

# TRIBUNE

## TAX RACKET

### Probe Essential

"Tribune" has always regarded the Income Tax Department as one of the few Government organisations that run smoothly, efficiently and without the taint of corruption. We have so far not associated any scandals or rackets with the Department, though in the days of the UNP, political pressure in respect of certain persons in the political firmament is alleged to have been surreptitiously exercised contrary to national interests.

But in recent months complaints have reached us which indicate that some persons in the Department are party to what must be described as a racket. We have conducted what investigations we can and we are satisfied that more than a *prima facie* case exists for us to bring the matter before the public so that the Income Tax authorities will conduct a serious and intensive probe into the matter.

Let us set out one way in which the racket works on a hypothetical basis. A, from an outstation, sends

in his returns for two or three years, with what he thinks are his accounts and some documents to support them. What he next gets is an assessment notice on an estimated income on the footing that he has not submitted accounts with documents or that whatever accounts he sent in were false. A rushes to the Department to be told that his file had been tampered with, and it is impressed on him that he must have been responsible for the pilferage. He is asked to pay up a fantastic sum within a short time or to face a prosecution.

In this situation, he is "contacted" by a minor officer of the Department who directs him to particular member of the legal profession or one of the tribe known as accountants authorised to appear before the Department, and tells him that if his case is presented "properly" he would be able to get a reduction. This A does, and his authorised representative either charges a heavy fee or a fee and a percentage of the reduction that would be obtained, and thereafter represents matters.

#### Pattern

As the basis of the assessment was fictitious it would not be nor-

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mally difficult to obtain a reduction. The first complaint of this kind of goings-on we received, we did not take seriously. But when the pattern began to repeat itself, and when we found the same persons from the legal and accountancy professions being involved in these cases, we made our investigations.

We have more than reasonable suspicion that some minor officers in the Department operate the racket. They pick on suitable cases, and either through anonymous petitions or by pilfering documents, leave no alternative for the Asst. Assessors but to make estimated assessments. Then they await the victims to walk into the trap, (and most of them are rather ignorant about these matters), and then it is an easy matter to direct them to the professional "experts" concerned. These minor officers can then instruct the lawyers or the accountants the kind of case that should be made out to obtain a reduction, and the spoils are thereafter shared between all those in the racket.

Victims of this racket are in no position to make complaints, for apart from anything else, they fear what the Income Tax Department would do next. But if the powers that be at the helm of affairs in the Income Tax Department cannot run this racket to earth, then it is time for them to shed themselves of the naive illusions about what is happening around them and get down to a spot of proper Sherlock Holmes work.

### TRIBUNE

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#### In This Issue

Parties & Politics	...	499
Municipal Election		
GMOA Meeting	...	498
Report		
Volte Face	...	505
Govt. & Doctors		

# WEEK by WEEK in CEYLON

★ GMOA MEETING

★ DAHANAYAKE

★ STATISTICS

The *Tribune* congratulates the Government Medical Officers' Association on its unanimous decision last Sunday not to strike, but to negotiate with the Government further, following the assurance given by the Prime Minister that he would personally conduct negotiations with the Association and arrive at a settlement satisfactory both to the Government and the Association, by January 7th.

It took the Association nearly four and a half hours to arrive at this decision, after about a hundred doctors had spoken for and against strike action.

When the meeting started at 9 a. m., the President Dr. Frank Fernando announced to the 450 doctors present that the Prime Minister had expressed a desire to address the Association. The doctors were all prepared to listen to the Prime Minister but only after they had concluded the business of the day.

Immediately after this matter was disposed of a member of the Association proposed the following motion: "This House strongly censures the action of Dr. E. M. Wijerama in having subscribed to the Canekeratne Report and thus betrayed the Association whose nominee he was."

The doctor who moved the motion referred to reports that Dr. Wijerama had been offered an ambassadorial appointment, and rumours that he was to be appointed a Dean of a faculty in the new Medical College.

A senior doctor, a specialist in fact, followed the mover of the motion and said that he had known Dr. Wijerama for the past thirty years. He was of the opinion that Dr. Wijerama was a man of high integrity and an honourable man.

The discussion went on these lines and there were a number of references made to Dr. Wijerama's past and speculations as to his future. The President intervened at this stage and said that the Association was neither discussing Dr.

Wijerama's past nor his future, but the present and there was no denying the fact that Dr. Wijerama had unashamedly subscribed to the Canekeratne Report. He however pointed that there was important business before the House, and the House should not waste its time on trivialities like Dr. Wijerama, his past and his future.

### Specialists

The matter which nearly caused a split in the Association was then taken up. The question of the total abolition of private practice had split the union in two: on one side the specialists, and on the other, the bulk of government doctors. The specialists told the meeting that they were not going to support the Association if it did not agree to the acceptance of the principle of consultation practice and threatened to break away from the Association. By consultation practice the specialists meant that patients were free to consult them in their house or chambers, and really meant the maintenance of the *status quo*. The specialists did not favour the

Canekeratne Report because it banned the consultation of doctors in their residences or chambers. Therefore they wished to reject the Canekeratne Report.

At this stage of the meeting, the bulk of doctors had the whiphand over the specialists. For if the specialists broke away from the Association, the Association would have accepted the Canekeratne Report in toto, which would have meant that the specialists would be bound

continued on page 503

Owing to the Christmas and New Year Holidays there will be no issue of the *Tribune* next week, Saturday December 29, 1956. The next issue will be published on January 5, 1957.

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# SOMEBODY UP THERE LIKES ME

# PARTIES & POLITICS

The results of the Colombo Municipal Elections shows that the strength of the different parties has not materially altered since the General Elections of April 1956; and also that unless all the 'progressive parties' get together, the UNP will constitute the biggest single party.

Prime Minister Bandaranaike, commenting on the results, correctly analysed the position when he said: "Another factor is that in a three or four-cornered fight, a party like the UNP has an advantage — as the progressive vote gets divided." At the last General Elections, a combination of the MEP, LSSP and CP defeated the UNP. At the Municipal Elections just concluded the UNP has obtained a majority of 18 seats out of the 31 with about 38% of those who voted; and only about 64% of the total number of voters went to the polls.

As against the 39,674 votes polled by the UNP, the MEP, LSSP and CP polled 54,848 votes. The major percentage of 13,553 votes obtained by Independents, the Moors Association and the Labour Party would also have gone anti-UNP.

