

Volume 4

No. 9



Friday

13th August, 1948

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OFFICIAL REPORT

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*[Fourteenth Allotted Day.]*

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PRINTED AT THE CEYLON GOVERNMENT PRESS, COLOMBO.

Annual Subscription Rs. 50, by post Rs. 56, and each part 70 cents, by  
pcst 76 cents, payable in advance to the SUPERINTENDENT, GOVERNMENT  
PUBLICATIONS BUREAU, P. O. Box 500, Secretariat, Colombo 1.



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## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, 13th August, 1948.

*The House met at 10 a.m., Mr. SPEAKER [THE HON. Mr. A. F. MOLAMURE] in the Chair.*

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**The Hon. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike** (Minister of Health and Local Government, and Leader of the House): I move,

"That this House at its rising this day do adjourn until Monday 16th August, and that Monday 16th August shall be an Allotted Day for the consideration of the Appropriation Bill, 1948-49."

In moving this Motion, I should like to mention that I did suggest to Members of the Opposition that, instead of meeting on Monday, we should have Monday free and meet on Tuesday and Wednesday, provided there is agreement that on Wednesday night, if there happens to be any Heads left over, such Heads would be put to the Committee. I do not know whether Members of the Opposition are willing to do that. I understood from some of the Leaders that they are willing to do it. But I understood from the hon. Member for Ruwanwella (Dr. Perera) that he is not willing to commit himself to that. I think the consideration of the Votes of the Ministry of Transport and Works will commence today, and I estimate two days should be sufficient to complete the consideration of the Appropriation Bill. If hon. Members are agreeable, and that is understood, I will move the Motion with that Amendment. I am only making a suggestion—

**Dr. N. M. Perera** (Ruwanwella): There seems to be a general desire that we should have Monday free because we are all tired. I have no objection to the proposal of the Leader of the House. I do think that with the progress we are making we might be able to finish by Wednesday.

**The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike:** We might finish on Tuesday. Anyhow we will have to adjourn on Wednesday.

**Dr. Perera:** I have already mentioned our difficulty to the Leader of the House; that is in regard to the discussion of the Citizenship Bill.

**Mr. Speaker:** You might raise that on the 19th.

**The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike:** This is not dependent on that. That is a separate matter and the Hon. Prime Minister will have to express his views on that.

**Dr. Perera:** I think the Opposition Members met, and they are almost unanimous that we should try and get a postponement of that Bill because it is a difficult subject.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is coming up on the 19th, and you might mention it on the 19th.

**Dr. Perera:** Would not that be too late to adjourn the Debate?

**Mr. Speaker:** No.

**Dr. Perera:** The Budget has placed a severe strain on Members. That Bill, as you know, is one of the most important Bills. Hon Members will have to study it up.

**Mr. Speaker:** You might get in touch with the Hon. Prime Minister and make your arrangements with him.

**Dr. Perera:** I have no objection. I only wanted to place the matter before the Hon. Leader of the House.

**The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike:** I will mention that to the Hon. Prime Minister, but I cannot in any way commit the Government over the matter.

**Mr. Speaker:** Let the Leader of the Opposition get in touch with the Hon. Prime Minister.

**The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike:** My suggestion is that the Hon. Prime Minister is particularly interested in this Bill.

I think that the members of the Opposition should see the Hon. Prime Minister.

**Dr. Perera:** I have no objection to that.



**The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike:** Are we agreed then?

**Mr. Speaker:** You might amend the Motion now.

**The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike:** On the understanding that if the Committee stage is not finished on Wednesday, the 18th, the remaining Heads be put to the vote.

Resolved:

"That this House at its rising this day do adjourn until Tuesday 17th August, and that Tuesday, 17th August, shall be an Allotted Day for the consideration of the Appropriation Bill, 1948-49."

## APPROPRIATION BILL, 1948-49

Considered in Committee. [*Progress 12th August.*]

[**MR. SPEAKER** in the Chair.]

### Head 132.—Department of Industries

*Vote No. 2.—Working of State Factories, Workshops and Stores establishment and cost of additions, alterations, renewals, &c., and improvements to factory buildings, machinery, equipment, &c., Rs. 525,024.*

*Sub-head 18.—Establishment of (Building, Housing, Carpentry) Workshops, Rs. 525,000.*

Question again proposed, that the Vote be reduced by Rs. 10 in respect of sub-head 16.

**Mr. A. Sinnalebbe** (Batticaloa): As Government is contemplating the establishment of carpentry workshops in the provinces too, I would request that workshops be established in the Eastern Province as well, especially at Batticaloa and in the neighbouring villages like Kattankudi. There are about 500 to 600 carpenters in that area who are unemployed. They are unable to do any work for private companies because there are no private companies giving them employment.

I would, therefore, request the Hon. Minister not to forget Batticaloa when the question of establishing these carpentry workshops comes up.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*Sub-head 19.—Running Expenses of a Drug Factory (token vote), Rs. 100.*

**Major J. W. Oldfield** (Appointed Member): I want to have a little information as to what the money in this Vote is actually going to be spent on. Will the Hon. Minister also let me know what has happened to the quinine factory that was started some time ago? There was a sum of Rs. 150,000 which was voted out of Loan Funds in 1947 for the preparation of quinine from cinchona. I would like to know what has happened to that.

**The Hon. Mr. C. Sittampalam** (Minister of Posts and Telecommunication, and Industries, Industrial Research and Fisheries): The Drug Factory is being reorganized and certain drugs such as caffeine, strychnine and pyrethrum will be manufactured. We will also be manufacturing quinine in the Drug Factory.

**Dr. Perera:** What progress has already been made? This item was in the Estimates last year also, and I would like to know what this Drug Factory has been doing.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Dr. Ganguly has just come back.

**Dr. Perera:** You have not started any work, I suppose?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I cannot actually say how far he has progressed. He has just returned.

*Sub-head 20.—Purchasing and Equipping Stores for the various units of the Department, Rs. 30,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** Is this a re-vote? I am not quite certain. There was a provision of Rs. 30,000 last year, and the same appears this year too.

**The Chairman:** It is an annual vote.

**Dr. Perera:** No, Sir.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** There is an Amendment by the Hon. Minister of Finance to reduce this vote by Rs. 30,000—the whole item to be deleted.



**Dr. Perera:** Oh, yes.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I move, "That the Vote be reduced by Rs. 30,000 in respect of sub-head 20."

Question put, and agreed to.

*Sub-head 21.—Running Expenses of Industrial Laboratory and Workshop (token vote), Rs. 100.*

**Dr. Perera:** Why is this on a token vote, Sir?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It is meant to be run on a commercial basis. It is attached to our factories, and it is meant to be run on a commercial basis.

**Dr. Perera:** How does the Hon. Minister propose to work this on a commercial basis? These are industrial laboratories.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** You refer to the industrial laboratory and not to the workshop?

**Dr. Perera:** I think that this is an expenditure which the Department is going to incur in order to carry on certain research activities. But how is the Hon. Minister going to run it on a commercial basis unless he hopes to recoup this expenditure by distributing it among all the industries as special overhead costs?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** This is also a workshop and laboratory and we will proceed on that basis, and the moment there is a loss——

**Mr. W. Dahanayake (Galle):** What is being done in this workshop?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I said last night that it produces softened rubber, a kind of latex, which can be shipped easily. I do not know the scientific description of it. There is a method of preparing latex which makes it possible to ship it unlike in the form of crude rubber. This is the form in which rubber is used by the manufacturing countries, and we can probably make some money on it, by exporting it.

*Sub-head 23.—Guaranteed Prices of Agricultural Produce, Rs. 100.*

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I move, "That the Vote be reduced by Rs. 100 in respect of sub-head 23."

Question put, and agreed to.

**Dr. Perera:** Why are you reducing it?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** That is a mistake. That has crept in here by error.

**Mr. K. V. D. Sugathadasa (Weli-mada):** I want to ask a question on sub-head 23.

**The Chairman:** It has been deleted.

**Mr. Sugathadasa:** There are some nascent industries in the Island, like the chocolate industry, and they have to compete with foreign goods. I say that special protection should be afforded to new industries that are started. There is only one chocolate factory in the Island, and they are now managing without a subsidy.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It is not a question of a subsidy. If the hon. Member wants protection for local industries, and if he draws my attention to the industries for which he wants protection, I shall take steps in the matter.

**Mr. Sugathadasa:** If that cannot be done, I think a subsidy at least should be given.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** He wants tariff protection, I think. I shall look into the matter.

**The Chairman:** The Hon. Minister says that he will consider the whole matter.

Question, "That the sum of Rs. 497,934 for Head 132, Vote No. 2, be inserted in the Schedule," put, and agreed to.

Head 132, Vote 2, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.



**Head 133.—Department of Mineralogy**

*Vote No. 1.—Salaries and Expenses of the Department of Mineralogy,*  
Rs. 190,822.

*Sub-head 1.—Personal Emoluments,*  
Rs. 76,670.

**Mr. D. S. Goonesekera** (Udugama): I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to the fact that poor villagers are now charged for mining without permits and that they are not allowed to mine in Crown reserves. I request the Hon. Minister to give free permits for mining in these Crown reserves. I know that the Hon. Minister will laugh at the idea. What I say is that there is hidden wealth in this Island and the Government is adopting a dog in the manger policy—

**Mr. Dahanayake:** The Government is hiding it.

**Mr. Goonesekera:**—because they are not exploring the wealth of the soil nor are they allowing poor inhabitants to explore the soil and make something out of it. If these people are allowed these mining rights, it will also solve the unemployment problem to a great extent. Furthermore, whatever these poor peasants earn will be in the interests of the Island, and thereby the national wealth of the country will be increased. I cannot understand why there are these prohibitions and I would earnestly request the Hon. Minister to grant these poor peasants free permits and not keep on harassing them. As I said, if they do find gems it will be good for the Island.

10.15 A.M.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Gems?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Gem mining and plumbago mining.

**Mr. Goonesekera:** The gems will be inside Ceylon.

**An Hon. Member:** We are all inside Ceylon!

**Mr. Goonesekera:** The national wealth of the Island will increase if we allow these poor people to find gems.

**Mr. P. G. B. Keuneman** (Third Colombo Central): The hon. Member is dropping gems all over the place!

**Mr. Goonesekera:** I hope that my request will receive due consideration.

**Mr. E. W. Mathew** (Second Balan-goda): I would like to make a few observations on the Glass Factory.

**The Chairman:** That item has already been passed.

**Mr. Keuneman:** Mr. Chairman, I would like a statement from the Hon. Minister on the progress which has been made with the mineralogical survey of the resources of this Island. Some time ago, a very valuable survey was made by Mr. D. N. Wadia when he was Government Mineralogist and, as a result of the findings of that survey, a good deal of the industries which the Hon. Minister spoke about yesterday were started. Since then we have not heard much about this survey, and I would, therefore, like to know from the Hon. Minister if any valuable discoveries have been made as a result of the survey and what has been done.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** What is really needed is a complete and comprehensive geological survey of the whole Island. This matter has been put off from year to year and the fact that there has been no such survey retards the commencement and progress of even certain engineering projects. Certain projects that the Irrigation Department has in view cannot be carried out because there has been no geological survey of the Island. I think if the Cabinet is keen on industrialization and on introducing new projects, the first requisite is a complete and comprehensive geological survey.

**Mr. S. A. Silva** (Agalawatta): I want some information from the Hon. Minister. Some time ago, I think about 25 or 30 years ago, a plant was established at Induruwa for the extraction of monozite. This mineral fetched very high prices in those days. I would like to know whether this plant is being worked now and whether monozite is being extracted.



Further, I have been informed by letter that in the Eheliyagoda area in a place called Mitipola on a land which is about three or four acres in extent, a mineral has been found which is believed to be thorianite. Villagers in the area have collected quantities of this, and I understand that even the Government Mineralogical Department has some of it. It is a very valuable mineral which is required for making atomic bombs. I would like to know whether any steps are being taken about this.

**Dr. Perera:** Last year when these questions were asked the Hon. Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary said that surveys were being carried on and they were not able to give us any further information. I do hope the Hon. Acting Minister will be in a better position to give us some information, particularly with regard to these Assistant Geologists that were appointed. Two Assistant Geologists have been appointed and we would like to know whether they are in England or whether they are studying and what progress has been made.

We would also like to know what investigations have been made with regard to the iron ore deposits which Professor Wadia mentioned in his report.

Further, we wish to know the present position with regard to ilmenite. The question of exploiting the resources of ilmenite in this country has been raised before. The question caused some agitation in the previous State Council also. I would like to know whether the Hon. Minister has considered the question of exploiting the ilmenite deposits that we have in Ceylon.

**Mr. Keuneman:** Before the Hon. Minister replies I would like to mention one point which I overlooked. I would like to have a statement from the Hon. Minister whether he is in a position to give us information on the report we heard about uranium deposits in Ceylon. I understand that the Balangoda area particularly is full of atomic energy.

**The Chairman:** Be careful how you approach the area.

**Mr. Keuneman:** It may be radio-active. I hope that the Hon. Minister will be able to tell us whether he is making any attempts to probe into the potentialities of Ceylon in regard to uranium which the Hon. Minister would realize is a valuable deposit.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** In regard to the question of issuing licences for prospective plumbago mining—I am sorry the hon. Member who raised the point has left the House—I might say the Government is not anxious to encourage citizens to waste their energies in a wild-goose chase or to dissipate their capital on such things. If anyone satisfies the authorities that there is a reasonable prospect of extracting plumbago minerals on certain lands, no doubt the Government Agent will issue licences. This work is done by Government Agents.

**The Chairman:** They call for tenders.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Regarding the geological survey of the Island, I might say that it is half finished. We are having an all comprehensive survey. The Government Mineralogist is very active about it.

**Mr. Keuneman:** When do you expect to complete it?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It depends. He does work for other departments. He has to report on the various water schemes, help the town planner by reporting on the conditions of the soil, &c. He is continually disturbed by work from other departments. I cannot say exactly when he would finish it.

Regarding extraction of thorianite, it has been found in the Ratnapura District, and the reason why they have not been allowed to extract it is because it is radio-active and the Government only can extract it. We do not allow any private party to do this work.

**Dr. Perera:** Is the Government utilizing it?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** When it becomes possible, Government will utilize it. Ilmenite is found in large



[Hon. Mr. Sittampalam.] quantities at Pulimoddai in the Trincomalee District. There are deposits there with an ilmenite content of 70 per cent. It is economically well worth while exploring. There have been offers to us by companies asking for permission to explore it, but we do not want to issue permits. We want to start a Government factory there.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** What about the monazite at Induruwa?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I shall find that out.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** I am aware that there is a huge deposit of monazite off the Puttalam coast near about Kudiramalai rock. It is a very valuable mineral. At one time it fetched about Rs. 800 a ton.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We will be able to spot that out.

**Mr. Keuneman:** I would like to ask one more question arising out of the reply of the Hon. Minister. I see that there is provision for two Assistant Geologists. I hope that the Hon. Minister will now take serious steps to see that the principal officers of the Department of Mineralogy do not work for other Departments and that they get ahead with the survey. One of these Geologists can be lent to other Departments for other work. I think the Hon. Minister will appreciate that no proper industrialization of this country can be carried out until we know all the hidden resources of this country.

**Dr. Perera:** These two Assistant Geologists are still under training. I do not know what the position is. I want the Hon. Minister to let me know what they are doing.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** They are in training in England.

**Dr. Perera:** That is what I wanted to know.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** On their return they will be appointed.

**Dr. Perera:** What about my question regarding the iron ore deposits? Have you made any further investigation?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** You mean iron ore in the whole Island?

**Dr. Perera:** Yes.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I think surveys are being made. Most of these deposits have been found in rubber estates and tea estates.

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake (Prime Minister):** Surveys have been made.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I know that some surveys have been made in the Ratnapura District. We cannot still say whether it will be economical to pursue this matter.

**Dr. Perera:** One more question, and that is about the Inspector of Mines. That work has not been satisfactorily carried out, and I am not at all satisfied about the inspections that are being made, particularly the inspections of plumbago mines. Although the bigger mines are worked fairly satisfactorily with regard to safety measures, and so on, some of the smaller mines are not really protected enough, and people are running grave risks in working them. I think the Inspector should be given special instructions so that the inspections of these mines are done properly.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** He ensures that the safety regulations are not contravened.

**Dr. Perera:** Conditions are very unsatisfactory at the moment.

Question, "That the sum of Rs. 190,822 for Head 133, Vote No. 1, be inserted in the Schedule" put and agreed to.

Head 133, Vote 1, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

### Head 134.—Salt Department

*Vote No. 1.—Salaries and Expenses of the Salt Department, including cost of training officers abroad and Expenses of Experiment, Research and Propaganda, Rs. 555,646.*

*Sub-head 1.—Personal Emoluments, Rs. 345,701.*

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene (Kalutara):** I would like to make a few observations on the working of the Salt Department.



Today in this Island we do not have a real salt industry. It is really a misnomer to call it an industry at all. What we are having is the mere manufacture of salt by methods which are extremely primitive, and the output too is very small. Furthermore, the only product that we derive is the crude common salt.

I think, Sir, it is time that we paid some serious attention to this matter and started a fully developed salt industry in this country.

**The Chairman:** You are now speaking on Vote 2 which is regarding the manufacture of salt. We are only on Vote 1, Personal Emoluments, Stationery, and so on.

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene:** I am just making a few general observations on the salt industry of this country, Sir, but if you think that this is not the time to do so, I shall stop speaking.

**The Chairman:** You can do so when we come to Vote 2.

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I understand that the Chemist is not in Ceylon. Is that correct?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The post has not been filled yet.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Are the two Assistant Chemists here or have those two posts also to be filled?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The two Assistant Chemists are here.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I think the post of Chemist was advertised, and you have not been able to find a person.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Yes, that is right.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I think this was here last year also and it is not a new item. I refer to the post of Chemist.

**The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** He met with an accident, did he not?

10.30 A.M.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We hope to fill it soon.

**Dr. Perera:** They have not yet filled this post, Sir, and it will be seen that the salary provided for a first-class Chemist is certainly not adequate for the purpose. You cannot attract a good scientist on Rs. 400 a month. The Hon. Minister will have to reconsider that position.

*Sub-head 5.—Training of officers abroad and tours, Rs. 20,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** I want a little information on this sub-head. There is an increase of Rs. 15,000 over last year's vote, and I would like to have some information in regard to the details. Have the people been chosen and sent across already?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We propose to send the Assistant Chemist to India to study all aspects of salt manufacture. The Salt Commissioner himself will be touring India with a view to studying all methods used in the manufacture of by-products, etc. We intend manufacturing fertilizers also.

**Mr. L. Rajapaksa (Hambantota):** I wish to know from the Hon. Minister whether he is aware that one of the salt stores in Hambantota, the one located in Kirinda, has been closed down. I think the Hon. Minister—

**The Chairman:** That comes under Vote 2.

I shall now put Vote 1 to the House.

**Mr. Keuneman:** Just one point before that, Sir. Will the Hon. Minister please tell us what progress has been made with regard to the question of manufacturing caustic soda?

**The Chairman:** That also comes under Vote 2.

Question, "That the sum of Rs. 555,646 for Head 134, Vote No. 1, be inserted in the Schedule" put, and agreed to.

Head 134, Vote 1, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.



*Vote No. 2.—Purchase, manufacture (including manufacture of by-products), collection, transport, &c., Rs. 3,018,622.*

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene:**

As I was saying, Sir, Ceylon offers many advantages for the full-scale development of a salt industry. As it lies within the Tropics, we do not have to spend much money on the initial concentration processes which are very expensive, and we would be in a position to compete with the more industrialized countries of the world.

Apart from that, Sir, I think that the manufacture of by-products such as gypsum which will be needed for our cement factory when it is established, and potash, a fertilizer on which this country annually spends large sums of money, would be very profitable to the Government. However, I find that only the very paltry sum of Rs. 75,000 has been voted this year for the manufacture of by-products.

**The Chairman:** I will allow the hon. Member to discuss this matter, but, as a matter of fact, there are no Amendments under sub-head 4.

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene:**

There are ready-made markets for salt in the neighbouring countries.

**The Chairman:** If the hon. Member wants, he can ask any questions, but I will not allow him to make a speech.

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene:**

I hope that early action will be taken for the manufacture of salt by using up-to-date modern methods.

**Dr. Perera:** We might have discussed by-products, and so on, under Vote 1.

**The Chairman:** The Hon. Ministers tell me that when matters are discussed which are not formally brought up as Amendments, they are not prepared to give replies.

**Dr. Perera:** Normally we would have raised the question of policy in regard to by-products under Vote 1—

**The Chairman:** If you will ask any questions, you can do so, but if you want to make speeches, and so on, I cannot allow that.

**Mr. V. Kumaraswamy (Chavakacheri):** I have three questions to ask: (1) Will the Hon. Minister implement all the recommendations made by the Salt Commissioner in his recent Report? I have read through the Report and find that it is a masterly document. (2) Will the Hon. Minister take early steps to electrify the Elephant Pass Saltern? (3) Will the Hon. Minister take steps to introduce welfare societies among the saltern workers? I understand from the Permanent Secretary that they had a scheme for supplying radio sets, and so on. Will the Hon. Minister take early steps to implement these proposals?

**Mr. L. Rajapaksa:** I wish to ask the Hon. Minister whether he is aware of the fact that the salt store in my constituency in Kirinda has been closed down? May I know the reason why this store has been closed down? I should like to bring to the notice of the Hon. Minister that all the people in this village depend on this salt store, and after it was closed down they have become destitute.

**Mr. J. C. T. Kotalawela (Second Badulla):** I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether the annual production of salt in Ceylon is sufficient for all our needs.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Most of the employees in the salterns are given only casual work. I want to know why the Minister does not prepare plans to give these men permanent work throughout the year.

