867.

105. SP XXIV of 1943, p. 16.

106. Census of Ceylon, 1901, ch. 15: Education.

107. Papers relating to the education of immigrant Tamil cooly children employed on estates, SP IV of 1905, enclosure 1, p. 1.

108. *ibid.* pp. 2 and 3. Estate schools were graded as C schools, and a child had to put in 25 attendances in 3 months to qualify for grant as against 100 in 9 months in A schools. The grant was, of course, lower.

109. *ibid.* pp. 1 & 2. Also see Governor's Address in Legislative Council sessions 1904/05. Sir William Blake was Governor, 1903-1907.

110. Report of the Commission on Elementary Education in Ceylon, SP XXVIII of 1905, p. 11, para. 47. The members of the Commission (often referred to as the Wace Commission) were Herbert Wace, John Howard, D. B. Jayatilaka, Joseph Cooreman and J. N. Campbell.

111. *ibid.* para 50.

112. A clause which prohibited the teaching of religion to pupils belonging to a religion or denomination other than that of the proprietor of the school, if the parents objected, was introduced into the Town Schools Ordinance No. 5 of 1907 and the Rural Schools Ordinance No. 8 of 1907.

113. H (LC) 26.10.1919 p. 433. Attorney General's comments introducing the new ordinance.

114. The minimum age at which Indian labour could be employed on estates was fixed for the first time by sec. 4 of the Minimum wages (Indian Labour) Ordinance No. 27 of 1927, which prohibited the employment of children under the age of 10.

115. Also referred to as the Kannangara Commission Report (from the name of the Minister of Education, who was chairman). SP XXIV of 1943.

116. *ibid.* p. 6 (preface).

117. Central Schools or *madhya maha vidyalayas* were specially well equipped and well staffed schools which admitted students from Senior Secondary Schools or *maha vidyalayas* in the district. Senior Secondary Schools have classes from grades 1 to 11 (earlier 12); some of them teach only from grades 6 to 11.

118. According to the Economic Survey of 1969/70, (Table 10) the literary figures were: All-Island—82.6%, Urban sector—88.7% Rural sector—84.3%. See also p. 72.

119. H (LC) 30.5.44, p. 841; and 1.6.45, col. 2848.

120. Ordinance No. 26 of 1947 (An Ordinance to amend the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939). Sec. 8 amends secs. 34-40 of the earlier ordinance. Also see Education Ordinance, ch. 185 of the LEC, 1956 rev. part VI, secs.39-46.

121. The Hon. Minister's Statement of 12.12.46 of the Objects and Reasons of the Bill together with the draft of the Bill was presented as a government document.

122. This was done by the enactment of the Ceylon Citizenship Act No. 18 of 1948, the Indian and Pakistani (Citizenship) Act No. 3 of 1949, and the Ceylon Parliamentary Elections Act No. 48 of 1948.

123. White Paper on Education, 1950—Government proposals for educational reform—Parliamentary Series no. 2.

124. Education (Amendment) Act No. 5 of 1951. secs. 8, 9, and 10.

125. The Education Regulations, 1951: Provisions as to Estate Schools, reg. no. 14.

126. As reported in the *Year Book* of the Planters' Association, 1953, pp. 23 and 24.

127. It is stated that no new schools have been established on estates since 1948.

128. Reg. 35 (1) under Code of Regulations for Assisted Vernacular and Bilingual Schools.

129. See n. 78. 3 teachers were paid Rs 100 each p.m. The number has since been reduced to 2, who are paid Rs 150 each p.m.

130. The Buddhist Committee of Enquiry, constituted in 1954 in accordance with a resolution adopted by the All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress in 1953, held several sittings and prepared a Report which was presented to S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in 1956. See also Muelder, Wallace. R. *Schools for a new nation*, Colombo, 1962, p. 110.