## UNP Gain

Although the voting figures reveal that the relative strength of the parties has not materially altered, the UNP has gained three seats in the Municipal Council compared to the position in the old Council. The LSSP has lost 3 and the CP 2 seats, and the MEP has gained 5 mainly at the expense of the LSSP and CP. This is the first time the MEP has contested the Municipal Elections and it has won 5 seats mainly by emphasising the language and religious issues and thereby weaning some of the voters who have traditionally voted Left.

The gain of three seats made by the UNP is a reflection not only of the basic hold of the UNP on about 35 to 40 percent of the country, but also of the sense of frustration that has come over the "floating vote" as a result of the

*Pertinax*, whose comments on local political matters have appeared in the *Tribune* from time to time, writes this week on the recently concluded Colombo Municipal Elections. His is a vigorous and incisive approach to Ceylon's present-day parties and politics. We welcome contributions from readers on the same question.

misdeeds of the MEP Government, and the stupid and foolish disagreement and disunity between the LSSP and the CP. Two weeks ago the *Tribune* editorially pointed out: "..... this (dissension in the MEP) coupled with the wider disunity the MEP has brought about by its undemocratic and unfair *Sinhala Only Act* has created a situation where a section of the population now seems to regret having thrown out the UNP at the last elections. This sense of frustration is further accentuated by the fact that the LSSP seems determined to plough

lonely furrow dreaming of being returned to power soon, and the CP is too weak to be effective and also too uncertain about its policies....." *Tribune* had also emphasised that it was only a combination of all the progressive forces in the MEP, the LSSP and CP which can defeat the UNP.

## Jubilation ?

This analysis has been borne out by the results of the Colombo Municipal Council.

The jubilation which J. R. Jayawardene indulged in when the UNP victory was known was certainly not justified. He failed to see that the UNP has not gained in the popular vote since April, as a result of what he called the "up-surge against the acts of omission and commission of the MEP." He further failed to see that the UNP had won so many seats only as a result of the spitting of the "progressive vote" by the MEP, LSSP and CP contesting practically all seats. J. R. Jayawardene further claimed that "the young and enthu-

*continued on page 500*

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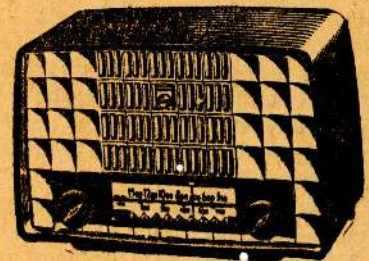
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# Parties & Politics

*continued from page 499*

siastic team elected by the peoples' vote will justify the confidence placed in them." The vast majority of the UNP Municipal Members are old sitting members, some of whom have served more than one term previously in the Council. There are only three or four newcomers to the UNP team, and J. R. Jayawardene had to strain his imagination to describe the present UNP Municipal team as "young and enthusiastic."

Apart from this, Jayawardene claimed that "our defeat in April has taught us many lessons. It is as a better and reformed party that we intend to place ourselves at the service of the people hoping if they so wish it to give this country a sane, stable and progressive Government." It is good to know that the UNP has learnt the lessons from the April defeat, but there has yet been no concrete evidence of any reform. Have any of the old stagers responsible for the corruption and retrograde policies of the Party been purged? Has the Party evolved a new programme of work which can be called "progressive"?

As far as is known, the core of corruption and anti-democratic autocracy that tainted the UNP is still very much in the Party. And, as for a programme and policy, the UNP has not gone one step further from the old airy-fairy promises it had indulged in the years it had been in power.

Nevertheless, Jayawardene has promised that the UNP with its absolute majority in the new Council will set an example by its work as a "reformed" party. The coming months will show how far it can carry out this promise. In the absence of any definite policy or programme, the UNP majority in the Council is likely, according to critical observers, to shift the blame for its complete bankruptcy of ideas to the MEP Central Government and claim that its best efforts were sabotaged by the Centre.

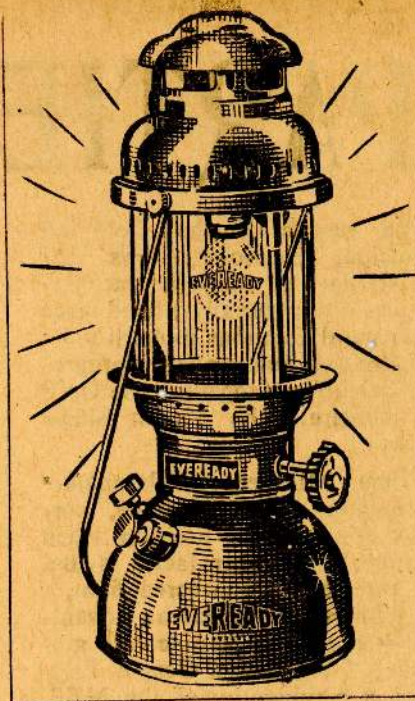
This bluff, however, will not fool anybody. A progressive administration in the Council can do a great deal of good whatever the Central Government is or does. With Central Government help wonders can be achieved, but on its own the UNP administration has ample opportunity to show that it

is a "reformed" party and that it has a new progressive policy. If in the Colombo Municipal Council, the UNP can prove that it is a new party with a practical progressive policy, it can certainly hope to enter the 1960 General Elections under better auspices than it did in 1956. Jayawardene and the UNP, moreover, must define what they mean by "progressive". The term alone is not enough.

## MEP

The MEP fought the Municipal Elections for the first time, and it must be also remembered that the dissension within the MEP showed itself when candidates insisted on labelling themselves as SLFP or VLSSP. A breakdown of the votes obtained by the SLFP and VLSSP candidates in the elections shows that in the city the VLSSP has as much strength as the SLFP; but it is a fact that in the rural areas the SLFP has a much greater pull than the VLSSP; and perhaps because of the virulence of its language and religious policies the SLFP will be able, on its own strength, (without the support of other progressive forces) to put up a winning fight against the UNP.

Whatever the dissensions within the MEP, it put up a united front at the Municipal elections, and for the 25% of the votes that were polled for it, the MEP was able to get



only 5 seats. It is significant that as against the 25,820 votes polled by the MEP, the two Left parties LSSP and the CP polled 28,028 votes.

The most redoubtable victory of the MEP was the one at Borella where its candidate defeated Dr. N. M. Perera, the leader of the LSSP. But whatever the merits of the victory over Dr. N. M. Perera

*continued on page 509*

## THE PEOPLE'S CAR



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# GREATER SYRIA

The first step towards "guaranteeing" British domination in the Middle East after the war was taken in deep secrecy in January 1943. It was then that the first compact was concluded for an Anglo-American redivision of Asia. At the Churchill-Roosevelt meeting in Casablanca, a secret agreement was signed under which Britain was to assume full military and political "responsibility" in the Middle East and the Balkans, while the United States was to assume similar "responsibility" in the Far East. This compact was confirmed in 1946 by a special agreement between the British and American general staffs.