Secondly, Sir, I want to know what provision the Minister has made for the setting up of plants to manufacture the by-products of salt. I see that there is no provision whatever in the Estimates for setting up any such plant, although the Hon. Minister stated in his speech that steps were being taken—

**The Chairman:** That question was asked and answered.

**Mr. Keuneman:** I wish to raise a query on the manufacture of caustic soda. I think that when we were discussing the question of the soap industry, it was very correctly pointed out that the entire soap industry is



languishing because of the shortage of caustic soda. But, in the meantime, we regret very much to see that the Government seems reluctant to get ahead with this question of the manufacture of caustic soda.

I was going through the Report of the Salt Commissioner and an argument seems to be going on between an expert, one Dr. Underwood, who was brought into this matter, and the Salt Commissioner himself. Dr. Underwood seems to think it is uneconomic to manufacture caustic soda, while, I notice, the Salt Commissioner does not share this point of view and he quotes technical journals to confirm his conclusions.

I want to ask whether the Hon. Minister has come to a definite decision to start the manufacture of caustic soda as a by-product of salt; and, if so, whether he can tell us when it will be that those industries like the soap industry, which are at present gravely in need of caustic soda, will be able to get sufficient supplies.

**Mr. P. L. Bauddhasara** (Polonnaruwa): Sub-head 2 is for the "purchase of salt". May I know from the Hon. Minister whether he is hoping to buy salt from outside Ceylon?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I will answer the last question first. In February this year, when there was a serious shortage of salt, we did think that we might have to import salt from abroad; but we held on till the last moment when we were lucky enough to secure a big crop of salt from Hambantota, and the need for buying from outside did not arise. This vote is for the internal purchase of salt.

The Report submitted by the Salt Commissioner, which was published as a Sessional Paper, has suggested various schemes for the manufacture of by-products from salt; and when those things are produced, the quantity of salt available to us will be so large that it will be far in excess of Ceylon's requirements, and we shall probably be able to export a large quantity. Until we have made an examination of all the economic aspects involved, it is not possible for me to say that we have

accepted any part or all of the recommendations contained in the Report. For instance, one is a Rs. 2-million scheme; another is a Rs. 40-million scheme. They are very, very ambitious schemes.

I have read the Report but have not had time to study the various proposals, and when I have done so, I will put up my recommendations to my colleagues in the Cabinet.

As regards by-products, there is provision, in the schemes that have been proposed, for the manufacture of caustic soda, gypsum, and so on.

**Mr. Keuneman:** Not in the Estimates.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** There is nothing in the Estimates.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** There is a provision of Rs. 10,000 for the manufacture of by-products. That is enough to carry on for the present, but when we are in a position to implement the big schemes we will come to you. Provision for them is made under Loan Funds.

As to the electrification of the salterns, Palavi has already been electrified, and we will modernize the salterns as we go on. I cannot say exactly when certain things will be done, but we shall proceed from one to the other.

In regard to the salt store at Kirinda, it was considered uneconomic to continue the store and it was closed down; but if, in consequence, any distress has been caused to the people in Kirinda, we will see what relief can be given.

**Dr. Perera:** Could the Minister answer this question? At the moment you are manufacturing certain by-products; can you inform us what the present financial position is?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We are producing on a very small scale. About 200 tons of gypsum was produced last year whereas 5,000 tons will be needed for the cement factory next year. In respect of French chalk, we are able to meet all the requirements of the Island.



**Dr. Perera:** You are making some table salt?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Yes, when we can do it.

**Dr. Perera:** Have you made any profits?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Yes; all these things are done on a profit basis. There is no loss.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** May I point out to the Hon. Minister the passage in the speech of the Hon. Minister of Finance? This is what he says:—

“It is proposed to begin a very vigorous campaign to manufacture the by-products of salt, and provision has been made for the establishment of industrial plants for this purpose.” [OFFICIAL REPORT, July 20, 1948, Vol. 3, C. 1042.]

But all that we can discover in the Estimates is a meagre Rs. 50,000 for a caustic soda factory. I would like to know what fraction of the factory can come up on a meagre Rs. 50,000.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The matter is under investigation.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I want an assurance from the Hon. Minister that the matter will be looked into at an early date.

**The Hon. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene (Minister of Finance):** If the hon. Member will turn to page 566 of the Estimates, he will find that the amount chargeable under the Loan Fund Expenditure for the gypsum factory is Rs. 220,000, and for the establishment of a caustic soda factory, Rs. 2,600,000.

In the course of this year we are unable to spend more than Rs. 50,000 on the caustic soda factory, and Rs. 20,000 on the gypsum factory; but if we are in a position to proceed further we will come to this House for supplementary provision. In all, we can spend up to Rs. 3,000,000. We do not want to increase the Budget with allocations which it will not be possible to spend during the year.

**Dr. Perera:** I do not think that these huge sums of money should be expended without a full investigation of all aspects of the problem. This is not a

matter which should be just lightly undertaken on the report of an amateur. We want a real Industrial Chemist who will go into the question and work out the economics of the whole scheme before we embark on it.

10.45 A.M.

**Mr. Sinnalebbe:** I should like to bring to the notice of the Hon. Minister that salt is sold at a very much higher price now. Before the war, salt was sold to the villagers at the rate of 4 cents per lb. During the emergency, too, it was sold at 4 cents. But since then the price has been increased to 6 cents, and now the price is 8 cents per lb. everywhere in the districts. I would request the Hon. Minister to see that the price is reduced to 4 cents per lb.

*Sub-head 6.—Purchase of coir and gunny bags, Rs. 400,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** With regard to the question of coir and gunny bags, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary undertook last year to explore the possibilities of buying locally produced coir bags. I would like to know what the position is, and what success the Hon. Minister has had.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I issued definite orders that coir bags should be used in preference to gunny bags. But there was plenty of difficulty. When coir bags were used, a good quantity of the salt dropped out because the meshes were too large. Apart from that, as the men had to carry these bags on their naked shoulders, abrasions were caused. Consequently the labourers protested, and the output, too, was very much less. In fact, the Department reported that it would be better to throw away the coir bags rather than compel the labourers to use them.

The Department is now experimenting on another type of coir bag to find out whether that would be suitable. I do not want the Department to use imported gunny bags. I would rather prefer them to use the coir bags produced locally.

**Dr. Perera:** Is there any loss on the coir bags. Does the Department recover the full amount?



**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Yes. The purchasers have to pay the value.

**Dr. Perera:** Sometimes they do not pay the value. There have been losses incurred in the past.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The cost of output and labour is very much less. It costs less to the Government.

*Sub-head 7.—Weighing out of salt to purchasers, Rs. 35,000.*

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** This amount provides for the weighing out of local salt as well as the weighing and loading of imported salt from wharf to wagons. May I know what is the necessity for importing salt?

**The Chairman:** Whenever it becomes necessary. That question has already been answered. If the crop fails here, the Government will have to import salt.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** The crop may not fail all throughout Ceylon. If the crop in the Jaffna area fails, the Hambantota areas could supply.

**The Chairman:** The Hon. Minister ought to know better.

**Mr. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolla** (Dandagamuwa): Last year, the expenditure under this sub-head was recoverable from purchasers of salt. I find that it is not to be so recovered this year.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I suppose there is an omission in this year's Estimates of a note to that effect. The expenditure is recoverable from purchasers. What is recovered from the purchasers is credited to Revenue.

*Sub-head 8.—Transport of salt, Rs. 1,000,000.*

**Mr. Dahanayake:** This is a very big vote—Rs. 1,000,000—for the transport of salt. I understand that a great part of this money goes into the pockets of private contractors.

**The Chairman:** That is all recovered.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Private contractors are paid by Government for the transport of salt to the various stores. Surely this transport can be done by Government?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It is done by Government. Wherever there is a rail service, it is done by rail service and by railway feeder service. It is not correct to say that it is done by private contractors. That subject comes under the Railway itself; I do not know what plan they have.

**Mr. Kumaraswamy:** The Hon. Minister has failed to meet my point. What about the establishment of welfare centres at salterns? I would like to know whether such a scheme would be favourably considered.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Certainly, we are very anxious to have welfare centres all over the Island where there are salterns.

**Mr. Keuneman:** If the transport is done by the Department itself, what is the reason for such a big vote.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** It is not done by the Department, if the hon. Member would look at page 374 of the Estimates.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The transport is from places where salt is manufactured to places all over the Island where salt is sold. The expenditure is recovered from the purchasers.

**Mr. Keuneman:** On the one hand we are told that the salt crop failed; on the other hand the vote for transport is going up.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The cost of transport has gone up. There is an increase in the railway fares as well as in the cost of lorry transport.

The salt crop did not fail. If it does fail, we will have to import from India. We were just getting on to the border line when we might have had to begin importing salt from elsewhere. Fortunately we had a large supply, and that came to our rescue.



**Mr. S. A. Silva:** Is it not the fact that the major portion of the transport is done by private contractors and not by the Government?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The major portion of the transport is done by the railway and the railway feeder service.

Question, "That the sum of Rs. 3,018,622 for Head 134, Vote No. 1, be inserted in the Schedule," put, and agreed to.

Head 134, Vote 1, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

### Head 135.—Department of Fisheries

*Vote No. 1.—Salaries and Expenses of the Department of Fisheries including training, research and experiment, &c., Rs. 707,867.*

*Sub-head 1.—Personal Emoluments, Rs. 171,134.*

**Mr. C. E. Attygalle** (Ratnapura): May I make a few comments, Mr. Chairman, with regard to this sub-head?

The fishing industry is one into which in my opinion, private capital and private business experience should be invited, despite the fact that the hon. Third Member for Colombo Central opposed me when I made a similar suggestion on the last occasion. Once again I stress the fact that this is an industry which can be developed to the great advantage of this country by inviting private business methods into it. This Department need not really be administered by a Civil Servant: these gentlemen may be good at selling carved toy elephants, but not in regard to a great industry like this.

May I ask the Hon. Minister if he is prepared to establish central fishing and fish products corporations in which the Government could have the largest number of shares, and to which private capital and private business men could be invited?

**Mr. Keuneman:** There are one or two remarks which I should like to make about this Department. There has been a good deal of controversy going on between certain persons engaged in the fishing industry and some of the representatives of the Department. I think,

as far as the general public are concerned, the principal matter which agitates their attention is the thorough neglect of the potentialities of the fishing industry in this country, and the provision of fresh fish to the people. That is a big problem, and we have not been able to get any satisfactory explanation from the Hon. Minister or his predecessor that this matter is being tackled in a way which will benefit the people. It is a standing disgrace that in a small Island like ours, surrounded by the sea, we are unable even now to provide fresh fish at cheap rates to the vast majority of the people. It is a standing disgrace that we have to import such a large quantity of dried fish, that the people in the villages in the interior do not very often see fresh fish, and that the fishing industry, which can be such a valuable asset to the people of this country, is still one of the most primitive and backward industries in this country.

While the Hon. Minister talks of a six-year plan and the rehabilitation and development of industries, we would like to know what exactly his plan is for the fishing industry. What exactly is the future he envisages for the development of the fishing industry, so that the people can be provided with both fresh and dried fish at cheap rates?

That is the main question I wish to ask. After the Hon. Minister's reply, I will deal with the other questions.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** With regard to the fishing industry, I would like to state that, while this Government for the last 16 years has spent enormous sums of money on the development of agriculture, this important industry—which, if properly developed would have brought a large income to this country—has been utterly neglected.

During the war, even those fishermen who were catching fish by their own primitive methods were deprived of getting the due share of income which they would have normally made as a result of the Government controlling the prices. But the Government have not given any assistance to this industry. Money had been advanced to fishing societies and individual fishermen, but I am aware that, although over 95% of those individuals who had taken small loans up to a maximum of Rs. 500 had



paid back the loans, the large societies managed by the capitalists of the various towns have not paid back the money they had borrowed.

**The Chairman:** That matter was discussed fully in this House once before.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** But today, as a result of the money not being recovered by Government, the poor fishermen are not given loans.

**The Chairman:** That matter has been discussed before. The question was asked, and the reply given.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** The point I wish to stress is that these poor fishermen should be given loans again.

**The Chairman:** Besides, this is not germane to this vote. It comes under Vote 2.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** With regard to the housing of fishermen along the coast—

**The Chairman:** We are now on “Personal Emoluments.”

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** I thought we are discussing the “Minister.”

**The Chairman:** There is no question even of the “Minister” here.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** While we are discussing “Personal Emoluments,” can I not suggest what should be done?

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member can suggest anything he likes in regard to “Personal Emoluments.”

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** It is absolutely necessary that these fishermen who go out deep-sea fishing in their primitive boats should be given some help in the form of fast running, towing boats, because it takes more time for these fishermen to get to their fishing areas than they actually devote to fishing and they take another half-day to come back. If motor boats are provided at important fishing centres for these boats to be towed up to the fishing grounds, it would enable them to devote more time to the catching of fish and to bring ashore a large quantity of fish practically daily.

The other point I wish to make is that cold storage facilities should be provided for this industry.

**The Chairman:** That comes under Vote 2.

**Mr. N. H. Keerthiratne (Kegalla):** I find that in this Department the officers concerned are not pulling their weight. In the purchase of vessels they have made blunders. One of the trawlers they have purchased is lying idle without doing any fishing. It is true that the men there are being paid without doing any work. They had explored the whole world to get trawlers and they have got a trawler from Australia. That is now limping and is in some port or other.

**The Chairman:** That matter also comes under Vote 2.

**Mr. Keerthiratne:** This unsatisfactory state of affairs is due to the inefficient work of the Director. That is why I am blaming the Department. The officers there are not playing their part. In connexion with most of the activities carried out by this Department, the officers do not know what they are about. And now they are asking for additional staff—I see that provision is made for an Assistant Director—just to mark time and do no work.

11.0 A.M.

If these officers are not doing their work properly, I hope the Minister will appoint men who are able to do the work. When they propose to purchase fishing vessels, and so on, they must give the contract to someone who knows the job, someone who would give you a fishing vessel, or a trawler, that is in good order. The Department should not buy, in a far off country, a vessel which the Department is unable to bring here. When the Minister of Transport and Works buys aeroplanes, he sees to it that they are flown here by the manufacturers. But in the case of the trawler, this Department has bought it in a distant country and has undertaken the task of bringing it here.

**The Chairman:** That comes under Vote No. 2.



**Mr. Keerthiratne:** I am referring to the bad work of the Director of Fisheries.

**Mr. Iriyagolla:** What practical experience has the Director in fishing?

**Mr. Dahanayake:** We are not satisfied with the work of this Department. During the past few years the main concern of the Department has been to market fish to the well-to-do classes in Colombo and other towns. The Department has neglected all its legitimate work and adopted a step-motherly attitude towards the fishing industry and the fishing folk of this country—

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** That has been repeated twenty times.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** The Department has done nothing whatever to improve the lot of the fishermen. For the last six or seven years we have passed money votes which the Director has not utilized for the purposes for which they were voted.

The fishing industry in the country today is exactly where it was a hundred years ago.

That is a damning indictment of the Government of the country—

**The Chairman:** What indictment? Standing indictment?

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I said a “damning indictment.”

**The Chairman:** Please withdraw that word.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I withdraw it.

It is an indictment of the Government of which the Government should take due notice. I have heard the fishing folk say that the Government and this Department are not interested in them. That is the charge that is being made.

When we come to the various sub-heads I shall point out that we have voted funds year after year which were never utilized. You have spoken of research work when no research work whatever has been done. You have spoken of modernization, whereas our

poor fishermen have not yet been shown a small modern craft which they could conveniently use.

I feel that the Government has a lot to answer for on this account. Let the Government remember that the fishing industry is second in importance only to agriculture, from every point of view, and that the Government must spend more on this Department and get better results. If there is a cut proposed in the salary of the Director, I heartily approve of it.

**The Chairman:** There is.

**Dr. Perera:** Will the Minister give us some details about the additional officers he proposes to appoint in this Department? There is provision for a large number of new officers,—one Assistant Director, one Assistant Naturalist, an Office Assistant, one Commercial Assistant, and so on. Could the Minister give us details regarding these appointments when he answers the other questions that have been asked.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** With regard to the remarks about the Director of Fisheries, and the statement that the Department of Fisheries has not been doing good work during the last few years, that it has been contenting itself with the marketing of fish, that several votes have lapsed as a result of its inactivity, hon. Members must make allowance for war conditions.

The Director of Fisheries was called upon by the Civil Defence Commissioner to help him in the distribution of fish, and in solving the difficult position that had arisen in the matter of fish supplies in Colombo and other parts of the Island.

The Director had naturally to give up his normal work just as my hon. Friend the Member for Vaddukkoddai when he was a Government servant gave up his normal duties as Auditor-General and attended to some other work in the Pettah. The Director of Fisheries had to give up his normal work and take up the marketing of fish, work for which he had not been trained.

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** I rise to a point of Order: I want a Ruling from you, Sir. An inquiry is



being held by a Committee appointed to go into the conduct of the particular Head of this Department. Is not this matter therefore *sub judice*? Is it proper for us to discuss the conduct of this Head of Department when there is already an inquiry being held—

**The Chairman:** So far as we are concerned, we do not know of any such inquiry.

**Dr. Perera:** We are only concerned with the policy of the Director, as Head of this Department.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** We are not concerned with the man.

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** I am trying to find out what is the right procedure.

**The Chairman:** We are raising here nothing regarding his conduct.

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** Certain things were said about the officer himself, and that is why I raised the point of Order.

**The Chairman:** The questions referred only to his work as Director—

**Mr. Keuneman:** And his policy.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The Department was diverted—[*Interruption.*]—I am dealing with the Department as a whole, rather than with the Director. If anything I said gave the impression that I was referring to the present Director—

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** I was not thinking of that.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Some hon. Members wanted to know what work this Department has done. Owing to war conditions the work of the Department had to be diverted to such channels as the marketing of fish. Marketing is a most important part of the work undertaken for the protection of the fishermen from rings of traders who were in the habit of going to the beach, and, as the catch came in, of joining together and bidding the lowest possible price for the catch.

The poor fishermen, coming ashore tired and hungry, had no choice but to sell the fish to these middlemen. The alternative was to allow all the fish to go bad.

These rings were operating for years together. However defective the marketing scheme of the Director may have been, the purchase of the fish by the Government at the beach had the effect of breaking the ring. If the majority of the fishermen did not sell to the Director, they had at any rate the advantage of others coming on to the beach and buying their fish in competition with the Government. The Government purchased in the years 1943-1946, fish worth Rs. 6,000,000, and this was of material help to the fishing industry.

I was not a member of the Government in those days, but I do say that it is rather unfair to charge the Government with neglecting the fishing industry. A reference to the Estimates will show that whereas in former years the Government spent on the Department of Fisheries only about Rs. 20,000 or Rs. 30,000, this year we have provided Rs. 704,271—

**Mr. Dahanayake:** That is not enough.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It is quite possible that that is not enough, but the vote is twenty times what it used to be in previous years.

A comparison has been made of the expenditure by Government on agriculture and on fisheries. We give A1 priority to Agriculture, and then next to this industry. By doing that we were trying to make Ceylon self-sufficient in rice. Even the fishermen eat rice. Expenditure on agriculture benefits the country as a whole. It is of vital importance to the well-being of all of us. It is not a question of the Government giving preference to one class of person as against another class.

A large part of the Government expenditure on this Department is shown under "Loan Fund Expenditure" in the Estimates. There is provision in Rs. 1,500,000 for the purchase and erection of ice and refrigeration plants for the development of the fishing industry; in Rs. 500,000 for the purchase of trawlers, seiners, research vessels, launches for preventive and other



[Hon. Mr. Sittampalam.]  
work, other fishing vessels and boats connected with fishing works; in Rs. 280,000, for purchase of a Purse Seiner and cost of transfer from Australia to Ceylon.

The hon. Member for Kegalla said that the trawler we had purchased was idling in the Colombo harbour. This trawler does not belong to us. The terms sought to be imposed on us in connexion with that trawler did not prove acceptable to us. They wanted to use that trawler to go out fishing at Government expense: all the losses were to be borne by Government, while all the profits were to go to them! That is a different story. The trawler to which the hon. Member referred does not belong to the Government.

**Mr. Keerthiratne:** I referred to the trawler bought in Australia, which is lying idle in a port somewhere between Ceylon and Australia. We are paying the wages of the crew, and also for the damage caused to another vessel on the way. I understand that the vessel we bought in Australia cannot reach Ceylon owing to engine trouble.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The trawler we bought met with an accident on the way. The fault was not ours. The delay in bringing the boat out to Ceylon is due to engine failure. That was unavoidable.

**Mr. Keuneman:** The Minister has not dealt with my question about the dry fish industry. The Government is allowing the "*karavadu Mudalalis*" to run the dry fish industry. Why cannot the Government—

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We have a very comprehensive housing scheme for fishermen. The Minister of Health and Local Government is in charge of that. Many of the houses are needed in urban areas. We are now trying to establish co-operative societies all over the fishing centres. We are going to encourage the formation of co-operative societies, both to buy fish and to cure it, and for all the other operations.

**Mr. Keuneman:** How does the housing scheme solve the dry fish question?

**The Chairman:** The question about housing was asked by some other Member.

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena (Kotte):** The policy of the Government in the past was to suppress this particular industry—all along. It can be said that the Government, at that stage, were deliberately suppressing this industry

**The Chairman:** That was referred to by another hon. Member.

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:** May I not be permitted—

**The Chairman:** Repetitions should be avoided.

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:** I say that this industry has not been allowed to develop on the right lines. The problems connected with the various branches of this industry should have been tackled. As the hon. Third Member for Colombo Central pointed out, the dry fish industry has been neglected—

**The Chairman:** I cannot allow a discussion on the dry fish industry. There is no Amendment to cover that. I shall allow discussion only on items covered by Amendments to sub-heads. Hon. Members may refer to these matters in passing, but—

**Mr. Keuneman:** This is a question of policy, under the item "Director."

**The Chairman:** The policy should have been discussed under the vote for the Minister.

**Mr. Keuneman:** Am I to understand from the Minister's reply that his Department has no proposals to make about the dry fish industry?

**The Chairman:** There is nothing in the Estimates.

**Mr. Keuneman:** That is the whole point.

**Mr. J. J. Fernando (Chilaw):** May I know where the Fisheries Training School is?



**The Chairman:** We have not come to that yet. The hon. Member might wait till we come to that sub-head. We are still on Personal Emoluments.

