



# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

## SENATE

OFFICIAL REPORT

**Vol. 10 No. 11**

**Tuesday, 3rd July, 1956**

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# GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON

## GOVERNOR-GENERAL

HIS EXCELLENCY SIR OLIVER ERNEST GOONETILLEKE, G.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., K.B.E.

### THE CABINET

(Formed by The Hon. SOLOMON WEST RIDGEWAY DIAS BANDARANAIKE, M.P.,  
April, 1956)

- Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and External Affairs—The Hon. SOLOMON WEST RIDGEWAY DIAS BANDARANAIKE, M.P.
- Minister of Education—The Hon. WIJAYANANDA DAHANAYAKE, M.P.
- Minister of Lands and Land Development—The Hon. CHARLES PERCIVAL DE SILVA, M.P.
- Minister of Justice—Senator The Hon. MANIKKU WADUMESTRI HENDRICK DE SILVA, Q.C.
- Minister of Industries and Fisheries—The Hon. PEDURU HEWA WILLIAM DE SILVA, M.P.
- Minister of Finance—The Hon. STANLEY DE ZOYSA, M.P.
- Minister of Agriculture and Food—The Hon. DON PHILIP RUPASINGHA GUNAWARDENA, M.P.
- Minister of Labour, Housing and Social Services—The Hon. TIKIRI BANDARILANGARATNE, M.P.
- Minister of Home Affairs—Senator The Hon. ALEXANDER PERERA JAYASURIYA.
- Minister of Local Government and Cultural Affairs—The Hon. JAYAWERU KURUPPU, M.P.
- Minister of Posts, Broadcasting and Information—The Hon. CASILA ABDUL SAME MARIKKAR, M.P.
- Minister of Transport and Works—The Hon. MAITHRIPALA SENANAYAKE, M.P.
- Minister of Commerce and Trade—The Hon. RICHARD GOTHABAYA SENANAYAKE, M.P.
- Minister of Health—The Hon. VIMALA WIJEWARDENE, M.P.

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- Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Local Government and Cultural Affairs—RATNAYAKE MUDIYANSELAGE CHANDRASENA RATNAYAKE BELIGAMMANA, Esq., M.P.
- Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour, Housing and Social Services—MANAMELDURA PIYADASA DE ZOYSA, Esq., M.P.
- Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs—IMIYA MUDIYANSELAGE RAPHAEL ABHAYAWANSA IRIYAGOLLE, Esq., M.P.
- Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health—IDAMPITIYE RALLAGE PUNCHI BANDA GUNATILLAKA KALUGALLA, Esq., M.P.
- Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industries and Fisheries—WELIKALU JAMES CHARLES MUNASINHA, Esq., M.P.
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- Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education—PUNCHI BANDA ALOYSIUS WEERAKOON, Esq., M.P.
- Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance—Senator CHANDRADASA WIJESINGHE.



**SENATE***Tuesday, 3rd July, 1956*

The Senate met at 2.30 p.m., Mr. PRESIDENT [SENATOR THE HON. SIR CYRIL DE ZOYSA, Kt.] in the Chair.

**MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL**

THE PRESIDENT: The following Message has been received from His Excellency the Governor-General:

" Governor-General's Office,  
Queen's House,  
Colombo, Ceylon,  
28th June, 1956.

Reference No. C. 21/1956.

SIR,—I HAVE the honour to inform you that, in terms of Section 36 (2) of the Ceylon (Constitution) Order in Council, 1946, I have this day assented in Her Majesty's name to the Bill intituled—

' An Act to amend the Police Ordinance. '

I have the honour to be, Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,  
O. E. GOONEWILLEKE,  
Governor-General.

The Honourable  
The President of the Senate."

**PAPERS PRESENTED**

Regulation made by the Minister of Home Affairs under Section 43 (i) (e) of the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance (Chapter 222) and published in Gazette No. 10,939 of June 8, 1956.—  
[Senator The Hon. A. P. Jayasuriya.]

The same to lie upon the Table.

**ORAL ANSWERS**

[CASUALTIES BY FIRING AND DAMAGE TO PROPERTY DURING CIVIL DISTURBANCES]

SENATOR SIR PHILIP RODRIGO, on behalf of Senator Justin Kotelawala, asked the Leader of the Senate: (1) (a) How many persons were injured and how many killed throughout the Island by (i) Military and (ii) Police firing since the present Government assumed office? (b) How many persons were injured and how many killed throughout the Island

by private individuals in the course of civil disturbances during the same period? (c) What is the extent of the damage caused to (i) public and (ii) private property during the same period throughout the Island as a result of civil disturbances? (d) What other acts of hooliganism and violence not resulting in death, injury or damage to property were committed during this period as a result of civil disturbances, for example, wrongfully confining private individuals or compelling them to vacate their residences or otherwise humiliating them? (e) How many of the dead remain unidentified? (2) Does Government propose to appoint a commission to report on the civil disturbances that took place during the said period?

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA (MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND LEADER OF THE SENATE): With regard to this question standing in the name of Senator Justin Kotelawala, and also the other questions standing in the name of Senator E. B. Wikramanayake on today's Order Paper, I am sorry, I am not ready with the answers. I should like to have some further time.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Leader will have to obtain, by way of a Motion, the consent of the House to have these questions answered at some other time.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: I move, " That the questions standing on the Order Paper this Day be disposed of at another sitting of this House. "

On Question, Motion agreed to.

**SITTINGS OF THE SENATE**

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: I move,

- (a) That if the Business on the Paper be not disposed of the House, at its rising this day, do adjourn until 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 4, 1956;
- (b) That at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 4, 1956, the House shall be adjourned without Question put; and
- (c) That at 7 p.m. that day paragraphs (3) and (4) of Standing Order 7 shall operate.

On Question, Motion agreed to.



## AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS REGULATION

### [DEPOSIT FOR STANDARD RATIO OF LOCAL PRODUCTS]

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: I move,

That the Regulation made by the Minister of Agriculture and Food under Sections 9 (2) and 13 (1) of the Agricultural Products (Regulation) Ordinance, No. 29 of 1939, and presented in the Senate on June 26, 1956, be approved.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

## ARMY REGULATION

### [PAY CODE]

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: I move,

That the Regulation amending the Army Pay Code made by the Minister of Defence and External Affairs under Section 155 of the Army Act, No. 17 of 1949, and published in *Government Gazette* No. 10,939 of June 8, 1956, which was presented on June 26, 1956, be approved.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT BY-LAWS

### [GAMPOLA URBAN COUNCIL]

SENATOR THE HON. A. P. JAYASURIYA (MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS): I move,

That the By-law relating to the exemption of certain premises from the special conservancy rate for 1956 made by the Urban Council, Gampola, under Sections 143 (b) and 166 of Urban Councils Ordinance, No. 61 of 1939, approved by the Minister of Local Government and published in the *Government Gazette* No. 10,891 of February 10, 1956, which was presented on June 26, 1956, be not disallowed.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

SENATOR THE HON. JAYASURIYA: I move,

That the By-law relating to the markets made by the Urban Council, Gampola, under Sections 166 and 170 (11) of Urban Councils Ordinance, No. 61 of 1939, approved by the Minister of Local Government and published in the *Government Gazette* No. 10,896 of February 24, 1956, which was presented on June 26, 1956, be not disallowed.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

SENATOR THE HON. JAYASURIYA: I move,

That the By-law relating to the exemption of certain premises from the special water rate for 1956 made by the Urban Council, Gampola,

under Sections 166 and 143 (b) of Urban Councils Ordinance, No. 61 of 1939, approved by the Minister of Local Government and published in the *Government Gazette* No. 10,891 of February 10, 1956, which was presented on June 26, 1956, be not disallowed.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

### [BADULLA URBAN COUNCIL]

SENATOR THE HON. JAYASURIYA: I move,

That the By-laws relating to the erection of temporary structures made by the Urban Council, Badulla, under Sections 166 and 170 of Urban Councils Ordinance, No. 61 of 1939, approved by the Minister of Local Government and published in the *Government Gazette* No. 10,885 of January 27, 1956, which were presented on June 26, 1956, be not disallowed.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

### [PUTTALAM URBAN COUNCIL]

SENATOR THE HON. JAYASURIYA: I move,

That the By-law relating to the conservancy services made by the Urban Council, Puttalam, under Sections 166 and 170 of Urban Councils Ordinance, No. 61 of 1939, approved by the Minister of Local Government and published in the *Government Gazette* No. 10,896 of February 24, 1956, which was presented on June 26, 1956, be not disallowed.

Question proposed from the Chair.

SENATOR E. W. KANNANGARA: Will the Hon. Minister kindly explain the effect of this by-law?

SENATOR THE HON. JAYASURIYA: This deals with cesspits and latrines. The idea is to prevent these things becoming a nuisance to the public.

SENATOR KANNANGARA: I am not pressing for an explanation.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

### [HAPUTALE URBAN COUNCIL]

SENATOR THE HON. JAYASURIYA: I move,

That the by-law relating to the offensive and dangerous trades made by the Urban Council, Haputale, under Sections 166 and 170 of Urban Councils Ordinance, No. 61 of 1939, approved by the Minister of Local Government and published in the *Government Gazette* No. 10,885 of January 27, 1956, which was presented on June 26, 1956, be not disallowed.

Question proposed from the Chair.



SENATOR KANNANGARA: I must certainly object to this by-law. The idea appears to be to make the grinding of chillies a dangerous or offensive trade. In many parts of the country we have places where chillies are ground. The Urban Council of Haputale wants to make the grinding of chillies an offensive trade.

SENATOR THE HON. JAYASURIYA: The local body agreed that it is necessary to control this offensive or dangerous trade.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Senator wanted to know whether the Hon. Minister would agree with the proposition that the grinding of chillies should be declared an offensive trade.

SENATOR C. WIJESINGHE (PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER OF FINANCE): Some village committees treat the keeping or storing of tea, the storing of manure, the curing of copra—all of them—as offensive trades. The grinding of chillies is really “offensive” to the eyes. It leads to tearing of the eyes! In the case of the trades referred to by me earlier, I do not agree that they are offensive trades.

SENATOR THE HON. JAYASURIYA: The local authority has decided that the grinding of chillies is an offensive trade.

SENATOR E. B. WIKRAMANAYAKE: The question whether these regulations are *ultra vires* of the Ordinance is not a matter for us to decide. It is a matter for the courts.

THE PRESIDENT: The local authority has decided, it appears, that under certain conditions this trade might be conducted in such a way as to cause inconvenience to the public in a particular place.

SENATOR KANNANGARA: The Ministry of Local Government, when it was called upon to agree to these by-laws in the old days, used to scrutinize them carefully, and refused to approve any by-laws which it felt were improper. It does not look as if the same care is taken now.

SENATOR A. M. A. AZEEZ: That was the tendency during the old colonial days, when the Central Government wanted to lead the local authorities by the nose. There was too much interference with the local authorities. The grinding of chillies may or may not be a trade that appeals to some people, but we should not agree to unwarranted interference with the powers that a local authority should enjoy.

SENATOR THOMAS AMARASURIYA: These by-laws are framed by the local authorities to suit conditions in their areas. The by-laws are then sent to the Hon. Minister for his sanction. The by-laws passed by the various local bodies are not always the same. They vary.

SENATOR K. ADAMALY: Would maldive fish be included in the same category as chillies?

THE PRESIDENT: We have important business before us. If the Hon. Minister has no objection, I would suggest that he withdraw this Motion and bring it up later.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### [WATTEGAMA URBAN COUNCIL]

SENATOR THE HON. JAYASURIYA: I move,

That the By-law relating to the exemption of certain premises from the special conservancy rate for 1956, made by the Urban Council, Wattagama, under Sections 143 (b) and 166 of Urban Councils Ordinance, No. 61 of 1939, approved by the Minister of Local Government and published in the *Government Gazette* No. 10,885 of January 27, 1956, which was presented on June 26, 1956, be not disallowed.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

#### MOTIONS DEFERRED

THE PRESIDENT: As there are a large number of these Motions on the Order Paper and they are going to take a fair amount of time, may I enquire from the Hon. Minister whether he has any objection to these being taken up on the next date? Are they so urgent?

SENATOR THE HON. JAYASURIYA: They are not so urgent.



THE PRESIDENT: Then, would you move that the House do agree to items Nos. 10 to 41 on the Order Paper being withdrawn and being brought up on another day?

SENATOR THE HON. JAYASURIYA: With the permission of the House, I move that Motions Nos. 10 to 41 on the Order Paper appearing in my name be allowed to stand down.

Motions Nos. 10 to 41 on the Order Paper, by leave, deferred.

### CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE (AMENDMENT) BILL[s]

Order for Second Reading read.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: I move, "That the Bill be now read a Second time." This Bill is intended to expedite inquiries and the preparation of indictments. Under the present procedure, if an accused is charged in a magistrate's court and the proceedings are sent up to the Attorney-General for the preparation of an indictment, the Attorney-General has not the right to frame a charge in that indictment with reference to any matter disclosed by the evidence with which the accused has not been charged in the magistrate's court. Therefore, this amendment is intended to enable the Attorney-General to frame a charge in the indictment on the evidence recorded in the magistrate's court without the necessity, as at present, of having to refer the proceedings back to the magistrate to have the accused charged. This is the only purpose of the amendment. It is intended to avoid the delay caused by sending back the proceedings to the magistrate to frame a charge and to have the charge read to the accused. The accused is in no way prejudiced because the charge is based on the evidence already on record.

On Question, Bill read a Second time; and committed to a Committee of the whole Senate, and considered in Committee.

MR. PRESIDENT sat Chairman.

Clauses 1 to 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Enacting Clause and Title ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Bill reported without amendment; read the Third time and passed.

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: I move, "That the Bill be now read a Second time."

This Bill has been discussed in the country, in the newspapers, and in the Other Place. It has been discussed very fully by all persons who are interested in the matter. Therefore, although I do not think it necessary for me to dwell on this Bill at any great length, still I think it is necessary that some explanation of the necessity for the Bill as well as its provisions should be given by me.

This Bill has been discussed chiefly as one dealing with the official language. It undoubtedly deals with the official language of this country, but the effect of the Bill would be very much more far-reaching than the effect of a Bill which deals merely with the official language. It is a Bill which affects the common man and it introduces a reform which is very desirable. The Bill is intended really to associate the people of the country with the Government at all levels of administration. Therefore, I think, this is a Bill to which we should all pay attention; and if we are anxious, as we all are, for the progressive advancement of the people of the country, it should be accepted by all of us.

I will refer shortly to the history of this Bill. The first occasion on which the question of the official language was taken up in the State Council was somewhere in 1944, when Mr. J. R. Jayewardene introduced a resolution that Sinhalese should be the official language of Ceylon. That resolution was amended to read that Sinhalese and Tamil should be the official languages of Ceylon, and that was accepted. After it was accepted, a Select Committee of the Council was appointed to consider that resolution and to suggest ways and means of giving effect to it. That Select Committee went into the matter and they decided that swabasha, or Sinhalese and Tamil, could be introduced within a certain period of years. Following on that, a Commission to find ways and means of implementing that resolution was appointed with the ex-Chief Justice, Sir Arthur Wijeyewardene,



as its Chairman. That Commission has submitted several interim reports and a final report, and certain action has been taken on those reports. At that stage, there was no real interest in this question in the country itself. But subsequently on an occasion when Sir John Kotelawala was in Jaffna, at a place called Kokkuvil, he made a statement that Sir John Kotelawala sometimes and Tamil.

SENATOR SIR UKWATTE JAYASUNDERA: That is not correct.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: I speak subject to correction. That was what was reported. Whether that was actually what he said or not I do not know, but there was a resolution in the House of Representatives, too, with regard to that matter. I say this, that Sir John Kotelawala sometimes made statements without much consideration. But after he had considered what he had said and discovered the true purport of that pronouncement or statement and found that it was wrong, he went back on that statement and not only determined otherwise but also took swift action to do what was correct although he had made that statement. I must say, in fairness to Sir John Kotelawala, that whenever he had determined to do a certain thing or to adopt a certain procedure, he did not hesitate to do so. So that, when he actually found that owing to this statement of his, that Sinhalese and Tamil would be the State languages, there was an outcry in the country and complaints by the Sinhalese that the introduction of both Sinhalese and Tamil as the State languages would adversely affect the Sinhalese people, he took action to change the attitude he had taken up. He and his party decided that Sinhalese alone should be the State language, quite correctly too, and he proceeded to give effect to that decision.

At a meeting which was held at Kelaniya, his party decided that Sinhalese alone should be the State language or the official language. After having arrived at that decision, Sir John dissolved Parliament and went to the country for a mandate. At the same time, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party also decided that Sinhalese alone should be the State language. They added that

the reasonable use of Tamil should be provided for. That was an addition on the part of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. That was not a decision of the United National Party, though in their minds they must have been satisfied that reasonable demands of the other people of the country should be granted. Therefore, I do not think that there was any substantial difference between the decisions arrived at by the S. L. F. P. and the U. N. P. though the U. N. P. did not, in fact, express in so many words their attitude towards the other languages of Ceylon.

The General Elections were held, and, as a result, the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna which was composed of the S.L.F.P. and the Basha Peramuna had a majority of Members in the House of Representatives who were entrusted with the task of making Sinhalese the official language of the country. This explanation is necessary because once the M.E.P. formed the Government, they had to carry out their undertaking given to the country. The U.N.P. had said that if their representatives were returned to Parliament, the first Bill they would introduce would be the one to make Sinhalese the official language of Ceylon. On the other hand, our party had said that we would introduce such a Bill and make Sinhalese the official language within 24 hours.

I believe there was no difference between the two statements of the U.N.P. and the M.E.P. It was merely intended that at the earliest opportunity this Bill would be introduced in the House of Representatives. Accordingly, the party considered the terms of this Bill, the way in which it should be drafted, and introduced it. When it came to the question of drafting this Bill, it was found that provision had to be made for making Sinhalese the official language. It was also felt that certain provision should be made for the use of the other languages in the country, for matters relating to education, the Public Service and local authorities. When we proceeded to consider that question it was found that we had not sufficient acquaintance with the matters in which these languages could be used. I mean we had to say what is the official language and what is not the official



[Senator The Hon. M. W. H. de Silva] language. We had to find out the circumstances in which the other languages should be used.

We asked members of the other parties to come and assist us with regard to this matter. But since the Tamil-speaking leaders were committed to the principle that there should be parity and nothing but parity, they refused to assist us. So, ultimately, it was decided that these matters should be left alone for the present, to be dealt with subsequently when we are sufficiently familiar with the proceedings in the administration and otherwise, when we are in a position to make sufficient and adequate provision regarding them. Therefore, this Bill was introduced in the form in which it was presented. The Bill merely says that Sinhalese shall be the official language of Ceylon and also provides that the implementation of it should be done within a period of four years and six months. That is, from time to time, when it is decided that Sinhalese can be used without prejudice to the administration, then, in those cases, the Minister in charge will make an order that Sinhalese shall be used. Till he makes that order, he will normally order that the *status quo* remain.

With regard to the use of Tamil and the other languages after 1960, it would be necessary to make certain provisions. There is no doubt that when we are in a position to do so, before very long, we will either amend this Act or bring a new Bill to provide for those matters. That is the position in which the present Bill is presented. It merely provides for the use of Sinhalese and its implementation within a period of four years and six months. That is all that this Bill provides. During that period of four years and six months, it is possible for the Minister to allow the use of Tamil, to allow the use of English—to allow the use of these languages to remain as it is without any alteration at all. That is the position with regard to this Bill.

The Bill has been opposed chiefly by the leaders of the Tamil-speaking people. I must say that originally Tamil leaders like Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan and Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam did join with the Sinhalese and did fight for reforms and for freedom for the whole

country, the Sinhalese as well as the Tamils. But thereafter, on many occasions when the Sinhalese asked for reforms and for further freedom—freedom for themselves and for everybody in Ceylon—the attitude of the present leaders of the Tamil-speaking people has been entirely different. For instance, before the Soulbury Commission, it is very well known that some of the Tamil-speaking leaders wanted parity and nothing but parity. They wanted, in other words, what is called “fifty-fifty”. They wanted representation in the House of Representatives to be 50 for the Sinhalese and 50 for the minorities. That was a claim which was put forward by, I believe, Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam and fought for strenuously till the last moment, till the actual report of the Commission was presented. Now, that was an attitude not of assisting the country to obtain freedom, not of assisting the Sinhalese in their effort to gain more freedom for Ceylon. It had been the same thereafter under the Soulbury Constitution. The proposal to give responsible Government to the Ceylonese was opposed by the Tamil-speaking leaders. But in spite of opposition, we gained liberty, at least a certain amount of freedom as a Dominion.

In the light of this opposition, one can understand why these leaders are opposing this Bill. As I said, this Bill is to make this Government a people's Government; it is a Bill which will assist the common man to come forward and join the Government and take part in the administration of this country. This apparently means that in the case of the Tamil-speaking people, certain classes who have now no liberty, certain classes who have been exploited, will get the opportunity of joining the Sinhalese people, of learning a little Sinhalese and taking part in the administration of the country.

Therefore, it seems to me that these leaders who have got their leadership by virtue of the fact that the government of the country is administered in English, who have got their leadership by their knowledge of English, would lose their leadership as soon as the ordinary Tamil man joins in the administration of the country by learning a little Sinhalese and not by learning English. I think that these leaders



who oppose this Bill feel that they are about to lose their leadership of the Tamil-speaking people.

I said that these leaders are unprogressive. I still maintain it, because, if you look at the conduct of the Tamils in the places in which they live——

SENATOR P. NAGALINGAM : I am sorry to interrupt the hon Leader. May I ask him whether any of the Tamil leaders oppose Sinhala being made the language of administration for the Sinhalese?

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA : I am speaking about parity. I said why parity is required by them. I will explain it further. As I said, actually these leaders are not progressive in their outlook ; and they are not making sufficient attempts to make those who are lower than themselves join them, or join the Government and participate in working towards the progress of this country. On what is this parity based? They say that each man in this country is entitled to have himself governed by his own language. Well, how far is that correct? In Ceylon there are not only the Tamil-speaking people: there are people who speak English, whose mother tongue is English: there are people who speak Malay; there are people who speak various other languages of India. All these people would then be entitled, as a matter of right, to say that they should be governed in those various languages. It is not a question of numbers: if it is an absolute right, then that right belongs to all the people in the same situation. Therefore, I say, if it is a principle, that principle should apply not only to one language but to all the languages which are being used in Ceylon.

Hon. Senators will see how difficult such a position would be. It will not be possible to govern the country in half-a-dozen languages just because there are as many languages prevailing in this country. So that, it had to be decided which language out of those languages should be selected as the official language. We say that the official language should be the language of the majority of the people, namely, the Sinhalese language.

Now, what really do these gentlemen mean by parity? No real explanation has been given at any time as to what they intend by the term "parity". Efforts have been made by some members of the Nawa Lanka Sama Samaja Party to say what they intend by parity, but I have never come across a definition or an explanation of what they mean by parity. I will tell you what it may possibly mean. It may mean in actual terms, if it is pushed to its logical conclusion, the suppression of the Sinhalese and their entire disappearance from this country. Now, suppose we say that legally Sinhalese and Tamil have been given parity. Suppose there is a hospital somewhere in the south, in Ruhuna. Then my friends will come and say, "Well, there is parity of language. Let half the staff be Tamil-speaking and the other half be Sinhalese-speaking." Supposing there are two doctors, they would say that one doctor should be Tamil-speaking and the other Sinhalese-speaking. Supposing there is one nurse. Probably they will say, "Let half the nurse be Sinhalese and the other half be Tamil" !

SENATOR E. J. COORAY: The better half!

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: That is the extent to which you can push this demand for parity. Then, by the same token, they can come and say, "Let half the Members of the House of Representatives be Tamil-speaking and the other half be Sinhalese-speaking." In fact, it will apply to the composition of this House as well.

If that is the position, what would happen to the Sinhalese language? How will 65 per cent of the population of this country who speak Sinhalese prevail against this demand for parity? Surely, hon. Senators will see that it would mean the suppression of the Sinhalese and the Sinhalese language. Perhaps the reasonable people might not go to that extreme but we are dealing with people who, I say, are not quite reasonable.

Hon. Senators must have heard recently that a telegram was sent to the Prime Minister of England by the Federal Party saying that the British



[Senator The Hon. M. W. H. de Silva] should not leave the Trincomalee Base without consulting them. Can you imagine anything more extraordinary than that? When the Government of a country which is acknowledged by all its people is fighting for its rights, is fighting to be free and is doing something, these people intervene and say to a foreign Government—mind you, not to its own Government—“Do not do that because we are interested in it.” Can you imagine anything more impudent and extraordinary? Well, these are the leaders of the Tamil-speaking people with whom we have to deal. Therefore I say that this opposition to the Bill is not in the best interests of the Tamil people because the Tamil people have been exploited, they have been suppressed, and this is an attempt on the part of the Tamil leaders to keep on suppressing and exploiting these Tamil people of the country. I say that is the reason why this Bill is being opposed by the Tamil-speaking leaders.

