

# TRIBUNE

## Ease the Tension

There is a universal desire among all sections of the people from among all communities that the present tension should be eased and that the prevailing sense of insecurity should be removed. Even the most emotionally ardent language enthusiast of every variety now realises that it is only in an atmosphere of calm and peace that discussions on language or any other subject should be carried on.

Only a handful of designing and unscrupulous individuals, bent on mischief, and determined to create chaos and anarchy to advance a deep-set conspiracy to overthrow the present Government, want it to be otherwise. The activities of such individuals must be checked. Police action is undoubtedly essential to prevent excesses, but there can be no peace and quiet if the source of the friction is not removed, or remedied.

### TRIBUNE

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It will be admitted that it is the *Sinhala Only* Bill, as it stands today, which is providing a fruitful field for disturbed conditions. Last week *Tribune* suggested that the Bill should be amended to remove the fears of the minorities if disaster in the form of national disunity is to be avoided. This is still essential. *In the Bill itself there should be recognition that Tamil is a national language and that English should continue to play its present role during the period of the switch over in more definite and positive terms than as envisaged in the Bill as it is presently constituted.* Furthermore, the period for the change over should be extended if the fears of a large number of people is to be removed. These amendments can be secured without violating the main principle involved in the Bill of having Sinhalese as the only official language.

#### Conference

For this purpose, and for the purpose of concretizing the assurances of the Premier and the Government in the matter of giving due recognition to a reasonable use of the Tamil language, *Tribune* suggests that the Round-Table Conference of minority opinion and views should be summoned. To obtain the widest possible support, this conference must be without prejudice to any constitutional and lawful objection minority representatives may have to the purpose and scope of the main Bill. This Round-Table Conference should meet for the limited purpose of actualizing the assurances so freely made and promised by the Government in regard to the Tamil language. Such a Round-Table Conference, summoned immediately, will go a long way towards easing the tension in the country.

Instead of doing this, it will be disastrous if Ministers of the Cabi-

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net attempt to give effect to the Bill in their individual capacity. Contrary to the undertaking of the Prime Minister that he alone would be responsible for the implementation of the Bill, the Minister of Justice is reported to have sent a directive to the Council of Legal Education that no student should be admitted to the Law College unless he attained a very high degree of proficiency in Sinhalese almost immediately. Another senior Minister, it is learnt had boasted at a conference of technical officers that any resistance to the Language Bill would be met with "blood and bullets." It is the inherent right of every person in a democratic state to resist anything through constitutional and lawful means, and irresponsible amateurish talk by Cabinet Ministers only adds fuel to the fire of communal tension.

#### Invasion Fear

The Tamil minority should also realise that propaganda from certain sources has successfully created in the minds of an over-whelming majority of the Sinhalese people, fear that there is a conspiracy among the Tamils in Ceylon, in conjunction with the 40,000,000 "Dravidians" in South India, to swallow the Sinhalese race, language and culture. To say that this belief is a canard is not enough. Even mirages can be realities during moments of urgency, and we in Ceylon are at the moment living through such urgent times. It was because this canard of a Tamil conspiracy is so deeply set that a rumour spread on the eve of June 5th that a Tamil Army was infiltrating into Colombo (in the guise of satyagrahis) to capture the city was so readily believed by a very large number of Sinhalese people.

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# KILLING INDUSTRY

Almost a year ago "Tribune" pointed out the serious handicaps under which the local wire-nail industry was forced to operate and thereby incur losses. Thanks to the protests made by this paper the glaring anomalies in import duties prevailing at that time were rectified and this industry, as a result, enjoyed a brief spell of prosperity.

Although subsequently there was a shortage of wire nails in the market, the two main local firms engaged in this industry did not take any advantage of this situation but maintained a steady fixed price. As their margin of profit was quite small, the price of the local product remained competitive with the imported varieties. However, as has often happened in the past, — as in the case of hand-loom sarongs, glass-ware, plywood tea chests, and of late, ceramic-ware — the local importers seem to have a fatal fascination for foreign products in preference to those manufactured locally although the latter may be better in quality and cheaper in price. The same fate has now befallen the local wire-nail industry.

## Imported

In the case of wire nails matters have been made more ludicrous by the fact that the Government's own agencies have followed in the footsteps of the importers. The Rubber Commissioner, for instance, has negotiated for the purchase of large quantities of wire nails from China and the first consignment of this have already arrived in the Island. Although there are large number of other goods which can be imported from China it is strange why the Rubber Commissioner should pick on wire-nails, a commodity that was being produced locally.

Although the price of the imported nails are slightly higher in each of these cases, the local dealers, because of their monopoly of the distribution channels, have no problems in marketing the imported articles.

As a result of unrestricted imports the local manufacturers are faced with a serious difficulty. Large stocks of nail-wire are rusting in their stores while they pay a substantial sum of money in interest to the banks on capital thus tied up.

Besides this the machines and men are idle.

Although this matter was brought to the attention of the authorities precious little has so far been done to give relief to this industry. Responsibility is shifted from one Ministry to another and from one Department to another and that too at the leisurely pace to which bureaucracy is accustomed in Ceylon.

## Confidence

As far as the local firms are concerned the manufacture of wire-nails was to have been the first step to be subsequently followed up by the manufacture of barbed wire, staples, wire netting, a whole range of other wire products and eventually drawing wire from wire rods. These firms now complain that the lukewarm support given by the Government, and that too at a belated hour, has forced them to abandon their earlier proposals to expand this industry.

We believe that problems of this nature will continue to rise as long as we have industry in this country and it is the duty of the Government to solve them expeditiously as they arise. Indeed in a properly organised set-up such difficulties can be anticipated well in advance and action taken to prevent them.

*If the M.E.P. Government is anxious to create confidence amongst local entrepreneurs and enlist their co-operation in building up industry in Ceylon it should take a little more interest in such matters as these which come within its power.*

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Glenn Ford, Dorothy McGuire  
in

TRIAL

EASE THE TENSION

continued from first page

It is also a sorry reflection of the state of the Information Services of Government. The ideological basis for the mob violence in Colombo and Gal Oya, engineered by agents provocateurs, was undoubtedly secured by playing upon this fear of a Tamil invasion. In the hunger and unemployment prevailing in Ceylon any canard is good enough for belief.

If the Tamils hope to win the goodwill of the Sinhalese - they must even if they want to have a new Constitution for a different form of Government - they should do everything to remove this un-

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# BACKGROUND

A Special Correspondent examines the *Sinhala Only* Bill. His findings will appear in three articles. This week he examines the background in which the Bill has emerged. Next week he will analyse the support and criticism the Bill has received. In the concluding article, he will stress the full implications of the Bill and the urgency for amendment. Comments on the views expressed by the Special Correspondent are invited.