130*a*. This party was founded in 1951 by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, who broke away from the then ruling United National Party along with a few others, and has been in power since 1956, either by itself or in coalition with left wing parties, except for a very short period in 1960 and from 1965 to 1970, when it was the leading party in the Opposition. Its declared goal is a socialist society in a truly free Sri Lanka. Its achievements include the take-over of the British naval base at Trincomalee and the air base at Katunayake, the nationalisation of bus transport and of the refining and distribution of petroleum, land reform, including the take-over of foreign-owned plantations, and the declaration of Sri Lanka as a sovereign and independent republic. In

1956 it made Sinhala the only official language of the country, and in 1961 took over most of the assisted schools run by religious denominations.

131. Muelder, pp. 111 and 112.

132. SP XVII of 1962, secs. 36 and 39-42.

133. White Paper of 1964—Proposals for a national system of education.

134. White Paper of 1966—Proposals for reforms in general and technical education, ch. xxi: Estate schools, pp. 30-52.

135. SP XIX of 1943, paras 61 and 62.

136. H (SC) 1947, vol 1, col. 1139 ff and col. 1614.

137. H (HR) 1950/51, vol 9, 26.9.50, col. 318.

138. H (HR) 1950/51, vol. 9, 27.9.60, col. 470.

139. H (HR) 1.3.49, col. 1423.

140. H (HR) 10.8.51, col. 2864.

141. Satcunan, S. P. Education on estates, in the *Ceylon Labour Gazette* vol. ii, no. 7, (July 1951), p. 7.

142. See n. 126.

143. H (HR) 16.8.54, col. 1766.

144. Gamini Jayasuriya, H (HR), 4.5.65, col. 1205.

145. Comprising the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (under the leadership of Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike), the Lanka Samasamaja Party (Trotskyite) and the Communist Party (Moscow Wing), which entered into an electoral agreement prior to the General Elections of 1972 and also agreed on a common programme for the ushering in of a socialist society. See p. 9 of the *Tribune* of 3.5.70 which carries the election manifesto of the coalition in full. The Throne Speech is reported in full on pp. 9, 10 and 12 of the *Tribune* of 21.6.70.

146. Information gathered from the trade unions that took part in the dialogue; for the effects of repatriation and land reform on school attendance, see next chapter.

147. Information obtained from plantation trade unions in February 1975.

148. Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Agency Houses and Brokering Firms, SP XII of 1974, (also called the Agency Houses Report), p. 140.

149. Sivalingam, R. The integration of estate schools—end of educational discrimination, in the *Nation* of 15.11.71. p. 7.

150. *Gazette* of the Republic of Sri Lanka, 9.8.74, Part 1 Section II A, (Advertising), pp. 886-889. Item 7 (iii) refers to estate schools.

151. *Thriposha* powder was offered to estates that were members of the Planters' Association Estates' Health Scheme in order to combat the nutritional deficiencies of pregnant and lactating mothers and of very young children on these estates. It was to be issued in 2 packets of 1½ lb. each per month for each beneficiary;a sum of 50 cts was charged as packaging charges for each packet. It was issued free at child care centres etc.

152. It was the intention of the Ministry of Education that there should be a well staffed and equipped *madhya maha vidyalaya* or Central School for each electoral district to which students from the *maha vidyalayas* or secondary schools could seek admission. Hostel facilities are provided at subsidised rates to poor but deserving students.

153. As its name suggests, this type of school caters for students from all over the Island and is specially well equipped and staffed. Examples are Royal College, Colombo, Jaffna Hindu College and Zahira College, Gampola.

153*a* An attempt has been made since May 1976 to teach science as required by the syllabus of the new Higher National Certificate of Education (see n. 165 a) at Saraswathy Vidyalaya, Badulla. Teachers with the necessary qualifications have yet to be appointed.

154. Subsidiary Legislation under the Education Ordinance, ch. 185, Code of Regulations for Assisted Vernacular and Bilingual Schools, reg. 19.

155. Memorandum to the Hon'ble the Prime Minister on the education of Tamil children outside the Northern and Eastern Provinces from a committee appointed by a meeting of Tamil parents held at Saraswathy Hall, Bambalapitiya, on the 12th November 1965, pp. 5. ff.