**Mr. Iriyagolla:** I want to know whether the Director, or the Assistant Director, has any experience in fishing. The officer in charge of the Irrigation Department is an engineer, and the officer controlling the Medical Department is a doctor—

**Mr. Keerthiratne:** We want details of his experience in this work, and also about his qualifications. As far as I am aware, I do not think the Director and the Assistant Director have any great experience of fishing, but they know the science of the fishing industry.

11.15 A.M.

**Major Montague Jayewickreme** (Weligama): May I ask the Hon. Minister to get another Director who has some experience? It is true that the present Director is a man who is qualified in certain respects, but apart from his academic qualifications, what experience has he to be Director of Fisheries? The question of the fishing industry is engaging the attention of the entire country.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We are taking every step to put the industry on a sound footing and we intend forming co-operative societies and supplying them with all their requirements. We are about to introduce a much better marketing scheme than that which existed before. We are considering it with a view to preventing the exploitation of the consumer by the profiteer. We are exploring ways and means of increasing the supply of fish in this country. We also intend producing various kinds of fertilizers from non-edible fish and spoilt fish. So, it will be seen, that we are not idling.

As for the qualifications of the Director of Fisheries, I do not know exactly what qualifications are necessary for the holder of the post of Director of Fisheries. If it is thought that he must be a person accustomed to fishing in the deep sea, then we shall find it difficult to get such a man.

**Mr. Iriyagolla:** You can send a man to a country like Japan and have him trained there. That kind of man will help us.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 10,640 in respect of sub-head 1, New Item 'Inspectors' (Additional Staff (Temporary))".

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 7,428 in respect of sub-head 1, item 'Clerks' (Additional Staff (Temporary))".

Question put, and agreed to.

**Dr. Perera:** I have already asked the Hon. Minister some questions—

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member asked why there are these new posts like Assistant Director, and so on.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I think my Permanent Secretary might have sent to the hon. Member the reorganization scheme which he drafted. We intend to have a complete reorganization of the Fisheries Department which will provide for a comprehensive marketing scheme; co-operative schemes to protect the fishermen, and so on. We also intend to get the Department to do intensive research, which was completely neglected during the last 5 or 6 years.

The Engineer was for the purpose of helping us in connection with a housing scheme, but since that part of the housing scheme has now been put in charge of the Minister of Local Government, this Engineer will be used on the staff.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** With regard to the Hon. Minister's statement that co-operative societies are to be established at different fishing centres, I would like to state that according to the present co-operative system the members of a society have to subscribe a certain amount, and the Government advances a certain amount, in order to help them to form a society. Now, that type of society will not be of any use to the actual working fisherman. If any help extended to the fishermen, they



[Mr. S. A. Silva.]  
must be given the full value of a net or a boat, to be paid back in small instalments.

**The Chairman:** That comes under Vote 2. The Minister only referred to it in passing. The hon. Member cannot therefore take it up. He only said that co-operative depots may be established. The hon. Member cannot discuss that matter now. He can bring it up when we come to the separate vote.

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene:** I wish to speak a few words on the welfare of fishermen.

**The Chairman:** We have not yet come to that sub-head.

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera** (Dehiowita): May I have some information regarding fresh water fish?

**The Chairman:** That comes under a different sub-head.

**Dr. Perera:** May I get some information about these new Inspectors to be appointed? There is already provision for some 12 Fisheries Inspectors.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The number of Inspectors is the same as for last year. It has been deleted by a mistake, and I am restoring it.

**Dr. Perera:** What I want to know is whether it is an addition to the existing number of Fisheries Inspectors or is it an entirely new item?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We are having the same number of Inspectors. You will find that if you total it up, although this is a new item.

**The Chairman:** They are going to be temporary additional staff.

**Mr. J. J. Fernando:** May I ask a question regarding the Training School for Fishermen?

**The Chairman:** That comes under a different sub-head. We are still on sub-head 1.

**Mr. S. A. Pakeman** (Appointed Member): I would like to call the attention of the Hon. Minister to a remark made by the hon. Appointed Member (Major Oldfield) in the course of the Second Reading Debate on the Appropriation Bill, regarding a recent fishery survey made by a Swedish survey vessel charting our seas. I should like to know whether any information has been obtained from the Swedish Government about this survey which might be of value to the fishing industry.

*Sub-head 4.—Research and Inshore fishery investigations, Rs. 7,000.*

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Year after year we have passed votes for research and Inshore fishery investigations, but nothing whatever has been done. The Hon. Minister must tell us what research work and what fishery investigations he can do with the paltry sum of Rs. 7,000. If proper research work is to be done, it will be necessary even to study the movements of fish. It will be necessary to find out in what portions of the ocean one could get a big catch. This information is not available. There is nothing available in the Department.

I have been fighting for some research stations down South, but nothing has been done. There seems to be some research work done here—somewhere near Galle Face. They are probably fishing for men at Galle Face. The Department is fishing for men. I cannot understand what research work has been done. If a study of the coastal belt is made, you will be able to carry out an investigation of deep sea fishing, inshore fishing, and even fishing in ponds inshore. There are for instance, the Koggala and thé Dodanduwa lakes on either side of Galle. The deep sea fishers of Gandara are interested in the matter, but nothing whatever has been done in regard to it, as far as we can see. I want the Hon. Minister to give us an assurance that a research station will be set up immediately somewhere near Galle, perhaps at "Buona Vista" in the constituency of my good Friend the Member for Weligama.

This paltry sum of money is an attempt to hoodwink all the people of this country. What is the research work you can do with this sum?



**Mr. S. A. Silva:** As regards inshore fishery investigations, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether there is any officer in his Department qualified to do that work.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** As a matter of fact, there is an entire department set up for this work with an Assistant Director, a Naturalist and others who will carry out investigations and research. This particular item has been misunderstood. It is in connection with the maintenance of pearl banks, investigation about inshore oysters, and so on.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** What is being done at Galle Face?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** There is a whole department there. Their salaries and a laboratory have been provided for. I admit they have not been doing much up to now; but now that a laboratory has been provided for, we are hoping to do some research work in the coming year.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** What has been done in regard to Research and Inshore fishery investigation? That is very important work. A search for new fishing grounds is a very important thing. It will help the fishermen. I would ask the Hon. Minister whether he has any qualified officer to do this work, and if not, why he has not got one, even from Japan.

*Sub-head 6.—Establishment of rearing ponds for fresh water fish and fresh water fishery development,  
Rs. 15,000.*

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera:** If we shift from the deep sea to our inland waters, we will find the same chaos continuing year after year. We have been passing money for research about fresh water fish. The position I take is this, that if real work is to be done, this amount is insufficient; and as we know how things are done today this sum is an absolute waste. In fact, regarding fresh water fish, it has been a case of little fry wandering aimlessly in a wilderness of ignorance.

Take the Kelani river for instance. If it is carefully supervised from a place like Ginigathena to Kaduwela, after ten

years that area will yield a good harvest. For instance, there is the *marcia*, a very edible and a very fast growing fish, and the *leyla* . . . .

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Marcia is the name of a girl.

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera:** It is a fast-growing, edible fish.

But what is happening today? On the banks of the river there is indiscriminate dynamiting of fish with the knowledge and connivance of the headmen of the different areas.

11.30 A.M.

Last year, you will remember, we voted a sum of Rs. 10,000 for some fishing club in Nuwara Eliya. We protested against that policy of giving Rs. 10,000 to a private club and making Government servants club officials [*Interruption.*] It is the Nuwara Eliya Salmon Club, or Fishing Club, or something like that.

**The Hon. Mr. Jayewardene:** That is not correct, Sir.

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera:** I would like the Hon. Minister to look into these matters. I understand that some kind of fish was being carefully nursed in Peradeniya and that during the floods they got away and are now flourishing in some of the dry zone tanks—the *gourami* fish. I want some information as to what we propose to do in the future in regard to fish culture. How are we going to tackle this important problem with this paltry sum?

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** With regard to fresh water fish culture, the *gourami* was imported to this Island about seven or eight years back, or even earlier.

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** About twenty-five years ago.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** Yes. I was once told by the Hon. Prime Minister's nephew that in his estate ponds there are *gourami* weighing forty to fifty pounds. What has the Government done to develop the fresh water fish tanks in this Island?



**Mr. Bauddhadasara:** In my electorate in the Tamankaduwa area there are a number of fresh water tanks. There was an attempt made by the Department to start a fish breeding centre, and a tank was built at Polonnaruwa, but this tank is about twenty-five miles away from the fresh water lake and in front of a cemetery. Nothing has been done there, and this tank is, so to speak, a tombstone to the industry.

In the Tamankaduwa area the *gourami* fish is found in abundance. Even in the Colombo markets you find a large amount of *Lula* fish which comes from other parts of the country, but the Government has made no effort to develop this industry. I would appeal to the Government to establish a small ice plant somewhere in Mutugala or a place like that to help these people who are engaged in this industry at present.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We sent an officer to Malaya who returned only about three weeks ago. He was away from April to June. He studied fresh water fisheries and he has come back, and we are establishing a tank at Polonnaruwa, the hon. Member's constituency, for the rearing of fresh water fish. We hope that we would be able to go ahead with the work and be able to stock the many inland rivers and tanks with edible fish.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** We want more details about the work that the Minister proposes should be done in this research station, whether research work would be done, for instance, in connexion with the curing and preserving of fish and the manufacture of its various by-products, whether research will be done to study the movement of sea fish, and whether research will be done to expand and improve the existing fisheries. The Fisheries Research Station should be in the charge of specialists who know what they are about. What I feel is that the Research Station up to this point has done very little and that the whole thing is an amateurish effort, which will bring no lasting benefit to the people. The Hon. Minister must consider this research work as the most important activity he will have to undertake in the immediate future, if he is to improve this industry. We have seen this vote

of Rs. 50,000 occurring year after year, but we have seen no results from whatever research has been done. We have seen no journal or publication in which the results of the research are published. As a matter of fact, we feel that we are simply throwing away good money on something utterly useless. I ask the Hon. Minister to reorganize his research branch to see that some results are achieved as quickly as possible.

**Major Jayewickreme:** We would like to have the names of the gentlemen who are doing this research work. I think it is vital to find out who are the people who have undertaken this research, because as the hon. Member for Galle pointed out, the entire fabric of this industry depends on the research that we are going to do. If the Hon. Minister will let us know who the people are who are undertaking this work, we shall at least know whether they are capable of doing this work.

**Mr. G. R. Motha (Maskeliya):** Will the Hon. Minister tell us the nature of the equipment that is going to be purchased for the research station?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We have got no research station at all. We have to equip a laboratory with the usual waterpipes and other things. These things are very expensive—the necessary retorts and things like that. All this was provided for last time, but as I stated before—

**Dr. Perera:** Was that sum of Rs. 50,000 spent last year? Or is this a re-vote?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It is not a re-vote. The laboratories were not equipped last year, and the money provision may have lapsed. We have provided what we think will be spent this year. The Director himself is a research officer. He will be in charge of one of the laboratories. We have also provided for Assistant Research officers, and the Naturalists themselves will do research. One of the Naturalists has already been appointed.

**Dr. Perera:** The Department had an aquarium some time back in Mount Lavinia. Is it still operating?



**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** That is not run by the Department. That was run by Dr. Almeida.

**Dr. Perera:** Did not the Government give it a subsidy?

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** Government may have given a grant; I am not sure.

*Sub-head 8.—Fees and Expenses of Experts, Rs. 5,000.*

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** With regard to Sub-head 8, "Fees and Expenses of Experts", I would like to ask the Hon. Minister what expert knowledge we could gain by spending a paltry sum of Rs. 5,000. As hon. Members are aware, there is no expert on the fishing industry in this Island. If we want expert knowledge on this industry, we will have to import an expert from either Norway or Portugal, or even from Japan. If the Hon. Minister really means business, he must ask for more money on this vote and get one or two really first-class experts from abroad to develop this industry, which is bound to give employment to a large section of the population.

**The Chairman:** This Vote is only to provide the fees and expenses of experts whom the Director may wish to consult in connexion with any feature of the fisheries development.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** When there are no experts, how can the Director consult them?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** This is not intended to pay the actual fees of experts. For example, some experts may come on their own. Recently we had an expert, Mr. Keshtavan, coming here, and there was another, Mr. Hitching, the Colonial Adviser. We have to pay their hotel fees, pay for their cars, and so on. We do not pay fees.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** What a confession of absolute indifference towards the industry the Hon. Minister has just now made! He and his Department are waiting for experts to drop down from the heavens. What is the meaning of this? I think this money is being thrown away. Some person drops into

see the Director, they have a feed in the afternoon, have a chat, and the Director writes down that he has had a chat with such-and-such a fishery expert. Let there be an expert from abroad. We do not grudge the money at all.

*Sub-head 9.—Training of officers in specialized work, Rs. 38,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** With regard to Sub-head 9, "Training of officers in specialized work," where are these people being trained?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** They are being sent to England for training. We propose to send an engineer for training in refrigeration. Both an engineer and a naturalist will be sent.

**Dr. Perera:** Did you send anybody last year? Apparently there was a vote of Rs. 38,000 last year.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We did not send anyone last year.

**Dr. Perera:** Then this must be a re-vote.

*Sub-head 10.—Fisheries Training.*

**Mr. J. J. Fernando:** May I ask the Hon. Minister whether there is any scheme for organizing fishery schools throughout the Island? I would suggest that at least one school be established in my area at Mattakottuwa.

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:** I would suggest that the Minister should consult the most experienced fishermen in the area and get practical experience in running this Department.

**Dr. Perera:** Might I know where the fisheries training school is going to be established, or, if it is already established, where it is? Is this a training school for fishermen, or for whom? What is the particular idea behind this Fisheries Training School?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The idea is to give a training in the handling of mechanized vessels, like trawlers. Swimming, rowing and sailing will also be taught. It will be established in the Harbour.



**Dr. Perera:** That is, to train fishermen?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Yes.

**Mr. Motha:** Not to train the fish!

**Dr. Perera:** Surely, the Minister must have some idea of what he proposes to do. How does he propose to recruit these men? Does he propose to take on some young men and train them up? Does he mean mechanized fishing in the sense of using motor-boats and so on?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We have a number of mechanized vessels, and we start schools like this to train young men to man these vessels.

**Dr. Perera:** Is it a subsidy to the C. R. N. V. R.?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It will be under the C. R. N. V. R.

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera:** Is this for life-boats to save this sinking department?

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Can the Hon. Minister devise a scheme of getting small motor craft and training our men to use them?

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** That is exactly what he said.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** On Sub-head 11, I want to know how many life-boats there are and why no life-boats have been given to the Southern coast. The "Sirima" was the only life boat of the Department, but poor "Sirima" is still languishing in the waters of Kalpitiya transporting fish, instead of saving lives. This is another vote intended to disarm criticism. No rescue work is done by the Department. Year after year we pass a vote for life-boats, but the only life-boat the Department has is doing other work. I repeat again that the coastal area from Ambalangoda to Matara needs a life-boat, and the Hon Minister must see that that is given immediately.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** Under this sub-head, I would earnestly urge the Hon. Minister to consider the necessity of providing

fast-running boats at important fishing centres to go to fishing grounds. More time is spent by the fishermen to get to the fishing ground than is actually spent on fishing. Therefore, if there are fast-running boats which could take the fishermen across, more hours could be spent on actual fishing than is done now. Today, these men cannot do even one hour's actual fishing. Last year we voted a sum of Rs. 60,000. I should like to ask the Hon. Minister why it is that not a single boat was purchased last year.

11.45 A.M.

**Mr. H. D. Abeygoonewardane** (Matara): I wish to endorse the statement made by the hon. Member for Galle in regard to life-boats for the Southern Province. In the past, a large number of accidents have occurred, and there have been more than fifteen deaths in the Dondra area alone. That being so, I would request the Hon. Minister to see that life-boats are provided for these fishermen.

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene:** May I suggest that beacons be put up along the coast for the better protection of fishermen? All these years this necessity has been overlooked. Even the local authorities have not paid sufficient heed to this question. It is therefore time that the Government acted in the matter.

**Mr. Mathew:** I cannot understand the proposition of the hon. Member for Galle that one life-boat should be supplied. It will be necessary to purchase a number of life-boats and to distribute them among the fishermen.

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera:** What about rubber balloons?

**Dr. Perera:** Last year too we provided a sum of Rs. 60,000 for the purchase of life-boats. Is this year's request a re-vote? If that is so, it should have been mentioned.

**Mr. Sinnalebbe:** May I know to what centres these life-boats would be distributed?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The present life-boat plies between Karaduwa and Kalpitiya. All the private boats there are under repair. We charge fifty



cents per trip for a person to be transported. We are buying life-boats for Rs. 60,000, and the first one will be located at Dondra. With regard to the question of having beacons along the coast, I shall look into the matter and see whether we can provide them.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** With regard to sub-head 12, "Fishery Roads", I should like to know who constructs these roads and in whose charge they are.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** They are in the charge of the Fisheries Department, as in the past.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Please let us have an account of the fishery roads that the Hon. Minister has constructed. My own impression is that nothing has been done.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** In my own constituency there have been certain fishery roads constructed, and I have been on them.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** With regard to sub-head 14, "Purchase and erection of fish by-products plant", an amount of Rs. 75,000 has been estimated for. What is the plant that the Hon. Minister can obtain for this sum? What is the proposal before the Government? Last year we voted a sum of Rs. 30,000 for the same purpose. Have you purchased any by-products plant yet? My information is that nothing has been done under this sub-head and that the Government's present proposal is also to do nothing. Is that so?

**The Chairman:** The Hon. Minister has already explained that during the last year or more actually no work has been done. The Department has been re-organized with new officials, and they are trying to do as much as possible for the work this year. In the case of most of these items hon. Members will please note that they are revotes.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Just as we cannot start a sugar factory till we have got the sugar-cane, we cannot do anything in this matter until we get the machinery.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Do you propose to purchase a plant for the curing and preservation of fish also?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The vote is for the purchase of a by-products plant.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** What do you mean by by-products?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** They are fertilizers. Of all the trawler fish that we get, we sort out the offal for this purpose. We want to convert that into fertilizers.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** During the last year or two we have buried tons of fish because of the irregular manner in which the Department handles the position.

**Mr. Abeygoonewardane:** With regard to sub-head 15, "Coastal navigation aids and removal of obstruction to fishing and survey of sites for local fishery harbours", I should like to know from the Hon. Minister how many harbours he intends to construct. I ask the question because the sum voted seems to be inadequate. In the South coast the fishermen are unable to carry on fishing unless an adequate number of fishery harbours are constructed.

**The Chairman:** This vote is not one for the construction of fishery harbours. It is for coastal navigation aids, removal of obstruction to fishing, and survey of sites for local fishery harbours.

**Major Jayewickreme:** Sir, I had occasion to bring this matter to the notice of the Hon. Minister yesterday and he gave me a very sympathetic hearing. But, I should like to record the utterly callous manner in which the Department of Fisheries is dealing with this problem. The Hon. Minister must be apprised of these difficulties. Yesterday, it so happened that a delegation, including myself, representing 5,000 people, interviewed the Hon. Minister. A request was made of the Department of Fisheries to remove certain obstructions to fishing. The present position is that there is a natural gulf of 30 feet, and a reef has grown there. There have been



[Major Jayewickreme.]

thirteen deaths during the past few years as a result of boats being dashed against the reef. Boats that go out during a particular time cannot return if a storm intervenes. Representations were made to the Director of Fisheries to blast the growing reef and also to widen the passage through which the boats come by 30 feet. That obstruction will have to be removed if the fishermen are to earn their living. I had to put this question to the Hon. Minister, and the answer given by him was, I think, that the whole matter would require technical investigation. If this matter is going to take time it would create discontent among a mass of 5,000,-odd people in Gandara and Dondra.

The Hon. Minister gave a very sympathetic hearing to the delegation. So, at least, let him instruct the Department of Fisheries that, when requests are made, they should send somebody to investigate the matter and report giving sound technical advice; I earnestly ask the Hon. Minister to consider this matter. Let us now get ahead with this type of work even if we have to spend a lakh of rupees in order to save the lives of the fishermen. I know every hon. Member of this House will agree that money spent in that way will be well spent.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I pointed out the dangerous existence of an obstructive reef in the Unawatuna Bay. Although the Director visited the scene, nothing has been done. In such matters as this, I fear other Government departments are not co-operating with the Fisheries Department.

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** What are the other departments?

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Evidently the Fisheries Department has no expert to give an authoritative statement on such questions as soil erosion that may result from the removal of an obstructive reef. I believe, when petitions are sent, they are referred to the Port Commission, who in turn, shelve them. I earnestly appeal to the Hon. Prime Minister to see that all requests that are made for the removal of obstructive rocks and reefs receive immediate investigation. It is

not merely a question of protecting the lives of the fishermen; it is also a question of getting a greater catch of fish during certain seasons of the year. When winds begin to blow harder and when the sea becomes rough, these obstructive reefs cannot be easily discerned. The result is that fishermen keep away from fishing in the entire belt. From the economic angle this is a very important matter, and we hope that much more will be done under this sub-head in the coming year than was done in the past.

**Mr. Abeygoonewardane:** Since 1931 the people of Paraduwa have made requests to the Government to blast certain rocks because they were unable to fish during a particular season. In spite of those requests, nothing has been done to blast these rocks. I hope the Hon. Minister will take this matter up.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The technical advice which I have received is that the blasting of these reefs might lead to soil erosion. I think I have to be more careful, because, if I get these reefs blasted and if the coast erodes, the population will blame me for not using greater wisdom. But that does not mean that I propose to turn down the request of the deputation that came to me. We shall look into their request very carefully, and if we can make certain that there will be no soil erosion, certainly, I shall have the reefs blasted.

*Sub-head 18.—Propaganda, advertisement, and Publication of fish marketing information bulletin, Rs. 12,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** I move, "That the Vote be reduced by Rs. 1,000 in respect of sub-head 18."

Can we have some information on this sub-head?