There is no doubt that the *Sinhala Only* Bill has been the most controversial piece of legislation that has so far been debated and passed by the Ceylon Parliament. So much heat and tension had been generated that violence of a major kind erupted in Colombo and a number of provincial centres. In the result that the Bill was really passed literally under armed guard.

The armed guard was found essential to curb the violence of intoxicated language fanatics of the *Sinhala Only* species, inextricably mixed up with hooligans and looters, who sought to intimidate all those who opposed the Bill — the Tamil minorities and the Left Parties like the NLSSP and CP — into weakening and relaxing their opposition to the Bill.

This intolerance of a violent kind is a new phenomenon in Ceylon. It arose for the first time when the *Tri Sinhala* movement carried on a anti-Indian campaign about four years ago. It is significant also that these violent tactics have characterised all language and racial fanatics. These organisations have tended to damn all those who differed from them as "enemies of the race", "agents of the enemy", "quislings" and the like. And they have not hesitated to use violence in varying degrees.

To the language fanatics and extremists of the North all those who

differed from them were "Sinhalese agents" "betrayers", "sellers-out" and the like. To their counterparts in the South all those who criticised them were "enemies of the Sinhalese race" and so on. Both groups have used violent tactics and pressure techniques, in elections and otherwise, in an attempt to drive their opponents out of politics.

## Foreign Power

It is also significant that in India, where the language controversy has led to violence and disorder in certain areas, similar intolerant tactics mixed with hooliganism have regularly shown their ugly head. It is noteworthy that no less a person than Prime Minister Nehru has been constrained to warn his country:

to beware of elements sowing seeds of disintegration in the name of language — a game suited to the interests of some foreign Powers which, he said, wanted India to become weak ..... that the recent outbursts of violence in the country were a calculated attempt by reactionary forces to

## VIOLENCE

In conclusion, Mr Nehru warned all the people that violence and bitterness would work against the goal of Socialist Pattern of Society they had set before themselves. This pattern could not be achieved without complete unity. Disunity would spell disaster to the country.

"Let us eschew violence in all its forms and adopt a policy of understanding each other's point of view through talks and personal contacts."

— Nehru

Bombay, June 15

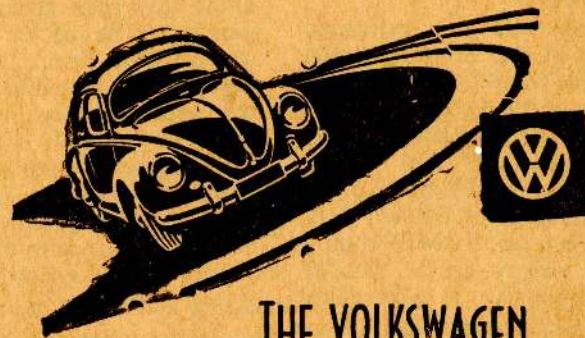
distract people from the path of socialism.

In the same speech, Nehru made some remarks about the language troubles in Ceylon and hinted that the same foreign power which used bribery and other disgraceful methods to create trouble in India may have something to do with the troubles in this island.

Prime Minister Nehru certainly knows what he is talking about regarding happenings in India and the suggestion that a certain interested foreign power has a hand in the

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## THE PEOPLE'S CAR



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# Background

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language controversies in this country has been made in Ceylon itself by responsible persons in Parliament and outside.

It must be remembered that until a certain foreign power started operating in a big way in Ceylon, as part of its campaign to extend its protective cover over Asia, all political parties, including the UNP and SLFP, were agreed that Sinhalese and Tamil should be the official languages of the country with English as a compulsory second language. This was something that was accepted as one of the main axioms of political life in this country.

This happy state was rudely shaken when a vociferous organisation called the *Tri Sinhala* (with a secret underground wing known as the *Dutugemunu Secret Society* started operating about 4 years ago). Apart from its violent anti-Indian campaign, this organisation sowed the seeds of the theory of *Sinhala Only* for a united Sinhala race having Buddhism as Sinhala State religion. This society was amply supplied with funds. According to a report in the *Times of Ceylon* two of its propaganda vans were traced to a foreign organisation in the island.

## Reactionary

The *Sinhala Only* movement won the support of reactionary elements who wanted easy political power. It was also thought of as an excellent slogan to fight the Left. In the same way reactionary elements in the North were attracted by Tamil racial slogans.

So cleverly was this campaign chalked out in the South that the UNP and the SLFP and fragmentary groups in the Left Parties fell for this slogan of *Sinhala Only*. Although the UNP and SLFP (merged in the MEP) both cried aloud as champions of *Sinhala Only* at the last elections, the MEP romped home to victory on the radical socialist programme it advocated.

The *Tri Sinhala* and the *Dutugemunu Society*, having performed the tasks for which they were set up, are now in the background, but organisations, ready to raise the religious cry for a Buddhist State, are in the forefront. But that is a different story which must be discussed in a subsequent article.

*The racial chauvinism of the Sinhala Only variety necessarily had its repercussions on the largest minority — the Tamil minority — which stood divided into two by the anti-Indian movement of the Tri Sinhala based on the Citizenship laws. (Except for sporadic protests by individuals, the Ceylon Tamils tamely watched this attack on the franchise and citizenship rights of a section of the Tamil minority. The Tamil Arasu Movement of the North undoubtedly derived a great deal of strength by the chauvinism of the Sinhala Only fanatics. In the 1952 elections, they won no more than 2 seats: in 1956 they won 10.*

## MEP

It was in this context that the MEP was returned to power. Both in the UNP and the MEP had fanatics of the *Sinhala Only* variety inside its ranks. It was hoped that radical economic programme of a socialist character which the MEP proclaimed would enable this party not to sidetrack the economic programme into the channels of language hysteria. The manifesto of the MEP itself provided some hope that it would adopt a progressive language policy although it was committed to *Sinhala Only*.

Unfortunately, the MEP Government has belied the hopes placed in it in the matter of language. The Manifesto spoke of the due recognition which will be granted to the reasonable use of Tamil as a minority language. It was fully expected that the MEP Government would provide for the reasonable use of the Tamil language in the main Bill. This has not been done. Assurances alone have been given that regulations would be drawn up to give a status to the Tamil language. It is necessary to remember that when the saner and more reasonable elements in the MEP drafted provisions to give due recognition to the Tamil language in the Bill, the *Sinhala Only* fanatics started a *furor* with the help of *Lake House* (whose sworn enemies this group earlier had been.) Jayasuriya fasted and those chauvinists held public meetings which were reported out of all proportion in the Sinhalese and English press, to coerce the MEP into introducing a chauvinistic Bill.