Britain bought from America the Middle East, which was not American property, and sold to America East Asia, which was not British property. More in return for Middle East oil, she surrendered something she really did possess, namely military and political supremacy in the old British dominions, Australia and New Zealand. Yet she did not feel she was paying too high a price and was certain that the whole matter had been arranged and the Middle East was safely in her pocket. What the peoples of the area might think was not taken into consideration: it was assumed that in face of the British and American joint chiefs of staff, the Arabs were a nonentity.

## Greater Syria

The next step was an attempt to create under the label of "Greater Syria" a new colonial state stretching from the Red Sea to Iran and embracing Iraq, Syria, the Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. It was to be ruled by the Baghdad Hashimite dynasty, who were pensioners of Britain. Something similar had already been attempted in 1918 by Colonel Lawrence, agent of the British Arabian Bureau. Now the idea was that the establishment of this Arab vassal state would place the seal on the British colonisation of the Middle East. "Greater Syria" was conceived on the pattern of the colonial India of the nineteenth century. The success of this scheme, it was calculated, would bring the southern Arab states, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen as

well as Turkey, Iran and Greece in the North, under British influence and in addition would strengthen Britain's hold on Egypt. "Greater Syria" was considered an ideal political camouflage for the oil empire of Shell and AIOC.

The authors of the project must have thought that the program for colonizing the Middle East was practically consummated. Agreement had been reached with the United States for a redivision of Asia and with the Baghdad dynasty on the "Greater Syria" project; a new chain of military bases had been established from Cyprus to Iran, oil production was rapidly rising — what else was needed?

What was needed was the chief thing on which everything else depended, namely the acquiescence of the Middle East peoples in Britain's policy in their part of the world. And that was lacking.

The Arabs answered "No!" to the would-be arbiters of their destiny. They would not allow anyone to make their territory an object of division, exploitation or strategy. The result was that the Middle East plan elaborated by the old fashioned imperial politicians collapsed like a house of cards. History did not retreat before the shades of Curzon and Lawrence. In fact, it gave their successors an object lesson in political realism.

In last week's instalment of this article, which we reproduce by courtesy of *New Times*, the author traced the background of the contemporary situation in the Middle East. This week he analyses Britain's unsuccessful efforts to create Greater Syria and the coming of the U.S. into the Middle East arena.

The lesson began with their failure to induce the Arab states to dissolve themselves into the "Greater Syria" oil empire. True, there were times when the sponsors of the project seemed to be on the point of succeeding. But they never did. At the decisive moment their manoeuvres failed and they had to beat a retreat. The peoples of the Middle East would not take the path charted for them. They followed their own road, and with every step drove another nail into the coffin of the scheme hatched by the latter-day Palmestons.

The Arabs today are not what they were in the nineteenth century, or even before World War I. Fellahs, shepherds, Bedouins, merchants sheikhs and the new professional class refused to act as pawns to obey the orders of foreigners. The politicians of the old imperial school failed to understand that in the mid-twentieth century the Arabs who occupy a territory forty times the area of Great Britain were no longer playthings, but themselves makers of

*continued on page 502*



# Greater Syria

*continued from page 501*

international policy; not servitors of gentlemen in cork helmets, but builders of independent states.

People trained in the traditions of Lord Curzon and Colonel Lawrence refused to realize that the days of the "date and camel" economy were passing in the Arabian Peninsula, that instead of weak and disunited tribes, they were up against a united national movement of a whole people, one just as insuperable as the Indian and Burmese national-liberation movements had been. The simple fact that the Arabs could no longer be ordered about and had to be treated as equals could not penetrate the imperialists' minds, was beyond their understanding. But even they could not fail to see that the destiny of the Arab countries was now being decided not in London, in some office in Whitehall, but in Cairo, Damascus, Riad, Beyrouth and Amman.

## United States

From this bitter truth the imperial reactionaries, drew two conclu-

sions. First they decided to act in the Middle East from "positions of strength". But realizing they were no longer strong enough to wage a struggle against the tens of millions of Arabs and Iranians, they took another decision namely to agree to the United States taking part in the struggle. In other words they opened their preserve to their most dangerous rival.

What came of this, is generally known. Consenting to "underwrite" the British positions in the Middle East, that is, to send armed forces into the area, notably to the Mediterranean, the United States exacted a stiff premium — in the shape of oil and military and political coin.

In 1937 Britain controlled 80.9 percent of the Middle East oil output, America 12.8 percent. In 1950 the shares were respectively 50.9 and 44.4 percent; in 1956, 30 and 65 percent. These are amazing figures: in less than two decades nearly half the total oil production of the Middle East slipped from Britain's hands. The great British oil empire in the Arab-Iran area was melting away.

Britain's military hegemony in the Middle East, bases on the "strategical triangle," suffered a similar fate. The U.S. Sixth Fleet, stationed in the Mediterranean grew to three times the strength of the British Mediterranean Fleet. The biggest Western air base on Arabian territory now belonged to the United States. The Turkish bases were likewise under American control.

What did the account show on balance? An enormous increase in expenditure and no increase in revenue. Between 1945 and 1954 Britain forfeited to the United States a considerable part of her economic military and political positions in the Middle East and gained no new position for herself. She had failed to bring the peoples of the area under her control. In 1954 her agreement with the U.S. general staff did not save her from having to surrender her principal Middle Eastern base, the Suez. On the demand of the Egyptians, the British forces were compelled to quit the territory of Egypt which Field Marshal Slim had once called "the key to the Middle East."

*continued on page 508*

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by the acceptance of the report, and in turn would have meant that patients would go to the paying clinics suggested in the Canekeratne Report and not to the Specialists' residences or chambers. The doctors themselves were willing to sacrifice their fight for higher salaries, in the cause of the abolition of private practice.

The specialists realising this, accepted a definition of the term consultation practice to mean consultation between doctor and doctor and not specialist and patient. In other words the specialists climbed down to accept the position that if their services were required they will have to be sought not directly by the patient but by the patient through a doctor. This was the definition of consultation practice throughout Great Britain.

Rather than accept the paying clinics system the specialists agreed to the abolition of private practice with the proviso that consultation practice between doctor and doctor be allowed. It was a victory for the bulk of doctors, who by a tactical move that they would accept the Canekeratne Report, forced the hands of the specialists into lending their support.