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** That is to give more information.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The scheme is a very confidential one. The proposal we had in mind was to allow a system of licensed traders to buy the fish and sell it—to have a minimum price at which they must buy it and a



maximum price at which they must sell the fish. We intend to have a skeleton organization ready to take this business over if the private traders and buyers fail. It is a big scheme, and we are still examining it to find out whether there will be any evils in the working of it or whether any other scheme will be necessary. In the meantime, we have advised the fishermen to form themselves into societies.

**Dr. Perera:** I was talking about the bulletin.

**The Chairman:** That is the same thing.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We need all this propaganda advertisement.

**The Chairman:** The Sitting is suspended till 2 P.M.

*Sitting accordingly suspended until 2 p.m., and then resumed.*

*Sub-head 16.—Pearl Bank Inspection, Rs. 25,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** I move, "That the Vote be reduced by Rs. 1,000 in respect of sub-head 16."

The only point I want to raise is this. Sub-head 4 deals with Research and Inshore fishery investigations. The Hon. Minister informed the House that that provision was also for the Pearl Bank inspection. Now we find that there is a separate item altogether for Pearl Bank inspection. Why cannot the two Votes be lumped together, if that were so?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We are expecting a new kind of oyster off the coast of Trincomalee. That is another kind of oyster. This relates to our Marichchukkaddi Pearl Bank.

*Sub-head 18.—Propaganda, advertisement, and publication of fish marketing information bulletin, Rs. 12,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** We were really discussing sub-head 18 when we adjourned for

lunch. Can we have some information in regard to that sub-head?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** As I mentioned before, I was talking about the marketing scheme itself. In connexion with the new marketing scheme, we will have to advertise by leaflets about the prices of fish. In connexion with the leather factory and other factories, one of our main defects was lack of advertisement.

**Dr. Perera:** Is it proposed to issue this bulletin free?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Yes; except that it will be published on the same lines as others, with advertisements. Normally it will be free.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** May I know whether the bulletin will be published in Sinhalese and Tamil?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Yes.

*Sub-head 23.—Preventive Work, Rs. 5,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** I move, "That the Vote be reduced by Rs. 5,000 in respect of sub-head 23."

What is this Vote for?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We actually intended to start a separate preventive force because the Police Department was finding it difficult to tackle this work, that is to prevent the dynamiting of fish. It is a very serious matter, and it is going on all over the place.

**Dr. Perera:** It is a very difficult job to prevent it in the whole Island.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** We hope to make use of the Police Force.

**Dr. Perera:** I noticed that last year there was provision for the trawler "Raglan Castle". There is no Vote for this trawler in the Estimates for 1948-49. What is the present position in regard to this trawler?



**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** There is provision for it under Vote 2. We will be coming to it soon. It is a token vote because it is run on a commercial basis.

**Major Oldfield:** As a rule those of us who sit here are unable to hear what the Hon. Minister says. Will he kindly repeat what he said?

**Dr. Perera:** He spoke about the dynamiting of fish.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The Vote for preventive work is not quite adequate. We hope to utilize the services of the Police. If we cannot get the Police to do it, then we will have to come to this House for supplementary provision.

Question, "That the sum of Rs. 724,128 for Head 135, Vote No. 1, be inserted in the Schedule," put, and agreed to.

Head 135, Vote 1, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

*Vote No. 2.—Loans and grants to fishing industry; operation of trawlers and fishing vessels; upkeep and working of ice and refrigeration plants; purchase of stocks and working of welfare depots, Rs. 400.*

*Sub-head 1.—Loans to Co-operative Societies and Samitis (Token Vote), Rs. 100.*

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene:** I wish to say a few words about the conditions of living of the fishermen. This was touched upon only in passing by the Hon. Minister, and I would like to speak about it in a little more detail.

This morning the hon. Third Member for Colombo Central (Mr. Keuneman) said that it is a standing disgrace that we are not able to supply the vast majority of the people of this country with fish at cheaper rates. Apart from that the conditions of living of the fishermen, especially their housing conditions, are also a thorough disgrace to this country. It is surprising that, in a country that calls itself civilized, these conditions are permitted to continue. There is no use in touching merely the fringe of the problem by having schemes for fishermen in one or two parts of this Island only. There are housing schemes

for urban dwellers which have been started by the Hon. Minister of Health and Local Government; the Hon. Minister of Transport and Works has been compelled to inaugurate schemes for the Railway workers; but no steps at all have been taken with regard to schemes for the poor fishermen. They are neglected. Unless and until a proper survey is made in areas where there are concentrations of fishermen and housing schemes, which would cover the needs of the majority of the fishermen are inaugurated, I do not think this problem will be effectively solved. We do not expect fishermen to go and occupy houses that are intended for urban dwellers. Houses for them should be situated as close to the sea shore as possible so that their work and occupation will not be seriously affected.

We want to have some statement with regard to this matter because we feel that the Government is not doing its duty by the fishermen. We also want to know whether the Government intends, during the next financial year, to evolve a scheme which will provide houses for fishermen.

The other matter that I wish to raise is with regard to the welfare of fishermen during the off-seasons. I think the Hon. Minister and every hon. Member of this House is aware that, for a period of about six months in the year, the fishermen are without proper occupation. Either the Government should provide schemes to employ those fishermen during that period or they should be given some sort of financial assistance.

In my opinion it is an elementary duty on the part of the Government to attend to these two problems which affect a very large section of the people of this country.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I want to speak about the granting of loans to co-operative societies and about the granting of loans to fishermen. I understand that the system of granting loans to needy fishermen has been discontinued. Now, that is a very sad state of affairs. I also understand that the reason for discontinuing the granting of loans is that—

**The Chairman:** The Hon. Minister made a full statement on that.



**Mr. Dahanayake:**—large sums of money are due from those who were given loans in the past. I want to point out what was wrong with the manner in which the loans were given in the past.

**The Chairman:** That whole matter has been debated. I believe the hon. Member himself pointed out that matter. He said that the loans were given without any security and that therefore they cannot be recovered. I believe the hon. Member himself pointed out this matter.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Questions were asked from the Hon. Minister and replies were given, but the whole question was not thrashed out.

**The Chairman:** And supplementary questions were asked.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Today the needy fishermen are unable to get loans. On the other hand, certain other fishermen are in acute distress because of these outstanding loans.

I want to point out how the Department has blundered in this matter. When these loans were given, the Department expected the fishermen to sell their catch to the Department and when the catch was sold, the distributing scheme of the Department was so bad that large quantities of fish had to be buried and large losses were incurred by the Government. When the Government found that it was losing on the distribution scheme, the Government did something very strange. It told the fishermen to whom loans were given, "We are going to deduct 50 per cent. from the controlled price of fish and pay you accordingly." Hence, Sir, if a fisherman who had obtained a loan gave to the Department a catch worth Rs. 500 according to the control rates, he got credit for only Rs. 250. This system continued and the fishermen at the end of the period of control found it impossible to pay off the loans because, by an artificial method introduced in order to cover up the transactions of the Government, half the actual cost of the purchases were credited not in favour of the fishermen but in favour of the Government. Now we say that that policy was wrong.

Today I understand that about Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 lakhs are outstanding from these fishermen and the various societies

For instance, I understand that a co-operative society in the North, somewhere in Point Pedro, owes the Department about Rs. 150,000, and it cannot pay this money back. What should the Government do now? I am going to make a very serious suggestion to the Hon. Minister for his consideration. In view of the fact that during the period of the war so many other industries were subsidized, in view of the fact, for instance, that the peasants of this country got indirect subsidies such as the free issue of manure and implements, I ask that the Minister should consider wiping off at least 50 per cent. of the value of the loans that were granted. If the loan was to the value of Rs. 200,000 let him wipe off Rs. 100,000, as a bad debt, or rather as a subsidy to the industry. I want the Hon. Minister to consider this position very seriously because so many deserving fishermen and so many deserving societies are in distress today, and it is up to the Hon. Minister to grant them due redress.

2.15 P.M.

Is the Hon. Minister also aware that when these loans were granted, some of the loans went, not to the actual fishermen themselves, but to owners of fleets of lorries and others? I am mentioning that by the way, Sir, in order to intimate to the Hon. Minister, if further proof is necessary, that the Department bungled the entire business. The Department blundered and blundered badly, and now the poor fishermen are in distress.

On the one side we ask that the system of giving loans should be revived and, on the other, we ask that those from whom sums are still outstanding be granted relief. We also ask that the Hon. Minister should go into the whole question afresh and view this matter as one that concerns the fishermen, and the industry as a whole, most vitally; let the Department not exact the last ounce of blood from these poor people who have served us so well, especially during the period of emergency, and let them be granted due redress without delay.

**Mr. Keuneman:** I would like to develop one of the points which the hon. Member for Galle touched on but did not develop, and that is with regard to this matter of loans.



[Mr. Keuneman.]

I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether he can satisfy this House that, in the future, when he once again starts issuing loans, these loans will go directly to the co-operative societies or *samitis* or the actual fishermen themselves. According to the information that I have been able to glean on this matter, Sir, some of the very large outstanding sums which the Hon. Minister and his Department have not been able to recover, are sums which had been most recklessly given to persons who are fish distributors and fish *mudalalis*, and who have nothing at all to do with the actual catching of fish. Those are the persons who, to a very large extent, have defaulted in paying up. I do not want to go into the details because there are rather nasty stories connected with this matter which, I think, will be taken up in another place on another occasion.

**Mr. K. Kanagaratnam** (Vaddukoddai): It is a very fishy business!

**Mr. Keuneman:** Yes. I would like this definite assurance from the Hon. Minister, namely, that because of the past bungling and because of the past fishy business that has taken place, the poor fishermen, who are badly in need of loans, will not be let down, and that the system of granting loans to them through their co-operative societies will once again be started, and also that, when it is started, the loans will go to the persons who are actually engaged in the catching of fish and not to the *mudalalis* and such other middlemen.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** There is the further fact that these so-called *samitis* are not co-operative societies. They were formed in the past by people who were not at all in the trade. For instance, in Negombo there was a society, the President of which was a proctor; and it was a very good society too. [Interruption.] The hon. Appointed Member (Mr. Oldfield) too seems to be aware of this.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** A proctor fishes for men!

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera:** For money, fish, part of the advances would have

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** These people had taken loans from the Department and now this President is giving loans to the traders after obtaining security. There is a sum of Rs. 85,000 involved, and I cannot understand why this sum should be wiped off.

Another point which I wish to stress is about the appropriation of one-tenth of the catch of the fishermen by the different churches in the Island. The Department should establish fishing harbours to which the people could bring their catch and sell it. Now, in Negombo particularly, where the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to this Ministry hails from, the people have to fish and bring the catch to the selling place which is given on a lease to a *mudalali*, and he deducts one-tenth of the selling price of the fish. This illegal fine that is being levied from the poor fishermen should be stopped immediately.

**Dr. Perera:** Can the Hon. Minister also answer this question? What is the total amount of loans granted and actually outstanding at the present moment? How much does he think is recoverable, and how much irrecoverable?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The outstanding balance on the 1st July was: advances to groups Rs. 1,269,203.61, advances to individual fishermen about Rs. 217,000, and advances on fish marketing Rs. 309,000.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Loans outstanding?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Advances mean outstanding loans.

**Dr. Perera:** Can you say roughly how much is recoverable?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It is very difficult to say. If we continued the marketing scheme, probably a good part of this money would have been recovered. Although these were called advances, traders were in the habit of advancing money to fishermen and buying their fish and they exploited them badly. To some extent the Department advanced money in the hope that they would get the fish, and if the Department had continued to buy fish, part of the advances would have



been settled by now, by way of the fish that the Department received from the fishermen. Now that we intend to have altogether a new scheme, it is probably a little difficult to recover the advances.

That brings me to the point raised by the hon. Member for Galle. What he suggests is that a large portion of these advances be written off on the ground that agricultural workers and others received subsidies, but that the fishing industry did not receive any subsidy during the war days. That is a very big problem. As a matter of fact, the only subsidy which the peasants received was, as he says, distribution of manure, help in weeding and such other items. I do not think he is referring to the operation of the Land Development Ordinance which is quite a different thing. That subsidy was given for a year or two. But to say that these loans should, therefore, be wiped off means that those who borrowed from Government would be at an advantage as against those who did not borrow, and quite possibly a question may be raised by others as to why these people should be placed in an advantageous position by having half the loans written off.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** In any case you recover 50 per cent.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It might set up a bad precedent. It might give the impression that if you borrow from Government there is a good chance of a part of it being wiped off. Some of these borrowers may be quite well to do persons, perhaps some of them might be plutocrats and the hon. Member for Galle does not like them to be plutocrats. When we write off, we will make the revenue the lesser.

All the same I say that there is a great deal of point in what the hon. Member says. I shall have the matter examined in conjunction with the Hon. Minister of Finance and see whether we can come to some sort of agreement and, if necessary, write off a part of these loans. I cannot make a definite promise, but I shall consult the Hon. Minister of Finance and look into the matter and see whether some of these loans could be waived.

As for the present loan scheme, it will be almost entirely for the co-operative societies. There has been a misunderstanding on the part of the hon. Member for Agalawatta with regard to the meaning of the word *samitis*. It is really a misprint for *samati*, but we actually mean a co-operative society comprising, for instance, a boat owner and his boatmen. It is not meant to be for *samatis*. The loan scheme is entirely for co-operative societies and, in the case of needy fishermen, we have arranged for them to apply to the Hon. Minister of Labour and Social Services and get grants from a distress vote. The Hon. Minister of Labour and Social Services has agreed to take over that part of the work and, whereas hitherto we used to give money to the fishermen as loans, we can, in future, give them money as grants. That is provided for, because I do not think it will help a needy fisherman very much when he feels that he has a loan of Rs. 300 or Rs. 400 outstanding as a result of his having met with some misfortune, such as failure of a catch or something else.

We have welfare schemes for our fishermen and also housing schemes for them. I do not know whether hon. Members have seen the scheme of re-organization which my Permanent Secretary put up about six or seven months ago. I have examined this scheme in great detail and now we are dissecting it and going into it very carefully, with a view to adopting a good many parts of it, as Government policy. There is provision there for welfare schemes for fishermen. We are trying to start some kind of society through which we can collect money from them during fishing seasons and pay it back to them during the off-seasons. We want to try and do that because these fishermen make a lot of money during the good seasons which they spend very freely and find themselves left without anything for the off-seasons. We are trying to adjust all that and see that they are able to maintain themselves all the year round. I should like to explain the scheme that we have in view in more detail, but it will occupy a lot of time.

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene:** What about housing schemes for the fishermen?



**The Chairman:** He has already explained about housing schemes.

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene:** But there is nothing in the Estimates.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The housing schemes will be taken up by the Hon. Minister of Health and Local Government like the scheme at Karaiyur in Jaffna; there is also one that we have started in Negombo. We will be starting housing schemes in other places too and all that will be gone into by the Hon. Minister of Health and Local Government because it was our intention to incorporate all housing schemes under one vote. Apart from that, we would have to go into the administrative areas of local bodies, and they would not like our starting schemes for a particular class of persons without their having a voice in the matter. That is why we have handed it over to the Hon. Minister of Health and Local Government. And as all the Ministers are working in conjunction with each other, I shall ensure that proper steps are taken to have these fishermen provided with houses. We are well aware that these fishermen are living under extremely difficult conditions, and we are doing our best for them. It is a great pity that they have to live under those conditions, but steps are being taken to improve their lot.

During the course of his Budget speech, when dealing with agriculture and industries, the Hon. Minister of Finance said that we should spend larger sums of money for the future welfare of the Island, and first increase our reserves to be able to do better things for the people. Housing schemes and similar projects are ventures which have no productive return. Of course, we must proceed with such matters as rapidly as we can, but we must be careful that we do not over-emphasize that aspect of our expenditure as compared with the productive side of it. If we do that, we might soon find ourselves bankrupt. I do not want hon. Members to think that we are actually cutting down our expenditure in this direction. We are fully alive to the situation, and we shall certainly take note of the difficulties that these people have to contend with.

**Dr. Perera:** Will the Hon. Minister inform me whether the grant of loans to these people will be held up on the ground that there are these outstanding loans? That is one thing that we are worried about. The question that was taken up some time ago was in connexion with these outstanding loans. In the Estimates you will find that the total amount outstanding on account of loans should not exceed Rs. 1,750,000. Will the Hon. Minister go into this matter also and, if necessary, raise the maximum amount which he is going to grant as a loan?

2.30 P.M.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I will explain that. I placed the matter, as one of urgency, before the Cabinet for its sanction, because I cannot spend the revenues of this country without the concurrence of my colleagues, and we shall have to carry on as best we can for the next few months.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I want housing schemes for the fisherfolk. I am afraid the Minister is evading responsibility. Let me remind him that the Minister of Transport and Works has carried out a scheme of his own for the Railway workers. The Minister of Fisheries must carry out a scheme on his own for those people who are engaged in the fishing industry. We say that because the scheme of the Hon. Minister of Health will take us nowhere. The Hon. Minister of Health stipulates that any urban council or village committee should pay one-third of the cost of the building scheme. There is not a single village committee that can afford to pay one-third of a building scheme. That means that there will be no building schemes at all, or that the Minister and his colleagues will be building castles in the air!

I ask that the Minister of Fisheries should show greater responsibility in the discharge of his duties and that he should evolve a scheme of housing to include all places where there are concentrations of fishermen, without passing on the baby to the Minister of Health.

**Dr. Perera:** This, I suppose, is the proper moment to raise the question of the "Baglan Castle." Could the



Minister give us a statement as to the present position with regard to the use of this vessel. Some time ago the "Raglan Castle" was giving us a sufficiently large catch commensurate with its normal running expenses. At least, that was the impression I had. I hope the Hon. Minister will correct me if I am wrong. What I should like to know is whether the "Raglan Castle" is an economic proposition, whether it gives an economic return for the total sum expended on it, and whether the use of trawlers of that type will be a feasible proposition in the future in Ceylon, judging from the experience we have gained by using the "Raglan Castle".

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I understand that the "Raglan Castle" is today a ruined castle! It is under repairs. I would like to know how much has been spent on carrying out repairs to this castle.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I admit that the "Raglan Castle" is often under repairs. However, it was a paying proposition in spite of that. It was selling its fish to the fish marketing scheme at a price well below the prevailing price. It is still a paying proposition. It still brings in catches of fish to keep it going; but the vessel is very old, and I do not know whether, in time, the cost of repairs will not probably exceed the return it gives in the form of fish. At the moment we do not want to reduce the quantity of fish that is made available to the Island, and we are running the vessel, but not at a loss.

As to the general question whether fishing trawlers would be a profitable proposition, so far, from what we know, they would be very profitable; but I consulted some scientific officers who told me that if we went on operating on a large scale, some of our fishing grounds might be depleted after five or six years, with the result that we might find that we will not get profitable catches. But at the moment we find that the operation of trawlers is very profitable, and we propose soon to get another trawler.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** How much was spent on repairs?

**Dr. Perera:** Is the "Raglan Castle" in commission now?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Yes. I do not know about the position today, but after it undergoes repairs it goes back to sea.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** What is the bill for the repairs?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It is all paid from the return we get from the operation of the vessel.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** But tell us how much was spent on repairs, because the sum might be a revelation.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I can get you the figures.

*Sub-head 3.—Purchase and working of ice and refrigerator plants (Token Vote), Rs. 100.*

**Mr. Keuneman:** I would like to know from the Hon. Minister what is the present position regarding the getting down of refrigerator plants. This has been a serious deficiency in the fishing industry and a great deal of fish that went to waste, as referred to by hon. Members, was due to the fact that there were no proper refrigerating facilities. What is the present position?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Orders have been placed for four plants. The engines of three have arrived and, I think, the other parts will come soon, when we will be able to instal the plants.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Can the Minister tell us when it is anticipated that the full plants will be in operation?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** By the end of the next financial year.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** How many plants do you propose to have?

**The Chairman:** Four.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Where?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It has been decided, not by me but by my predecessor in office, to have one in Mannar, one in Colombo, one in Chilaw, and one down the South coast. We can instal more plants as needed.



**Dr. Perera:** This, Sir, is one of those items about which we would like to know the actual financial position. The Hon. Minister says that he is operating on a token vote. How much have we—

**The Chairman:** The sum is not to exceed Rs. 500,000 at any time.

**Dr. Perera:** How much have we lost? Have we lost at all?

**The Chairman:** The new ice and refrigeration plants are coming.

*Sub-head 4.—Purchase of stock for and working of fishermen's equipment and rice and curry-stuff depots (Token Vote), Rs. 100.*

**Dr. Perera:** What about sub-head 4?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** That is to stop the profiteering that is practised on fishermen. We buy equipment such as sails, nets, and so on, and rice and curry-stuffs and sell them to the fishermen till such time as they form their own co-operative societies to look after their requirements.

**Dr. Perera:** What does equipment mean?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Nets, and so on. We do not intend to go on doing it for ever.

Question, "That the sum of Rs. 400 for Head 135, Vote No. 2, be inserted in the Schedule", put, and agreed to.

Head 135, Vote 2, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

### **Head 139.—Minister of Posts and Telecommunication**

*Vote No. 1.—Salaries and Expenses of the Office of the Minister of Posts and Telecommunication, Rs. 147,864.*

*Sub-head 1.—Personal Emoluments, Rs. 117,798.*

**Mr. Keuneman:** There are one or two points I want to raise in connexion with the votes of the Hon. Minister of Posts and Telecommunication.

The first is, I would like to have some sort of statement from the Hon. Minister on what he intends to do with Radio

SEAC which, we have been told in this House, has been received from the Service Authorities more or less as a gift. We have not heard anything more on this matter. There has been a great deal of public discussion on whether or not Ceylon can in actual fact afford to run a broadcasting station of the nature and range of Radio SEAC. Personally, I am very much in favour of doing so, but I would like to have a statement from the Hon. Minister on what the position is, particularly with regard to the development of broadcasting in Ceylon and the use of this new radio station which the Ceylon Government is going to acquire.