The result was that the provisions regarding Tamil were dropped.

## FULL TEXT

*This is the full text of the Official Language Bill which was passed by 66 votes to 29 in the House of Representatives.*

“This Act may be cited as the Official Languages Act of 1956.

(1) “The Sinhala language shall be the official language of Ceylon, provided that where the Minister considers it impracticable to commence the use of only the Sinhalese language, for any official purpose, immediately on the coming into force of this Act, the language or languages hitherto used for that purpose, may be continued to be so used, until the necessary change is effected as early as possible before the expiry of the thirty-first day of December 1960.

“If such change cannot be effected by administrative order, regulations may be made under this Act to effect such change.

(2) “The Minister may make regulations in respect of all matters for which regulations are authorised by this Act to be made, generally for the purpose of giving effect to the principle and provisions of this Act.

“No regulation made under this sub-section shall have effect until it is approved by the Senate and the House Representatives and notice of such approval is published in the Gazette.”

By this one single act of weakness, the MEP Government forfeited the sympathy and goodwill of not only the Tamil speaking minority but also all other minorities. Religious minorities even among the Sinhalese now entertain the greatest apprehension that a *Buddhism Only* Bill will be soon foisted on the country. In addition, to the opposition and discontent among all minorities, the *Sinhalese Only* Bill has earned the bitter opposition of the progressive Left forces which stand for a socialist development of the economy of the extend.

To be continued next week.

# Fundamental Rights

There is a great deal of disillusionment among all sections of people about the way the M.E.P. government has succumbed to the demands of the language fanatics. This article focuses attention on the apprehensions which a very large number of people of all communities now seem to share about the M. E. P. Government.

Since the inception of the M.E.P. Government we have been witness to a dictatorship by the majority, far removed from the protection of rights and liberties which individuals are entitled to in a healthy and clean democracy.

That better could have been expected if the U.N.P. were still in power cannot, however, be believed in view of its last minute pre-election decision to stand for *Sinhalese Only* — an utterly fickle and treacherous move indeed it was.

Many of the Representatives of the M.E.P. Government were returned not by virtue of their own popularity or capability, for they were literarily unheard of before. Rather, it was because the people felt strongly that the U.N.P. had to be ousted at any cost for various reasons, that the M.E.P. emerged as the Party in power. Its success (which first pleased most of us who expected better) was therefore, a grand stroke of luck and nothing more. Today, the estimate of those placed in responsible positions and the confidence reposed in them are questionable factors to be reckoned with.

A Ceylonese nation needs a healthy democratic atmosphere in which, to survive if not thrive; such inter-communal harmony now lies dashed to smithereens, whilst racial emotions surge within the breasts of those who once lived in fellowship and toiled and sweated side by side for the common good of all.

Certain Ministers and the subordinates have gone ahead on their own initiative to establish a new State Religion and Language, even though the necessary legislation has

not been conceived in the case of the former, and the latter is still in draft form.

There was no valid reason for an enforced meatless week. Voluntary fulfilment of the appeal of the Sangha to Buddhists to abide by the precepts they profess to uphold would have been a truer manifestation of Buddhism. Instead, devoid of just discrimination, all men and innocent beasts were made to suffer inconvenience and starvation.

The Western Radio Programme of National Service has already been curtailed notwithstanding there being independent Swabhasha transmissions; and now the Minister and his Permanent Secretary have thought fit to interfere further, even though ample scope is already available to diffuse the Sinhalese Cul-

By

Chelvathy Muthu Krishna

ture.....A glaring instance of opportunists who seek to inflict their "Panditism" on those who are not impressed!

Of course, there are remedies for every ill, some drastic and some not. But pent-up dissatisfaction and bitterness will some day emerge to vindicate itself, and the course of emotions so roused is not certain. However, the experiences of other nations within their territories in similar circumstances should serve as an example.

Whether Mr. Bandaranaike himself will succeed in living up to expectations is to be seen. That he is struggling valiantly to conform to the middle way, in spite of pulls from diverse quarters, invites the highest admiration. But if he yields under the strain, even his own intentions and assurances, and innermost feelings of justice, fair-play, and equality for all men alike, will not win the respect, trust, and co-operation he needs from the minority peoples also, in order to carry on a progressive policy for the development of the country as a whole, wherein lies the wealth of the entire nation.

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# Parker

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# Bill Incomplete

This article was sent to us on 8th June, 1956 whilst the Language Debate was in progress, but we were not able to publish it in our issue last week. Mr. Welikala rightly emphasises that legislation by regulations is inadequate to meet the just apprehensions of the minorities.

This Bill that is being debated upon is too short and sweet to allay the fears of the minorities, the present and the future Public Officers and of the thousands of school children and of their parents.

The Premier has stated on every conceivable occasion that he does not want to make this bill cumbersome by bringing into it, the working details, but would make ample provision for regulations to be framed as occasion demands and asked the country to trust him to do his best. This is quite unsatisfactory. Personally I have no doubt that the Premier is quite honest (and not a humbug - I use this term in its Pickwickian sense) in his assurances; but in this enlightened age, the country would prefer to have everything in black and white in this very important bit of Legislation, rather than leave room for future regulations.

## Two

I understand that this Bill has only two clauses. Where is the harm in including all possible clauses directions and working methods so that the future generations may know how and where they stand. To give an example: there is our Income Tax Ordinance. It tells us who should pay, how to calculate what to deduct, what to omit and a host of other cumbersome clauses. Yet, commentaries, explanations, Supreme Court Dicta are being added over-night in order to make that Ordinance more cumbersome, but more explanatory. That Bill could have been made very short and finished in one sentence: - "Every person who has and income of Rs. 4800 or more per annum shall pay a percentage

of that person's income as noted in the Schedule annexed hereto."

I suggest that the Sinhala Only Bill be scrapped and re-drafted (by the Legal Draftsman, not by laymen and monks) embodying all working details, as in the case of the Income Tax Ordinance, before placing it before the Legislature. Then everyone can have a "go" at it. Prime Ministers come and Prime Ministers go: one may have a long foot and another a short one like the British Chancellor. Assurance given by one Prime Minister may be found inexpedient at a later stage, or, may not fall in line with his successor. Sir John as Prime Minister assured the Tamils in the North that he would give parity of status and assured the Sinhalese in the South the Official language would be Sinhala Only, with the result that people have lost faith in the assurances of local politicians. Over and above the general opposition to this Bill in its present form there will be further discussions and blowing of hot air when the regulations come in to fill in the various gaps. To avoid such contingencies, it is the duty of the Government

to give full details and not to keep on harping on their election slogans.