Then you would perhaps ask me, “How is it that the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party are also opposing this Bill? With regard to them, there is the well-recognized fact that they are against the present state of capitalist society. They want to suppress the capitalists not by Parliamentary methods but by violent methods, by revolution. Now we want to make our party a people's party. We do not want to suppress capitalism by force but to associate all the people of the country with the Government and make it a people's Government. But then it will never serve the purpose of the communists or the L.S.S.P. to have a people's Government of that type. What they wish for is something quite different—a revolution by which capitalism would be suppressed, the capitalists would be liquidated and the country governed by them on behalf of their own people. That is the sort of thing which they want and that is the sort of thing which this Bill will prevent and is intended to prevent. This Bill is intended to give the common people the right to its own Government, the right to take part in all its affairs.

Is it easier for a villager who speaks Tamil to learn English to join in a Government which is conducted in English; or is it easier for him to learn Sinhalese

which is a related language, and join a Government which is conducted on his behalf and on behalf of the Sinhalese people? It is said, in fact, that over 50 per cent of the words of the Sinhalese language are Tamil or are of Tamil origin. Then what is the difficulty for a Tamil person to learn the Sinhalese language? Whatever the Tamil leaders may say, it is our intention to give all facilities to the Tamil people, to the ordinary people, to learn the Sinhalese language and join us and be one nation with us.

I have explained to a certain extent why this opposition has arisen, but what is the excuse made for this opposition? They say that by this Bill we are going to suppress the Tamil language, we are going to suppress Tamil culture, we are going to do so many things against the Tamil language and their way of life, but there is nothing in this Bill which makes it impossible for the Tamil people to preserve their language, to preserve their culture, to get on as much as they like in their own language. There is not one word in this Bill which prevents that from being done, and I undertake to say here and now that all the facilities will be provided for the Tamil people to learn their language, to preserve their culture; and as for their other people to enable them to go to their temples, to go to the public wells and to go to a tea boutique and get a cup of tea. Those are the things, the absence of which really retards a linguistic group, and not the fact that the official language is Sinhalese. Their language and their freedom are being suppressed by their own people.

Take the terms of the Bill itself. They are quite simple. There is only one provision really, that Sinhalese shall be the official language. The proviso merely provides, as I said, for the implementation of this Bill by stages. When it is possible to introduce Sinhalese to transact a certain matter in that language, it will be introduced. I say that because this time has been taken to enable us to introduce Sinhalese gradually without affecting the efficiency of the administration or affecting the rights of the people who are already in service. The Prime Minister is very well known in this country and he is in charge of the implementation of this Bill. He has already given an undertaking and an assurance that provision will be made for the reasonable use of Tamil, and that



this Bill will not be given effect to in any manner to the prejudice of the minority communities in Ceylon.

I know that talk is going round to say that once this Bill is passed, the Government might think of passing a Bill making one religion the State religion. That is entirely false. There is not the slightest intention on the part of this Government to bring any Bill with regard to the religion of any party in this Island. Hon. Senators may rest satisfied that this Government is not going to do anything which would discriminate against the minorities in this Island, and particularly not with regard to religion.

Sometimes it may be said that the very fact that Sinhalese is made the State language is a discrimination against people who talk other languages in the Island. That is not so. How could it be a discrimination? This language is common to everybody. Many Sinhalese people do not know the Sinhalese language; many Tamil know the Sinhalese language; there are Sinhalese people whose common language in the home is Tamil; and there are many Tamil people whose common language in the home is Sinhalese; so that there is no question of discrimination. Sinhalese will be available in the schools for anybody to learn, and therefore the mere fact that we are starting Sinhalese as the official language and introducing our own language is not a matter of discrimination, nor is it a matter which in any way adversely affects the minorities.

Some hon. Senators might be interested to know how this is going to affect the administration of justice in Ceylon. Before this Bill was introduced, I inquired from the Hon. Chief Justice whether the court records could be kept in the Sinhalese language—that is to say, the records of the Assize Court, the Appeal Court and the Court of Criminal Appeal—and the reply was that it could be done as soon as the necessary administrative arrangements were made. In other words, the Supreme Court is of opinion that as soon as we can provide the necessary typists, interpreters and typewriters records could be kept in the Sinhalese language. Certainly, the provision of typists, typewriters, and so on, will take a couple of years. But

whatever it is, this assurance can be given, namely, that no advocate or judge who is in service now will be adversely affected by the introduction of the Sinhalese language into the records of the courts.

I purposely did not ask the judges whether they could conduct proceedings in the Sinhalese language or when they could conduct proceedings in Sinhalese. I had a very good reason for it. Proceedings need not be conducted in the official language. If hon. Senators would look at what is happening in the courts today, they would see that the official language is entirely unnecessary for the conduct of such proceedings. A man who talks only Tamil can come to court and say in Tamil that such and such is his grievance, that such and such is the wrong done to him, and so on. He can say what he wants in his own language. He can give his evidence in his own language, as he does now, and he can argue his case in his own language. The only requirement is, because today the record has to be kept in English, his evidence has to be translated into English. If the record is to be kept in Sinhalese, it will be translated into Sinhalese; and if the accused happens to be a person who does not know the language of the complainant, then it will be translated into the language of the accused, or defendant as the case may be, so that he might understand the complaint that is being made against him. That is all. Proceedings can actually be conducted in any language which a man uses. It may be his own language. The only provision is that the two parties should understand each other and the court should understand what the complaint is. So long as that provision is there, there is nothing to prevent any language being used in the courts.

Today, if you look at what is actually happening you will find, in the rural courts, that one man speaks in Sinhalese and the other man replies in Sinhalese and the proceedings are conducted in Sinhalese. If you go to the Northern Province you will find that court proceedings there are being conducted in Tamil. The only thing is that the record is kept in one language, that is the State language. Even in the Colombo



[Senator The Hon. M. W. H. de Silva] courts you sometimes find cases being conducted in Sinhalese. Therefore, this question of the State language or official language will not affect the courts in any way, except to the extent that records will have to be kept in Sinhalese. But that is not a matter which really affects the justice which is administered in the courts, nor is it a matter which involves very many changes

It may be said that some of the judges might not know the Sinhalese language; that they might only know the English language and that therefore they will not be in a position to administer justice. Well, in such cases, it will certainly be necessary that the proceedings should be translated into English for their benefit. That is all. They can function as they are now doing. So, in no way will the administration of justice in the Island be adversely affected by the introduction of Sinhalese as the official language.

Now with regard to education.

THE PRESIDENT: Before the hon. Leader passes on to another point I should like to have some clarification with regard to one or two points he mentioned about the courts. He said that before long, as soon as the necessary machinery is provided, it will be possible to conduct proceedings in the official language.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: No. I never said that. I said that records would be kept in the official language but proceedings will always be conducted in the language of the persons giving evidence.

THE PRESIDENT: Proceedings can be conducted in the language of the persons appearing before court?

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: It is not a case of "can be"; they must be conducted in the language of the persons appearing and giving evidence. If the plaintiff is a Tamil man, he must give his evidence in Tamil because he may not know any other language; but it will be interpreted and recorded in Sinhalese. Similarly, a Chinaman will be perfectly entitled to give his evidence in Chinese.

THE PRESIDENT: Supposing the judge understands only English and a person comes into the witness-box and gives evidence in Tamil?

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: In such exceptional cases, it will be necessary to translate into English for the benefit of the judge. I am sorry I did not make the position quite clear. My position is that a person who goes to court can ask for relief in his own language at any time. It has been the case throughout and it will be the case hereafter.

SENATOR SIR UKWATTE JAYASUNDERA: May I interrupt the hon. Leader to clarify a point? In a civil case today the provision is that the plaint must be in the English language. Does the hon. Leader mean that hereafter—I am merely asking for information—a Tamil-speaking man or an English-speaking man can lodge a plaint in Tamil or English?

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: No, because it is a provision of law. The present provision is that it should be in English but when the official language becomes Sinhalese that provision will have to be amended to enable it to be in Sinhalese.

SENATOR SIR U. JAYASUNDERA: They—the Tamil man and the Englishman—will have to file it in Sinhalese?

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: Yes, the plaint and the answer too. That is why I said that the record must be in Sinhalese. But so far as proceedings are concerned, an advocate is retained. An advocate is an officer of court and is expected to help the court. At present he helps the court by arguing in English, but there is nothing to prevent him using the language of his client. He is only the recognized agent of the client and therefore he is entitled to use that language to explain his client's case. All these things are really academic. What is happening today is, really the most convenient thing is done in court. Sometimes, if a man knows English as well as Sinhalese he gives his evidence in English for the sake of convenience, and not because he is obliged to do it.



SENATOR SIR U. JAYASUNDERA: May I again interrupt the hon. Leader? In the case of lawyers, counsel or proctors, once this Bill becomes law—unless the Hon. Minister says that the pleading may be done in English—are they not obliged to address in Sinhalese and ask for relief in Sinhalese?

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: I said that when the Bill is implemented the plaint will be in Sinhalese.

SENATOR SIR U. JAYASUNDERA: Perhaps, I did not make myself quite clear. The official language is now English. Therefore, whatever may be the nationality of the litigant, counsel addressing court on his behalf must do so in English today. Similarly, once this Bill is passed, will not counsel be obliged to address the court in Sinhalese, unless under the proviso the Minister says that the present procedure can go on interminably?

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: I do not agree that today it is necessary to address the court in English. If the court understands Sinhalese, counsel can address in Sinhalese; and it would be perfectly legal for him to do so, because the official language does not affect the proceedings. There is a provision in the Civil Procedure Code that the plaint shall be in English; but for that provision which relates to the plaint and answer, the other proceedings are not affected.

As a matter of fact, at this stage I might give this information. It is proposed not to make any alteration in the present position by an Order until we are in a position, until we are ready with the necessary machinery, to introduce the change in the courts. So, after this Bill is passed, while it will be obligatory to use Sinhalese for official purposes, we will make an Order preserving the *status quo* till such time as we think a change is possible. I can say that the Hon. Prime Minister who is in charge of this Bill will take every necessary step to see that no undue hardship is caused to the clients, to counsel, or to the judges, and also that the administration of justice does not suffer. I can say that definitely.

THE PRESIDENT: May I ask a question for the purpose of information? The moment this Bill becomes law, will it be obligatory on every one to recognize Sinhalese as the official language?

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: That will be the position unless an Order is made by the Prime Minister to the effect that any particular matter is exempted for the present. The Prime Minister can make a general Order.

SENATOR SIR U. JAYASUNDERA: Unless the Minister in charge categorises the subjects and says, for instance, that A, B, C, D, and so on, can continue to be dealt with in other languages, Sinhalese will have to be used immediately.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: Certain things will have to be done in Sinhalese immediately unless an Order is made allowing the use of the other languages. It is not necessary to categorise, but the Minister can make a general Order.

SENATOR SIR U. JAYASUNDERA: Those are not the terms of the Bill.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: All I am saying is that the Bill gives the right to the Minister to enforce its provisions immediately or to say that it is impracticable at the moment for particular purposes. It gives the Minister the right to specify any particular official purpose for which the Sinhalese language may not be used.

SENATOR SIR U. JAYASUNDERA: He can do that for all purposes, in which case he will negative the whole Bill.

THE PRESIDENT: You have got the assurance that until everything is ready for the change-over the Hon. Prime Minister will see that the *status quo* is maintained.

SENATOR SIR U. JAYASUNDERA: If he makes a general Order and renders the Bill dormant, it will be looked upon as a fraud.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: That is a matter for comment. I do not think so at all.



THE PRESIDENT: I do not think it can be characterized in the way the hon. Senator did. The hon. Leader says that the machinery is not ready yet for the Bill to be implemented immediately.

SENATOR SIR U. JAYASUNDERA: Then, he must specify the particular matters.

SENATOR KANNANGARA: I rise to a point of Order. It is very unfair to have these interruptions while the hon. Leader is making his speech. If there are any points to be clarified or any questions to be asked, we can deal with them in our own speeches. The hon. Leader will reply at the end of the debate.

SENATOR SIR U. JAYASUNDERA: I can assure you, Mr. President, that it was not my intention to embarrass the speaker at all. These are matters which, I think, even the hon. Leader would like to clarify. I assure the House that there was no intention to cause embarrassment.