Once this matter was disposed of and the support of the specialists obtained the meeting proceeded to the question of negotiations with the government or strike action. The President faced his toughest assignment here. There was a strong militant section from the outstations which had come ready to take a vote on strike action and here was the President advocating negotiation with the government. In a first-class speech which studiously avoided the word "strike" the President put forward a strong case for negotiation with the government. He said he was convinced of the good faith of the Prime Minister in this matter and appealed to the doctors present to adopt his suggestion which he put forward after discussions with the Prime Minister. The specialists threw in their lot with the President and the militant section showed signs of becoming less and less militant. Soon they fell in line with the views of the President and unanimously voted for negotiations with the Government.

By this time the Association was in a mood to hear the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was invited and when he came to the House, a specialist proposed that the decisions of the House, namely to call off the strike, negotiate with the Government and the decision on the abolition of private practice be made known to the Prime Minister. But the whole House wanted to hear the Prime Minister before he was informed of the decisions and so it was. The Prime Minister made an impassioned appeal to the House on the lines of the decisions it had already taken and ended his speech by assuring the doctors that he would personally conduct negotiations and see that a just settlement was arrived at.

The resolutions were then made known to the Prime Minister and he was glad. So were the doctors and so were the specialists.

The G.M.O.A. has achieved unity in its demands for the abolition of private practice, and a readjustment of salary scales.

The Government is satisfied with the doctors' actions and has given them an assurance that their demands will be reasonably met.

The public hail the victory of the G.M.O.A.

*Tit-bit of the day's proceedings*

came in the Prime Minister's speech. Referring to the composition of the G.M.O.A. Committee that was appointed to negotiate with the Government, the Prime Minister said: I hope you have not nominated Dr. Wijerama to serve on the Committee!

**Dahanayake**


If it is only a mental pervert who would suggest lowering the standards of Royal College, it is only a mad man who would suggest that lectures delivered at the University in English could be translated into Swabasha by interpreters.

Mr. W. Dahanayake, Minister of Education should have his head examined.

It is said that power corrupts, but in Mr. Dahanayake's case, it has corroded his mind and has turned a harmless eccentric into a dangerous lunatic. And he is determined to make a madhouse of our University too!

He has announced in a Press statement to the *Ceylon Daily News* that he plans to employ interpreters to translate into Swabasha lectures delivered in English, in furtherance of his intention to help students educated in the swabasha medium to pursue their University Education in English.

continued on page 506



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The decision of the Minister of Justice to introduce the official language into the Courts of Ceylon causes us no little concern. The Minister has fixed 1960 as the deadline for the introduction of Sinhalese and for this purpose has appointed a 17 member committee with the Principal of the Law College, Mr. G. M. de Silva, as Chairman to work out the switch-over from English.

In the meantime Judges of the Supreme Court have indicated to the Minister that they will not be in a position to write their judgments in Sinhalese, although the maintenance of records could be in Sinhalese in 1960 provided the necessary staff and equipment were provided.

The Committee should lose no time in addressing itself to the many and intricate problems that must arise with regards to the working of the Courts. The main problem as we can see it will be the manner of conducting the actual proceedings of the various courts. There is also the problem connected with the learning and teaching of law itself in the language medium, which will involve translation of numerous texts, law reports, legislative enactments and a codification of the Common Law.

At present the law stipulates that Court records have to be maintained in English. Even in the rural courts, where the District Court of the area may determine the language in which the records may be maintained, the records are maintained in English. In Sinhalese speaking areas, the Courts could be directed to maintain their records in Sinhalese, but it would bring innumerable hardships to the Tamil speaking areas if the records are directed to be maintained in Sinhalese. And that is exactly what the present position is. For the Minister of Justice has indicated that the official language — Sinhalese, should be introduced into Courts all over the island, and there is absolutely no indication that the records or proceedings should be in Tamil in Tamil speaking areas. This matter has been the subject of questions in the Senate, and when the Minister was

asked to table the correspondence on the subject, that is correspondence between himself and the Judges of the Supreme Court, he pleaded that they were confidential documents and therefore could not be tabled. Surely does not the Minister of Justice realise that the subject is one which concerns the administration of justice, which every citizen looks up to with regard and respect, and that as a matter of right he is entitled to know? The legal maxim that justice should not only be done, but should seem to be done is still with us, and this type of conduct on the part of the Minister of Justice disillusiones the people of the country as to their belief in the existence of the maxim.

Even if the lower courts can be settled by a directive of the Minister, a legislative Fiat cannot solve the problem in the higher courts — District Courts and the Supreme Court — without dislocating the work of these courts. We presume that the deadline set by the Minister for 1960 means that from January 1st of that year all pleadings, proceedings, records, judgments etc. will be in Sinhalese. It passes our understanding and we cannot imagine that a switch over of this nature would take less than a generation. The Minister of Justice hopes to accomplish this in three years.

All creeds and communities still look up for fairplay and justice, and nothing should be done to undermine the regard and respect that citizens of the country have for the administration of justice not only between citizen and citizen but citizen and the state. We therefore suggest a modification of the Official Language Act in its application to the Courts of the land.

We do not have to go far to seek illuminating examples which the Minister of Justice can follow. In India where Hindi was declared the official language, the framers of the Constitution gave a period of 15 years during which English will continue to be used in the Courts. There has been no dislocation in the administration of justice in that country. In Pakistan, although Urdu and Bengali were declared the official

languages, English will continue to be used for a period of 20 years in the Courts. At the end of 10 years a Commission will inquire whether English could be satisfactorily replaced, and at the end of 20 years too if it is felt that English cannot still be replaced a further extension of time may be given.

In Ceylon, of course, the 24-hour switch principle has become so ingrained that the Government will not see the difficulties that lie ahead.

With regard to the allied problem of the learning and teaching of Law in the Sinhalese medium, let us take the question of the translation of the Legislative enactments. If the revision of the English Edition of the Legislative Enactments could take three or four years, how much longer will a translation of the Enactments take. Then what about the numerous law texts that we have, the large volume of law reports, which all hinge on the turn of a phrase, a punctuation mark, and technical legal interpretation. The task is a formidable one and the administration of justice is bound to go to the dogs unless something is done by the Committee appointed by the Minister of Justice, to cry a halt to the hasty decision of the Minister.

The lecturers in the Law College today think their Law in English. Can they within a period of three years, begin to think their law in Sinhalese which is not capable or elastic enough of absorbing new legal terms easily? The Official Language Department recently compiled a glossary of 2,000 legal terms in Sinhalese and we have it on good authority that the terms are hopelessly inadequate for use in the Courts.