The Prime Minister also asserted that the Education Policy of his government has nothing to do with the Sinhala Only Bill. I join issue with him on that assertion. The education policy of this country is so mixed up with the language policy, that the two are inseparable. Whatever fate is in store for the younger and the future generations, in view of the short-sighted education policy blindly followed from the State Council days, it should now be re-considered and re-formed so as not to interfere with the future entrants into the Public Services. Now that the Pirivenas are to be given University status, with a residential university to be built at Kalutara, and land and money set aside, the study of the oriental languages (including Tamil) can safely be left to the Pirivena University, and the school children given a fair chance to acquire a thorough knowledge of the Western classics, arts and sciences. If the present education policy is continued, there will be a glut of Pundits and dearth of men and women educated on Western lines, a few years hence.

## Fundamental Rights

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Intelligent political thought has begun to infiltrate the erstwhile illiterate masses, and the time is even now at hand when they will cease to heed blindly the hollow cries of opportunist politicians, and others whose rightful place is no-where near the political arena.

It must be re-iterated, that the very circumstances that swept the M.E.P. into power could sweep it out in much less time — such being the vagaries of politics. If Mr. Bandaranaike is able successfully to extricate himself from the disrupting influences around him, and to carry out his policies unhampered and un-oppressed, there is yet hope that his endeavour to be a good and

great Prime Minister might still be a reality.

His appeal to the minority peoples to have explicit faith in his ability to safeguard their rights would, perhaps, have received a greater measure of support if it were not the case that there are various interested personalities who have succeeded in manoeuvring things their own way; and in the light of these facts it does not seem practical to rely purely on his personal assurances in matters of importance, however well-intentioned such promises may be. Nevertheless, may he be granted the strength, the courage, and the will to cry halt to the march of lesser men whose shadows have grown large under his light, and who now will even try to wrest the position of Prime Minister from him, in order that they may hold sway.

On the morning of Friday June 15, 1956, at 5-58 a.m., after a marathon session lasting through the night, the House of Representatives passed the Sinhala Only bill. The voting was 66 to 29, the Government failing to obtain a two-thirds majority by two votes. (As the Speaker had earlier ruled that this was a Bill that did not involve a constitutional change, a two-thirds majority was not necessary, but it is likely that the Bill will be challenged in the Courts as being *ultra vires*).

The debate on the Sinhala Only bill was perhaps one of the longest on any single piece of legislation: it went on for seven days lasting 51½ hours.

#### Division

The United National Party and the six Appointed Members (consisting of two Burghers, one Malay and three Europeans) voted with the Government. Sir John Kotelawela, former Premier and Leader of the UNP, was away on leave in Europe and R. G. Senanayake, though he was Member for Kelaniya and Dambadeniya, had only a single vote. The Government vote would have been 68 but for Sir John's absence and the single vote for R. G. Senanayake.

The fact that the two Burgher members voted with the Government has been taken to signify that this community is for Sinhala Only, but it is known that apart from these two members and certain top business groups the vast majority of this community share the apprehensions of other minorities in regard to the intolerance and chauvinism that is crystallised in the Bill as presently constituted.

Sir Razik Fared, in a spectacular statement claiming to speak for the *Moors*, attacked the opponents of the Bill and voted with the UNP, although persons like Dr. Kaleel and Senator A. M. A. Azeez have shown that this Bill was different from the kind of Sinhala Only bill the Muslims had undertaken to support. Though Sir Razik and

Minister (Singhala) Marikkar of the MEP had voted for the Bill, it is an open secret that the overwhelming majority of the Muslims in Ceylon are opposed to this Bill particularly because a fear that religion would be the next target of attack by the Sinhala chauvinists is gathering head.

Independent Member, Hussain Marcan Markar, who also belonged to the Muslim League, voted with the Opposition. The NLSSP, the CP and the FP stood together against the Bill strengthened by one-member parties like the Tamil Congress and the Resistance Front. Three members of the Opposition were absent at voting time: Cholmondeley Goonewardena (NLSSP), Mudaliyar Kariapper and Rajadurai (both of the Federal Party). Kariapper was ill and Rajadurai seems to have his hands full with the troubles in Batticaloa.

#### In Support

The Government spokesmen claimed that the present Bill was consistent with their Mandate and that the reasonable use of Tamil would be recognised in the Regulations that would be framed in due course under the Bill. The reason for non-inclusion was that it would make the Bill cumbersome. The Prime Minister and his colleagues

(and even his back-bench supporters) were at pains to assure the minorities that no discrimination or injustice would flow from this bill, but an Opposition Member aptly pointed out that "legislation by assurances" was no substitute for legislative guarantees.

The United National Party supported the Bill with a qualification that it would have made provisions for Tamil in the main Bill if it had itself introduced the Bill. Its attitude was that when the Regulations were brought up it was time enough to consider the safeguards for the minorities. Many felt that the UNP had lost a splendid opportunity for winning a certain amount of political initiative in this matter. As it stands it is only tailing behind the MEP.

The European Appointed Members (the MEP in its manifesto promised to abolish the system of Appointed Members) supported the Bill on the footing that *business would go on as usual* even with Sinhala Only (with Translation Bureaus). The two Burgher Members also took the same attitude and pinned all their faith on assurances without pausing to consider the question of fundamental rights.

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# GUILTY

Much as everybody desires that the tension should be eased, it is necessary to stress that it is important and urgent that the Government should trace those guilty of the lawlessness that was let loose in Colombo, Gal Oya and other provincial centres whilst the language debate was in progress. The *Morning Times* in an editorial on Monday June 18 stressed that it was not merely sufficient to find scapegoats for the incidents in Gal Oya. We cannot do better than quote the apt and pointed words of the editorial.

"In sober fact the Gal Oya disturbance cannot be regarded as an isolated event — they were the disastrous end product of the communal chain reaction which began on Galle Face Green on the morning of June 5th. It was the uproar on the Galle Face Green that started all the trouble, so that if the Government wants to find the culprits who must be held responsible for all the misfortunes the people have had to endure these past two weeks in Gal Oya and elsewhere, let them take the trouble to discover who organised the Galle Face affray. That it was indeed organised no one doubts any more, for the serried cohorts who marched with banners against the sa yagrahis did not spring up suddenly from nowhere. It was these irresponsible and reckless people, incited by men who had for weeks gone about rabble rousing, that put the spark to the powder keg. By all means let us catch the culprits, but let us not try to discover scape-goats. If we are going to have an inquiry, it would be mockery to confine it to Gal Oya: it must bring within its scope the entire sequence of events, a sequence which began at Galle Face on June 5th. Who were the generals behind the "army" with banners on the green that fateful day? That is the question to which we would like an answer."