156. H (HR) 3.4.63, cols. 241-244, Also see the *Ceylon Daily News* of 5.4.1963.

157. De Silva, C. R. Weightage in university admissions: standardisation and district quotas in Sri Lanka 1970-1975. *MCS* vol. 5 no. 2, July 1974, pp. 151-167.

158. The Indian High Commission has had for some years a Ceylon Estate Workers' Education Trust, which awards 12 scholarships a year to deserving students from the plantations to enable them to pursue their studies at the tertiary level. Each scholarship is worth Rs 125 per month. The Ceylon Workers' Congress, the Democratic Workers' Congress and the National Union of Workers give bursaries direct to children of their members in addition to contributing to this Trust.

159. See n. 38.

160. The best known of the worker-poets writes under the pen-name of Kurinji Thennavan. Among the contributors in prose and verse to papers like the *Virakesari* are some who have not gone beyond grade 5 in an estate school. See also article by Sivakumaran, K. S. on Tamil writing from the bill country, in the *Ceylon Daily News* of 12.5.72, and his book, *Tamil writing in Sri Lanka*, Colombo, 1971, pp. 17 and 18.

161. Subramania Bharathi was a poet of resurgent India and the Tamil counterpart of Rabindranath Tagore. Though he wrote only in his mother tongue his songs were singularly free of parochialism.

162. See proceedings of the seminar on Plantation youth and the economy of Sri Lanka, held under the auspices of the Ceylon Workers' Congress on 24.2.73—2.3.73. Some of the participants were tea pluckers who had passed the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level).

163. Seers, Dudley. *Matching employment opportunities and expectations*, Geneva, 1971 pp. 22 ff.

164. Seers, Dudley. *Technical papers*, Geneva, 1971 p. 192, Table 4.

165. See p. 1 of the *Report on a preliminary reconnaissance of education in Ceylon with comments on projects for aid*, by a visiting team of the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (International Association), published by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Ceylon, Colombo, 1967.

165*a* See Ministry of Planning and Employment, Government of Ceylon, *The five year plan*, 1972-1976, Colombo, 1971, pp. 107-112; Marga Institute. *Needs of children and adolescents—a case study of Sri Lanka*, Colombo, 1975, pp. 18-25.

166. From a paragraph on 'Cooly education' by 'Nobody' in the *Ceylon Observer* feature '100 years ago' in the *Ceylon Observer* of 10.7.74.

167. Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Agency Houses and Brokering Firms, pp. 140-144.

168. *Satyodaya*, Bulletin no. 19, Sept. 1974, p. 4.

169. See n. 22. Under sec. 10 of the Service Contracts Ordinance No. 5 of 1841 an employer who fails to honour his obligations towards his servant was liable to a fine not exceeding £10 and, during default, to imprisonment.

170. H (HR), 14.12.50, col. 1806.

171. Petition dated 29.11.71 to the Hon. Minister of Education by plantation trade unions; also see p. 22 of article mentioned in n. 149.

172. See nn. 137 and 138.

173. Wanasinghe, Sydney. The private sector in education, part 3, in *YS*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 50, 51; also see n. 122.

174. De Silva, K. M. (1), ch. ix—Missionary organizations and the problems of Indian immigration in Ceylon, pp. 270, 276-281; Ludowyk, 1967, p. 197.

175. Ludowyk, 1967, p. 197.

176. From a letter by Edward Griffiths (a missionary of the time) in the *Ceylon Observer* of July 1874, reproduced in the feature, '100 years ago' in the *Ceylon Observer* of 5.7.74.

177. *Calendar and Year Book of the Methodist Church*, part 2—The Methodist Church in Ceylon, 1954.

178. This party was formed in 1949 by those who broke away from the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress when its representatives in Parliament voted for the Citizenship Acts which disenfranchised persons of recent Indian origin. It had as its goal a federal form of government. In 1971 the two parties along with the Ceylon Workers' Congress formed the Tamil United Front,

which unsuccessfully presented to the Government 6 demands, one of which was decentralisation of the administration. The Ceylon Workers' Congress has, however, dissociated itself from the demand for a separate state for the Tamils made by the Tamil United Liberation Front which was formed in 1976.