This brings us to another question. Namely the proposal of the Minister of Justice that from 1959 onwards admission to the Law College should be confined to those students who have passed with credit in Sinhalese in the G.C.E. examination (for Proctors) and with H.S.C. Sinhalese (for advocate students). To say the least, this seems a deliberate move to shut out Tamil and Burgher students from the Law College.



# VOLTE - FACE

As I mentioned last week, Sherlock Holmes is now back again on active duty after a rather long vacation in foreign parts. He spent the last week-end snooping among the doctors to find out developments in that quarter as well as crawling under Cabinet Ministers tables to pick up inside dope about government reactions to GMOA plans about their strike. I also gave Sherlock Holmes one or two assignments. I must say that he has brought back the answers to most of them.

The first problem I set Sherlock was to find out just why the *Times of Ceylon* had taken upon itself to do everything to break the doctors' strike. Readers will recall that as soon as the Report of Implementation Committee was officially out the *Times of Ceylon* in an editorial endeavoured to prove why the Canekeratne Report should be adopted and advised the doctors to give up their plans to strike. I was amused by the laboured and illogical arguments adduced by the *Times*.

## Threats

When the *Times* found that the GMOA was not to be so easily bamboozed into accepting the Canekeratne Report and when it became clear that the doctors were keen about striking, the *Times* took up a provocative and aggressive attitude. If threatened the doctors. In headlines and prominent "boxes" it conjured up Government plans to smash the strike. First it put out the childish story that Government would report doctors who struck to the Medical Council for unprofessional conduct. When this turned out to be a damp squib, the *Times* played up another canard (which had arisen in a Cabinet meeting) that Government would get doctors from Russia and China to break the strike. No responsible newspaper would have given this story any credence. For, apart from the question of "international black-legging" (to which Russia and

China are not likely to have acceded), it would have been clear to the rawest journalist that Russian and Chinese doctors would have faced language difficulties in this country (which English speaking doctors would not have).

In addition to this humbug, the *Times* also endeavoured to rouse public sympathy against the doctors by resorting to sob stories about "suffering" humanity without doctors! But when all this bluff and thunder didn't work, the *Times of Ceylon* started climbing down just as the Government did. It began to see defects in the Canekeratne Report, and it was probably taken a back by the speed with which the Prime Minister climbed down on this question.

My question to Sherlock Holmes was why the *Times of Ceylon* took it upon itself to play this ignominious role. I will not reveal all that Sherlock brought me, but this I can say that it would appear that two very big fish in the country had appealed to the powers that be in the *Times* that unless the doctors strike was smashed the Government would be faced with an "embarrassing" situation. With gallant heart, it would appear, that the *Times of Ceylon* decided to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the Bandaranaike Government. The *Morning Times* was, probably for circulation reasons, asked to go slow (or was it that leadear writers in that paper were not so gullible and found themselves unable to put across impossible arguments?)

## Somersault

Whatever the pressure that was exerted, I am satisfied from news that Sherlock Holmes has brought me that the Government was extremely "excited" about the strike. Some responsible. Ministers saw the downfall of the MEP Government if the doctors struck. All the tall talk and bravado of the Government about smashing the strike was sheer

bluff, according to Sherlock Holmes, who say that many of the members of the Cabinet were jittery about the situation.

It is said that whilst the Prime Minister was for compromise from the start, and the whilst the Prime Minister saw through the false premises on which the Canekeratne Committee had built up its case, he was stampeded into taking "a strong line" by colleagues like Dahanayake and Philip Gunawardene, who it would appear had insisted that these "trussed" doctors belonging to the "upper classes" (and not the swabasha sections) should be "kept in their places". Premier Bandaranaike had endeavoured to put across this strong line, but by Friday he had realised that this strong arm tactics would land him into a bigger mess than he anticipated, and with the result he turned a neat somersault over the weekend and ended up with a stirring appeal to the GMOA. This is probably the greatest volte face of the MEP Government so far. The Premier also virtually rejected the Canekeratne Report which he had had earlier wanted everybody to accept.

*But being Prime Minister he wanted some kind of face-saving form la for his great climb down. This was achieved through the efforts of some of the socialists who did not want a strike and who perhaps did not want private practice abolished complete-*

continued on page 506

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# Just Briefly

continued from page 505

ly. Three specialists, Sherlock Holmes tells me, took a prominent part in paving the way for the GM. A resolution to put off action till January 7 pending negotiations. These specialists were John Wilson, Antonisz and P. B. Fernando.

Doctors in the GMA seemed to be uncertain whether these three specialists were more for the Canecker Report and the Government or the doctors, but whatever it was they succeeded in "persuading" the GMA to take a slow and cautious line. It would seem that GMA strike stalwarts feared a "split" in their ranks owing to the activities of these specialists and therefore acceded to negotiate with Government further. Dr. Ananda Nimalasuriya, (no longer in Government Service), son in law of M. W. H. de Silva, Minister of Justice, is also said to have played a prominent part in the negotiations to enable the Premier to face a GMA after it had passed a resolution to negotiate.

All's well that ends well. It is yet to be seen what the negotiations will bring. Government also fears that if the doctors' salaries demands are granted, other sections of Government employees too will clamour for higher wages. With such increasing demands, Government will be faced with bankruptcy. Unless, of course Government is able to increase production and the wealth of the country so that everybody can have more. But instead of concentrating on productive activities members of the present Cabinet seem to devote their time and energies entirely to grabbing telephones, issuing cheques, and working up public hysteria over language and religion.

## Amazing

Sherlock Holmes tells me that he heard some "amazing" remarks in the course of his investigations made by some of the specialists in defence of private practice. One gentleman, noted for his quoting the Sermon on the Mount, is said to have told the young folk: "some of us have toiled for 15 or 16 years on a pittance.....now we have just

begun to make a little money by private practice.....why do chaps want to stop all this?....." Another specialist who plays the Buddhist angle in a big way is alleged to have burst out "H. V. Perera and other lawyers make lakhs every year.....Why shouldn't we be allowed the same privilege?....."

The answer is simple. If specialists want to make money let them quit Government Service and make all the money they want in the world. What the public object to is the practice making money whilst being Government doctors. As Government specialists they have a supreme opportunity of louting for patients, and what is more Government provides free nursing home facilities in the form of beds for each specialist to treat his cases. These part-time Government doctors are really a menace, whatever their specialist skills be. If these gentlemen are permitted to prey upon society in the way they do, Crown Counsel and officers like the Attorney General and the Solicitor General will also want to right to private practice after office hours, at least, consultation practice — for have they not as much right as H. V. Perera to make money out of the law?