The *Times of Ceylon*, on the same evening, stressed that "there are unmistakable signs that in the hurried self-righteous search for scape-goats the real culprits behind last week's lawlessness may get away unscathed, and what is more

unsuspected." The paper also repeated with great emphasis that "there is no denying the fact that the acts of lawlessness perpetrated in various parts of the country actually began in Colombo on June 5th. Who is to blame? The answer is simple. Who are the ring leaders who organised the demonstration against the satyagrahis in Colombo and incited the hooligans to flout law and order? The plain unvarnished truth is that they are the unscrupulous persons who see in the language question an unprecedented opportunity to undermine established authority by fanning the flames of communal hatred. These exploiters of emotionalism are the real culprits responsible for the present unrest throughout the country. They must be hounded down, gagged and neutralized, if necessary in more effective ways, before they spread their poisonous doctrine of racialism on a more massive scale. ..."

We fully endorse the sentiments expressed in these two editorials. The MEP Government which has received such stout-hearted support from the *Times* group of papers will do well to heed these words. *Lake House*, which bitterly opposed the MEP before and during the election campaign, and which has carried on a sniping guerilla war against the Bandaranaike Government ever since it came to power, has written some piously angry editorials condemning the lawlessness but somehow seems reluctant to demand a full and comprehensive probe into the real culprits of the disturbance. Reading the editorials of *Lake House* journals one gets the impression that it would be happy if a few scapegoats were spotted if the public could not be made to forget the troubles. If the MEP adopts the line of least resistance

suggested by *Lake House* it will be only storing up more trouble for the future.

Nearly a month ago, in our issue of May 26, we warned the Government and the public that a conspiracy was afoot to smash the MEP. We drew pointed attention to the fact it would be on the language question that the first shot would be fired. With tragic suddenness the country was plunged into lawlessness of the most violent kind from June 5th. It is not necessary to labour the point to assert that the hand of the *agent provocateur* loomed large in Colombo, in Batticaloa and in Gal Oya. In these places, these dismal agents of chaos succeeded in creating the most unfortunate situations. In Trincomalee and in a large number of towns in the South, these *provocateurs*, some of them probably only fanatical tools in the hands of more designing agents, succeeded in provoking troubles of a more restricted character. In Chavakachcheri and other places in Jaffna like Mallakam (where a wayside station was burnt) these provocative acts did not cause a flare-up. It was perhaps a stroke of luck that the shot fired at a Sinhalese family in Trincomalee (a teacher and his wife) was allegedly by an assailant who was a Sinhalese (a naval police sergeant). If the assailant had not been found, and if the victim had died, a first class communal flare-up could have followed.

*Agent provocateurs* do not spring from nowhere. These must be traced and through them the guilty men behind the disturbances must be unearthed. If this is not done what occurred for two weeks after June 5th will be soon repeated on a larger and more massive scale.

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# CASTE

The atmosphere in Colombo is charged with tension. The Gal-Oya episode has cast a shadow of gloom over everybody. But what is even more exasperating is the spirit of intolerance that is being exhibited by so many persons from whom better was expected.

It seems impossible to carry on a normal conversation with persons who are intolerant of people who do not share their views in every detail. Any difference of opinion is immediately pounced upon and proclaimed as an example of pleading for the "enemy." The Sinhalese fanatic characterises any plea for the recognition of the Tamil language as the thin end of the wedge for a Tamil invasion. The Tamil fanatic howls that anyone who does not take the same view on every matter in every minute detail is an agent of the Sinhalese or at best as one "who is currying favour with the majority community."

Until intolerance of this kind is eliminated from our politics, until the demagogic trick of attributing the basest motives of "betrayal" and "selling out" to meet any argument is replaced by the decencies of give and take in discussions and debate, democracy faces a bleak future immediately in this island. The fight for democracy is the fight against intolerance.

## Caste

Another form of intolerance about which much is being made these days is caste. There are many who point the finger of scorn to the North and proclaim that there are Depressed Classes there. That this is being done in order to bring about a division is apparent, but what some do not seem to appreciate is that caste seems to be playing a very important role in the political affairs in the South.

When one discusses political matters of the moment with a certain variety of knowledgeable person he is always very anxious to whisper "confidentially" in your ear that the true explanation for a particular action is *caste*. When an appointment in the Police Force created a

controversy these busybodies whispered it was caste. Many even see caste in the violent fanaticism on language: it is alleged that a certain caste or a group of castes are seeking through *Sinhala Only* to secure social integration with the major caste and for this reason are raising the bogey of a Tamil invasion.

When I mentioned to a caste-minded friend that a retired doctor who is the brother of a Cabinet Minister was likely to go as Ambassador to Burma he was aghast: "it's caste again.....you know.....they want everything....." When I pointed out that what was objectionable was not caste but the continuation of the UNP practice of nepotism he would not agree. To explain nepotism one must go to caste he said.

For some time now I had been under the impression that caste had ceased to play any significant role in the South of Ceylon. But I suppose times of stress and tension bring out hidden and even subconscious trends. The defeat of the UNP and the controversy over language have created a period of transition in this island. At such times, I suppose, it is inevitable for such logic to emerge.

For the development of democracy the fight against intolerance has to be coupled with the fight against caste. An intolerant man sees the MaCarthyian bogey of an "enemy agent" in everybody who does not share his same intolerance: the caste fanatic (only a variation of the language or religious fanatic) will refuse to be happy unless he sees the hidden hand of caste conspiracy in every political development.

## Tapping

Premier Bandaranaike must be congratulated on his frankness. Sir John always maintained that phones were never tapped. Permanent Secretary Gunasena de Soysa, even as late as last week, maintained that there was never any phone-tapping during the UNP regime or even that of the MEP. No sooner was the ink on this statement dry (there could be no erasing of it), the Prime Minister

at his weekly *kiribath* chat admitted that during times of stress and tension phone-tapping was inevitable.

And thus the cat was let out of the bag. Phone-tapping will have only any value if it were secret. Why then did the Premier inform the public that phones were tapped?

A friend of mine had an ingenious explanation. According to him, the PM was unable to persuade the steel frame of the civil service and the police force that phone-tapping should be done away with. These gentlemen had maintained that "law and order" could not be preserved without phone-tapping. What could the Premier do under the circumstances? He was a democrat and did not believe in phone-tapping. So the only thing to be done was to inform the public that phones were tapped.