As for the second point, I wish to ask the Hon. Minister for an explanation of certain actions of his in regard to the Broadcasting Station on which there seems to be a great deal of dissatisfaction and, shall I say, dismay. These are in relation to the Advisory Boards and the Programme Committees which are set up by the Hon. Minister. These bodies usually have certain definite periods during which they function, and then, after that, they are reconstituted. But in the case of the last Advisory Board, it was discovered that it was reconstituted by the Hon. Minister even before its expected lease of life could be over, and the members of that Advisory Board, I am reliably informed, were sent letters intimating to them that their services would no longer be required by the Hon. Minister. Some of them seem to have got the impression that the letters were couched in a way which could not be considered courteous; but that is after all their individual point of view.

Now the main point I am driving at is this: that there is a general feeling that the Hon. Minister's reason for summarily, as it were, dismissing the Advisory Board existing at the time, is the fact that this Advisory Board happened to criticize, by way of a resolution passed by the Board, certain actions of the Hon. Minister, and to express their disagreement with the Hon. Minister on those matters.

As evidence of that, Sir, the fact is pointed out that the Director of Education, who was himself, I believe, the mover of this particular resolution criticizing the Hon. Minister, was removed



from the Board; and there is a great deal of dissatisfaction among those who had been fairly closely associated with the broadcasting services of the Broadcasting Station on this matter. We would like to have a statement from the Hon. Minister on why this has been done.

It has also been pointed out that there seems to be a certain amount of discrimination in the way in which the Hon. Minister exercises certain of his functions in regard to broadcasting. Last time, when I raised the question of the political bias of the Radio Station, the Hon. Minister gave this House the assurance that he would personally see that all scripts were vetted before they are allowed to go on the air.

The point I want to raise is not one which deals with political bias, but with the fact that recently, in the case of the broadcast on the occasion of the Wesak celebrations, the Minister exempted all the speakers who were making broadcasts from this provision which requires that they should send in their broadcasts to be approved in advance. But the single exception was made in the case of Dr. Malalasekera and, I understand, it appears that his broadcast was cancelled, instead of which a certain item of music was played for the delectation of those who happened to be listening in.

Now there are certain things going on in the Broadcasting Station which, I think, have reached the ears of the public, too, and the public have the right to know from the Hon. Minister why he does such things; because, otherwise, it would seem that the Minister, far from listening to the advice of his Advisory Board, is merely trying to create a Board which will abide by his decision, failing which, he will summarily dismiss it. In all these circumstances, I think it is but fair for the Hon. Minister himself to make a statement on this matter.

There is another point I would like to raise under this vote, as I see that this vote deals with the Permanent Secretary; but I do not know whether you would permit me to raise it here.

**The Chairman:** You can do so.

**Mr. Keuneman:** I have received information from a fairly reliable source of the fact that the Permanent Secre-

tary, too, has been interfering a great deal in the actual running of this organization.

The specific complaint which I have received, and which I have gone into as far as it was possible for me to do so, is in regard to the question of certain appointments. The particular appointment to which I refer was, I believe, in connexion with a Programme Assistant in Sinhalese. A number of applications were considered by a Selection Board which contained among them a Professor of Oriental Languages of the Ceylon University, an Assistant Director of Education, and the Chief Sinhalese Translator to the Government. These very eminent gentlemen selected a certain candidate for this particular post; but, according to the information available to me, Sir, a ruling was made by the Permanent Secretary that the candidate selected by the Selection Board was not a suitable candidate, and that as a matter of fact, the candidate who came third according to the decision of the Board, should be appointed.

Now, with this sort of thing going on in the Broadcasting Station, and with this sort of story going on among the public, I think it would be very advisable for the Hon. Minister to clear the air, if it is possible for him to clear it, by making a statement regarding these matters.

2.45 P.M.

The other point to which I should like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister is the very great dissatisfaction existing among the staff of the Broadcasting Station.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member can take that up under the next Head.

**Mr. Pakeman:** During the last Budget discussion, when this Ministry came up for consideration, there was a considerable amount of criticism as to why the Permanent Secretary and the Postmaster-General were both doing very much the same work. This year there is one more Department—National Savings Department—added on to this Ministry. It would be rather interesting to know why that was done because, in my opinion, it would be better if that Department comes under the Ministry of Finance.



[Mr. Pakeman.]

The point occurred to me—probably it has occurred to the Hon. Minister as well—whether it would not be better to separate Posts and Telecommunication into two departments, the Postal Department and the Telecommunication Department as has been done in Malaya and, I believe, in Burma. I would like to have the Hon. Minister's ideas on the subject.

It would be possible in that way to scrap one post, either the Postmaster-General's or his Assistant's, and perhaps rather slightly lower the status of the Head of the Postal Department and raise the status of the Head of the Telecommunication Department. It is necessary that something should be done to bring the Permanent Secretary to the level of Permanent Secretaries in the other Ministries.

It would also avoid the difficulty which is always likely to arise, as it has arisen in the Medical Department, when the post of Postmaster-General next falls vacant, as to the branch from which the promotion should be made. There are, I believe, in the Telecommunication Department, trained men with the requisite qualifications who are very good indeed, and they are the sort of people who might have more scope if a separation is effected.

I think the main difficulty is not at the top, but at the bottom. But the Head of the Telecommunication Department attends to all the railway telecommunications and to a lesser extent, I believe, to those of the Civil Aviation and even of the Police Department. I do not, therefore, see any very serious or insurmountable difficulty in the matter of disentangling the Telecommunication section from the Postal Department, or in making arrangements similar to those existing between the Telecommunication and the Railway Departments. I notice from the Civil List that the present Postmaster-General has passed the usual retiring age, and it has struck me that perhaps he is being kept on with this idea in mind.

I should very much like the Hon. Minister to give some exposition of his ideas on this subject, or at least an assurance that, if he has not already taken this matter into serious consideration, he will do so in the future.

**Mr. Wilmot A. Perera (Matugama):**

On the question of broadcasting, may I inquire whether the Broadcasting Station has audition panels as it did a few years ago, apart from the advisory boards?

**Mr. V. G. W. Ratnayaka (Deniyaya):**

The broadcasting section is still under the same Department. I would like to state that broadcasting is a very important item according to the needs of the present day. Broadcasting in other parts of the world has made rapid advances during the last few years. I would therefore suggest that the broadcasting section be made a separate department altogether under the same Ministry. For instance, last year, the Meteorological Department was under the Survey Department. Now the Minister of Agriculture and Lands has a separate Department of Meteorology under his Ministry, thus giving the department more scope for work. Similarly, I would suggest that a separate department for broadcasting be created as early as possible.

As we are all aware, broadcasting helps the masses a great deal with regard to health, education and in various other spheres in connexion with their daily life. Broadcasting is a specialized science, and if we send out a few men to other countries to study the newest methods of broadcasting, we would undoubtedly be able to bring up our broadcasting to the standard obtaining in other countries.

I would like to have the views of the Hon. Minister on the question of opening a separate department for broadcasting.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** With regard to the question raised by the hon. Third Member for Colombo Central about Radio SEAC, negotiations have advanced considerably since I brought this subject to the notice of this House, and this Government has agreed on the principle of taking over Radio SEAC. We have now only to consider the details of the proposal. There is bound to be delay in the correspondence with regard to this matter, and it is difficult to hurry up negotiations. But hon. Members may be quite certain, as I am, that Radio SEAC will belong to us very soon.



**Mr. Dahanayake:** We would not have to pay anything?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** No.

The question was raised about the cost of running it. Radio SEAC will continue to broadcast to British Forces for some time. They will be paying us for that service. In that way, and by encouraging commercial broadcasting, we hope, and I am sure we will be able, to pay the entire cost of running Radio SEAC without it being in any way a burden on the taxpayer.

We are now putting up a new studio, and by the time Radio SEAC becomes our property, the studio at Torrington Square will cease to function. We intend really to have only one broadcasting station very soon, and all our normal broadcasting will be amalgamated with the work of Radio SEAC. We will probably have a much more efficient broadcasting service than in the past; yet our expenditure on broadcasting will not be increased beyond what it would have been if we had had dual broadcasting under the old system.

It is rather difficult to explain briefly, during a discussion at the Committee stage, the meaning of commercial broadcasting. Hon. Members understand what it is. We will be selling time on the radio to advertizers, and it is done in such an unobtrusive way that it does not affect the programmes. Radio SEAC's broadcasting is very clear and could be heard as far as China, Japan, Ethiopia, and other parts of the world. It is one of the most powerful broadcasting stations, at least in this part of the world.

The next question raised by the hon. Third Member for Colombo Central was why we reconstituted the Advisory Board. The reason is because I found, when I made inquiries, that there was a bad procedure in existence. The Chairmen and members of the Committees were themselves broadcasting for payment and determining what the programmes should be. In fact, last December, I came to this House with a supplementary Vote during the Committee stage and got an extra Rs. 100,000, doubling the amount provided previously in order that we might

have better broadcasting. But the whole of this amount was placed at the disposal of the Chairman of Committees, who themselves, together with members of the Committees, took part in broadcasting and received payment for it.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** The broadcasting was ruined.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I do not think anything bad took place, but having had previous experience and training in Government Service, it looked to me an entirely wrong principle to allow such a state of affairs to continue. Therefore I thought it necessary to reconstitute these Boards and, at the same time, have a rule that the Chairmen and Members of the Committees could, as an exceptional case, get a refund of expenses, but should not get payment when they chose to broadcast. It is for that reason that a reconstitution took place.

I admit that it so happened that the Advisory Board had passed what is known as a vote of censure on the Minister—it amounted to a clear vote of censure—for adopting the policy of trying to vet scripts which they only were in a position to check. I believe in the supremacy of this Parliament. The hon. Third Member for Colombo Central prefaced his speech with the words that I had given an undertaking to this House that I would see to it personally that certain rules were observed. If, in pursuance of that undertaking, I issued an order, and a mere advisory board thinks that it does not matter what I promised Parliament, that they have just as much authority as we have here, and passed a vote of censure on the Minister, I think that conduct is highly reprehensible.

As for what happened on Wesak day, one or two members said that they objected, on principle, to the scripts being sent to the Minister. Some who did not submit their scripts said: "We do not intend to transgress any of your rules; we only wish to make a religious broadcast; will you trust us and allow it?". If they were persons whom I could trust, I certainly said, "Yes". But there were one or two others who said, "We object to your checking on principle". To say: "That is all right, you can broadcast without my checking"



[Hon. Mr. Sittampalam.]  
would only be nullifying my entire rule. That is the distinction to which the hon. Member referred.

There was a reference to an appointment made by the Postmaster-General; that the selection board made one recommendation and that my Permanent Secretary intervened. I do not like to discuss these appointments. I think it would be better if I did not. It is rather difficult to discuss the subject in this manner at the Committee stage of the Budget. If it is alleged that there had been any deliberate favouritism, the hon. Member should raise it separately, and then I could look into it. It does not follow that the Postmaster-General must always accept what the selection board says.

I do not know how the hon. Third Member for Colombo Central became aware of the selection board's recommendation. It is a very, very unfortunate practice in this country that a selection board, which is only meant to advise the Postmaster-General and which probably made a report to the Postmaster-General, should convey such recommendation to any member of the public or even a Member of the House, unless the selection board felt that there had been a very serious wrong done.

I have not looked into the matter myself. I do not interfere in appointments. This has been brought to my notice now for the first time. Nothing serious has occurred. I shall look into the matter.

3.0 P.M.

**Mr. Sri Nissanka:** What is the age of the present Postmaster-General?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It has been urged on us that the Department of Postal and Telecommunication Services should be separated, into two Departments. I had that idea myself for the last three or four months, and I am exploring the possibilities. The present Postmaster-General is against the proposal. Hundreds of postmasters in rural areas are doing both postal and telegraph work, and the dual control that will be exercised on them from Colombo, if the two branches were separated, might lead to these officers not being as amenable to discipline as they are under the present conditions.

The Postmaster-General is worried about the undesirable effects of separating the two Branches. I have not given up the idea altogether.

Another hon. Member suggested the separation of the Broadcasting Section. That is more feasible. As broadcasting becomes more and more important, a separate Department may become necessary. Broadcasting is something quite apart from postal or telegraph work. I shall certainly consider that suggestion seriously and, if possible, we might establish a separate Department.

As these are matters within the purview of the Prime Minister, I shall have to make my recommendations to him after I have arrived at a decision on the subject.

As for the reason why the National Savings Movement was placed under my Ministry, that is also a matter on which the Prime Minister will be able to speak, as he happens to be present here just now. This is also a matter entirely within the purview of the Prime Minister.

As for audition panels in connexion with broadcasting, we do intend to have audition panels.

Question, "That the sum of Rs. 147,864 for Head 139, Vote No. 1, be inserted in the Schedule", put, and agreed to.

#### Head 140.—Postal and Telecommunication Services

*Vote No. 1.—Salaries and Expenses of the Department of Postal and Telecommunication Services including cost of working, maintenance and minor improvements, additions and extensions to Postal and Telecommunication equipment. Expenses connected with the working of the Post Office Savings Bank and Broadcasting, Rs. 22, 532, 235.*

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I want to bring to the notice of the Minister a very grave act of injustice that has been perpetrated against a large section of the postmasters.

There are over 1,300 postmasters, and it is unfortunate that they should have two Unions. Both Unions call themselves the Postmasters' Union of Ceylon. One of these Unions has a



membership of about 900, and the other has a membership of the remaining number. It is unfortunate, I repeat, that there should be two Unions. We hope that it will be possible for arrangements to be made to have only one Union for the postmasters in the future.

Be that as it may, as things are, the Department should not favour the minority Union, which has a membership of about 400 postmasters. This minority Union has been singled out for special treatment by the Department.

Recently the question of representation on the Whitley Council arose. Both Unions, the majority Union as well as the minority Union expressed their willingness to send representatives to the Whitley Council, but the representatives of the minority Union were accepted, while the representatives of the majority Union were rejected.

To find out the reason for this strange behaviour, one has to go back to the period of the last general strike, when this division among the postmasters took place. Before the strike there was only one Postmasters' Union of Ceylon. When the strike took place, the majority were for obtaining their rights by the use of the weapon of the strike. The minority considered that they should stand "loyally" by the Government.

From that stage onwards there has been gross victimization of the majority who were for using the strike weapon. Soon after the strike was over, some of the leading lights of the Union, who were amongst the strikers, were transferred to distant stations. I believe the Treasurer was transferred to Trincomalee, the President to Kalmunai and the Secretary to Tangalle. Whoever was responsible for these transfers appears to have looked at the map of Ceylon, spotted out three distant stations and sent these officers there. The Government made it impossible for those three gentlemen to meet together, by sending them to far away, distant stations.

The three cases I have mentioned were of postmasters who were doing specialized work in Colombo. Normally, a postmaster who does such specialized work in Colombo is not transferred out of Colombo. That was how victimization was being carried on.

After some of the leading lights among the postmasters who went out on strike had been transferred, a minority of postmasters, utilizing a rule of the Union, packed the Union with their supporters. The rule I refer to states that all office-bearers of the Union shall be officers stationed in Colombo. When a number of the office-bearers had been transferred to outstations, there was a rump left behind of about four or five postmasters. These men, taking advantage of the rule of the Union I have already referred to, filled all the vacancies in the ranks of office-bearers, and this new body, which was the creation of a handful of men, started functioning as the Postmasters' Union of Ceylon. They form the minority Union.

The remaining postmasters, unable to obtain justice, unable to obtain a hearing, have also their own Union, which meets regularly, which has subscriptions paid to it regularly, and in which a constitution is carefully followed.

But why has the majority Union not been recognized? The Minister seems to hold that the minority Union is the constitutional successor to the original Union. I ask the Minister not to split hairs over this matter. If the aim of Whitley Councils is to ensure that just grievances are heard and redressed, there should be no hair-splitting on such minor points.

The majority Union has about 900 postmasters in it, and it is the bounden duty of the Minister to give representation to the majority Union in the Whitley Council which he is keen on setting up. There is today very grave dissatisfaction among the postmasters. I am sure it is not the intention of the Prime Minister to allow disaffection to continue on a large scale in any Government Department.

The grievance which I have exposed is a genuine one, and I earnestly appeal to the Minister of Posts and Telecommunication and to the Prime Minister to see that matters are set right without delay.

**Mr. Keuneman:** During the Committee stage of the last Budget, I brought to the notice of the Minister of Posts and Telecommunication certain very glaring anomalies in the conversions of the salary scales of the clerks of the Postal Department. The Minister on that occasion gave the assurance that



[Mr. Keuneman.]

he would go into the matter, and that if he felt there were glaring anomalies he would see that they were removed.

I want to know from the Minister what action he has taken in this matter during the intervening period between the last Budget and this.

**Mr. V. G. W. Ratnayaka:** With regard to the Postal Clerical Service, I want to bring to the notice of the Minister an important point. There is provision this year for 706 clerks in the Postal Clerical Service (Executive Class). Out of that number, 176, are in Grade II. 44 in Grade I., and 8 in the Special Grade. There are also 35 Assistant Clerks.

These men in Grade II., were recruited in 1925 or 1927. It would appear, from the number appearing in this and last year's Budgets, that only two officers are to be promoted to Grade I., in the coming year. The clerks in Grade II., stagnate in that grade for a large number of years before they are promoted to Grade I. There are today officers in Grade II, who have been serving in that grade for over 20 years.

Turning to the Postmasters and Signallers Service, I find provision for 1,302 men in this year's Estimates. Of that number, 1,099 are in Class II, as against 1,095, in the 1947-48 Budget, an increase of four officers. Most of these men joined the Department well over 15 or 20 years ago, and have not yet been promoted to Class I. Quite a large number of the officers in Class II. joined the Department about the year 1919—

**The Chairman:** You are referring now to the Postmasters?

**Mr. V. G. W. Ratnayaka:** Yes.

The men who joined the Department in 1919 have therefore been stagnating in Class II. for over 28 years, awaiting promotion to Class I. The Minister will appreciate the plight of these postmasters in Class II., who have stagnated in that Class for over 27 or 28 years. It is high time that he altered the method of promoting these officers to Class I., with a view to shortening the period of stagnation in the lower grade. As you

will see, in the Postal Clerical Service, Executive Grade II., about 2 out of 168 officers were promoted last year, and in the Postmasters Class II., of similar status, out of 1,095 officers, given in last year's Budget Estimates, only 4 have been promoted. You can, therefore, see the disparity in the percentage of the promotions in this service.

3.15 P.M.

I would therefore appeal to the Hon. Minister to alter the method of promotion and see that these officers, who have served as much as 23 years are promoted to the higher class. If this is done, I am sure the officers will give much better service.

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene:** I would like to say a few words about the leave conditions of the members of the Postal Clerical Service. I am speaking on behalf of the Postal Clerical servants who joined the Department after 1941. There are about 180 clerks who joined this Department after 1941. These clerks are not entitled to leave on public holidays, but out of these 180 clerks, about 80 automatically have leave on public holidays because the sections in which they work are closed on public holidays. I raised this matter during the Committee stage of the last Budget Debate, and the Hon. Minister gave a definite assurance to this House that he would see to it that the leave conditions of the post-1941 Postal Clerical servants are brought into line with the conditions of service of the General Clerical servants, but when I subsequently saw the Hon. Minister on this matter I was told that the whole question of leave for public servants was being reviewed by the Treasury, with particular reference to the Report of the Cadres Commission. Now, this is an anomaly which should not be allowed to continue. This is a simple matter which can be adjusted departmentally. I do not think this is a matter which should await a review of the conditions of service of public servants as a whole. This has been a source of grave discontent among this class of public servant, and I hope that even now the Hon. Minister will take early steps to remove this anomaly in the Postal Clerical Service.



**Mr. T. B. Subasinghe** (Bingiriya): There is just one point I would like to raise with the Hon. Minister. You are aware, Mr. Chairman, that in this country a greater part of the postal facilities is provided through the medium of sub-Post Offices, particularly in the rural areas, but unfortunately the sub-Postmasters, who are in charge of this work and who perform such a useful function, do not seem to receive the attention of the Government to which they are entitled. The system of recruitment of these men is the same as that in England where conditions are quite different to those prevailing in this country. It is about time that the Department gave consideration to this matter and revised the salaries of these people. At the present moment they are paid on a unit basis, according to the amount of work that they do, but I am informed through reliable sources that, particularly as a result of the Exchange Control, the incomes of these people have fallen in some cases very considerably.

Further, unlike in Great Britain from where this system was copied, the conditions prevailing in the rural areas in this country are quite different. In England you find sub-Postmasters or sub-Postmistresses invariably conducting a private business of their own, such as a cigarette, tobacco or sweet shop, which is their main source of income. In England, the income of either a sub-Postmaster or a sub-Postmistress, is purely secondary, whereas in this country, so far as sub-Postmasters are concerned, their main source of income happens to be their salary. There are very few of them running private businesses of their own.

Further, unlike in England, you will find some of the sub-Post Offices performing the same functions as the main Post Offices, providing telephonic communication and telegraphic communication. Some of these people do very important work, and it is about time that the Hon. Minister gave his earnest attention to this question and revised the system of payment to them.

**Dr. Perera:** I would like to have a statement from the Hon. Minister on the present position in regard to postal facilities. Last year, when the question

was raised, the Hon. Minister said that the difficulty was the obtaining of material. I would like a statement from the Hon. Minister as to the present position with regard to this matter.

As hon. Members are aware, there is a dearth, particularly, of telephone facilities in the rural areas. I am referring, in particular, to the lack of any direct communication between hospitals. That is a matter that requires the urgent and immediate attention of the Hon. Minister. Must the position be delayed so long? Have we to wait for a number of years before we get these facilities, particularly for important institutions like hospitals? Or is the Hon. Minister contemplating importing the necessary materials, if necessary, from places like the United States of America without waiting for the material from England, if there is any particular delay in getting material from England? I would like the Hon. Minister to tell us the present position with regard to these facilities.

Might I also draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to the present very unsatisfactory situation with regard to the telephone service, particularly in Colombo? Very often, between particular hours, it is almost impossible to get oneself connected correctly. You dial a number, but you almost invariably get a wrong connection, and the subscribers have to pay for all the wrong connections that the Hon. Minister is responsible for. My own experience is that wrong numbers have been connected, not through my fault, but because of a technical defect. Quite apart from the scolding that we get from the other parties, we are mulcted.