I have also heard of Cabinet Ministers who have approached certain key men in the medical profession who were keen Buddhists with the following line of talk: "ours is a Buddhist Government... we cannot let it fall..... for this reason we cannot let the GMA strike nor can we give all that it wants in the form of salaries....." Specialists who were approached on these lines were quick, it is said, to strike a bargain. Let us have private practice in the shape and form of Consultative Clinics and we'll forget all about salary increases. That is how, it is said, Government came to accept the Canecker Report which such undue haste.

Life undoubtedly becomes sordid and mean in a stagnant economic order (as the 'Student' of Politics describes our society in the *Daily News*). What is needed is a national effort



## WEEK by WEEK

continued from page 503

The University has already expressed its views on the question of the Swabasha medium for education in the University, and said that it will not be in a position to teach in the Sinhalese and Tamil media in 1960. But Mr. Dahanayake, who is Pro-Chancellor of the University tells the University authorities they can go to hell when he announces:

"As the professors and lecturers at Peradeniya will not be able to work with Sinhalese in 1960 an attempt should be made to work with interpreters during the transition continued on page 511

to increase wealth. Unless men like Dahanayake, Philip Gunawardene and Marikkar are got out of the way, the present Government is likely to dissipate its energies in chasing the shadows and nightmares created and conjured up by the gentlemen.

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# HUNGARY

The Hungarian question continues to be played up in a big way in our local daily papers. These papers have all these years been deadly anti-Soviet, and the Hungarian question has provided them with another occasion to let loose the flood of propaganda from London and Washington whose publicists have conveniently buried the Suez affair as some long forgotten matter and make only passing reference to the carnage in Cyprus and Algeria and the genocide and segregation in African colonies and "dominions".

Nevertheless, the question of Hungary is engaging the attention of even the most sympathetic friends of the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Democracies. Two points of view have emerged regarding the distressing situation that has developed in Hungary. The official Soviet and Kadar Government line is that counter-revolutionaries and foreign agents had exploited the genuine dissatisfaction against the admitted misdeeds of the Rakosi and Gero government to bring about a fascist *putsch*, and that it was only the timely intervention of the Soviet troops which had prevented the establishment of a Horthy type regime in Hungary.

The other view taken by friends of the Soviet Union like Basil Davidson (writing in the *New Statesman & Nation*) and Nehru (in the Lok Sabha) is that the Rakosi and Gero Governments had behaved worse than the Horthy regime in matters of civil liberties, and that what took place in Hungary after October 23 was a genuine national uprising against a tyrannical Government, and that whilst the counter-revolutionaries both within and without the country had attempted to take charge of the situation they had not in fact done

so when the Soviet Government intervened. Nehru in particular has expressed the view that the Soviet intervention had made matters worse and has demanded that Soviet troops quit Hungary immediately.

## Cold War

Whilst all those interested in world peace and the development of civil liberties in all countries are anxiously looking out for ways and means of resolving the Hungarian question in a peaceable manner as quickly as possible, the Western Powers seem determined to derive the maximum *cold war* benefits out of the situation. The over-anxiety of these Powers to exploit the position for propaganda purposes tend to support the accusation that U. S. and Britain had a

hand in the armed "uprising" in Hungary.

Balaraman in a despatch to the *Hindu* of December 1<sup>st</sup> indicates that the negative approach of the Western Powers are not conducive to an early solution. He stated:

"Russia's aggression in Hungary and her refusal to co-operate with the U.N. in bringing about an easing of the situation there even to the extent of letting the Secretary-General visit Budapest has shocked world opinion and put her completely in the wrong, it is true; but it is sad to have to note that the Western Powers, as the debate indicates, seem at present bent principally on exploiting it for propaganda purposes and have lost sight of what its effect could be on the Hungarian people. They are pushing through their resolution, which enumerates all the undoubted transgressions of Russia and condemns her as violator of the Charter. Apart from pointing the finger at Russia, how this resolution is going to help the Hungarians it is difficult to understand."

India and a number of Afrasian Powers refused to be drawn into the this propaganda game, but Ceylon's Representative at the UN seems to have fallen into line with Washington on the Hungarian question.

*continued on page 508*

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# World Affairs

continued from page 507

## Saner View

The *Morning Times* is the first Ceylon daily paper which has taken a different view editorially of the Hungarian problem. In an editorial, last Saturday, the *Morning Times* after roundly condemning Russia for her actions in Hungary and supporting Nehru for throwing his "full weight into the campaign to persuade the Russians that they must withdraw their troops from Hungary and allow that tragic and brave people to decide their destiny," went on to state:

"But we are far from optimistic that the Russians will in fact withdraw before they have made perfectly sure that Hungary will not join the Western Bloc. That is the crux of the problem. Had there been no fear in the Russian mind that the Hungarian revolution would be exploited, if successful, by the Western Bloc to point a dagger at the heart of Russia, things might have happened differently. It was because the Russians were persuaded that Poland did not intend to allow itself to be used as a western base, that the Gomulka regime has been allowed to liberalise communism in that country. But Russia has been on the defensive ever since some of the Western powers years ago spoke naively and rashly of 'liberating' Eastern Europe, and continued to organise brain radio propaganda from stations like Radio Free Europe and the Voice America advocating freedom from the Russian yoke. Part at least of the blame for the Hungarian tragedy must be laid at the door of the powers that sponsored this foolish propaganda and roused hopes that rebellion would be supported by something more effective than the hollow western words.

"Let us face the facts. As things are there is no hope for rebellion in Eastern Europe, however desirable successful rebellion may be. At best, rebellion can result in heroic deeds like barefisted resistance against Russian tanks; but such resistance is foredoomed however desperate and heroic it may be. The only way the West, and the neutral powers too, can help the enslaved peoples of Eastern Europe is to help to create the conditions in which countries like Hungary,

Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and the Baltic states will be enabled to liberalise their regimes on the Polish and Yugoslav models. That is the best that can be hoped for, for years to come. To achieve that, the Western powers must review their policy in order to reduce East West tension and to mitigate the fear in Russia that the West in trying to create conditions in which a massive "liberation" campaign may be successfully launched. As long as Russia regards NATO as a threat to its existence, so long will the Warsaw Pact operate, and Eastern Europe be prevented from getting clear of the Soviet jackboot.