So now you know what to expect when you lift up the phone. Do not waste time talking secrets. If you want to conspire, get into a car and meet your fellow conspirators. *Do you phone.*

## Mettananda Turns Buddhist

One of the most significant transformations of the era is that of Mettananda. Until the sixth of June in the year of grace on thousand nine hundred and fifty six, Mettananda was a fiery demon who wanted the Tamils swallowed up, boycotted and hunted out of the island (excuse — they object to *Sinhala Only*). But on that memorable day, Mettananda was converted to the principles of the teachings of the Buddha. For the first time he spoke of kindness and tolerance to the "Tamil brethren". One week later, he went so far as to quote a text from the Indian known as the Buddha to request his friends to show humility in victory of the *Sinhala Only* Bill.

I wish some persons would be able to preach the Dhamma to certain fire-eaters in the North who seem unable to begin or end a conversation without provocative insults and threats of physical assault.

## Week by Week

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Opposition to the Bill came from angles: the Tamilist viewpoint from Federalists and persons like Ponnambalam and Sun'haralingam, and socialist criticism from the NLSSP and the CP.

To the Federalists this was a racial bill, a continuation of the discriminatory legislation which originated from the time of the Citizenship laws. According to them this Bill proved that Sinhalese and Tamils could not exist happily in a unitary state, and that a Federal Union of two autonomous states was essential in order to bring peace and harmony to this country.

Mr. Ponnambalam concentrated on the shortcoming of the Bill as a piece of discriminatory legislation and indicated four grounds (vide our last issue) on which the Bill was objectionable. In addition, Ponnambalam was melodramatic and wanted to be even "more extreme" than the Federalists. He hinted darkly about stern and stiff resistance and about a separate Tamilnad. As immediate measures he wanted a boycott of the Sinhalese language as a medium for administration until the dispute was solved. It was felt that what Ponnambalam sought to achieve in his immediate proposals was in effect an attempt to bring sufficient pressure to compel Government to amend the Bill.

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Sun'haralingam was as nebulous as ever and apart from provocative racist statements he said little else. He has proclaimed that he would boycott sittings of the House (as he has done before). Ponnambalam also wants all sixteen Tamil members to resign and boycott Parliament. It would seem that he would resign only if all others did so. Knowledgeable persons state that Ponnambalam crashed into politics in 1932 when he broke the Jaffna Youth Congress boycott of the Donoughmore Constitution and the first State Council (for the reason that the reforms did not go far enough). The query is now raised whether he will fade out of politics with a boycott of Parliament, but it is asserted by those who know Jaffna politics that Ponnambalam is too astute a politician to commit *hara kiri*.

#### Socialist

The NLSSP and the CP both took up the position that this was discriminatory and chauvinistic piece of legislation which would tend to disrupt national unity and detract from the task of socialist development. The first point stressed was that this was an attempt to force down a language on the minorities in a switch-over time that was so short that it would inevitably work tremendous hardship on all except a privileged section of Sinhalese-educated.

It was also pointed out that this Bill was a violation of fundamental rights as well as democratic principles. To the Government taunt that two languages were impractical and costly, the NLSSP and the CP asserted that any price was worth paying in order to preserve national unity. Keneuman for the CP also went on to indicate that in their view "parity" meant.

Leader of the Opposition Dr. N. M. Perera, in what is regarded as one of the best speeches heard in the House, challenged the

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# Two Languages

We were at one time hoping that Ceylon would have two languages, Tamil and Sinhalese, throughout the Island, but unfortunately for us and for the Tamil language, the Sinhalese people, it is not merely the power-seeking politicians as one would say, but the Sinhalese people by and large—it is my feeling and it is the considered view of many Muslims — have convinced themselves that parity of status cannot obtain without parity of strength. They think, may be groundlessly, may be their fears are exaggerated, but I think they sincerely are of the belief that the Sinhalese language cannot survive if parity of status is granted to Tamil. I am not saying that this is the correct view, but I am saying it seems to me to be the sincerely held view.

## Mandate

The L.S.S.P. has another theory. They think there was no mandate given to the MEP on the language issue; instead they say it was the hartal that was alive from 1953 to 1956 and that the MEP victory has something to do with the hartal of 1953. I do not share that view and I am sure the present party in power

does not share that view either. So that, if the L.S.S.P. and its leaders can convince the Sinhalese people, I personally would be the happiest person; but I feel that the Sinhalese people, rightly or wrongly, sincerely feel that so long as Sinhalese is a language which is not found anywhere else in the world, it cannot develop satisfactorily with parity of status.

The Canada example has been cited, but I find that there is a vital difference. Canada has two languages, namely French and English; but both those languages look to their mother countries, namely France and England, for vitalizing influences and for their sources of development. Such a situation does not obtain in Ceylon in respect of Sinhalese, and therefore our view is that the Sinhalese attitude must be respected, however much we may feel that attitude is not quite correct, for it is held sincerely. They point out that the Tamil language has 40,000,000 people to help towards its development. It is already a very rich language; it has textbooks for university education; it has an encyclopaedia; it has a dictionary comparable with the Oxford dictionary; whereas the Sinhalese language is deficient in all these respects. And so they think that there is no room for the development of the Sinhalese language once parity of status is granted.

So far, I have no quarrel with the Sinhalese. Once you have established Sinhalese as the State language, why do you want to attempt to kill the Tamil language? The Hon. Leader of the House seems to give an answer in the negative. I shall be very happy if that position is maintained in the Hon. Prime Minister's Bill. Senator Kanaganayagam said that the Bill was handed in secret to Members and then taken back and that this was put in cupboard later, but I have no access to sources of information which he apparently has access to. I humbly submit that is not the way to settle a problem of this nature, of vital consequence to a very large section of the Ceylonese

Last week we published the first part of this statement by Senator A. M. A. Azeez in which he mainly dealt with the attitude of Tamil-speaking Muslims to the question of Federation. In this article he sets out the Muslim approach to the *Sinhalese Only* policy. In the concluding part, next week, Senator Azeez outlines what he thinks should be the concrete expression of the terms *due recognition of Tamil*. This series of articles are extracts from an amplified statement based on Senator Azeez's speech on May 9 in the Senate.

people. Whatever fears might have been expressed, whatever rash utterance might have been made during election time by both sections, surely it is possible, with a due exercise of statesmanship, to find a solution. I personally know of no other solution than to have a commission or a committee set up with wide powers to canvass public opinion, to obtain the views of all concerned. After all, the peoples who are most concerned are the Tamil-speaking peoples because an attempt is being made to define the status of their own language. How can there be satisfaction, how can the democratic procedure be complied with, if they are shut out? That is the question I would like to ask the Government of the day and particularly the Hon Prime Minister.