**Mr. Baudddhasara:** May I know from the Hon. Minister the policy with regard to the allocation of Post Offices and sub-Post Offices in rural areas? I understand that this work is going to be handed over to the Government Agents and Assistant Government Agents of provincial towns. You are quite aware, Mr. Chairman, and it has already been stated during the Committee stage of the Budget, that whatever work these Government Agents and Assistant Government Agents do, gives rise to great dissatisfaction in the country. They are still carrying on that old colonial policy.



**Mr. Keuneman:** Your Government is carrying on the same colonial policy!

**Mr. Dahanayake:** That is the Independence you have got!

**Mr. Bauddhasara:** I would therefore appeal to the Hon. Minister to consult the village committee chairman, rather than depend on the Government Agents, D.R.Os and headmen of these rural areas, before allocating Post Offices.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I want to ask the Hon. Minister not to exploit these men. You will see, Mr. Chairman, that we have 350 temporary Counter Clerks who have been temporary for nearly 5 years. Are they going to remain temporary till they die? This matter was raised at the Committee stage of the last Budget, and the Hon. Minister undertook, I believe, to see that these temporary men were given permanent appointments.

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:** I would like to say a few words regarding the manner in which Post Offices are being opened all over the Island. I would particularly like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to the matter of Post Boxes. If the Department is unable to open Post Offices in the places demanded by the people, at least Post Boxes should be made available to the small towns and hamlets.

Regarding telephone services, I would like to say that there is no proper planning by this Department. We find that when telephonic communication is provided, say 12 miles from the City, posts which are very short—some 18 feet or so—are erected, and if a further 4 or 5 lines are required these posts have to be replaced because extra arms cannot be fitted, thereby causing tremendous expense to Government. I would earnestly suggest that when connexions are given to new areas, posts longer than 18 feet be erected, so that any number of arms could be added when required.

**Mr. Motha:** I would like to emphasize what the hon. Member for Polonnaruwa suggested with regard to the opening of sub-Post Offices and Receiving Offices. Local village committees should be consulted about the location of these sub-Post Offices. As far as I can see, in the Ginigathena area the Government

Agent apparently gives Post Offices according to the distance between one Post Office and the other. He forgets that there are rivers in between, and no bridges. I think the village committees have been asking for some Post Offices for years together without any response from the Department. I would suggest that the village committees be consulted and the Department itself should inquire into the necessities of the areas.

**Mr. L. Rajapaksa:** There is a matter which I wish to bring to the notice of the Hon. Minister. In my rural constituency, I need at least another 50 sub-Post Offices. I think that the policy of the Hon. Minister is all wrong. Unless we create some trouble, we do not get any sub-Post Offices. Is it that the Hon. Minister has not enough sub-Postmasters? I wish to know whether the delay in establishing sub-Post Offices is due to the inadequacy of the number of sub-Postmasters. If that is so, I hope he will appoint some sub-Post Mistresses and open up some sub-Post Offices.

**Mrs. Florence Senanayake (Kiriella):** I wish to bring to the notice of the Hon. Minister that the Department has employed some 343 female Telephonists. I have been informed that if these girls wish to get married they have to retire from the Service. That is most unfortunate. I consider it most unjust that these girls should be forced to retire if they get married. Will the Hon. Minister consider this vital problem and rescind this regulation?

Apart from that, I believe the conditions under which these girls work are really appalling. They have no retiring rooms, and there are many other facilities that should be provided for them.

I also notice that there is a Lady Supervisor of Telephones. May I know whether she is given authority to supervise the work of the telephone girls and see to their comforts? It is really unfortunate that girls who do such hard work should be neglected for such a long time, and I hope the Hon. Minister will consider their plight and help them.

3.30 P.M.

**Mr. Keuneman:** Just one word on the question of Sub-Post Offices. I entirely agree with the hon. Member for Hambantota (Mr. L. Rajapaksa). There does



not seem to be any policy in the Department on the way in which they open sub-Post Offices. The hon. Member is quite right in saying that unless one goes chasing after the Department, or making a nuisance of oneself to this Department, it is not possible to get anything from it. The hon. Member spoke of backward areas. I represent one of the most advanced areas. But in my constituency, in a place like Maligawatte, the people have been agitating—I do not know for how many years—for a sub-Post Office. Unless you create a big row you cannot get any attention from the Department. I would ask the Hon. Minister to face up to this problem, to draw up a programme to supply the need of sub-Post offices and provide so many every year. That is the only sensible way to deal with this matter.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I understand that the provision in the Estimates is only for 50 sub-Post Offices for the year. If that is so, how is the Minister to allocate the 50 sub-Post Offices among 101 electorates?

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member for Hambantota wants all fifty.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** We want the Minister to ask for a bigger vote.

**Mr. A. R. A. M. Aboobucker (Mudur):** We have been agitating for the last three years for telephone facilities, and I do not know how long the Minister will take to provide us with these facilities. I must, however, take the opportunity of thanking him for the sub-Post office he has been pleased to give us.

**Mr. Kanagaratnam:** I wish to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to certain representations made by officers in the Telecommunications Department. Even during the last Budget Debate I brought this to the notice of the Hon. Minister, but I am told that nothing has been done so far, particularly in regard to the representations made by the Telecommunication Inspectors who were promoted to the grade of Assistant Engineer. It appears that they had an intermediate grade of Chief Inspector, and that was abolished and they were promoted to the grade of Assistant

Engineer, without any corresponding compensation in the adjustment of their salaries. This matter has remained unattended for the past two years. I shall be very grateful if the Hon. Minister will attend to it without delay, because it has created a lot of disaffection and dissatisfaction among these officers, who have been promoted to the staff rank of Assistant Engineer from the grade of Inspector, but without any corresponding advantage from the point of view of remuneration. They count long service in the Department, and their case should be treated on a different footing from the case of those who are directly recruited to the post of Assistant Engineer.

Secondly, I wish to endorse the remarks of the hon. Member for Ruwanwella (Dr. Perera) in regard to telephone calls. Certainly there is something wrong in the automatic telephone system. I would draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to the frequent instances of wrong numbers being called. This happens practically every day, increasing our bills to such an extent that they are sometimes double the normal cost. One day I brought to the notice of the Supervisor that I had had as many as ten wrong numbers dialled for me that day, although I dialled the correct number in each case.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** With regard to sub-Post Offices, may I be permitted to say a few words?

**The Chairman:** Has the hon. Member anything new to say?

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** I want to impress on the Hon. Minister the requirements in my area.

**The Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** I am not asking for fifty sub-Post Offices, but I would request the Hon. Minister to pay attention to the applications made by the different areas in my electorate for sub-Post Offices.

I also notice that the Hon. Minister has made provision only for 510 receiving Offices. There were 510 in the 1947-48 Estimates also. There are a large number of villages in every electorate where the volume of work does not



[Mr. S. A. Silva.]

demand the establishment of a sub-Post Office, but certainly a Receiving Post Office is an essential thing. Therefore I would request the Hon. Minister to try and establish as many Receiving Post Offices as possible in practically each and every village area.

**Mr. Abeygoonewardane:** On this question of sub-Post Offices, while emphasizing the lack of postal facilities. I would like to point out that these sub-Post Offices are now established in the premises of the people to whom the contract is given, and as a result it so happens that sometimes a sub-Post Office is situated, not in the centre of the village, but in some corner of the village. I hope the Hon. Minister will change the principle on which these contracts are given and ensure that the sub-Post Offices are established in the centre of villages so that all the inhabitants can make the best use of them.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The point raised by the hon. Member for Galle (Mr. Dahanayake), that we have recognized only one of the Postal Unions, and not the other, is not true. In point of fact, we have recognized both Unions—

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Are both on the Whitley Council?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I was very anxious to bring them together. As a matter of fact, my Permanent Secretary has tried his best to bring them together, but we have not been able to do so yet. In the meantime, we have recognized both.

As for his other remarks, the Hon. Prime Minister is not here, and when he comes in, he will be able to reply. As I said, as far as these Unions are concerned, we are very anxious that they should function quite effectively, and I am glad to say that they are functioning. We will do our best to join them together. They are both to be represented on the Whitley Council.

On the question of public holidays and on the question of the conversion of salaries of clerks in Grade II., the hon. Member said that I had given certain

undertakings, which I have not implemented. I plead guilty in a sense, but I have personally pressed the matter on the Treasury. The Treasury has such a lot of work, and as they have to examine this question in relation to the conditions of employment in so many other departments, they have not been able to conclude the matter. But we will be pressing this matter and we can hope to get it settled in the near future. I have no reason to think that there will be anything in the way of the conversion being adopted as requested in the representations.

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene:** What about leave and public holidays?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The position about leave is this. As I said before, there are only six Post Office Holidays, and those who joined after a certain date go on the basis that they will have only those holidays; those who joined before that date have different terms. As I said, whenever we introduce a new scheme, it is very difficult to avoid having two sets of Government servants doing the same kind of work. If that is to be avoided, we will never be able to introduce any new scheme without altering the conditions under which the old hands joined. Anyway, we will look into the matter and will take it up with the Treasury.

The hon. Member for Bingiriya (Mr. Subasinghe) raised a very pertinent question about the conditions under which Sub-Postmasters work and he said that we should improve those conditions. He told us that we must realize that they are full-time officers and not part-time officers, as they are supposed to be in theory, and so on. The difficulty about that is that if we make these sub-Postmasters full-time postal hands, we immediately put up the cost of running a sub-Post Office. There is a heavy discrepancy between the cost of running a Post Office proper and a sub-Post Office, and one of the reasons why I am able to expand the postal service is the cheapness of this scheme of sub-Post Offices. I have to be wary in consequence of that. I admit that it needs some sort of improvement, but, if I put up the cost of the postal service, it would make it more difficult



to adopt the scheme which I am personally keen on, that is, to extend postal facilities to all rural areas as much as possible. I know sub-Postmasters have a grievance, and recently their income has gone down with the reduction of the Money Order transactions because of exchange control. I shall certainly look into the question and see whether something can be done.

As regards the temporary clerks, in answer to a question by the hon. Member for Galle, I think I stated that a few clerks would be put on a permanent basis.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** But in the Estimates they are called "temporary."

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It is not in the Budget, but it will be done. It was quite recently that, in answer to a question by the hon. Member, I said that it would be done.

The suggestion of the hon. Member for Kotte (Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena) will be adopted, that is, we will have post boxes wherever we are unable to give a post office. I am thankful for his suggestion that when we erect telegraph posts, we should have an eye on the future and that we should not merely assume that those two lines we put up will be the only telegraph lines. I shall communicate that suggestion to the Department and see that they bear that in mind.

The hon. Member for Kiriella (Mrs. Florence Senanayake) brought to my notice that the female telephonists do not have facilities for rest in the office. We are well aware of it, and we are taking steps to improve the conditions under which they work and to see that the amenities they have are improved.

But as for the request of the hon. Member that they should be allowed to continue in service after marriage, I would like to inform the hon. Member that though we feel sorry, when we listen to their grievance that they are compelled to resign on marriage, we must remember that there is a long waiting list of other girls who, not having husbands to support them probably find it hard to earn a living,

and who complain that they are not given a chance of being recruited to the Department. And from the point of view of the Department itself, as the hon. Member herself will admit, it is troublesome to employ married women as telephonists, because they have to be given six weeks' leave for maternity, six weeks leave afterwards, and so on. And there is a waiting list of other girls who will probably have a grievance.

**Mr. Keuneman:** So why not give them the leave?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** There is a waiting list of other girls who will have a grievance. The Department will benefit more by compelling these telephonists to retire on marriage.

**Dr. Perera:** The most important question I raised he has not answered.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** The suggestion of the hon. Member for Vaddukkoddai (Mr. Kanagaratnam) I shall certainly look into.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** About the extension of telephones?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** There are 2,500 persons waiting for telephone connections, but the position about materials is this: In respect of an order we sent in July, 1946, about one-sixth of the materials ordered has been received. Of an order that was placed in June, 1947, about half was received. I will not bore the House with the details, but we are getting only a fraction of our requirements. It is no use hon. Members suggesting that we should place the orders elsewhere. We are having priority with the companies from whom we order these things. If we go elsewhere, probably we will have to wait for three more years.

**Dr. Perera:** You can get your materials from America.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** In America, as I said before, there are about a million subscribers on the waiting list.



[Hon. Mr. Sittampalam.]

3.45 P.M.

I shall read out to hon. Members a most interesting cutting from a journal in connexion with the new telephone system in France. It is as follows:

“Congratulations and happy to announce that you have been made one-millionth on our waiting list”.

In Australia there are about 200,000 requests for telephones. So, we have no priority with any country except with these people, and we were able to apply pressure on them because we are their long-standing customers. We placed the orders in 1946. We do not intend to shift the order now because they will be only too happy to be relieved of executing it. We hope to get a good part of the materials this year. Then, Kandy and Galle may get their requirements. But, in the case of Colombo, the underground cable material has not yet come. As soon as the cable comes, we will get on with the work. We have to give priority to new connections, and, till then, I am very sorry we are absolutely helpless in the matter.

The hon. Member for Mutur (Mr. Aboobucker) asked a question on a previous occasion. We are experimenting with the Wireless Broadcasting Station in Delft, and, if that proves to be a success, we will deal with his request.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** I should like to refer to the explanation given by the Hon. Minister on the restriction placed on telephone girls.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member is not concerned with them. There are two other hon. Members interested in them.

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** What I wish to say is that because there are a large number of girls on the waiting list, the government ought not to exploit the situation. It is restricting the production of the most valuable asset in this country—the asset of man-power.

**Mr. Keuneman:** There are two questions I should like to ask under sub-heads 14 and 15. Shall I deal with all sub-heads together?

**The Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Keuneman:** One question is on Money Order frauds. There have been a certain number of frauds in the past and a certain amount of shaking of public confidence in the Post Offices. I know that in some cases frauds may be inevitable, but I would ask the Hon. Minister to give this House an assurance that he has gone into the matter and that the necessary precautions will be taken to prevent repetitions of such frauds.

The second point I have to make is on broadcasting. Can the Hon. Minister tell us when he thinks it will be possible for simultaneous broadcast transmissions to take place in English, Sinhalese and Tamil? That was the intention of the Hon. Minister when the last Budget was discussed. Will that come into operation?

*Sub-head 8.—Conveyance of Mails,  
Rs. 1,730,880.*

**Dr. Perera:** I move, “That the Vote be reduced by Rs. 43,000 in respect of sub-head 8”.

I would like the Hon. Minister to make a statement on the need for all this money, because, I remember reading, as soon as the Government took over direct transport of the mails which had previously been given out on contract, a statement that there was actually a profit and the cost was less in a sense as compared with the previous cost. The Hon. Minister stated that direct transport by the Department was definitely a saving to the Department. If that were so, I would like him to extend the service. I would like him to make a statement with regard to the whole saving to the Department.

Secondly, I should like the Hon. Minister to consider carrying out the same policy in the outstations, if he can, because, apparently, this so-called inefficient Government department seems to be doing it more efficiently than the contractors.

**Mr. V. G. W. Ratnayaka:** I should like to mention that, with regard to the question of broadcasting programmes, a large number of people in most parts of the Island suggest that if and when the Hon. Minister starts a new broadcasting department, he should have a



number of officers set aside separately to explore all possibilities in that direction.

With regard to sub-head 23, "Training abroad of Technical Officers in Broadcasting", I think that the amount set aside for the purpose is very small. It is Rs. 5,760. I think we should train officers not only in broadcasting but also in engineering on the broadcasting side. I suggest that the Hon. Minister should try and get the re-vote increased so that officers may be trained on the engineering side as well.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Sir, on the subject of broadcasting programmes, the Hon. Minister told us that he had succeeded in breaking up a "ring". I do not think that that has been effectively done. I would like the Hon. Minister to find out how it is that the same person keeps on broadcasting week after week. I have very often to turn off my wireless set whenever I hear that particular voice. Is there lack of talent in this country? Is there a lack of artistes in this country? I refer, particularly, to people who give gratuitous advice to thousands of people on how to manage this affair or that affair. All such talk should be scrapped. When we turn on our wireless set, we expect to hear something pleasant and something pleasing. We expect to hear something to make us happy. We do not want old professorial types of people to deliver lectures on sonorous topics through the radio. The Hon. Minister should see that these talks by some of these people who speak week after week are scrapped. Let him make a list and find out for himself how much of the money that is paid for the purpose of broadcasting goes to private individuals. Then, he will realize that the "ring" is getting re-shaped in another form.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I shall look into the suggestion made by the hon. Member for Galle. As for the suggestion of the hon. Member for Ruwanwella, I agree with him that wherever departmental conveyances are cheaper, or even if it is a little more expensive but not very much more expensive, it is preferable to support the work done by the Department. As I said on some other occasion, there is no

exploitation of labour when the work is done departmentally. But, it might not be possible to extend this service to the rural areas, because of the difficulty of having to bring the vehicles for service, repairs and so on, to Colombo. However that may be, we will certainly try to expedite the departmental working as much as possible.

**Mr. Wilmot A. Perera:** On the question of postage stamps, was the six cents stamp brought into use solely in order to increase revenue? If a man goes to buy a six cents stamp, he cannot get his change. It is very inconvenient! Was the six cents stamp introduced purely to increase revenue?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I do not know the circumstance under which the six cents stamp was introduced. But I have a scheme of revision of postage rates which I do not want to disclose just yet. It will be possible to reduce the rate of six cents to five cents.

**Mr. Keuneman:** What about my question on the Money Order frauds?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Every precaution will be taken to minimize frauds.

*Sub-head 24.—Training of Telecommunication Engineers in the United Kingdom (re-vote), Rs. 28,800.*

**Dr. Perera:** I move, "That the Vote be reduced by Rs. 100 in respect of sub-head 24."

One would have thought that the whole sum was spent.

There is provision for training telecommunication engineers as a re-vote. Does that mean that nobody was sent last year?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** Three men were sent, and, I believe, one broke down in health and returned. Two of them are still in training and we intend sending two more men. We did spend the money. Probably the word re-vote is an error.



*Sub-head 36.—For purchase of a military building at Trincomalee (Token vote), Rs. 10.*

**Dr. Perera:** I move, "That the Vote be reduced by Rs. 10 in respect of sub-head 36."

What is this military building at Trincomalee for which there is a token vote?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** With regard to the purchase of this military building the payment has not actually been made because it will be done by a lump sum adjustment later on.

Question, "That the sum of Rs. 22,532,235 for Head 140, Vote No. 1, be inserted in the Schedule", put, and agreed to.

Head 140, Vote 1, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

#### **Head 141.—National Savings Movement**

*Vote No. 1.—Salaries and Expenses of the National Savings Movement, Rs. 323,553.*

**Mr. Keuneman:** There is one point on which I want information. Can the Hon. Minister give us the percentage of money realized from small investors? The information I have is that most of the money comes from the rich people.

**The Chairman:** Can the Hon. Minister give the percentage?

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I can say how much of Savings Certificates have been sold.

**Dr. Perera:** What we want to know is the percentage in respect of the two categories.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** It will cost a lot of money to find that out.

**Mr. Motha:** It will be useful to see what sort of people are saving.

**Mr. Keuneman:** This is supposed to be a movement to encourage people of the poorer class to save.

**The Hon. Mr. Sittampalam:** I will see whether it can be done without much expense.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** You are trying to save the capitalists.

Question, "That the sum of Rs. 323,553 for Head 141, Vote No. 1, be inserted in the Schedule," put, and agreed to.

Head 141, Vote 1, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

**The Chairman:** The Sitting is suspended till 4.30 P.M.

*Sitting accordingly suspended until 4.30 p.m., and then resumed.*

#### **Head 144.—Minister of Transport and Works**

*Vote No. 1.—Salaries and Expenses of the Office of Minister of Transport and Works, Rs. 247,367.*

*Sub-head 1.—Personal Emoluments, Rs. 168,318.*

**Dr. Perera:** I move, "That the Vote be reduced by Rs. 100 in respect of sub-head 1."

There are a number of other Amendments. I do not intend to go into the policy very much until we come to the separate Heads. But I do want to express our dissatisfaction particularly with the way the transport services are being run today. On the one hand, you will find that this Government has in these very Estimates estimated a loss of Rs. 15,000,000 under the Railway Department. On the other hand, we find the bus transport services in a chaotic state. We have, in this House, repeatedly urged the Hon. Minister to consider the amalgamation of these two services in order to make both a paying and a real utility service to the people of this country.

The Hon. Minister, instead of tackling that question in the only comprehensive way it can be tackled, has thought fit to continue the bus transport services in the same old haphazard manner as it is being run today. There are a large number of hon. Members here who are fully aware of the way in which these bus services are being run—congested buses, never run to timetables, fares being charged at their sweet will and pleasure. All these conditions are obtaining today. Notwithstanding the functioning of the Hon.



Minister for the last nine months, we do not see any appreciable difference in the bus services that are provided today.

It is far from becoming a utility service, as the people of this country are expecting that service to be.

Then I shall, when we come to the question of the transport services, motor transport, give in detail why we are dissatisfied; but at the present stage I do want to express the thorough dissatisfaction of Members, particularly on this side of the House, regarding the manner in which the transport services are being managed today. The various defects of the Railway Department were enumerated on the last occasion. There had been some attempts, I admit, to make some minor improvements in the railway service but by and large the railway service considered as a whole has not been the kind of service that most of us desire.

Again, we must express our complete disagreement with him on the question of the re-employment of those strikers who are still outside and who are still not in a position to get back their jobs. That is my complaint in that matter and, knowing that there is already a Motion on the Order Paper, I am not going to deal with the question. We have had many references to the subject, but we have yet to know what the position is. The workers are still left high and dry, unaware whether they have been discontinued or whether they have been dismissed or whether they have any hopes of being re-employed at all. The Hon. Minister might have made some statement as to the policy that he intends to follow with regard to these workers. Hundreds of workers are involved in this matter in practically every department in the charge of this Hon. Minister—the Colombo Port Commission, the Public Works Department and other institutions.

All these things combined make us justified in feeling that there is something radically wrong with the manner in which the departments under the Hon. Minister are being conducted. We therefore feel constrained to express our dissatisfaction and insist on the Amendments that have been introduced.