*"We do not underestimate the grievous responsibility Russia must bear for the mass murder of the Hungarian people and the enslavement of millions of others in Eastern Europe; but we also insist that the Western powers, by their pathetic reliance on military pacts and by their irresponsible radio propaganda encouraging fore-doomed rebellion—we insist that the Western powers must share some part at least of the blame for the Hungarian horror. Russia is in no mood to allow Eastern Europe to rebel and join the west. At best, she will allow the liberalisation of the regimes in Eastern Europe if she is satisfied that the countries concerned will not become Western bases. These are the cardinal, hard, inescapable facts of the present situation. Western*

and neutral policy must proceed from that point. It is not a question of ideals, alas: it is a question of what is possible in the circumstance which the world finds itself."

This *Morning Times* view seems to represent the attitude of all those who refuse to believe the propaganda machines in Moscow and Washington, and who seek to find a reasonable basis for a peaceful solution of the problem of Hungary. What seems essential is that the Cold War must stop; that the Western Powers must cease inciting the people to impossible revolt; and that Russia should proceed with the policy of liberalising the political structures of countries over which she exercises some control without being too inhibited by cold war politics.

## Greater Syria

continued from page 502

Realities were talking in tones loud and plain enough for anyone to hear. But the men who thought themselves superior to history feigned deafness. In 1955, despite all, they made an attempt to start the whole thing over again. The attempt went by the name of the Baghdad pact.

From this, it was only a step to the "grand folly" of October, 30 1956.

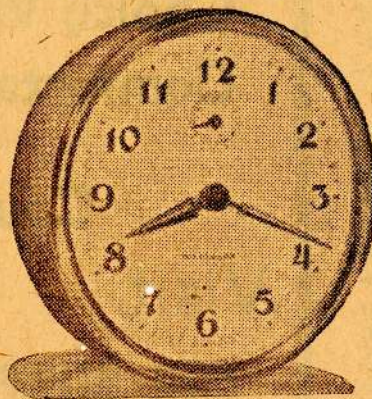
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## Parties & Politics

*continued from page 500*

this election showed that MEP, since the April election, has not gained any ground: on the other hand, it has lost in the popular vote. There are several reasons for this. In the first place, the MEP has given the Sinhalese masses *Sinhala Only* and *Buddhism Special*, but it has not provided work, food and prosperity. MEP leaders at the Municipal elections went about pleading that in seven months the party had not had enough time to show its mettle and to prove its worth. And this points to the second major reason for the set-back suffered by the MEP. Voters in the city of Colombo have begun to get fed up with the antics of certain MEP Ministers and their resorting to all the corrupt and power-crazy methods of the worst UNP Ministers. And this has made people believe that the MEP is incapable of delivering the goods: and that all the energies of the MEP would be dissipated in the exercise of petty power and insufferable acts of autocracy.

The third and perhaps the most important reason for the MEP defeat is that this Party, like the UNP before the last General Elections, had lost its balance and become drunk and dizzy with power. MEP stalwarts had within a short while developed the theory that they were invincible if they played up the two trumps they had in language and religion. Any party that bases its popularity on such jingoistic and retrograde policies is bound to meet its doom, and in the case of the MEP the rot has begun to set in much earlier than otherwise because of the utterly disgraceful manner in which certain Ministers have behaved. Unless the MEP pulls up its socks, and settles down to some hard work, and purges itself of political madmen like Dhanayake and Marikkar and communal and language fanatics like a number of other Ministers, this ruling party will daily lose its popularity, first in the urban areas and thereafter in the rural sectors of the country.

### The LSSP

The LSSP has suffered a very major set-back compared to the last Municipal Elections. Its leader Dr. N. M. Perera was defeated. Many of its Parliamentary leaders who contested the elections, like

Leslie Goonewardene, Vivienne Goonewardene, Robert Gunewardene and Anil Moonasinghe were trounced. The only LSSP Member of Parliament who was able to survive and hold his seat was Bernard Soysa and this was with a much reduced majority.

The trouble with the LSSP is that it had lost its balance, and regarded itself as a party as strong as the UNP and the MEP. Its leaders had begun to live in the Fools Paradise that the country was only waiting for an opportunity to sweep the LSSP into power.

It was this over-confidence born of political arrogance that led to the downfall of the LSSP at the elections. It was this same malady that drove the LSSP to spurn all efforts for a United Front with the CP. It was this same disease that made the LSSP fight the MEP Government on the same lines it had fought the UNP administration, and think in terms of a General Strike to throw out the MEP Government and precipitate another General Election where it felt it would have a landslide victory.

If the present defeat at the Colombo Municipal elections does not convince the leaders of the LSSP that they have to work together with the progressive elements in the MEP and the CP if the reactionary UNP is to be kept out of power, then the LSSP is doomed to wander in the political wilderness that befalls all those who insist on following sectarian policies.

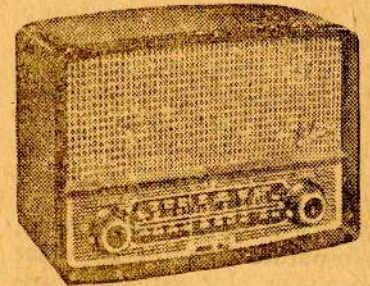
It is known that it was the sectarian attitude of the LSSP that was mainly responsible for the breaking up of the concord that existed between the MEP, the LSSP and the CP at the time of the last General Elections. Whilst the CP was willing to support the MEP Government for its progressive features and politics, the LSSP was anxious to dethrone the MEP on the wrong assumption that the UNP was dead as cold mutton (never to be resurrected again) and that it could safely afford to ignore the CP. This negative and sectarian attitude of the LSSP paved the way for the three-cornered and four-cornered fights in the Colombo Municipal elections, and these contests were responsible for the eighteen seats won by the UNP.

### Communist

Although the Communists have

*continued on page 510*

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## PARTIES & POLITICS

continued from page 509

been realistic about their attitude to the MEP Government (supporting it where it was right and condemning it where it went wrong), the CP strayed from realism when it sought to fight as many as 18 Municipal seats. Over five or six of its candidates secured infinitesimally small number of votes. One candidate received only 5 votes and a few others got equally disgraceful support. If the CP had not fielded some of the candidates, an election front with the LSSP might have been possible: for the "unity" talks with the LSSP had collapsed because the CP had wanted to contest three seats which the LSSP also claimed. Once the talks broke down, the two parties fought each other in as many as nine wards with disastrous consequences.