They still have ample time. I believe they wanted to make Sinhalese the official language in 24 hours. Many 24 hours have passed. They are now prepared to wait for a month. Cannot they wait for three or six months? With definite directions as regards time to a committee or commission? Views can be obtained; the committee or commission will be able to canvass the views. They can stipulate a time-limit for them to complete the inquiry. Before I come to the next point, I would like to refer to the decision of the Muslim community — the resolution that has been accepted by the all-Ceylon Muslim League and the

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# TWO LANGUAGES

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All-Ceylon Moor's Association. There are no other political organizations as far as our community is concerned. These two organizations might have had their little differences, but on this matter they deliberated and came to a unanimous conclusion. I would add that, in this conclusion, Muslims of the Eastern Province have definitely been included. This is the resolution that was passed unanimously on December 18, 1955. "The Conference was of the view, subject to acceptance by the two associations" (this was later ratified by both associations) "that Sinhalese be accepted as the only State language with due official recognition being given to Tamil and English, and provided that fundamental rights of the minorities in respect of religion, culture, language, etc., are incorporated in the Constitution." I would say this expresses the general will of the community.

## Recognition

What do we mean by "due official recognition"? I am not saying I am going to exhaust all the aspects of this question, but in Tamil-speaking areas and in the matter of the medium of instruction for Tamil speaking peoples there should be no compulsion of Sinhalese. It does not end here. There should be provision to see that a boy who pursues his education through Tamil as medium of instruction is not unduly handicapped when it comes to appearing for public examinations. I would like to remind the hon. Leader of the House of a portion in the manifesto of the MEP where, under the chapter "Employment", it is said there will be no discrimination on language grounds. I do not know the full implications of that statement, but it does seem refreshing to me to read that there will be no discrimination on language grounds. If there is going to be no discrimination and if Sinhalese is going to be the only State language, there is a certain difficulty arising. A boy who has been educated through the Tamil medium may be required to know the Sinhalese language. It may be necessary for him to know Sinhalese, but it is not necessary to handicap him by

setting all the question papers in the Sinhalese language. I am not trying to enter into details because they would be irrelevant at this stage but this is a vital problem. Merely to say that you are going to protect the Tamil medium of instruction does not solve the problem because there is the problem of employment. I admit that this is in the nature of a difficulty. If Sinhalese is to be the only State language, it should not preclude the Tamil-speaking peoples from having their fair share of employment. I think in India, which has Hindi as the State language, there are many regional languages. Their problem is a complicated one, though similar to ours, and I believe they are solving it satisfactorily. If the policies of the Government are similar in certain respects to those adopted by India, in whose steps we are said to be following, I am legitimate in requesting the Hon. Prime Minister that India's policies be imitated in other equally important respects;

Tamil has to be recognized as a medium of instruction through out the Island because there are Tamil-speaking Muslims living scattered throughout the country. The federal solution is no solution to the Muslims who are Tamil-speaking and who inhabit South, Central and West Ceylon in addition to the

North and the East. As a matter of fact, all the previous Governments for years have been establishing Tamil schools for the Muslim children in those areas and there must be some provision made for them.

I now come to the question of the use of Tamil as a language of administration. I am sure there is no intention on the part of Government to thrust Sinhalese as the only language of administration on purely Tamil speaking areas. Some kind of solution has to be found. The Hon. Prime Minister has referred in his speech on the Debate on the Address to regional councils, regionalization, decentralization, de-control and so on. There should be scope given -there is no question-for the development of the Tamil language. It is a legitimate desire on the part of Tamil-speaking peoples to have homes of their own. I am not thinking in terms of defining exact territories, boundaries and so on, but I do say that if there is going to be scope, if there is going to be room, for the development of the Tamil language, it is inevitable that there should also be a home for it.

*To be concluded next week*

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# COMICS and CRIME - 2

The defenders of the comics (especially the industry itself) have generally promoted the idea that the reading of comic books enables the child to rid himself of his "aggressive" tendencies. In a society such as ours which insists upon the equal right of all individuals to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," it must also be insisted that a measure of self-control must be learned and practised. This implies that one's neighbor may not be pushed around, and, emphatically, it implies that this neighbor must be allowed to stay alive. Apparently, according to some psychologists and the comic book industry, there is a great deal of frustration generated in permitting one's neighbor to live, to choose whom and what he will associate with and thus attain a measure of freedom with which to pursue his happiness. •

According to the pro-comic book experts, this accumulated frustration issues, in a sort of neo-Aristotleian catharsis, when the child is steeped in the vicious, vile, and salacious material presented to him by the humanitarian comic book industry. If one is willing to concur in the opinion that a great deal of latent aggression is built up by being decent to one's fellow men, there are many socially sanctioned ways in which legitimate aggressive energy may be expended. For children, there are all the competitive games of childhood—ranging from the simple game of tag, through wrest-

In this concluding part Dr. Wertham draws specific attention to anti-social and criminal behaviour which arises through reading horror comics and other similarly harmful literature. In the context of current developments in Ceylon the urgency for legislation to prohibit such literature cannot be overstressed.

ling, boxing, football, basketball and track (to cite a few): if the aggression is not sufficiently well defined to need contact expenditure, there are card games, checkers, chess—all of which supply enough competition to achieve alleviation of aggression through action which can stop short of desecration and murder.

### Dangerous

For those among us who have become disordered in some aspects of human relations, there are available child (and adult) psychiatrists and psychologists, who, *in a controlled situation*, can draw out the trouble and eliminate it by therapeutic play and treatment. (I have emphasized the words above because *a controlled situation is just what the comic book reader does not have*). The point there is that comic books do not serve the sort of purpose which their proponents rely upon as one of their main justifications for taking a child's pocket money (or, as some-

times happens—money which a child has stolen). The books serve no constructive or therapeutic purpose.

Case studies which have been made prove that these books serve quite another purpose: that of tempting and seducing young and flexible minds into learning the jargon and methods of murder, sadism, and disrespect for law and the rights of others. In fact they plant the seeds of aggression where they might not have appeared otherwise, and this sort of indoctrination is not generally followed by apathy. The action that is pictured in these books, and the methods inculcated by them, induce similar action by some "readers."

The allure of the hideous made glamorous has actually led to the deaths of some children—by their own hands or by those of their comrades, who, having learned techniques, must try them out.