THE PRESIDENT: If there was any such intention, I would not have allowed the interruptions.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: As I said, Mr. President, the Prime Minister, who is in charge of this Bill, will have to consider, if this Bill becomes law, in what matters the provisions of the Bill will have immediate effect, in what matters it will take a month before the Bill can be put into effect, in what matters it will take a year, and so on. He will have to consider the position in relation to each department and each subject and bring this Bill into force according to the circumstances prevailing in each sphere, subject of course to the time-limit fixed in the Bill itself.

I was speaking about the Judiciary when I was interrupted. I repeat that there is no intention to bring this into operation in the courts immediately because I realize that we have to create the necessary machinery first.

There is another question arising in this connection. The Civil Procedure Code provides that the plaint shall be in English. Well, that is a specific provision. Although this Bill provides that the official language shall be Sinhalese, I

do not think it overrides that specific provision, so that in spite of this Bill, that particular thing will have to be done in English until we amend the Civil Procedure Code, which provides that the plaint shall be in Sinhalese. That is the position, if I am not mistaken—my learned Friend will correct me if I am wrong—with regard to the courts.

With regard to certain other matters where there is specific provision for the use of English or Sinhalese or Tamil or all of these languages, such provision will not be affected by the passage of this Bill. Although this Bill provides for the official language to be Sinhalese only, hon. Senators will observe that there is no definition of "official language". There are also matters which are partially private and partially public, like registration of marriages or deaths, and which might not strictly call for the use of the official language. If there is provision in the law already for the use of languages other than Sinhalese in such matters, such provision will continue to remain. If there is no specific legal provision in that way, but if usage or some customary practice has grown up, then the Prime Minister will have to consider the question whether he should confirm that customary practice or alter it in any way. All I am trying to do is to impress on hon. Senators the fact that the provisions of this Bill are not going to be abruptly put into effect, upsetting the smooth work of the administration in any field in the Island. This law will be enforced judiciously and without injury to the general administration or to the administration of justice.

I was going to refer to the education system. It is well recognized that the medium of education should be the mother tongue. The fact that Sinhalese will be the official language has nothing to do with education in the mother tongue. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Bill, all education will be carried on in the mother-tongue medium. It is the same with regard to the local authorities.

SENATOR NAGALINGAM: I am very sorry to interrupt, Mr. President. While on the subject of education, I would like to know what steps are being contemplated with regard to instruction at the Law College—in what language?



SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: I made a suggestion to the Council of Legal Education that Sinhalese should be one of the compulsory subjects for law students. Well, I did that because a man who takes to the profession of the law will require a certain knowledge of the Sinhalese language under the new set up. I suggested that the students who are now in the Law College should take up an examination in Sinhalese before their final in 1959 and obtain a pass in Sinhalese. Well, I did that because I thought the circumstances demanded that the matter should be considered by the Council of Legal Education. That was all. It is for the Council of Legal Education to consult anybody they like, or not consult anybody, and fix any period they like or any examination they like and act in any manner they think desirable. Actually it is not a matter which concerns me except, incidentally, in regard to the policy of Government. I brought it to their notice for their own action. In fact, I might say that I was assisted in this matter—that is, with regard to examinations as well as the periods to be fixed—by the Principal of the Law College who followed the Report of the Languages Commission. So much for the legal aspect of this matter.

I was dealing with the educational aspect of it. Now, it has been stated that education is best imparted in the mother tongue of the child. Nothing definite transpires in this Bill. It is a matter which will have to be considered by the people interested in education. No doubt, it is a matter which will be looked into by those interested in the subject. Subsequent legislation, if necessary, and subsequent arrangements will be made with regard to this. So much for the educational set-up.

I was going to speak about the local authorities. No provision has been made in this Bill with regard to local government. That is also a matter which will have to be considered in connection with the provision for the reasonable use of Tamil and the reasonable use of other languages as well. I do not think the term "reasonable use" would be confined to Tamil only; there will be the English language and perhaps the Malay language.

SENATOR NAGALINGAM: There is no mandate.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: There is no mandate in this matter. The only mandate is with regard to the Sinhala language. There is no other mandate in the matter. These are matters which good sense wants us to provide for and which will be provided for not because of any mandate but because it is the duty of the Government to see that arrangements are made for the benefit and the advancement of the country.

I do not think I need detain hon. Senators any longer. I thank them much for listening to me very patiently and carefully. I also thank the hon. Senator (Senator Sir U. Jayasundera) who raised certain matters which I might have omitted to refer to. This is not a matter over which there need be any quarrel and I hope hon. Senators will consider the Bill in the light of the position placed before them and approve of this measure.

Question proposed from the Chair.

SENATOR AZEEZ: Mr. President, the hon. Leader of the House has just told us that the chief objective of this Bill is to assist the common man to take his due share in the administration of the country. I, as one who also believes in democratic socialism, agree with that objective but it is precisely my point that that objective is not fully secured by this Bill. And as I proceed I shall show hon. Senators how this particular Bill which has been brought forward now does not assist all the common men to take their due share in the administration of the country which is their legitimate right.

The hon. Leader also characterised this Bill as a simple Bill, as quite a simple Bill. I may say that in the history of legislatures, past and present, of the entire world, this is probably the shortest of Bills ever introduced but fraught with the gravest of consequences. I am not thinking at the moment of the consequences that were witnessed on the 5th June and thereafter but of the consequences that will outlast the present Government and consequences that will outlast the present generation.



[Senator Azeez]

I have had the privilege of speaking on this same subject on the 8th May when, on the floor of this House, I made my observations on the Speech from the Throne. It is my intention in view of many hon. Senators wanting to participate in this debate not to cover the same ground I covered on that occasion. It is my duty, I feel, Mr. President, to acquaint the Government—after reading the speeches that have been delivered in the Other Place and listening to speakers—of the fact that I am convinced that the present Government do not seem to be aware of the hardships they are causing to a community like the Muslim community by the introduction of the Sinhala language as the one official language of Ceylon in the manner in which it has been brought up by this Bill. It is my contention and I hope to convince you, Mr. President, that this Bill places grave disabilities on the Muslim community who are not Sinhalese-speaking. There may be all sorts of controversies as to what they speak but they are not relevant. It is admitted that the Muslims are not Sinhalese-speaking people. Therefore once this Bill is put into effect, once this becomes an Act, certain disabilities will be caused to them and it is my duty to emphasise those disabilities rather than enter into other side issues which unfortunately for this country have been high-lighted, namely, telegrams sent to Indian leaders by certain persons and telegrams sent to others in Great Britain, and so on. As far as I am concerned these things are utterly irrelevant to the issue because the Muslim community has not sent telegrams to anybody. We will demand justice from this Government; and if this Government does not give us justice, we will demand justice from the people, from the Sinhalese people, at the next General Election.

There has been a statement made in the Other Place that the Sinhalese race forms the Ceylonese nation and the others are mere national minorities. I am sure the hon. Leader does not share that view. He will, I am sure, admit that the Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers all form the Ceylonese nation. I am sure the hon. Leader will agree that the Muslim community forms an integral part of the Ceylonese nation. I am saying this because of the utterances

of some members of the Government party which are creating a lot of anxiety in our minds and I do hope it will be the task of responsible members like the hon. Leader and the Hon. Minister who is seated by his side (Senator The Hon. Jayasuriya) to ensure that in their party the tail does not wag the dog! People have short memories and some of the members of the Government party are comparatively young, so that it will be proper for me to quote portions from the concluding speech of the present Prime Minister when he wound up the debate on the Sri Lanka Bill which he sponsored. This is what he says at column 2062 of the HANSARD of 22nd March, 1945:

"May I here refer to the support that the main principle of this Bill has received from the hon. Nominated Member, (Mr. Jayah), the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Razik), and the hon. Member for Colombo Central (Dr. Kaleel) among the minority Members. I say that if any Member has brought closer the achievement of agreement among the various sections of the people of this country,"—

He used the words "sections of the people" and not "national minorities"—

"... by an attitude of generosity, where even those with whom he is concerned stand to suffer, I say the fullest credit, must go, more than to anyone among us, to the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Jayah).

The hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Jayah) has made a speech today that will have a great effect in bringing unity among the people of this country, in bringing some sense of reality to this struggle, however it may shape, that we are going to undertake to obtain a satisfactory measure of freedom.

What have the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Jayah) and his colleagues, the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Razik) and the hon. Member for Colombo Central done? There is provided in this Bill a scheme of representation under which the Muslim community more than any other community in this country might suffer, in the form in which it appears, but yet he himself was so sincerely determined to work for the main idea of freedom that he was prepared to vote for that principle embodied in this Bill."

It is very unfortunate that there is an impression in the minds of many people, some distinguished people, that the Muslim community is the one least affected by the language problem. In fact, the present Prime Minister stated this in February 1955—I am reading from the *Ceylon Daily News* of 26th February, 1955:

"Muslims need have no fears, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Leader of the Opposition, assured the Muslim community in Ceylon that theirs was the one community that need worry least about the language problem which now confronts the people of this country."



Mr. Bandaranaike, who was addressing members of the Young Men's Muslim Association, at its headquarters in the Fort yesterday, asked them to 'tell Mr. Azeez that if he will spare me (Mr. Bandaranaike) half an hour, I will remove all his doubts and fears!'"

He was under the impression that the Muslim community suffered least by any change in the language policy and he had been kind enough to issue an invitation, which I unfortunately did not avail of for quite a length of time; but he did give me the privilege of discussing this problem along with others for nearly four hours on 24th May, 1956. He said in February, 1955, that within half an hour he would remove all my doubts and fears; I was with him for four hours—I am quite convinced that he is very anxious to do his best for us in the circumstances but I cannot honestly say that all my doubts and fears have been removed, but still I am hoping for the best.

The Muslim community is affected most, not least, because of the complicated problems of language it has to face. Mr. President, I would crave your permission to read a short extract from the Zahira College Prize Day Report which I was privileged to read last January. It explains why the language problem is more complicated and more troublesome to us. This is what I stated:

"It is our conviction that we best serve Sri Lanka not by the abandonment of our culture but by its preservation and promotion, aiming at unity in diversity—political unity in the midst of cultural diversity. On Zahira, therefore, devolves a sacred obligation to foster the culture that is distinctively our own. In thus stressing its importance, we are not unmindful of the value of political unity. We believe with Sir Richard Livingstone that, 'Men are born to four citizenships. They should be able to live as good members of their family, of their community, of their nation, and of the whole human society', and that 'many of the world's troubles can be traced to a failure in one or other of these citizenships—to our never mastering the art of living with others, in the family, in the community, in the nation, in international relations.' We also realize that these four citizenships must co-exist and that the transgression of one of these loyalties must necessarily involve the transgression of the other three. While an Englishman in the United Kingdom or an American of Anglo-Saxon descent in the United States could exercise his rights and discharge his duties inherent in these four citizenships through the medium of one single language, namely English, and without the necessity of his having to acquire a knowledge of any other language, we, the Muslims of Ceylon, are in an entirely different and extremely difficult position. To fulfil adequately the obligations cast on us by

these four citizenships, we should of necessity acquire a knowledge of four different languages with four different scripts—the four languages concerned being Tamil, Arabic, Sinhalese and English, each of them with a different background of religion and history. In the case of the Ceylonese Malay-Muslims, the problem is further complicated by the presence of still another language, Malay."

Therefore when any change takes place precipitately it becomes a complicated problem to us, and it is not correct to say that we are the least affected; I would say that we are the most affected. We have another peculiar difficulty because ours is a community scattered throughout the Island, with one-third of its members inhabiting the purely Tamil-speaking areas in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and with the other portion, namely two-thirds, inhabiting the other seven Provinces. Any language question introduces a new and novel problem to us—how to preserve the solidarity of the community, how to ensure that the political power it possesses or the political influence it possesses is not diminished. That is a problem that has been created because of the present language policy, because the Eastern and Northern Province Muslims—they may be smaller in numbers—but they are the ones who are in a position to send a fair number of Muslim Members to the House of Representatives, whereas the other portion, namely two-thirds of the Muslims who inhabit the other seven Provinces, cannot because of their living isolatedly, because of their not—

SENATOR NAGALINGAM: What about Sir Razik Fareed?

SENATOR AZEEZ: They cannot send so many; one as against four.

So, that it is not a simple problem to us. This may be a "simple" Bill but to us it is not simple; it is very complicated indeed.

The hon. Leader of the House referred to parity and gave his own definition of it. I do not propose to enter into a discussion on that highly controversial subject but I would like to summarize the various solutions that have been offered in the matter of State languages, official languages, into nine categories.