*A LSSP-CP alliance would have also*

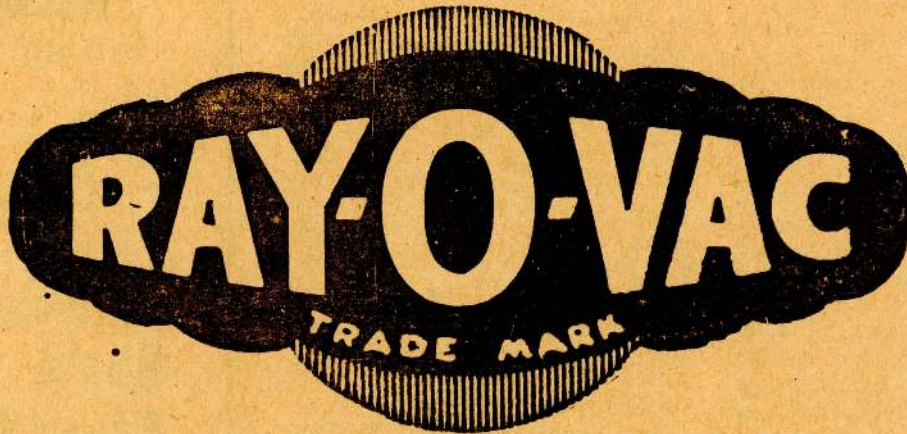
*brought about a qualitative change in the political complexion of the Municipal elections and provided the voter with an alternative to both the UNP as well as the MEP. Such an alliance would further have brought about more realistic approach to the M+P vis a vis the UNP.*

The Communist Party in Ceylon has unfortunately been inhibited in its growth because it has suffered from the same kind of crazy electioneering over confidence, stemming from political arrogance, as the LSSP. The CP, moreover, like the LSSP has always put all its political eggs into the electioneering basket, with dire consequences. It has a poor party organisation and an immature and puerile propaganda machine. It has not concentrated on educating the people on what socialism means, but it has specialised on fielding a large number of candidates at elections (and many of these party

"election nominees" have let the party down at the first available opportunity). Furthermore, like the LSSP, the CP has never done proper trade union work with the result the "organised" working class (or at least sections of them) fell victim to the demogogy of the racial and religious jingoists in the MEP.

Unless the Communist Party gets over its craze to contest a large number of seats at every election, it will continue to tail behind the LSSP as a rival, whereas only a lively unity between the two parties can lead to the growth of a stable socialist movement in Ceylon. Only a strong alliance between the LSSP and CP can provide the necessary impetus to the MEP Government to follow progressive economic and political policies and at the same time keep reactionaries at bay.

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# WEEK by WEEK

(continued from page 466)

period. It is better that the lecturer should work through interpreters rather than the students should be made to answer papers and listen to lectures in the English medium."

It would be folly to waste any more space in this paper on the ravings of a demented mind, and we leave the mad batter to his hair-brained schemes.

## Statistics

There were altogether 166,652 voters on the electoral register of the Colombo Municipality in 1956 compared with 149,337 in 1954. This increase of 11.6%, however, has not been uniform in all the wards of Colombo.

The highest increase in the number of registered voters has been in the Kirillapone Ward, from 3,034 in 1954 to 4128 in 1956 an increase of 36%; Maradana comes next with an increase of 21.5%; St. Sebastian third with 18.9%; Wellawatte North

close with 18.7%. In all, there are 16 wards which recorded an increase of over 10% in the number of voters registered between 1954 and 1956.

At the other end of the scale comes the New Bazaar ward with an increase of only 1.6% in the number of registered voters. In the two wards, Pettah and Fort, the number of registered voters actually declined — by 11.6% in the case of Pettah and by 20.4% in the case of the Fort.

The average number of voters per ward works out to 4817. The actual numbers, however, vary considerably from ward to ward. Thimbirigasyaya tops the list with 8395; Suduwela comes next with 8167; Madampitiya third with 7316; Maligakande fourth with 7123 and Borella fifth with 6941. At other end of the scale comes Pettah with 2172 and Fort with only 846 voters.

106,030 cast their votes in 1956 compared with 103,730 in 1954 — an increase of 2,500. However this is not proportional to increase in the number of registered voters during the period. This is evident from the fact that 69.4% of the

registered voters polled in 1954 whereas the corresponding figure for 1956 is only 63.7% — an actual decline of 5.7%. It would, therefore, indicate that the voters of Colombo did not take as keen interest in the current election as they did in 1954.

The decline in the number polled has also not been uniform in all the wards. Wellawatte South, which recorded a decline of as much as 16%, heads the list in this category. Next comes Grandpass with 14%; Kuppiyawatte 12.7%; Kochchikade 12.5%; Wellawatte North 11.2%; Korahena East 9.2% and Havelock Town 7.2%. In five wards, on the other hand there has been an actual increase in the percentage polled. These are Fort, Pettah, Borella, Bambalapitiya and Kirillapone. If we leave out of consideration Fort and Pettah, with their very small electorates, the other three wards indicate feverish political activity. We know that, at least in two of these wards — Borella and Kirillapone — the U.N.P. and MEP concentrated all their efforts to defeat the two veterans of L.S.S.P, Dr N. M. Perera and Robert Gunawardena.

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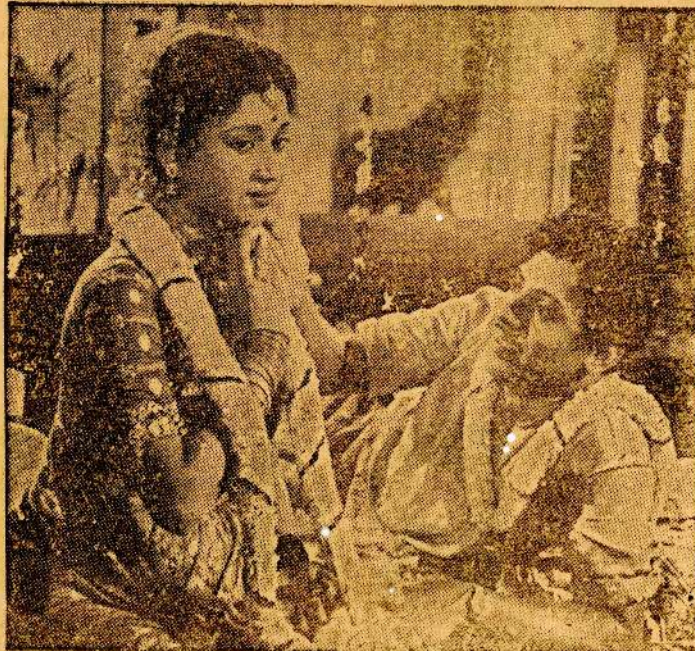
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