This is normal learning of abnormal subject matter. The defenders of the industry have another specious argument: i.e., that only the abnormal child—the child who already needs help—is affected adversely by the dramatic filth and horror of the comics. In the cases of young delinquents which have been fully studied, there has seldom been a history of outspoken mental abnormality. The seriously disturbed child is locked within his troubles: he has all that

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## Comics & Crime - 2

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can do to keep himself going at all, and he is not the typical comic book reader. Inquiries made of psychiatrists, educators, and prosecutors bear out this point. But even if it were true that the vulnerable child is the disturbed child, this defence by the experts is so brutal that people of goodwill could not bear with it.

### Vested Financial Interests

Another subtle aspect of crime comics is the advertising that is carried in the pages of these "magazines." Perhaps the publishers and advertisers are relying on the principle most clearly described in Poe's short story, *The Purloined Letter*, in which the letter that has been searched for is discovered lying in plain sight on a table; the adults who pronounce the comics harmless have apparently not noticed that these advertisements invite the young to buy (through the mail) real guns, bullets, hunting and snap-blade knives — and that the children *do buy them*. Besides the tools of destruction, panaceas for various physical ailments, which

should require the doctor's or the psychologist's attention, appear in comic book advertising.

The eye-gouging, disfiguring methods used by comic book characters, disrupt and discourage healthy relations between the sexes; rape, brutality, and murder have become rampant as never before in the history of American printed matter. The actualization of some of these by our "delinquent" youth may be fairly laid at the door of the comic book publishers and their upholders.

In the fantastic world pictured in these books, men are seldom or never courteous or protective toward women, and women are not depicted as possessing any of the qualities which would draw out the sort of high-level response which is normal between the sexes — if we are to continue living in a decent world. The men of the comics are described, in cartoon and text, as being strong, lustful, brutal, and unintelligent; they are tender only when dealing with a younger person of their own sex. The comic book world is a world of violence, bloodthirsty and homosexually inclined. What a picture to present

to the young of America (or of any nation)!


The fact (that is, the comic book readers use it as if it were a fact) that these books are leisure time reading and therefore do not teach but amuse, must be refuted if we believe in the foundations of our educational system. Is it reasonable to believe that if reading-material from a textbook is learned, that reading-material from a comic book is *not learned*? It is utter nonsense to think that conditioning (the main prop of learning) will take place in one instance and not in the other. If this were the case, empirical learning by means of projects, visits to museums, and factories, would drop to an all-time low.


Comic-book publishers are gaining tremendous financial returns by perverting young minds. Even if no juvenile crimes followed the blueprints laid down in these books, it would still be despicable for professedly child-loving Americans to expose children to horrible and repulsive situations that, but for the comics, some of them might not meet in an entire lifetime.


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# Ease the Tension

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natural fear of a Tamil Invasion. A Round Table Conference will help in creating a better atmosphere. There should be not only amendments to the "Sinhala Only" Bill through the concrete actualization of the assurances to recognise a reasonable use of the Tamil language, but steps should also be taken to frame a new Constitution incorporating a Charter of Fundamental Rights. The MEP is committed to the framing of a new Constitution to meet the contemporary and future requirements of an Independent Republic. The earlier this is done the better.

## Week by Week

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Government to dissolve Parliament and go to the country on this issue instead of some of its spokesmen sniping in Parliament and outside at NLSSP and CP parliamentarians

challenging them to resign their seats and contest MEP candidates. One of the most emotionally charged speeches came from Dr. Colvin R. de Silva when he pilloried the Government. Leslie Goonewardene, Bernard Soysa and Edmund Samarakoddy for the NLSSP analysed the Bill and traced its genesis as a dangerous outbreak of chauvinism. Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe also made a memorable contribution whilst the speech of P. Kandiah was regarded even by Government benches as one which made out a case which was difficult to meet. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam sought to set aright many misconceptions about the Federal Party, and did this without resorting to racist arguments of a provocative kind which other Tamil - Arasu spokesmen indulged in. Mr. Chelvanayakam emphasised that a Federal form of Government was the best way of preserving national unity. He also stressed that the Federal Party did not look to any help from abroad (Ameri-



cans) but defended on the strength of the internal unity of the Tamil people and the goodwill of the Sinhalese to achieve their goal.

Those who were in the House right through the debate commented that the Government made out a weak case but that it relied on the weight of numbers to secure the passage of the Bill.

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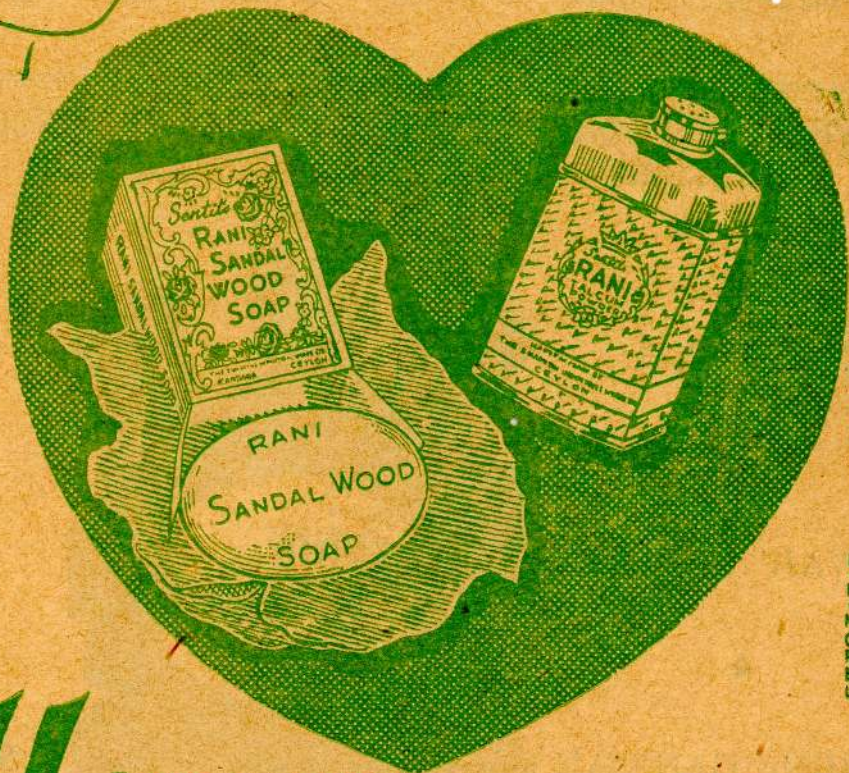


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