179. De Silva, K. M. (1) p. 260.

180. Sanmugathasan, N. *A Marxist looks at the history of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1975, p. 27.

181. H(SC) 31.8.37, col. 2174; 3.9.37, cols. 2364-2369 and 2419-2421.

182. See report of a symposium held at the Centre for Society and Religion, Maradana, in *Congress News* of 15.7.75.

183. Socio-Economic Survey of Ceylon, 1969/70, conducted by the Department of Census and Statistics.

184. *Canon* Thomas, p. 2.

185. Kodikara, S. U. *Indo-Ceylon relations since independence*, Colombo, 1965, p. 74. The auother supports his contention with a quotation from U. Mahajani's *The role of Indian minorities in Burma and Malaya*, Bombay, 1960, p. 26, that 'however dispersed the members may have been, they gravitate towards the central family by the principle of common property'. This observation would, however, not be applicable to those who do not own property, as is confirmed by the experience of those who have recently returned to India.

186. Such as those of the now proscribed *Dravida Munnetra Kazaham* (Dravidian Progressive Front), earlier the *Dravida Kazaham* (Dravidian Front) of Ramasamy Naiker. Anti-Brahmin and Rationalist in its origins and strongly opposed to the imposition of Hindi in Tamil Nadu, it was associated by the Central Government with militant Tamil nationalism and accused of harbouring separatist aims.

187. Jayawardena, p. 332.

188. In the low and mid country one hears phrases like *athilai velai illai* from Sinh. *eken vaedak naehae* (it's no use). Tatoo marks on foreheads have all but disappeared, and in some areas the *sarong* has replaced the *verti* (worn by Tamil men), and young women appear to prefer the jacket and cloth to the more orthodox *saree*.

189. See n. 65.

190. H(SC) 22.9.36; see also item 4 (10) on p. 3 of his *Statement of the present condition of the Indians in Ceylon, Colombo,* 1939 (roneoed document for private circulation).

191. Rule 9 of the Rules of the Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union. Rule 10 refers to literacy, sports and cultural activities.

192. e.g. S. Thondaman's paper on Equality of opportunity in employment, at the ILO Regional Seminar held at Manila on 11.10.69 pp. 121-128. References to this subject occur more frequently now in the annual reports of trade unions, and in the speeches of their representatives in Parliament.

193. e.g. the Hill Country Youth Federation (which claims to have been the first organisation to ask for the take-over of estate schools by Government), the Society for the Advancement of Tamil Education (which has in its membership lecturers from the University), the All-Ceylon Estate Teachers' Union, and the parent-teachers' associations of several schools in the towns.

194. Final Report of the National Education Commission, sec. 37.

195. Education Ordinance, ch. 185, sec. 34.

196. Such a concession appears to be given to Muslims at the Palaly Training College, Jaffna. H(HR) 21.12.71, cols. 3755 ff; 22.12.71, col. 3914. The type of requirements that could be relaxed temporarily in respect of estate teachers who possess the requisite academic qualifications are those relating to length of service and number of hours of teaching done per week.

197. e.g. Mahawatta Government Tamil School, the Dematagoda Tamil Mixed School, the Bloemandhal Tamil Mixed School, the Kotahena Tamil Mixed School, the Dehiwala Tamil Mixed School, and the Mallayam Tamil Girls' School.

198. See Collective Agreement No. 3 of 1971 signed under the Industrial Disputes Act, ch. 131, between the Employers' Federation of Ceylon and six Trade Unions, appearing in the *Ceylon Government Gazette* no. 14, 975 of 10.9.71.