First comes parity as envisaged by the hon. Leader of the House which, I may



[Senator Azeez]  
say, is parity quantitatively and qualitatively—parity which is almost “fifty-fifty” in disguise. Then there is the other parity which is parity qualitatively and not quantitatively. Then we have parity with priorities within, as the one defined by one of our former colleagues, Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan. Then we come to two official languages throughout the Island, and that is in accordance with the resolution passed in 1954 at the U. N. P. sessions. Next, we have two official languages of the Island, meaning regional languages—one language to be the official language in certain parts of the Island and the other language to be the official language in the other parts of the Island. Then we come to another category—Sinhalese only with due recognition of Tamil and with fundamental rights in respect of language guaranteed. Then we come to the next category—Sinhalese only while according due recognition to Tamil in the legislature, administration and education. That phraseology is taken from the memorandum that was submitted by the present Prime Minister to his Party on or about 12th September, 1955. Then we come to another kind, Sinhalese only with reasonable use of the Tamil language. This, I believe, is the one in the M. E. P. manifesto.

The hon. Leader of the House elucidated it further by saying that only one part has the effect of the mandate and that the other part has not the effect of the mandate. I find it rather difficult to draw that subtle distinction because the phraseology in the M. E. P. manifesto is “Sinhalese only with reasonable use of the Tamil language.” This is the first time I heard that the mandate covers the former part and not the latter part.

Sinhalese only as the official language, with no recognition whatever of Tamil, is the last category and normally I would include this Bill as falling into the last category but for the several assurances given by the Hon. Prime Minister in the Other Place and some assurances given by the hon. Leader of the House. If they had not given their assurances, our task would have been very simple because in this categorising we would have placed this Bill in the last category, that is Sinhalese only undiluted with no

sharing of status or power with any other language or languages. But the various assurances, the various statements, that have been made in the Other Place and some of the statements that have been made by the hon. Leader make the position very difficult indeed for us to place the present Bill in any one of these latter categories. Whether this particular Bill contemplates Sinhalese only, while giving due recognition to Tamil in the legislature, administration and education, or whether it is a Bill which envisages the reasonable use of the Tamil language, or whether this Bill is for due official recognition of the Tamil language, together with fundamental rights, we are at a loss to understand. We have been given several assurances, each assurance making the position more confused. If I knew for certain what is meant by these assurances and what exactly is connoted by the phrase “reasonable use of the Tamil language” I may be able easily to come to a conclusion. But this knowledge is withheld from us. We are asked to accept certain assurances and I therefore think it is my duty to analyse some of these assurances and to convince you that they mean nothing more and nothing less than that those who have given them are very fair-minded persons! But that does not carry us far. We are aware they are fair-minded persons, particularly the Prime Minister. We know that he would not be consciously harsh towards the minorities. I shall develop that point further, but I must say I find it very difficult to accept those assurances in the form in which they have been given.

I believe the hon. Leader said that the term “Official language” is not defined. He asked: “Why are you afraid?” We are afraid because unless this is defined we are at a loss to know where we stand. In fact, there was an interruption—the question was asked, “What about a plaint?” The hon. Leader said that a plaint has to be in the Sinhalese language because the Bill is such, but that if it is a question of marriage registration, and so on, they might consider allowing a different language. But can they allow that without first telling us exactly what is connoted by the words “official language”.



In the Other Place, the Hon. Prime Minister said that he could not introduce into the Bill any phrase like "due recognition of the Tamil language" or "reasonable use of the Tamil language" because those are things that cannot be precisely defined. I am in entire agreement with him there. But it is therefore most curious that the words "official language" have not been defined in so important a Bill as this. In other important Bills that have come before this House, the Objects and Reasons were printed along with the texts of the Bills, together with Statements of Legal Effect. If there is any Bill that should have the Objects and Reasons stated and a Statement of Legal Effect included, it is this because it affects the entirety of the nation, because it has been moved with the sole purpose of changing the language of administration of the country. But the Objects and Reasons have not been stated. There is no Statement of Legal Effect given. So that, truly, we are at a loss to understand what precisely the definition of "official language" is. Therefore we are compelled to think that the words "one official language" mean that Sinhalese and no other language will be allowed as an official language. If it was stated that Sinhalese shall be "the official language" or "an official language" it would be a different matter, but what is stated here is "one official language". In these circumstances, when this Bill comes in force, how can marriage registrations be made in any language other than Sinhalese, just as a plaint cannot be filed except in one language, the Sinhala language? I do not know how that can be done.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Leader explained that the Hon. Prime Minister is prepared, by regulation or otherwise, to see to such things.

SENATOR AZEEZ: I was dealing with another aspect of the matter, but the Prime Minister's powers cease to exist on 1st January, 1961.

SENATOR NAGALINGAM: No, 1960.

SENATOR AZEEZ: It may be 31st December, 1960, but anyway that is a very minor matter. That is exactly my

objection to the Bill. I shall come to this later. The hon. Leader is very solicitous about the minor languages of this country. Unfortunately I do not speak any minor language of this country. I am not a descendant of the Portuguese who have a language of their own, nor can I speak Malay, Sindhi, Gujarati or any of those languages. I must protest against this attitude of putting all languages together because, after all, the Hon. Prime Minister himself was an active participant in the debate on the Motion which was brought up in the State Council by Mr. J. R. Jayawardene in 1944. From 1944, till perhaps now, this very moment the hon. Leader spoke, there was no intention of raising any language other than the Sinhalese and Tamil languages to the status of national languages. Therefore, if the hon. Leader is going to foster minor languages of this country, he has my sympathy, but I am not particularly interested in them. In 1944, all of them participated in the debate. The original resolution was to make Sinhalese the official language, but it was amended to include Tamil as well. Therefore it has been accepted that Tamil should also come in. We do not say that it is a fundamental right that it should be a state language, an official language. But that does not mean we are oblivious of the special claims the Tamil language has by virtue of its past history and by virtue of the various decisions that have been made from 1944 onwards. I do not think it is correct to say that the Tamil language is in the same position as some other minor language which is spoken in this country. We do not know what precisely is a State language; we do not know what is an official language. I believe they are identical terms. But certainly I hope that the hon. Leader will not deny the status of a national language to the Tamil language. He may deny, but history will not support him.

Some reference, fortunately or unfortunately, has been made to a resolution that I proposed on 20th February, 1954, at the annual session of the U. N. P. The text of that resolution was not given and I crave your indulgence to give the



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text of that resolution because it might clear a lot of misunderstanding. This was the resolution:

"This Conference reiterates its decision to make Sinhalese and Tamil the official languages throughout the country in the shortest possible time."

Now, the question was asked as to why that resolution was introduced at that particular stage and in that particular form. The reason was that in January, 1954, there was an Indo-Ceylon Agreement in which the phrase "the language of the area" was used. Unfortunately, I have not got the text of that agreement, but the words "the language of the area" were used and there were some who sought to give the interpretation to that proposal that Tamil and Sinhalese shall be the official languages of Ceylon, that Tamil would be the official language in one part of Ceylon and Sinhalese would be the official language in another part of Ceylon.

THE PRESIDENT: Who had that impression?

SENATOR AZEEZ: Some Members of the U. N. P. were under the impression that a certain amount of confusion would be created by the use of the words "the language of the area" in an official document; that some persons might legitimately consider that that would mean having Tamil in certain areas and Sinhalese in certain other areas in Ceylon. That would have affected the Muslims most because they reside in both areas and I was particularly interested therefore in obtaining a clarification and moved a resolution in that form at that U. N. P. Conference.

SENATOR NAGALINGAM: It was worthless.

SENATOR AZEEZ: I shall not be diverted by these interruptions as I wish to carry on with the history of this matter uninterrupted. Therefore this resolution made it crystal clear that there were not going to be official languages in terms of areas, but that there were going to be two official languages. The words "parity of status" were never used by me. I never envisaged parity, nor was I ever happy when the term "parity of status" came into use and when my Sinhalese friends interpreted that term as "fifty-fifty" in disguise. I used to tell my Tamil friends—

SENATOR B. I. PALIPANE: There was no disguise; it was "fifty-fifty."

SENATOR AZEEZ: Senator Palipane says there was no disguise. I used to advise my Tamil friends not to use the term "parity of status" and my resolution never contained that phrase. Then this question of parity of status became very acute as a result of the official disregard of the Tamil language on the occasion of the opening of Parliament by the Queen on 24th June, 1954. Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam sought to move an Amendment to the Throne Speech, to the effect that provision should be made in the Constitution by which Tamil would be assured of a position of complete equality with Sinhalese as one of the official and national languages. Senator Nadesan dealt with that aspect of the question when commenting on the Throne Speech and I do not want to go into that again. All that I desire to stress is that it started an acute controversy throughout the country. The Muslim community had to take note of the controversy agitating the country, the feelings expressed and the tension created.

Therefore, on 11th December, 1955, the All-Ceylon Muslim League held a symposium on the language question. It invited various parties. We had the representatives of the S. L. F. P., the V. L. S. S. P., etc., and the Ceylon National League which advocated English as the only official language for many years to come. We were benefited by the discussions, and we gained valuable experience.

On 18th December, 1955, we had a Joint Conference of the All-Ceylon Muslim League and the Moors' Association and we passed a resolution which was relevant to my approach to this Bill. This was the resolution we passed in December, 1955:

"That Sinhalese be accepted as the only State Language with due official recognition being given to Tamil and English, and provided that the fundamental rights of the minorities in respect of religion, culture, language, etc., are incorporated in the Constitution."

That resolution was ratified by the Central Council of the All-Ceylon Muslim League on 8th January, 1956. On 11th January, 1956, two sets of representatives from these two organizations met and considered whether that particular



resolution should be moved as an amendment to the U. N. P. resolution at the Kelaniya conference. There was a diversity of views. Some opposed the proposal of an amendment, and felt that an interview should be sought with the then Prime Minister, Sir John Kotelawala, to find out whether he had in mind the giving of due recognition to Tamil and English, and incorporating fundamental rights. At that time the idea was that there was going to be an amendment to the Constitution. Some felt that there should be an amendment moved at Kelaniya; others felt that an assurance from the then Prime Minister would be sufficient, and that there was no need for an amendment.

On 19th January, 1956, a deputation waited on the then Prime Minister, led by Dr. Kaleel, then Minister of Labour. The necessary assurance was given by Sir John Kotelawala to the Muslim League and the Moors' Association, and those who represented these bodies in that deputation pledged their support to the U. N. P. after that assurance was given.

The assurance was that the Bill to be brought forward by Sir John Kotelawala, when he was voted to power, would conform to the requirement that due recognition be given to Tamil and English, and that fundamental rights would be incorporated in it. At that time the S. L. F. P. said that they had the reasonable use of Tamil in view.

On 17th May this year, we had a glimpse of the Bill that was being prepared by the present Government. The newspapers of 17th May had details of the Bill. The Bill as it appeared on 17th May was not acceptable to us. Between the publication of the details of the Bill on 17th May and the publication of the present Bill, some vital clauses, providing for some recognition of Tamil, had been omitted. The present Bill is worse than the draft Bill which appeared on 17th May.

When the draft of the Bill appeared in the papers, we passed a resolution on 20th May, three days after the draft was published. This was the resolution:

"Whereas the All-Ceylon Muslim League in December, 1955, passed a resolution that Sinhalese be accepted as the only State Language with due official recognition being given to Tamil and English, and provided that no other language

rights of the minorities in respect of religion, culture, language etc., are incorporated in the Constitution,

And whereas the draft Bill which has been approved by the Sinhala Only Committee of the M. E. P. does not give due official recognition to the Tamil and English languages,

And whereas no steps have been taken to incorporate in the Constitution the Fundamental Rights of the minorities in respect of religion, culture, and language,

And whereas the draft Bill violates the fundamental language rights of the Ceylonese Muslims,

And whereas the immediate change over to Sinhalese as the official language and the completion of the process before January, 1960, denies to the Muslims the opportunity of participating fully in the life of the country and imposes on them disabilities and disadvantages"—

All the effect this resolution appears to have had on the Government was that instead of January, 1960, they made it 31st December, 1960. They probably thought that the Muslims are so capable of acquiring a new language quickly that twelve months would make all the difference to them! We are not claiming parity. We wanted opportunities for participating fully in the life of the country, and our quarrel is that the Government does not give us time to cope with the situation. They are over-hasty. To conclude my quotation from the resolution:

"This Central Council of the All-Ceylon Muslim League hereby unequivocally declares that it cannot accept a Bill in terms of the proposed draft"

This resolution was passed on 20th May, and on 24th May we had the honour of an invitation from the Prime Minister to discuss this resolution and the language problem with him. We met him in the morning. We spent four hours with him. We expressed our point of view fully. He saw our difficulties, but that same evening Mr. F. R. Jayasuriya commenced his fast to death. He was good enough to call off his hunger strike on the 26th, and on the 28th he had the privilege of attending a meeting of the Parliamentary Group of the M. E. P. It is not for me to discuss the purport and manner of his fast which are well known. Although Mr. Jayasuriya's friends may think that no language owed so much to one individual as the Sinhalese language to Mr. Jayasuriya, history, I am sure, will give a different verdict.