**Mr. Keuneman:** There are certain questions of policy which I would like to raise under these Votes. I agree with the hon. Member for Ruwanwella that there is a great deal of room for dissatisfaction by the hon. Members of this House on the policy that is being carried out by the Hon. Minister whose vote is under discussion.

The first point I want to raise is regarding the extent to which the Hon. Minister is applying the principle of Ceylonization in the various departments under his charge. It is some time now since the legislature of this country had decided in favour of the principle of gradual Ceylonization, specifically with regard to the higher offices. In one particular department under the charge of the Hon. Minister there seems to be no evidence whatsoever that, despite the long connexion of the Hon. Minister with that department, any serious effort is being made to carry through and apply the policy of Ceylonization. I refer to the Port of Colombo. I have with me certain figures—I do not know whether they are correct and I hope the Hon. Minister will correct me if they are wrong—which will show the large number of non-Ceylonese who are employed in important positions in this Department. I find, among the European officers employed, that there are 13 pilots, 15 Tug Engineers, 4 Mechanical Superintendents, 10 Engineering Foremen, 1 Harbour Engineer, 1 Master Attendant, 1 Deputy Master Attendant, 5 Divers and the Chairman of the Port Commission. I think those, roughly, are the figures. The Hon. Minister can correct me if I am wrong.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** The figures are incorrect—there are more Europeans!

**Mr. Keuneman:** In the case of a number of these appointments a person has to undergo a long period of training before he can be suitable to fill any of those posts. We would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether already he has people in training to fill those posts because there seems to be absolutely no evidence of this matter as far as we are able to make out.



[Mr. Keuneman.]

There was a case recently where some divers were able to bring a certain amount of undue pressure on the Hon. Minister, inasmuch as there were no Ceylonese personnel who were there to carry out those functions. So I feel that the Hon. Minister cannot show this House that there is any serious attempt being made to train Ceylonese to take over these important posts in this Department which is under his control.

I want also to refer to a fact which the hon. Member for Ruwanwella touched on in the course of his remarks, and that is about the attitude of the Hon. Minister of Transport and Works to those employees in his departments who were discontinued as a result of the recent strikes.

**The Chairman:** There is a Motion on the Order Paper on the subject.

**Mr. Keuneman:** I am not talking about reinstatement; I am talking about another policy of the Hon. Minister. He is following the policy of persecuting these men. The matter was brought up in the House, but the Hon. Minister had seen to it that certain of these men, who had been discontinued as a result of the past strikes and who had been given jobs in relief schemes sponsored under his Ministry, were removed merely because they participated in the strikes. That seems to me to be a bit of gratuitous persecution by the Hon. Minister and certainly a policy which any person anxious to rectify matters cannot endorse, and therefore we must support the Amendment moved for a cut in the hon. Minister's salary.

On the question of the harbour too I would like to know from the Hon. Minister exactly what steps he is taking to break the monopoly controls that these foreign shipping firms in the harbour exercise. We on this side of the House have been agitating for a long time for the nationalization of the harbour as being the only effective way, first of all, of freeing this country from the control of these shipping rings, and secondly, from the point of view of getting the effective working of the harbour and the most effective use and development of the port. The Hon. Minister, true to form, has vigorously opposed the idea of the nationalization of the harbour. We

have not had from the Hon. Minister any evidence that he is doing anything through his Ministry to exercise any effective control for breaking these rings.

There is one other question regarding his policy towards the buses. I do not want to go into the general questions which can be brought under the Department of the Commissioner of Motor Transport. Now I want to deal with certain questions of policy only. Just as the Hon. Minister has resisted the demand for the nationalization of the harbour, in spite of his study tours recently on this matter, he has been resisting the demand for the nationalization of the bus services. Instead the Hon. Minister has given heed to the suggestion that there should be certain public companies floated whereby employers and employees can themselves contribute money towards shares, thinking that this would be the most effective means of running the bus services.

**The Chairman:** That matter also cannot be discussed now because there is a Motion on the Order Book in the name of the hon. Member for Ruwanwella.

**Mr. Keuneman:** He is dealing with the nationalization of the bus services, and I am dealing with the policy of the Hon. Minister.

**The Chairman:** That is the same thing. There is a Motion on the Order Book that all bus services should be nationalized.

**Mr. Keuneman:** That is a policy.

**The Chairman:** You are now asking him whether there is some other policy.

**Mr. Keuneman:** The Hon. Minister has given expression to a policy before. I am not referring to the policy which the hon. Member wants this House to adopt.

**The Chairman:** It is the same thing.

**Mr. Keuneman:** The hon. Member for Ruwanwella wants the Government to take over all the buses. I want to point out to the Hon. Minister that in the case of the South Western Bus Company, where an attempt was made to follow the suggestion of the company,



that experiment has not proved a success and has proved a dismal failure. I hope the Hon. Minister, realizing this fact, would even now come round to the correctness of the point of view expressed in the Motions of the hon. Members for Hakmana and Ruwanwella.

There is one other question. I would like to know the general policy of the Hon. Minister regarding the conversion of salaries of officers in his departments. It has nothing to do with the conversion of any one person's salary.

**The Hon. Sir John Kotelawala (Minister of Transport and Works):** That is for the Treasury.

**The Chairman:** Would you mind taking that up under Head 145?

**Mr. Keuneman:** It is a general question. The point I want to raise is, why in certain cases he is continuing to apply the conversion rule and in certain cases he is refusing to do so? In October last I brought up certain cases of persons who were employed in the Ceylon Government Railway and who made application for the adjustment of their salaries on the ground that the conversion of their salaries was incorrect. They were informed that no further representations on the matter could be considered. But I find that, after certain engine drivers have created a certain amount of trouble with the Hon. Minister, he has set up a committee which is now going into the question of conversion of salaries of drivers. I feel that if the Hon. Minister pursues this dual policy towards his employees, then the only possible way in which the employees can get their grievances redressed is to give the maximum possible trouble to the Hon. Minister and to see that he does something.

4.45 P.M.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I want to endorse the views that have been expressed by the hon. Members for Ruwanwella and Third Colombo Central and generally express our grave dissatisfaction with the policy that is being pursued by the Hon. Minister of Transport and Works.

I want in particular, Sir, to draw his attention to the fact that in all the schemes that are contemplated by the Government, this Ministry should have been voiced by the Hon.

important and responsible task to perform. The execution of many of the plans of Government has to be effected through this Ministry. During the discussion on the last Budget, whilst making reference to this same question, I suggested to the Hon. Minister that we should set up a Buildings Branch of the P.W.D.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** The P.W.D. has a Buildings Branch already.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I felt then, and I still feel that, if that suggestion is carried out, many of the delays in the execution of plans could be overcome. Looking through the Estimates, however, I find that he has totally failed to take cognizance of the fact that so much is being planned and so much has to be executed. The Hon. Minister of Health and Local Government, for instance, got through the House a vote of Rs. 20,000,000 for extensions to hospitals, but the Hon. Minister of Transport and Works is able to put through only work amounting to Rs. 2,000,000 during the coming year. Therefore, this Hon. Minister should note that he has created for the country and for the Government a bottle-neck through which it is impossible for the various plans and schemes to be executed. Even at this stage, Sir, let him tell us what his plans are for the coming year for executing the works for which moneys are being voted. This is a very important matter because we, as back-benchers, find that even when moneys are voted, the work cannot be executed because the P.W.D. as at present constituted, is unable to cope with the work.

What we expect the Hon. Minister to do in the near future is to set up, as I said before, a Buildings Branch in which there will be, not merely competent engineers and supervisors, but also an army of workmen, masons, carpenters and other skilled workers. By that means the Hon. Minister would also be able to help considerably in the solution of the unemployment problem. Further, by that means the Hon. Minister will assist each and every one of his colleagues by putting through, with greater expedition, the various plans that they have in view. This is a sentiment that



[Mr. Dahanayake.]

Minister and his colleagues in Parliament. But I suppose they form a freemasonry, and they do not criticize each other, although they privately tell us it is impossible to get things done because of the Public Works Department.

There is one other matter on which I would like to criticize the policy of the Hon. Minister, and it has been referred to already by the hon. Member for Ruwanwella. That is the position of the bus services in the country as against the C.G.R. It is painful for us to see an item particularly noted in the Estimates, "Losses on Railway working—Rs. 15,000,000". I want to ask the Hon. Minister whether he is satisfied with inserting this item year after year and doing nothing to eliminate it or to diminish the amount against that item. What are his plans for the future? Is he so complacent as to say, "I can do nothing about the Railway losses"?

That is not the way to tackle the problem. I want to attack his policy on a particular point on this subject. Without considering carefully the losses on Railway working in relation to other forms of transport, he has already enunciated the policy that he will not nationalize the bus services. I would have been happier if he had said that he would investigate the problem without being so quick in arriving at a decision. I appeal to him, even at this late stage, to revise his view and to study the problem as a whole.

The Hon. Minister enunciated a certain policy that he would not at any cost nationalize the bus services, and thereafter when there was a barrage of criticism against the Hon. Minister's policy, what did he do? He hastily summoned an Indian Civil Servant to give a report on that co-ordination of the transport services. Here is a Minister who has enunciated a policy and who requests an officer from abroad to consider the question independently. I ask him whether he has not already prejudiced the mind of the expert he is bringing down. Has he not already offered Mr. Rutnam a brief by saying that he is against the nationalization of the bus services? We ask him therefore, from this side of the House, to withdraw that earlier enunciation of policy and to say that he is still

in a position to consider the question as a whole and then to hand it over to the expert for report.

There is another matter on which I want to criticize the Minister's policy. He has told us often that he is very much concerned with civil aviation. For two or three years we have appealed to him in vain that he should absorb into some useful employment nearly 600 young men who were in the Fleet Air Arm Service. Promises have been held out to them year after year, and nothing has been done to absorb them in employment. I have with me a letter from one of these young men which I will be glad to pass on to the Hon. Minister in which it is stated that these young men who were in the Fleet Air Arm Service have written to the Hon. Minister in December, 1947, in March, 1948, and in July, 1948 and that all they had heard from the Hon. Minister was that the Minister had done a good deal for them and that they will have to wait for their chances of employment. There are over 600 young men, and I see nothing in the Estimates to indicate that the Minister has made an effort to absorb 600 of them into some sort of permanent employment. I feel that the Hon. Minister should revise his policy from the angle, not merely of carrying on the work of a department, but from the angle of giving the fullest possible benefit to the people of this country.

In this connection the Hon. Minister will admit that year after year on the Floor of this House I have pointed out to him that the condition of the railway carriages of this country is intolerable and a disgrace to the Government of this country. What has he done with all that? What has been his policy to improve the conditions of the Railway? Has he even set about to clean up the railway compartments? It was only the other day that I went up in a dirty suit to his Permanent Secretary and pointed out to him how my clean suit had become dirty as a result of travelling in a third-class compartment from Galle to Colombo Fort. It is a standing joke with the third-class railway passengers that the Hon. Minister makes them clean the railway.

Can we have an assurance from the Hon. Minister even at this stage that some effort will be made to provide, for



the railway passengers, the very elementary amenities that one finds in other railways all over the world?

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:** I would like to touch on a few points with regard to the general policy of this particular Minister. We have moved a cut in his salary, Sir, particularly because we feel that departments under his control are very badly mismanaged.

Whenever one of us goes to one of the workshops under this Hon. Minister and questions the workers and finds out their grievances, and when those grievances are brought up in this House, we always hear from those on the benches opposite that a mischiefmaker has gone there and created some trouble. Is it possible, Sir, for one of us to go and spend a few hours in a workshop, over which the Hon. Minister has had control for over 17 or 18 years, and create mischief? How can that happen? It is because the Hon. Minister is ignorant of certain things that are happening; it is because of his ignorance, inefficiency and quality of being "purse-proud" that this state of affairs exists today in the departments under his control.

**Mr. Mathew:** I rise to a point of Order, Sir. Is it parliamentary for an hon. Member to use the word "purse-proud" whilst referring to an Hon. Minister?

**The Chairman:** I did not hear it, but personal references like that are entirely unparliamentary. No personalities, please.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** The Hon. Minister did not object—he merely smiled. Why should you be worried?

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:** I think, Sir, more than one-third of the daily-paid workers in the service of Government are under this Hon. Minister. We find that questions of promotion are not being properly attended to, especially in the workshops. There are workers who have slaved for 10 and 15 and 20 years and whose merits have not been considered for promotion. We have to bring this to the notice of this House

because wherever we go—let it be the Railway Workshops or the P.W.D. Workshops or the Hydro-Electric Scheme or the Electrical Department—we find that the workers have this grouse. They invariably complain about the general administration of the Hon. Minister and his staff. Why is it that these complaints are made particularly by those under his control? I do not think we can adduce any reason for it at all. Perhaps the only reason we can adduce is that the Hon. Minister is a sort of military man who has always been behind the lines but never in front of the lines. He finds it better to administer things from behind the lines—to push from behind. In my opinion he has utterly failed in carrying out the duties entrusted to him as Minister. As I said, he is always behind the lines, and if he goes into the fighting lines he will be a different man. Why is it that we criticize his departments more than those that come under the other Ministers?

Further, he has suggested no remedy, nor does he intend taking any steps, I suppose, to reduce the tremendous losses that are at present being incurred by the Railway Department. Why cannot the Hon. Minister do something about that? It is because he has taken a definite stand with regard to the nationalization of the bus services in the country. Why cannot the Hon. Minister take over the bus services, nationalize them, and remove this terrible loss that his Departments, particularly the Railway, are incurring annually? He has not given thought to it because the bus services, the private transport services, are the chief pillars of the Government.

5.0 P.M.

Now I would like to mention something regarding the general condition of the roads—

**The Chairman:** Are not there so many roads?

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:** But, Sir, when some of us on this side of the House ask the Minister to open up a small road to connect two others which are separated by a gap of only fifty to sixty yards, he definitely states—



**The Chairman:** That question must be taken up——

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:**—“ If I carry out any work in such and such an area——”

**The Chairman:** Silence, please! The hon. Member must be silent when I speak to him. Will you take up the question of roads when we come to the Head “ Roads ”? There are so many roads in various districts; you can speak on roads when we come to their maintenance, and so on.

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:** On the general policy, Sir, I have to touch on little matters regarding roads; but we definitely feel that this particular Minister should be given a holiday in a far-off country like France, so that the conditions here can be made better.

**Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam** (Kankasanturai): The Hon. Minister of Transport and Works is one of those persons who started with a reputation, a reputation for efficiency. He has got under him departments where he can prove that reputation or disprove it.

Now, I say that, in spite of this efficiency, the most remarkable thing that the Hon. Minister presents us year after year is a deficit on the Railway. For the next financial year he budgets for a Rs. 70 million expenditure as against a Rs. 55 million revenue. Is this going to continue for ever? What is the Hon. Minister's plan in respect of the future?

At one time I believed in this reputation for efficiency of the Hon. Minister, and I am now beginning to doubt it. I have not yet come to a conclusion one way or the other, but very soon he will give proof to us one way or the other.

If any department is being run at a loss year after year, at such a large percentage of loss as in the ratio of earning 50 cents and spending 70 cents, well, there must be something very wrong. Of course, for the time being something can be wrong, but there must be a prospect of the wrong being remedied. Now, what is the prospect? It cannot be that the Hon. Minister will tell us, “ Look here, I am new to the task. The

Hon. Minister has had this baby with him for such a long time that we even forget who had the responsibility for it before him, because for so long he has himself had the responsibility.

Let him even tell us what he is trying to do with the Railway. What is his co-ordinated plan for the transport system of this country from the angle of the Railway? During the decade in which the Hon. Minister has had responsibility for Communications and Works and since then for Transport and Works, I know that new problems have arisen. How has the Minister tackled the new problems? Is he going to follow the beaten track and say, “ The problems are too much for me to solve ”? That is not the answer any efficient man can give when any problems face him.

The solution to the question lies in the interrelation of all forms of road traffic, other forms of land traffic, with the Railway traffic. That is the question that especially affects every part of the Island; more so, the south and the middle parts of the Island.

The co-ordination of all forms of other traffic with the railway has been a matter on which hon. Members have spoken, and I cannot add very much to it by repeating what has been said. But there is one other matter in which I say that the Hon. Minister has shown a very great lack of imagination, and that is this. Repeatedly, year after year in the State Council, and now here, Members from the North have asked that the ancient form of sea traffic that is peculiar to the northern part of the Island should be resuscitated.

Now when you raise that question, there immediately arises the question of ports. We raised it on the last occasion, and we raised it again this time, but what does the Hon. Minister say? He tries to make a joke of it. That is not proof of efficiency. What did the Hon. Minister say? He replied to the hon. Member for Kopai (Mr. Vanniasingham) on the occasion of the last Budget that he was appointing a Committee and that when he had done so he would seek the advice of the hon. Member for Kopai. I suppose he thought it was a very good joke. Well, you have to resort to jokes occasionally when you are failing in efficiency. Of course, you can be very efficient in joking as well. Well, when



that matter was referred to by the hon. Member for Vaddukkoddai (Mr. Kanagaratnam) in the present Budget Debate, then the Hon. Minister said that he was waiting for advice. In other words, he had forgotten about the Committee he was going to appoint.

This is not a small question. During the course of the Budget Debate a number of hon. Members have raised the question of shipping and sea transport. But now there is this also. When we do anything in this country, we like to do it on the grand and lose also on the grand.

Between India, our nearest country, and Ceylon, there is the possibility of starting a local industry in the form of carrying passengers, and even goods. I can tell the Hon. Minister that for centuries, for over a thousand years, there has been passenger traffic between India and Ceylon, especially with the northern and north-western parts of Ceylon, by country craft. Today it is not possible to carry on that passenger traffic because every port, except the ports of Colombo and Galle, is closed, and no facilities are afforded for the use of country craft, or sailing vessels, in order to carry passengers between India and Ceylon. Now, Sir, time after time, year after year, we have come here and said, "Open one of these ports and leave it to the enterprise of the local men who are trained seamen, who have seamanship running in their blood, to do the rest." What does the Hon. Minister do? He either turns it into a joke, or tries to avoid giving a reply to that point. I hope that at least this time he will stand up to the test, and give a reply.

The point is this. Between certain portions of Ceylon and South India the distance is only twenty-five or thirty miles—at the most thirty—but you do not give opportunities for the people to turn their talents to good use. Instead of earning a legitimate living by plying a legitimate trade, they turn their energies into another direction, and what do we find? Large-scale smuggling is carried on because their manhood asserts itself. The people who cannot engage themselves in seamanship in legitimate trade by carrying passengers between the two shores, take to smuggling all types of prohibited articles like opium, ganja, and so on. That is what happens by obstructing the manhood of these

people from engaging itself in a trade in which they have been trained for ages.

What does the Hon. Minister say in regard to this problem? He says, "We have to establish quarantine." Establish quarantine—yes, that is why the appeal is made to Government. When it came to the question of the Hon. Minister flying from Colombo to Kankasanturai and over to Madras, taking as his companion the hon. Member for Galle, there was no difficulty of establishing quarantine. There was no difficulty of organizing for air hostesses to keep them company and see that they travel in comfort. There was no difficulty at all. There is quarantine established at the Kankasanturai air port.

But when it comes to the question of conveying poor passengers from here to the other side of the narrow channel, quarantine is an insuperable difficulty. I think that would be difficult for an inefficient man; it should not be difficult for an efficient Minister who wants to retain his reputation for efficiency.

I do not want to dilate unnecessarily on this question, but I do want to say this: that the people in the Northern Province have a large volume of communication to carry on with the people in some parts of South India due to cultural and other affinities. There is a large amount of traffic in pilgrims between the Northern Province and South India. Monthly, weekly, almost daily, there are pilgrims going from Jaffna, or even from certain portions of the Eastern Province, to South India.

How is a man from, say, Kankasanturai to go to a place like Point Calimere on the other side, which is just thirty miles across? He has to go down to Medawachchiya, from there to Talaimannar, pass on to Dhanushkodi and go round about to Point Calimere taking about thirty hours over a journey which he would be able to do in twice thirty minutes, if our ports were open.

We have raised this question before, and it is for the Hon. Minister to develop this form of transport and help in building up an industry in passenger traffic. For that, all that the Minister has to do is to open up for passenger



[Mr. Chelvanayakam.]

traffic just one of the ports which were open from time immemorial till 1914. They have been closed only for the last thirty-four years.

Now, I say, Sir, that in respect of this matter which is a question of policy, the Minister is silent, the Six-year Programme is silent, and there is not a word said about it except for an occasional joke or two.

5.15 P.M.

**Dr. Colvin R. de Silva** (Wellawatta-Galkissa): May I be permitted to seek to assist the Hon. Minister of Transport, if he is not averse to being a little assisted, on some of the problems which, fundamental to our economy, it falls to his lot to attempt to solve?

If finance is the life-blood of a modern economy, development of communications certainly provide the very basis of its existence, and in a little country like Ceylon, what the Hon. Minister has to realize, if I may so remind him, is that to look at the problem of transport piecemeal is inevitably to fall into error. There is no other country where the whole question of unifying communications *via* a comprehensive outlook, is not only pressing, but so easy and possible, as Ceylon, because we are a little country, an island, with an already developed system of communication, as far as roads are concerned, in comparison with most Asiatic countries, and it should be easy for the Hon. Minister of Transport to look at the whole problem in a comprehensive way.

The question of sea transport has been brought to his notice. There is the question of river transport. The question of road transport has been referred to, and the perennial difficulties of the Railway. Now, there is no use in the Hon. Minister's looking at the Railway problem exclusively from the point of view of how to make the Railway, as such, a paying concern. Indeed, if you look at it in that way, it is, I think, readily arguable that the railways in Ceylon are doomed to be a loss, a failure, for the reason that, as far as railway economics go, it would appear in modern times, with the development of the internal combustion engine and the heavy oil engine, simultaneously with

the tarred road, that the whole possibility of the Railway being an economic concern has depended upon the length of haulages. Unless goods in adequate quantity have to be hauled over long distances, it is now more economic and cheaper to haul by road. It is precisely that fact that brings the necessity for what this Government is pleased to term the co-ordination of road and rail transport. I, for my part, would like to suggest to this Government that "co-ordination" is a term which merely allows an escape-way from the problem, and if they would address themselves to it along the line of the necessity not for co-ordination, which is a concept flowing from the Government, merely coming in to regulate the so-called private enterprise, but would use the term "unification of the transport system", I think by that very terminological act the Hon. Minister of Transport will find that a new light is thrown on the problem.