199. For rules relating to housing etc. See Estate Labour (Indian) Ordinance, ch. 133, sec. 24, Diseases (Labourers) Ordinance, ch. 175, rule 9 under sec. 12. This rule was amended in 1950 (see subsidiary legislation to ch. 225) to allow 2 adults and 3 children under the age of 12 to occupy a cottage-type room of 160 square feet.

200. A television team from the Granada Television Company (United Kingdom) visited Sri Lanka in 1973 and featured in their programmes in London what they claimed were the living and working conditions on some of the estates owned by British companies. This exposure disturbed world opinion. Employers complained that the charges were exaggerated and even questioned the bona fides of the promoters of the programme, but entered into dialogue with trade unions representing plantation workers and undertook to make certain improvements. A sequel to a further visit by the same company in 1975 and another 'exposure' was a tour of inspection by a visiting parliamentary team from the United Kingdom, which issued a report making 22 recommendations.

201. Statistics taken from the reports of the Medical Officer, Planters' Association Estates' Health Scheme.

202. Information obtained from documents available at the office of the Planters' Association.

203. Senewiratne, B., Hettiarachchi, J. and Seneviratne, Kamalini. Some problems in the management of anaemia in the tea-estate workers in Sri Lanka, reprinted from the *Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, August 1974, vol. 77, pp. 177-181; Senweiratne, Brian. Health of the Plantation Workers, in Bulletin No. 4 (Feb. 1975), and Anaemia in two economically important communities in Sri Lanka, in Bulletin no. 5 (Mar. 1975) of the *Co-ordinating Secretariat for Plantation Workers*, Satyodaya Study Centre, Kandy.

204. Udarata Samupakara Watu Sangwardana Mandalaya or Up-country Co-operative Estate Development Board (originally set up to administer 13 estates in the Central Province acquired before the Land Reform Law came into operation).

204 *a* Run by the Land Reform Commission itself and basically self-managing co-operative settlements, managing an unbroken extent of developed land within a form of co-operative ownership.

205. By a Collective Agreement signed between the Ceylon Estates Employers' Federation and the Ceylon Workers' Congress in 1965 trade union subscriptions were recovered from the wages of workers and sent direct to their head office. This concession was later extended to other unions too.

206. e.g. the right of trade union representatives to enter a place of work for the performance of his duties was secured for the first time in Sri Lanka by the enactment of the Trade Union Representatives (Entry into Estates) Act No. 25 of 1970.

207. *The Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya* or 'Organisation for the national harnessing of the goodness of all for the awakening or liberation of all in Sri Lanka' was founded in 1958. It works through specially trained volunteers who have accepted the philosophy of the movement and are dedicated to the service of their fellow-beings. The method used is that of forming groups at village level (based on age, function etc.), helping the members of these groups to discover their potentialities, and instilling in them a sense of commitment to the service of the village. Great emphasis is placed on traditional norms and values, and traditional institutions associated with village activities are sought to be revived. The movement has recently 'adopted' a few estates in the Central Province. See also *Non-formal education in Sri Lanka*, a Marga publication, Colombo, 1974 pp. 159-171 and 223-232.

208. Bulletin no. 3 (January 1975) of the *Co-ordinating Secretariat for Piantation Areas*, Satyodaya Stady Centre, Kandy, gives a summary of *Fr* Thomas's article; Bulletin no. 7 (May 1975) contains a statement made by Mrs Kusala Abhayawardena on her visit to Tamil Nadu; A booklet entitled *Ilankayilirunthu thayaham thirumpuhinravarkalukku or valikaatti* (A guide to those who are returning to their motherland from Sri Lanka), Madras, 1975.

209. H (SC) 1926, vol. 1, p. 317.

210. Report of the Special Committee on Education, SP XXIV, 1943, p. 23, para 53.

211. H (SC), 1.6.45, col. 2855; H(SC) 5.6.45 col. 2923,2936.

212. H (SC) 28.8.42, pp. 1964, 1965.

213. H (SC) 1947, vol. i (Jan.-July) col. 1158.

214. Final Report of the National Education Commission, secs. 38-41 and dissents.

215. White Paper on Education, 1964, sec. 30.

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