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The Bill became truncated and incomplete—whether as a result of Mr. Jayasuriya's action or not, I do not know. The Bill became less satisfactory to us.

After the draft Bill was published, the Working Committee of the All-Ceylon Muslim League passed this resolution on 8th June:

“The Working Committee while regretting its inability to support the Official Language Bill in the form in which it has been introduced by the present Government in the House of Representatives on June 5, 1956, reaffirms the League's acceptance of Sinhalese as the only State Language of Ceylon.”

THE PRESIDENT: The sitting is suspended for 30 minutes.

*Sitting accordingly suspended at 4.30 p.m., and resumed at 5 p.m.*

SENATOR AZEEZ: Mr. President, I find it extremely difficult to cast my vote in favour of this Bill for both what it contains and what it does not contain. In the first place, it contains just one date which throws on us a lot of hardship, that is, “the thirty-first day of December, 1960.”

Before I come to that I must also stress that this Bill is silent with regard to the status of the Tamil language, and I have already pointed out to you that the Tamil language, by virtue of its history, deserves an entirely different place from that of being a minor language. But the hon. Leader envisaged in his speech—in fact, the present Prime Minister in his memorandum of September 1955 also did envisage—some kind of status being given to the Tamil language in the spheres of legislation, administration, education and examination. If I remember right, he was not so solicitous about the minor languages at that time, and perhaps even now, as our present Leader who thinks probably that it is his duty to foster those languages which might die but for his timely intervention and special help.

The term “official language” has not been defined and, therefore, it is very difficult for us to know exactly what the implications of this Bill are. I think the hon. Leader stated that he would not mind allowing registration of marriages and deaths taking place in a language

other than Sinhalese even after 31st December, 1960. But the position is not so simple. What about the proceedings of the Kathi courts? Under the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act, there are a set of judicial officers called Kathis, many of whom do not know any language other than Tamil, and who are now allowed to have their records in Tamil.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: I think I explained that this Bill will not affect the special provisions of the law. There is a special provision with regard to Kathis which this Bill will not affect.

SENATOR AZEEZ: I am no lawyer, but when I read the clause:

“The Sinhala language shall be the one official language of Ceylon:”,

I understand no other meaning except there being one official language. We would have been very happy if that provision had been incorporated in the Bill. After all, the Legal Draftsman is quite competent to translate that idea into legal form, and I would have been very willing to vote for this Bill if such provision were made satisfactorily.

SENATOR S. NADESAN: That is because lawyers also must live.

SENATOR AZEEZ: Lawyers must live, but I am only concerned with the hardship that is likely to be caused to people who cannot employ expensive lawyers. This is more confusing because statements are made in various forms by various Ministers. Here is one statement by the hon. Leader of the House in the Other Place.

THE PRESIDENT: If the hon. Senator says that the Bill does not provide for the language, what language is it going to be?

SENATOR AZEEZ: The Bill provides clearly what the official language is going to be as soon as it is passed. We have not still technically passed it. But it says that in such very clear and unequivocal terms that I gained the impression that unless there is an Amending Act, this would have an overriding effect because at the moment we do not have any legislation specifying that a particular language is the official language of Ceylon. There is *ad hoc* legislation;



there are certain Acts where mention is made of documents being kept in Sinhalese or Tamil or English. But as far as I am aware, there is no legislation in existence today which makes English the one official language. As a matter of fact, there are subsidiary official languages today. Even during the colonial days, although English was the dominant or primary official language, it is my submission that there had been subsidiary official languages—not Malay and Gujarati and Sindi, and so on, but Tamil and Sinhalese—and, may I say, enjoying parity of status whatever its worth.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: What about English?

SENATOR AZEEZ: English was the principal official language. Having been a member of the Government Service once upon a time, I know that the village headmen were allowed to have their official records in Sinhalese or Tamil. But the whole point is, there should be some meaning in making a language the one official language of Ceylon. Otherwise, one could have taken some administrative steps. As a matter of fact, before this Bill was introduced, some Ministers had taken steps on their own.

SENATOR NADESAN: That is illegal.

SENATOR AZEEZ: That was illegal. That is being legalized.

SENATOR NADESAN: Even now it is illegal. Only the Prime Minister can make it legal.

SENATOR AZEEZ: If the hon. Leader's assurance had been embodied in this Bill, if his statement had been transformed into legal form, then, of course, I would have been satisfied. But now as it is, my own impression is—and the words justify my impression—that on and after 1st January, 1961, the Kathi courts, and so on, cannot have their records in a language other than Sinhalese. If it is otherwise, I will be happy; but that is not the meaning that I see in this Bill. For example, statements are made by Ministers. This is a statement by the hon. Leader of the House in the Other Place made at Kalmunai. This is from a report in the *Times of Ceylon* of 17th June, 1956. He is alleged to have told the people who were gathered

there that the Language Bill meant nothing more than the replacement of English by Sinhalese and that Tamil would continue to occupy the place which it held in the Island from time immemorial. Obviously, this is a contradiction of the Bill because English was an official language along with two other official languages. If that was the intention of the Government, we would have expected them to say that Sinhalese shall hereafter continue to occupy the place that English occupied in the sphere of administration, education and so on. Why are they not so clear? They are giving assurance after assurance. I shall deal with the assurances at a later stage.

Another difficulty is that English was never a national language. It was an official language; but Sinhalese is a national language. So is Tamil. The difficulty becomes rather worse on account of these distinguishing features. Merely to say that Sinhalese is going to substitute English carries us no further because Sinhalese is the language of 70 or 80 per cent. of the people of this country, and except for the members of the Burgher community who are small in number and who speak English, the others do not speak English as their language. So that, the position is entirely different. I personally feel that we should not be lulled into a false sense of security by this statement that Sinhalese is to replace English because it is not so stated in the Bill.

The hon. Leader of the House referred to the medium of instruction and said there is absolutely no intention of this Government to make any changes in the medium of instruction. But the problem is not so simple as that. What is going to be the medium of examinations, examinations in respect of the future Civil Service, Clerical Service and other Government employment? That question has not been answered. Now we are asked to take the assurances of the Prime Minister and other Ministers and give our assent to this Bill. When that question was pointedly referred to—I believe I am in order in reading the statement of the Hon. Minister of Education, because this is a subject that belongs to him—this is what he said:

“That is a detail that will have to be worked out. I have already said, if my hon. Friend did not understand me, that I shall place before the hon. Minister the results of all the



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investigations we have made. I even pointed to the example of a question paper that was being answered in three languages and was being marked and listed for purposes of results without showing any differences. Therefore, the answer to the question of the hon. Member for Vavuniya is that whatever results we have achieved will be placed before the Hon. Prime Minister so that he will be in a position to say how exactly future public examinations should be conducted.”—[OFFICIAL REPORT, REPRESENTATIVES, 8th June, 1956; Vol. 24, c. 1047.]

He says, “We will look into the matter.” As far as we are concerned, it is a vital matter because in 1945—I believe, on 11th September, 1945—there was a regulation framed by the Education Department and the then Minister of Education setting out what the medium of instruction should be. At present some children are being educated in Tamil, some in Sinhalese and some in English. Those are the three languages recognized as the media of instruction. The Government say, as far as the medium of examinations is concerned, they shall consider the matter, they shall go into the details—and they call that an assurance. I wish to know the real effect of the words, “I shall consider the matter, I shall give my anxious consideration to the matter.” As far as the medium of instruction is concerned, all the assurances the Government have given us is that they will work out the details, they will study everything and do what is right in their opinion.

The hon. Leader said that the medium of instruction has no connection with the official language. That is exactly the point at which I differ vitally from the Government. The official language cannot be dissociated from the medium of instruction, from the medium of education, from the medium of administration, from the medium of local authorities, etc. It is too vital a matter. As I said, the Bill just covers one aspect of the matter and the rest are unwritten assurances given in various shapes and forms, some on the floor of this House, some at the Other Place, some at public meetings. As far as we are concerned the medium of examinations is so vital. The Leader of the House might say, “We are not interfering with instruction,” but it is not so simple as all that. Suppose all the papers connected with examinations were to be in Sinhalese, certainly you are placing an insuperable obstacle in

the path of the boy who has not studied in Sinhalese as the medium. Therefore, we cannot be vague about the matter. All that I can do is to quote a passage from Shakespeare which indicates what a vital connection exists between the official language and the medium of examination. This is the quotation:

“You take my house when you do take the  
prop  
That doth sustain my house; you take my  
life  
When you do take the means whereby I  
live.”

When you manipulate your medium of education in a particular way, you are certainly placing an obstacle in the path of a Tamil-speaking boy pursuing his studies in his language as the medium.

I have seen statements in the Press where it is envisaged that higher education in Ceylon after 1961 should be pursued in the Sinhalese language. That is to say, a Tamil-speaking boy will start his education in the Tamil medium, but as he goes to the VI standard or Senior Prep. he will be expected to switch on to the Sinhalese medium. That is what I read in the Press.

SENATOR NADESAN: The Tamil boy can go on in the English language.

SENATOR AZEEZ: But he will be denying himself opportunities of employment, opportunities like what Senator Nadesan had. Unlike Senator Nadesan, my profession is such that I have to deal with the growing generation. I say that they will be very much handicapped unless the Government decided that the medium of examination will be so arranged as not to unduly handicap the Tamil-speaking boys.

SENATOR NADESAN: Government will give them land.

SENATOR AZEEZ: There is nothing whatever said about the medium of instruction. The statement of the Hon. Minister of Education is not one which we can accept. He said the Government had an open mind, that they had not come to a conclusion. They have not given an assurance that the Tamil-speaking boy will not be handicapped or even not unduly handicapped. I for one am not prepared to accept that vague assurance.



I was trying to find out for myself why the particular year 1960 was selected and not any other year. Someone said it was because an election has to take place in 1961 unless something unfortunate befalls the Government before that. I was not too happy about that reason and I read for myself the statement made by the Hon. Prime Minister. He has given us a reason why 1960 was selected. This is what the Hon. Prime Minister, in introducing this Bill, said:

"What is the time required to make the change-over—I am talking apart from the language of the minorities—to change over from English, what is the period? The Hon. Minister of Justice, in consulting the Supreme Court Judges, was informed by them—of course provided that certain things were done, interpreters were provided, and so on—that they could make the change in four years, and we took the Supreme Court as the body where it would be most difficult to effect a change. Therefore we fixed a date that exceeds four years; that is to say 31st December, 1963."—  
[OFFICIAL REPORT, REPRESENTATIVES, 6th June, 1956; Vol. 24, c. 839.]

SENATOR NADESAN: The whole of that is wrong.

SENATOR AZEEZ: Some questions were put on the floor of this House by the former Minister of Justice (Senator E. B. Wikramanayake) and some answer was given. But it was stated that in the public interest the correspondence could not be tabled.

SENATOR NADESAN: In the interest of the Prime Minister.

SENATOR AZEEZ: I do not know what exactly were the reasons that made him take that step, but it was clear from the statement of the hon. Leader that, provided certain interpreters were available, provided certain things were done, it would be possible.

SENATOR NADESAN: Possible to have the record.

SENATOR AZEEZ: But what about the pleaders? I refer to those who plead before the Supreme Court. It is very strange in fact, as far as the Supreme Court is concerned, that the Official Languages Committee has made this statement, which it is appropriate at this stage to quote. The statement, as a matter of fact, is quoted at column

690 of the House of Representatives HANSARD of 19th October, 1955. It reads as follows:

"The Select Committee of the State Council visualised this when it stated, 'We have to proceed with the greatest caution. The history of other countries which have gone through the phase that is now upon us when the national languages supplanted by a foreign tongue were struggling to gain ascendancy, tells us that the courts have been the last citadel of the foreign language.'"

In other words, it is accepted on all hands—even the Constitution of India has accepted it—that the most difficult place where the new language could be introduced is the Supreme Court.

The hon. Leader talked about records, about pleaders pleading in their own language and getting it interpreted by somebody for the benefit of the judge where the judge did not know the language of the pleaders, but he did not make any reference to the translation of the various legislative enactments. I say that because I envisage that after 1961, if there is a pleader who knows only Sinhalese and no other language, in terms of this Bill, of the spirit of this Bill, by virtue of the mandate that has been given this Government, he should not be compelled to get hold of a translator to read a set of legislative enactments—

SENATOR NADESAN: It will solve the unemployment problem.

SENATOR AZEEZ: Well, I can envisage an ironic situation where a lawyer who is very proficient in the Sinhalese language, as proficient as the Muslim Minister in the present Government, but who, unlike the Muslim Minister, does not know the English language pleads in the Supreme Court. What is he expected to do? That is a matter that has not been dealt with. What I say is, in respect of the most difficult sphere of administration, the most difficult place where you can have Sinhalese, you have fixed on 1960 for the switch-over. Therefore, by implication, in every other aspect of administration this switch-over could be possible much earlier, but it has been accepted everywhere—in the Indian Constitution, in the Select Committee Report—and history has proved it, that the place where it is most difficult to introduce a new language is the Appeal Court or the



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Supreme Court. If I remember right, in Egypt, where they had Arabic in all the various courts, they could not avoid French or English in their highest tribunal.

So, in that state of affairs, if you have fixed 1960 as the time for the switch-over in respect of the Supreme Court, then I take it that in the other spheres of administration you could switch over much earlier. That is why we are very much concerned and perturbed because the position is that 1960 is the last date; it is not the first date. So that, some of the members of the Muslim community must be prepared, as soon as this Bill is passed, to possess a knowledge of Sinhalese which they cannot acquire in that style, in that manner and in that quick time.

Now, I would like to ask the hon. Leader one simple question—I am not a lawyer—a commonsense question. You say that the courts will have to keep their records in Sinhalese by 1st January, 1961, but you are allowing the pleaders to plead in their own language. Is it easy for them to do that? Are you not creating difficulties? Supposing you made it 1971? If your 24-hours mandate can be 1960, cannot that mandate be 1970? Either you have it in 24 hours or you have it in reasonable time. We were under the impression that the intention at one time was to switch over to Sinhalese within 24 hours. Later, an explanation was given that within 24 hours the Government pledged itself to have a target date. I accept it. But if you can have 1960 as the target date, why cannot you have 1970 as the target date, particularly when it is pointed out to Government the various hardships that are caused to a set of people who are not Sinhalese-speaking?

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: The Hon. Prime Minister stated that the date would be extended if necessary.

SENATOR AZEEZ: When the date is sufficiently extended, I will be the first to speak, squally at length, in acceptance. Till the date is extended, I cannot accept it.

I will also read the particular passage where the Hon. Prime Minister spoke about the date.

SENATOR NADESAN: The Prime Minister's assurance.

SENATOR AZEEZ: Here is the assurance and the particular passage to which, I believe, the hon. Leader referred.

"May I say now, at this stage, that it is our intention, as far as is possible, to make that change wherever possible, but if in the course of our proceedings in implementation we find on sufficient ground and data that the change-over just cannot reasonably be made during that time, we will not hesitate to come before the House and the country for passing the necessary amendment to the Bill with the facts before us."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, REPRESENTATIVES, 6th June, 1956; Vol. 24. c. 840.]

I ask in all earnestness, have I not shown the hon. Leader our difficulties? So, why does he not consent to an amendment now? The Hon. Prime Minister says, "if it just cannot reasonably be made." According to whose reasoning? According to the Government's reasoning. Do they think that our Muslim boys are so linguistically made and created specially that they can take to any language in such quick time? But that is not so; it simply cannot be done. Within four and a half years they cannot acquire proficiency in a new language. Our proctors, our advocates who have been practising for such a long time cannot adapt themselves so quickly to the change-over. They may have to plead with interpreters, understand with the help of interpreters and read records also with the help of interpreters. I do not know of any country in the world—either in the past or the present, and I am sure not even in the future—with the kind of arrangement where the judge must have an interpreter, the lawyer himself must have an interpreter, and where the books are in a language which is not the official language.

These are difficulties to understand which there is no necessity to wait for a certain measure of time; these are difficulties which stare us in the face. With a little imagination, with a little common sense, they can be envisaged right now. The Government say that the Bill can be amended later when the change-over "just cannot reasonably be made", but as far as the difficulties are concerned, they are as clear as daylight. It is impossible to expect a person to acquire



proficiency in a new language in such quick time. Of course, if it is the kind of proficiency that is expected of a salesman or a hawker, it can certainly be acquired; but if it is the standard expected of a professional man, it simply cannot be done.

Now, reference was made to a circular that was sent by the hon. Leader in respect of the law students. The hon. Leader was perfectly logical, and in fact I must congratulate him on having sent that circular, because I found the Bill unfolded in that circular. The implication is very clear that Muslim law students who will acquire a certain knowledge—

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: Not a circular.

SENATOR AZEEZ: I am sorry, it was a letter.

SENATOR NADESAN: He had no right to send that letter.

SENATOR AZEEZ: Anyway, he has given his interpretation of the Bill—

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: Anybody has a right to suggest.

SENATOR NADESAN: I do not think so. The Minister in charge of the Bill is the Prime Minister.

SENATOR THE HON. M. W. H. DE SILVA: This was long before the Bill.

SENATOR NADESAN: That makes it worse.

SENATOR AZEEZ: Senator Nadesan has, as usual, interrupted me to say that the hon. Leader had no right to send a circular, or letter, or whatever it is, to the Incorporated Law Society. I am not concerned with that aspect of the matter.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think it is the Incorporated Law Society. It is the Council of Legal Education.

SENATOR AZEEZ: The Council of Legal Education. I thank you, Mr. President, but I am not concerned, as I said, with that aspect. What I say is that this letter to the Council of Legal Education, whether it is legal or illegal—if it had not been illegal, it would have been much better—this letter or circular or whatever it is, gives us an idea of the kind of implementation of this

Bill envisaged by the hon. Leader, and I say that he is perfectly logical. I thank him for his elucidation, because if this Bill is passed, the Muslim boy who does not possess any knowledge of Sinhalese has to acquire a certain knowledge of the Sinhalese language within a very short space of time; and with the kind of rigorous examination that this body hold—you know, Mr. President, that all these professional bodies hold very strict examinations—they do not pass all the candidates, as is done at the Training College under the new arrangement. Unlike the present Government which is very generous and pass all the candidates, the Council of Legal Education do not pass all candidates; so that, the boys who are non-Sinhalese-speaking will find it very difficult to become proficient in Sinhalese in such a hurry.

SENATOR NADESAN: The Director of Education holds the S. S. C. So, they will pass.

SENATOR AZEEZ: If the assurance is given that all the candidates who take up the S.S.C. from Zahira College will have the same luck as the trainees at—  
[Interruption.]

THE PRESIDENT: I would wish the hon. Senator not to listen to the interruptions but go on with his speech.

SENATOR AZEEZ: I thank you for your advice and I shall follow it.

All that I say is, we are grateful to the hon. Leader for giving us an indication of how this Bill is likely to be implemented; so that, the kind of requirement that is contained in this letter is more valuable to us than the many assurances given in other places and by other persons. All that I say is, the net result of this Bill interpreted in this way would be to make political illiterates of a generation of our community. I use that phrase in all seriousness. We are going for a generation to be political illiterates in our own country, and with that kind of implication I cannot naturally support this Bill. Of course, if you want one to be a sycophant of the Prime Minister, if you want one to tell him the things he wishes to hear rather than the things he should hear, one can say, "Do it"; but I cannot do that. I am very



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sorry I cannot do that. I have to place before the Prime Minister and the hon. Leader our difficulties and give them correct information.

I would like to add that there are several Muslims who have come to me after seeing this Bill and sought my advice whether they should not emigrate to Pakistan or to Malaya or to Indonesia, particularly those who have many children. They are perturbed. Of course, I know some hotheaded members of the M. E. P. would say, "That is exactly the kind of result we want from this Bill", but I know that the sober elements of that party do not desire that type of result.

Let us take the example of the Malay Union, which is an association that accepted the Sinhalese language as the only official language without any condition regarding due recognition of fundamental rights. All they wanted was 15 years' time, but they are now protesting that they cannot cope with the provisions of this Bill.

Many references have been made to these assurances. I first refer to the assurance given by the Hon. Minister of Education in regard to the medium of examinations. When he was told what would happen, he said that he would look into the matter carefully and that he would give it his most anxious consideration. So that, we have to take him on trust without knowing exactly what he is going to do.

The Prime Minister has given several assurances. Before I try to analyse what those assurances would or do mean, let us remind ourselves that the Prime Minister has his own limitations, not in point of knowledge or stature or eminence, but limitations by virtue of the fact that he is a popular Prime Minister, a democratic Prime Minister who has to consult his party, who has to do things according to mandates given to him. He cannot isolate himself from pressure groups within and outside his party, and we have seen that happening. We only hope and pray that his influence grows stronger daily in the party because we know he is not an extremist and is fair-minded; but we are always fearful of the forces of extremism in his party, because the extremists have

forged a new weapon, namely "glucose fasting." With this new weapon, anything can happen. The Prime Minister, in his personal capacity, can give an assurance but when the Prime Minister, in his capacity as the leader of a popular party, as the leader of a people's Government, gives an assurance, he gives it with certain limitations. That is one defect. Even if he were a dictator, we may not find it possible to accept assurances from him. Now he gives assurances, limited as he is by the conventions of party mandates and Parliamentary Government; but even if he were a dictator we would not be able to accept his assurances because this is what he has said in the Other Place:

"I think it is not a matter of political condemnation of a person that he may have changed his views on important points. I believe a good many people have done that in the history of this world." [OFFICIAL REPORT, REPRESENTATIVES, 6th June, 1956; Vol. 24, c. 844.]

AN HON. SENATOR: Who said that?

SENATOR AZEEZ: The Prime Minister himself.

New facts may emerge on which he may change, new conditions may arise; whereas if these assurances are clothed in legal phraseology and embodied in a Bill, you cannot change them because you will have to go to the House and face a debate. Therefore my position is, in any case it is not fair for our Prime Minister to expect us, those of us who belong to minority communities, to accept assurances of this nature when they are given in respect of problems and questions which are of such vital consequences to us and when those assurances are subject to the limitations I have indicated.

I would like to read another assurance that is contained in his speech:

"... on the further assurance that I gave them and which I give now, namely, that when this Bill is passed I intend to be the Minister in charge of this subject."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, REPRESENTATIVES, 6th June, 1956; Vol. 24 c. 841.]

But he can only frame regulations within the ambit of this Bill and it says he cannot frame regulations after 1st January, 1961. So, our grievance, the wrong that has been inflicted upon us, is that by this switch-over you do not give us time to cope with the new



official language. Therefore this assurance has relevance only to the regulations which can be framed within the ambit of this Bill and which will cease to operate on 1st January, 1961.

Then, he gives another assurance, that he will make this change-over “of course, wherever it is possible without causing hardship.” Who is to define “wherever it is possible”? We have already pointed out our hardships as the Bill stands at present. So, that assurance also does not take us very far.

Here is another passage that is very relevant:

“There are various other points like that which we have to take up. Instead of thinking of all that now and trying to introduce these things into the Bill, we felt that the wiser course was to address our minds in detail to each and every one of those problems where they arise.”

As far as we are concerned, the problems have already arisen, have been studied and explained; but according to the Hon. Prime Minister, he will take action whenever and wherever they arise, the implication being that they have not arisen already. I know it is difficult. He goes on to say:

“I know four languages myself: I will be very happy if I knew more. But I would like to assure my hon. Friends in this House that those are details on which I do not think they should try to pin me down . . .”  
OFFICIAL REPORT REPRESENTATIVES, 6th June, 1956; Vol. 24 c. 847.]

He gives the assurance of being fair-minded, of being quite conscious of the rights of the minorities. He gives the assurance that he considers the Muslims also an integral part of the Ceylonese nation. But when you ask him what exactly he proposes to do, how he is going to solve this difficulty, his answer is, “Give me time, do not pin me down”. What we say is, “Why do you not give us your solution and ask for our assent? You know we are in the dark; you do not tell us how you mean to solve it.”

I cannot understand these assurances because I have never felt that the present Prime Minister is not fair-minded, is not democratic. It is not necessary for him to say so. But the point is on questions of this nature, what I may honestly and truly consider fair, another person may not consider fair. It is something like what is jokingly said of the Honours student and the S. S. C. student in history. The

S. S. C. student thinks that the first global war was a war between right and might whereas the Honours student thinks, or should think, that it was a war between one conception of right and another conception of right. The Germans had their conception of right and the English and her allies had their conception of right.

I am not denying that the hon. Leader and the Hon. Prime Minister and other Ministers are not fair-minded and do not have our interests and the interests of the country at heart. But what I do contest is that on certain matters and problems their conception of right may conflict with our conception of right. Therefore, the necessity may and does arise to resolve those conflicts. This one-sided conception of right does not help us in any way. You are not helping us in any way by saying that you will endeavour to the best of your ability to be fair-minded.

THE PRESIDENT: Would it be correct to say that the hon. Senator is not against Sinhalese being made the official language but that his objection is that more time should be given before it is made the official language?

SENATOR AZEEZ: I was, in fact, hoping to deal with that aspect in my concluding remarks. That is my main objection. The other question of “due recognition” is also there, on which the Bill is silent. But apart from being silent on the point, the Bill also imposes on us a terrible hardship.

Unfortunately for our country and the minorities, this question has been treated as if it were a conflict between two races. The prestige, status and race aspects have been highlighted to the detriment of certain other important aspects. Having been in the Administrative Service, I myself would like to view this matter from another aspect. I feel that the implementation of this Bill is going to result in a breakdown of the administration, and that is a very vital matter. I understand that a team of Government Parliamentary Party Members are going to India and it is our earnest hope that they are going there with the intention, not of educating India as to how things can be done quickly and within the shortest possible time to educate India and particularly



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the Indian Prime Minister, but with the intention and the idea of educating themselves. They should have gone there before this Bill was introduced. I trust they are going after reading that section of the Indian Constitution which deals with the problem, which is fundamentally a negation of the kind of practice they have adopted and followed here. Unfortunately, the Indian people do not believe in "simple" Bills, they want complicated Bills, so in their Constitution there are a number of sections dealing with the language question. Sections 343 to 351 deal with this question; and I hope that the team that is going to India will carefully read that section of the Indian Constitution which deals with the Supreme Court. If they are going with open minds we will be very happy, but we do not know whether they are going with the intention of converting India to their way of doing things. The hon. Senator seated by my side is very keen that I should read that section of the Indian Constitution which deals with the Supreme Court, namely, Section 348; so I shall read it:

" 348 (1) Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this Part, until Parliament by law otherwise provides—

(a) all proceedings in the Supreme Court and in every High Court,

(b) the authoritative texts—

(i) of all Bills to be introduced or amendments thereto to be moved in either House of Parliament or in the House or either House of the Legislature of a State,

(ii) of all Acts passed by Parliament or the Legislature of a State and of all Ordinances promulgated by the President or the Governor or Rajpramukh of a State, and

(iii) of all orders, rules, regulations and bye-laws issued under this constitution or under any law made by Parliament or the Legislature of a State,

shall be in the English language."

SENATOR PALIPANE: Thereafter?

SENATOR AZEEZ: There is no "thereafter". In other words, they have given unlimited time to the Indian Government. But I suppose there is a peculiar logic which is appealing to the Government Parliamentary Party, namely, the smaller the country, the shorter the time necessary. I do not think that stands to reason.

Coming back to the point I was about to deal with, namely, the breakdown in the administration, there is a passage which I should like to quote from *The Madras Hindu*. Actually, it contains the views of the Madras Government submitted, I think, to the Language Commission. It is a memorandum to the Commission appearing in *The Madras Hindu* of 18th January. I do not want to read the entire passage; I shall only read the relevant portions of it.

"In the light of this preliminary explanation the provisions of Articles 343 and 344 of the Constitution regarding the official languages of the Union may be summarised as follows:

(1) English should be the principal official language of the Union up to January 26, 1965. Hindi should be the subsidiary official language up to the same date.

(2) Hindi should be the principal official language of the Union from and after January 26, 1965."

And this should interest my hon. Friend Senator Palipane:

"If, at any stage, Parliament considers it necessary it may by law provide that English should continue to be used, but only as a subsidiary official language. The change-over on a State-wide basis is seen to involve a considerable amount of preparatory work as well as a certain amount of dislocation. It is considered desirable to avoid this, when the machinery of administration is already strained in the effort to implement the National Five-Year Development Plan in this State and such activities as the National Extension Service and Community Projects which promote the welfare of the people more concretely than a change in the official language."

So, as far as India is concerned, they have an ambitious economic programme; and if I understood the manifesto of the M. E. P. they also have an ambitious economic programme for Ceylon. But India is alive to the danger of slowing down the administration when an effort has to be made to reorganize the country on progressive economic lines. But in Ceylon these are minor details and so we can have Sinhalese only as the State language by 1960!

What is the implication in the Bill stating that Sinhalese shall be the only official language? I imagine that all documents, all files, will be kept in Sinhalese. If all records in the Supreme Court will have to be kept in Sinhalese, I believe it is the intention of the Government, it is the implication of the Bill, that the language in which the files and official records will be kept should be Sinhalese. I am told that some



Cabinet Ministers are not very fluent in Sinhalese or that they cannot read Sinhalese so well. I do not know what is going to happen to them. Of course, there is the traditional answer "Have interpreters and translators and perhaps readers." I know that there are Permanent Secretaries who were recruited in a different age, under a different set of conditions, who are not at all proficient in the Sinhalese language although they have passed the so-called First and Second Examinations. I know that they may be able to give orders to peons and talk a few words in Sinhalese, but many of them cannot write a Cabinet Paper in the Sinhalese language. So, what is the remedy this Government proposes for these difficulties?

Speaking of interpreters and translators, have we got a sufficient number of such persons in this country who are bilingually proficient?

SENATOR NADESAN: What about S. S. C.-passed students?

SENATOR AZEEZ: Yes, there are so many of them, and it is a good thing if they get employment, but they cannot translate satisfactorily because, in the first place, official terminology will give them a good deal of trouble and they are not bilingual. This is the type of situation that is going to arise.

Is it necessary for our Prime Minister to wait till an administrative breakdown occurs for him to find a solution to this problem? Are we not fair in expecting him to envisage the difficulties that are bound to arise and provide for them straightway?

The Minister of Finance has made some statements on this subject. I do not want to quote them because I want to finish my speech by six o'clock. There is the famous radio speech of his in reference to public servants in which he uttered words to this effect: "We are not going to do things in a hurry, we will be very reasonable and considerate to all. We have no intention to disturb the promotion prospects of public officers. We are aware of the fact that you entered the service under different conditions." All this is very fair of him, very nice of him, but while on the one hand there is this Bill by which you have to complete the switch over into

Sinhalese in the whole administration by the end of 1960, on the other hand you are promising all the public servants that you will not compel them to learn sufficient Sinhalese or expect them to hasten their study of that language, or even go out, perhaps with a pension, if they cannot cope with the situation. This is utterly contradictory.

I say, Mr. President, they cannot have it both ways. We behold a dilemma. Either they have to be fair to the Public Service and keep them, or face an administrative breakdown. And if the assurances of the Finance Minister mean anything at all, the administration is going to break down. In this connection, it is interesting to consider what an eminent Sinhalese scholar like Mr. Julius de Lanerolle has said. He himself has been an administrator and he has put it so well that I desire to quote from an article he wrote to the *Times of Ceylon* of 6th June, 1956:

"When I asked Mr. Bandaranaike about this matter, he told me that he fixed the time-limit in order to enable him to review the position within the life-time of the present Parliament."

That itself is not very fortunate. If things go on normally, the Government is going to be on the eve of a General Election at the end of 1960. Those of us who have followed current history and politics will realize that these are not things that can be done on the eve of a General Election. You cannot extend the time-limit for the operation of this Bill beyond 1960 by bringing up an amendment at that stage. I say, therefore, that if you are sincere you are most unwise in fixing this particular date.

SENATOR NADESAN: They can extend the same promise to the electorate in 1960.

SENATOR AZEEZ: In that case, the people will be disillusioned. The people will open their eyes and see how the promises made to them have been carried out. Sometimes, Mr. President, justice is done in unexpected ways.

I go on to quote Mr. Lanerolle:

"In that case, a provision to that effect should have been made in the Bill itself, as has been done in the Indian Constitution. For otherwise, the ever-pressing hurry, on top of the numerous complications looming large, will thoroughly demoralise the services. That is why I maintain that any time-limits should not be fixed without making the necessary investigations."



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In these circumstances, not only the Tamil officers, but a very large number of Sinhalese officers themselves will find it extremely difficult to satisfy the exacting demands of the administration in such functions as minuting, etc.

The Tamil officers who were all these years qualifying for the change both in Tamil and Sinhalese will find it well-nigh impossible to switch on to Sinhalese alone within that time. Nor will it be an easy task for the departments concerned to undertake the training of all these Tamil officers.

If the administrative machine fails one of these days owing to the confusion and chaos caused by these sudden conversions, the Government will have none but themselves to blame."

If it is only a question of the Government's difficulty, then we would not be concerned so much, but unfortunately the people will suffer more. On the other hand, the people will not have the economic relief that has been promised to them. The Government will be busy the whole time trying to work the administration that they will not be able to spare any time to give their mind to the economic programme which they placed before the country. I wonder whether it is the idea of the richer sections of the M. E. P. to slow down that economic programme in this fashion. I hope that is not the case.

Let me quote Mr. Lanerolle further:

"On the other hand, if the Government agrees to make some systematic use of the bilingual work already done in the two Language Departments, some respite can be afforded to the Tamil officers whose co-operation is absolutely necessary for the well-being of the administration."

I do not want to quote further than that. Mr. Lanerolle makes it quite clear that we are heading for chaos in the administration and, if that happens, he says, it will be entirely due to the fault of the Government.

Mr. President, we were at one stage prepared to accept Sinhalese as the only official language, but we are unable to support this Bill for the reasons I have set out.

I am reminded of a story our own Prime Minister related when he wound up the debate on the Throne Speech in 1947 as the Leader of the House of Representatives. He was referring to the combination of the Indian Members and the Leftists. History has many surprises. But let me go on to the story. I quote his own words:

"I would just remind my hon. Friend, Mr. Speaker, of a very fine but very terrible tale in one of the late Mr. W. W. Jacobs's books

called 'The Monkey's Paw'. Let him read it and learn its moral. Briefly, the tale is this: There was a shrivelled monkey's paw which possessed a most potent charm. Anyone who grasped it firmly in his hand and whispered a request would have that request granted; but also there was such a curse attached to that charm that the request very often came in a way that was much more disastrous than the actual attainment of the prayer. This monkey's paw came into the possession of a humdrum Englishman of the lower middle-class. He knew, of course, of the legend attached to it. He was sorely tempted to try it. He only wanted a small thing—a matter of £100 in order to purchase some long desired household needs of his wife. He thought, as the request was small, the curse would not work. He took the monkey's paw in his hand in a moment of courage and he breathed his prayer for a hundred pounds, and he got it. His only son, a worker in a factory went the following day to the factory. He was caught in the machinery and died a horrible and agonizing death. The mangled remains of the son were brought to the house of the couple with the regrets of the manager of the factory and the assurance of the payment of £100 as compensation."

We accepted Sinhalese as the only official language and we have got this Bill. That poor man wanted £100 and got it through the death of his son. If we pass this Bill, it will make political illiterates of a whole generation of us. That man in the story did not know what was going to happen to his son but we do know what is going to happen to us as a result of this Bill. It is therefore not possible for me to vote for it. I therefore hope and request that now that our difficulties have been pointed out in clear terms, this Government will strive to make amends quickly. I do not propose to send a telegram to Prime Minister Eden or to anyone else because I am quite confident that if the present Government does not do justice, the Sinhalese people who voted this Government to power will, when they find that an injustice has been perpetrated, and when they are given the opportunity of choosing the next Government grant us redress, will not delay or deny us justice.

*It being 6 p.m., proceedings on business under consideration were interrupted under the Standing Order.*

Debate adjourned; to be resumed tomorrow.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: "That the House do now adjourn".—[Senator The Hon. M. W. H. de Silva.]

Adjourned accordingly at 6 p.m., until 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 4th July, 1956.



# SENATORS

## Third Parliament—First Session

|                                                                           | Year of Retirement |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| PRESIDENT—The Hon. Sir Cyril de Zoysa, Kt., J.P. ...                      | ... 1961           |
| DEPUTY PRESIDENT—Lady Molamure, C.B.E. ...                                | .. 1961            |
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| Dr. A. M. Samarasinghe ...                                                | ... 1961           |
| Dr. J. E. Senanayake ...                                                  | ... 1961           |
| Hector de Zoysa Siriwardana, Esq., C.B.E. ...                             | ... 1957           |
| Sir Warusahennedige Abraham Bennett Bastian Soysa, Kt., C.B.E., J.P., ... | ... 1957           |
| Peri Sundaram, Esq. ...                                                   | ... 1957           |
| U. B. Wanninayake, Esq. ...                                               | ... 1961           |
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