The railways are State-owned. Now, it is not merely because the railways are State-owned that the unification of the transport system calls for the State-ownership, that is, the nationalization, of the bus system in particular; and I would include personally the lorry system too. The whole of the road and rail transport system manifestly, even in the view of the Government, requires to come under the same co-ordination scheme. The Hon. Minister seeks, or at least has told us in other spheres, that what he is contemplating is what he calls public companies. I do not want to go into that in detail, because it is not the proper time. The point I wish to make is this. The public company idea is the effort to perpetuate the private interests in the form of a regulated enterprise. But it is precisely because, like postal communications, railway communications and road communications are fundamental to the functioning of our economy, that State-ownership, that is, the possibility of an over-all, comprehensive and permeating policy in the interests of the community, can govern the work of transport. It is for that reason that nationalization is needed.

There is another reason. When you take an essential service of that nature, without which neither the community



nor the social group can function, you are, by allowing precisely the present system, that is, the private monopoly system, only creating a special right of private taxation as against the community in certain monied groups. Now, I would suggest that the Hon. Minister should, once more, in this matter too, take a lesson from a country which happens to be his *bête noire*. Today, it is only in the U.S.S.R. as yet that road, rail, sea and air transport are the subject of a co-ordinated plan. I am sorry to have to refer to that country beyond the iron curtain which he prefers to leave there, but in the interests of the efficiency which he himself professes to subserve, I would suggest that he request his advisers to read the literature on the subject.

Why do I say this? I find that the Hon. Minister is just now paying a tremendous amount of attention to the development of certain air-lines. It is not a bad idea, but the continuous development of fresh aspects of modern transport, without any concept of the relationship between that development and the failure on the railway side, leaves us wondering whether this is not more a chase after modern fashions than a development along a unified plan. Air transport as within Ceylon, just like rail transport, can never become an economic proposition for, just as in the case of rail transport the length of the haulage is fundamental to its economics, similarly, the distances to be covered are fundamental to the economics of air-transport and air haulage.

It may be excellent propaganda to announce to the country that our Permanent Secretary, our Civil Servants and the like are to save an enormous amount of time by rushing by plane from Colombo to Trincomalee, and so on, but looked at from the point of view of a population which has to find easy methods of locomotion, that can never be an economic proposition.

On the other hand, sea and river transport are two aspects of our transport system which, for some peculiar reason, constitute the blind spot of every Transport Minister we have had, including the present one. In an island so completely girt by the sea, in an island in which there are so many rivers flowing to the sea which the Hon. Min-

ister of Agriculture and Lands is intending to control, and in an island where we still have, as a legacy from the Dutch, a certain outline of a canal system, which properly looked into can be further developed, one can see how an imaginative and efficient Minister of Transport could appreciate the problem in a scientific way in relation to the contemporary needs of our economy.

I also wish to make reference to the Port Commission in relation to this question, although that department comes under a separate Head. The problem of the Port Commission relates itself to the transport question and also to the problem of labour that necessarily comes under this branch. The Colombo Port is the outlet for the undiversified agricultural export economy, of which the Hon. Minister of Finance has spoken to us so much. I see in the papers a very insidious propaganda has been started as to the cost of that Port with a view to suggesting that it is due to the competitive position between labour units. That is more probably dealt with under Port Commission, but the Hon. Minister of Transport must look at it in another way. Firstly, must the Colombo Port continue to be the sole centralized outlet and inlet for our export and import trade? Secondly, does he or does he not intend to develop, at least in a subsidiary way, but not in a casual way, certain other historic ports we may have, whose development should surely be related by him to such development as the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands, for instance, is intending with regard to his Gal Oya Scheme and the like.

You will see, therefore, that if he will look at his transport problem not merely as a narrow problem of transport techniques, but as the fundamental problem of providing a communication system to a unified concept of economic development, he himself, far from being a mere legatee of the success of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands, would be a contributor to the ideas of economic development of the country.

Finally, with regard to the labour problem. I do not propose to set out upon an onslaught on the Hon. Minister on that point. He knows our views with regard to his policy on the matter. We know his views, and I think



[Dr. Colvin R. de Silva.]

swords have to be crossed in other arenas more effectively than here. But the point is this. The Hon. Minister of Transport must remember that Governments, in contemporary times, have an obligation in respect of the labour force and the wages system, and the conditions of work differ from the concepts of the 19th century. In the 19th century the Government considered that its duty was not to fall behind the competitive position in the private-enterprise field, but today Government has, not only as a large employer of labour, but necessarily as an expandingly large employer of labour, to understand, as in many countries it does understand, that it must set an example to employers. In other words, its standards should be such that the failure of any other employer to conform to them can be considered a lack in others, and not *vice versa*, that we must come, for instance, to this House and point out to the Hon. Minister that his standards fall below the level of any particular set of private employers.

Now, that does not mean the mere provision of canteens along with a copious quantity of needless propaganda to the workers. It does not mean making occasional decorative bows in the direction of the necessity of trade unionism while continuing a policy of undermining trade unionism. It means recognizing, in the first place, that the Hon. Minister of Transport and his Government as an employer of labour must expect to face its labour force in the same manner as the employers elsewhere. In other words, the paternity of the State is not a substitute for the rights of the working class, and when on that field friction is generated, quarrels are precipitated, and differences develop, it is necessary for the Government to remember that it cannot, at that stage, bring in so-called considerations of State in order to deal with what is essentially an employer-worker problem. That is the Hon. Minister's special responsibility, because he happens to control the Public Works Department, which controls the largest labour force, I think, in the Island.

Therefore, if I may sum up in a few sentences what I have to say to him on the economic side, I would suggest to

him that, since he is already looking to the upper atmosphere for his aerial development, when he next goes up in an aeroplane for the purpose of pleasure, he should combine it with a little business and take an aerial view of the transport problem, and when he looks down from those upper regions, where, I trust, the rarefied atmosphere will enable him to shed some of the prejudices which he cannot help but cherish on mother earth—then, I trust, he will take a bird's eye view, a broad view, a comprehensive view of his problems in the setting of the new economy which needs to be developed in this country.

5.30 P.M.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I am grateful to hon. Members for the moderation with which they have criticized these votes. I anticipated blood and thunder, sharp words. I am thankful that during the first year of the life of this House, the two sides of the House, who are as poles apart in their views, should have discussed problems connected with the departments under my charge, in such a friendly atmosphere.

I thank the hon. Member for Wellawatta-Galkissa for the sermon he preached, for the "Sermon on Mount Lavinia." He took me up into the air, and I saw that his head was in the clouds and that his feet were of clay! The hon. Member reminded us that he and I were as poles apart in our views and thoughts, and that the real clash between us would come not in this House but outside. I admit that. There is a wide divergence of views between us, and also in our methods. I believe in peaceful persuasion: the method of free, frank discussion. That is the method we, on this side, always use, and I am beginning to feel certain that by the end of another four years we shall have convinced the other side that ours is the correct method!

Certain questions were asked about the departments under my charge. I am thankful for small mercies; because some hon. Members did not forget that the work of at least some of my departments is being done efficiently. Of course, the hon. Member for Kankesan-turai doubts whether any of the departments are efficient!



I shall now deal with some of the points raised. I shall start with the ports. Certain Members seemed to be under the impression that the opening of the ports in Jaffna to passenger traffic is a very simple affair. A notification in the Gazette, and hey presto, the ports in Jaffna would be opened to free passenger traffic, and people could travel between Jaffna and India with ease!

I want to remind hon. Members of the reason why direct passenger traffic between Jaffna and Indian ports was stopped. It was stopped because we wanted to live in Ceylon free from epidemics. If we allowed the free entry into Ceylon of smallpox, chicken-pox, plague and all the other allied diseases, by not enforcing any kind of quarantine regulations, we would all soon be exterminated in this Island.

It was for that reason that Mandapam Camp was established, and free and unrestricted entry of passengers from India was stopped, and they were required to go through the quarantine camp at Mandapam, to stay there for a number of days. That was why vaccination was insisted upon; that was why passengers who were allowed to come in without detention at Mandapam were required to report themselves to a doctor for 14 days after arrival in Ceylon.

I did promise on the last occasion that I would look into the question of opening the Jaffna ports to passenger traffic, and see how quickly I could get some of these ports opened. Today those ports are open to goods traffic. When a port is opened to passenger traffic, we must have a quarantine station somewhere near by. We must have the equivalent of Mandapam Camp, situated either in Ceylon or in India. We must take the passengers to a quarantine camp, look after them for the requisite period. We must have two such camps, one for those coming through Mannar, and the other for those coming through Kayts and Valvettiturai.

The cost of putting up such a camp would be Rs. 1,100,000, and the running expenses, Rs. 41,000 a year. Then there would have to be a customs house at Kayts, for which the buildings would cost Rs. 214,000 (capital expenditure). The recurrent expenditure would amount to Rs. 25,000 a year. Then we

shall need a police station at Kayts, which would mean a recurrent expenditure of Rs. 64,000 a year.

All this expenditure in order that some people may have the pleasure of crossing that 21 miles stretch of sea, in *katamarans* or steam boats or launches. That is going to cost us Rs. 2,300,000 in capital expenditure, and Rs. 131,000 a year in recurrent charges.

Hon. Members will now understand that it is not such an easy matter to open the ports of Jaffna to passenger traffic with India. We are on the edge of a continent in which every kind of disease is rampant. We have had plague imported here from that country, and now even our tea bushes are affected by blister blight—

**Dr. Perera:** Did that also come from India?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Yes. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands will tell you that it came from India, and not from South Africa or Russia. Of course, we had other "blight" coming in from Russia, but not blister blight! Blister blight we seemed to have received for good.

So much with regard to the opening of ports in Jaffna. I hope to get the hon. Member for Kopai to sit on a small committee, where he will be able to get all these facts and figures. We are trying to make arrangements, on a small scale, to allow a certain number of passengers to come over, under limited quarantine, on certain conditions to be laid down by the doctor examining them. The necessary regulations will have to be worked out in consultation with those concerned.

I hope I have said enough to convince hon. Members that I have not left the matter entirely unattended to.

Turning to the P.W.D., my hon. Friend the Member for Galle said that this Department was the bottle-neck, and that sufficient work had not been done during the last year. The hon. Member will please listen to the facts I am going to give. I do not want any one to go away and say rude things about the P.W.D. at any rate in connexion with last year's work.



[Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala.]

Last year's record Budget provided for 290 items of work to be carried out by the P. W. D., costing Rs. 13,000,000. The number of items, work on which was completed earlier in the year, was 81; partly completed (up to last March), 2; number of works started, 167; works for which tenders have been called for, 5; works held up and stopped by Heads of Departments concerned, 3; works not started, 2.

In regard to the two works not started, (sub-heads 285 and 268): plans and bills of quantities were completed by the Chief Architect and sent to the Executive Engineer, Construction, to call for tenders, in respect of sub-head 285. In regard to sub-head 268, this is a large scheme, costing Rs. 825,000. The allocation for the year was Rs. 50,000, and the Chief Architect has completed the plans and has sent them to the Head of the Department concerned and has asked the latter to indicate the order of priority.

Out of a list of 290 items of works, only 5 have been held up. There are unavoidable delays over acquisition proceedings. There is not one item in last year's Budget work on which has not been started today, except in the few cases where we cannot get the land on which to build.

That is the record of the Public Works Department. It is a record, in the sense that not one item of work included in the Budget for last year has not been either finished, partially finished, or started. That alone ought to prove to the hon. Member for Kankesanturai that he should never change his mind!

I now come to the Railway. Hon. Members said that it was not a paying concern. They must not forget that at one time, not long ago, it was a paying concern. It has paid into revenue Rs. 26,000,000. It was a paying concern in 1943-44, 1944-45, and 1945-46—[Interruption]—yes, it may have been due to fortuitous circumstances—

**Dr. Colvin R. de Silva:** I am glad you have mastered the term!

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** When the Railway was losing in the years 1935-1938, they said, "For Heaven's sake,

give it away". Now it is losing again, but I am glad the hon. Member for Wel-lawatta-Galkissa sees no reason why we should give it away. It is a utility service, and therefore, according to my Friends opposite, it should not pay, it need not pay. "It is only a unified system of transport, that we want"—

**Dr. Colvin R. de Silva:** That will pay.

**The Hon. J. Kotelawala:** If we want to make it pay, then we must do certain things.

I shall give the House some comparative figures. The expenditure on coal in 1938-39 was Rs. 2,500,000; the same quantity of coal is today costing us Rs. 13,500,000—

**Mr. S. A. Silva:** For the same quantity?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Yes, we are running the same mileage, 500,000 a year.

For the same reasons, there has been an increase in the cost of establishments. On Sunday pay, we spent in 1938-39, Rs. 300,000. The provision in the Budget for 1948-49 is Rs. 1,400,000, an increase of over Rs. 1,000,000. We have improved the conditions of service of our workers, as evidenced by the increased payment for Sunday pay—

**Dr. Colvin R. de Silva:** A rupee is now worth only one-third its pre-war value.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** In 1939 we did not pay anything on account of cost of living allowance. Today our expenditure in the Railway on that score amounts to Rs. 14,000,000. If you add this Rs. 14,000,000 to the Rs. 1,500,000 paid out on account of Sunday pay, you get a total of Rs. 15,500,000. Remove this expenditure, and your loss on the Railway vanishes—

**Dr. Colvin R. de Silva:** A typical piece of Transport thinking!

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Why do not our Friends opposite say that these too are "fortuitous circumstances"?

**Dr. Colvin R. de Silva:** They are not. We have compelled you to make those payments to the workers.



**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** We are spending Rs. 15,000,000 on those two items alone, apart from the excess expenditure on coal. When we add these three items, we arrive at a total which fully accounts for the loss on the Railway.

5.45 P.M.

I will tell you some of the things that the Railway is doing. Hon. Members do not know these things. I do not know whether hon. Members realize the number of passengers which the Railway carries a day. The Railway carries 76,000 passengers every day.

**Dr. Colvin R. de Silva:** Not enough!

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Out of 6,000,000 people, what is the percentage that travel?

How many tons of goods does the Railway carry a day? It carries 4,000 tons of goods every day—goods that are required to keep us alive, *i.e.* foodstuffs—goods both imported and for export.

The number of miles run a day by the Railway is about 17,000.

The main point to keep in mind is this. In a nationalized service like the Railway if the people of the country are all out to look after their national interests and say "This Railway is ours, we must all look after it", we will have very little difficulty in keeping these trains clean. The hon. Member for Galle, I believe, once said that he travelled from Galle in a white suit and that by the time he got out of the train it was dirty.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I became your sweeper.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I remember there was a complaint from the Railway people that some passengers found it awkward when the hon. Member for Galle travelled by train.

I will tell you how the public has treated us in some ways. 35,536 electric bulbs have been deliberately destroyed since 1945, *i.e.*, an average of 10,000 bulbs per annum. Then, 31,000 feet of dynamo belting for lights had to be replaced. Is it any wonder that we find it difficult to keep our trains clean when bulbs, and so on, are stolen? The only way we can prevent it is to make the public and the workers understand that

it is their railway, and their property and that can only be drilled into them by persuasion and kindness. It is only then that we can achieve that efficient socialism that we are all dreaming of.

Then the question of 'nationalization' was discussed. It is a very nice term—

**The Chairman:** I objected to the use of the word 'nationalization'. 'Unification' of the railway transport is what was used.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Quite right. It is that that we are after. We have tried the experiment at Kataragama this year. Anybody can buy a ticket from anywhere to Kataragama and they will be taken there. We have provided a bus service which would take passengers from the nearest station to Kataragama. We are doing the same thing with regard to Nuwara Eliya and other places. Today, goods can be sent from anywhere right to the door of the consignee—straight from the goods shed to the consignee. Formerly one had to go round, take one's Way Bill, stand outside in a queue, and finally remove the goods or luggage in a bullock cart. Now the Railway delivers the goods at the door. It is on that principle that we are trying to introduce co-ordination as well as unification of the system.

Will you permit me to talk on the matter of transport today, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman:** Yes, you may.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** As the hon. Member for Ruwanwella said, a certain gentleman is coming out to go into this matter and see what best we can do. It is all very well for hon. Members to say, "Take over the bus service and run it yourself". We have a Railway which we are running ourselves, but hon. Members are blaming me for the losses on the Railway. If we take over the bus service, unless we have a system where the worker, the owner and the passenger all combine to make it a national concern, we will never run it at a profit. We will lose all our tyres, bulbs and even all our fares. Therefore, some measures must be introduced whereby the most efficient system can be brought in. The buses that we see running today are owned and run by former bus drivers. Most of them started as



**Mr. Dahanayake:** Was Mr. Cyril de Zoysa also a bus driver?

**The Chairman:** Order, please! Hon. Members must not forget that the Hon. Minister is being pilloried. His position is that of an accused person. A cut of Rs. 10 has been moved in his Vote, which is a censure on the Hon. Minister. Hon. Members must be fair to him and allow him to defend himself.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I have now lost my trend of thought entirely.

As I was saying, all these bus people started in a very small way. Hon. Members would not have forgotten that before the Nelson Plan for the re-organization of the bus services by making them into private companies came into operation, no bus was safe, and even the roads were not safe. If a bus was running to Colombo and there were a number of passengers going in the opposite direction, it turned back and took them to, say, Galle! Those were the conditions that existed then. There was the case of a woman who wanted to board a bus with her child. The conductor took the child into that bus and started off, with the result that the woman had to get into another bus. Those were the chaotic conditions of the bus service before this monopoly system was introduced. The monopoly system brought in all these men together. They formed themselves into private companies, and they are now much better organized.

One day I saw one of our big bus magnates going round his bus yard at 5 o'clock in the morning and getting his buses out. That is the sort of thing he was used to 15 years ago. I think he is now a Managing Director of a Bus Company. His habit was to see that the buses were out of his yard at 5 o'clock in the morning. That is the class of man who is still running the buses. Are we going to take him on as a Government servant? Can you expect Mr. Cyril de Zoysa to be a Government servant? Can we get Muhandiram Rodrigo to come into the Government Service? No! We must make use of their talent in this business till such time as we can evolve a workable scheme. We have not entirely given up the question of nationalization. We

want to work on another principle. When that is done, it will be one of the finest bits of social legislation ever thought of, namely, to give the workers a share in the business.

**Dr. Colvin R. de Silva:** It is 40 years old!

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** It may be 40 years old in that country, but it is new to this country. This would be far better than adopting a scheme where we will have no profits.

Now, the question is whether the scheme is workable in that manner. Let us try that scheme. There is nothing wrong in trying it. If we can have a scheme where the Government and the public and the worker have a share in the business, something behind which the whole country stands, something in which everyone has a concern for its efficient working, that would be ideal. But that is just the spirit which is lacking in the Railway today. If not for the Railway Security Service that we have today, it would not be safe to travel in our trains. The other day a Railway Security Officer, while he was lodging a complaint at the Police Station, was stabbed in the chest by a rowdy.

The hon. Member for Wellawatta-Galkissa says that there is a unified system of air, road and rail travel running beautifully in Russia. I will ask him to give me Stalin's powers for 24 hours, and I will make this the most efficient country in the world. He will not give me that power.

**Dr. Colvin R. de Silva:** Because you are not Stalin!

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Quite right! I do not want to be Stalin.

That is the point. You must have the power behind you. Take the Railway Security Service, for instance. That is one of the powers which compels people to get off railway footboards! Then there are some passengers who do not like to be disturbed; while there are others who keep on talking loudly much to their annoyance. Those are matters of courtesy which will have to be taught to our people. We are trying to tackle this question from the very bottom. We are trying to educate the worker.



The hon. Member for Kotte—or 'Cotta'—said today that the workmen loathe and detest me—

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:** I did not say that.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:**—or that the workers were worried about me. The 60-odd workers that the hon. Member referred to were at my house yesterday. They said, "Sir, you are our saviour." I have got their petition with me now. I jokingly said, "If you bring me on a plate the heads of those people who misled you, I will get you back your jobs." I am very sorry for them, and I am trying my best to do something for them. They now realize that the workers in my departments have only one friend.

6.0 P.M.

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera:** But you have a strange appetite!

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** This new Social Welfare Club is also to make the worker more efficient, give him more leisure and make him love his work more. We want him to love the work he does, not to do the work he loves. Everybody wants to do the work he likes, but we want him to like the work he does. That is our effort.

With regard to the Ceylonization of the departments under me, I think I can claim to have Ceylonized practically all my departments, particularly the Port. If anything, I have done it too rapidly. In the Railway there were 150 foreigners when I took over, and the last man will be leaving next year or so. That means that I have Ceylonized 150 posts there. In the Public Works Department there are only one or two non-Ceylonese; in the Electrical Department none; in the Basic Camp, none; in the Salvage Department, none; in the Air Service, none. That is so far as those departments are concerned.

As far as the Port is concerned, there are a few more than the number given by the hon. Member, but we have to put up with them on account of certain requirements. For instance, you cannot have a pilot bringing in a ship if he has no certificate—

**Mr. Keuneman:** Are you training Ceylonese for these posts?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** If you go to the Port now, you will find the first non-Ceylonese pilot trained after ten years—Mr. Jansen. I will not give you a list of all the men who are being trained for these posts. The first one was Jansen. He has gone through his apprenticeship, and he is employed here now as the first Ceylonese to become a pilot. The second man is I. C. Varney. These boys are sent for training at the age of sixteen. Then there are others—J. R. Wise, his brother, A. Wise, O. G. Henricus and C. R. Joseph. These boys are selected and sent for training. We have a scheme for this. There are eleven pilots, and there are seven apprentices in training. This is not our show. This is an Indian Training School. And unfortunately, when we advertise for these apprenticeships, the parents of these boys do not let them go at this young age of sixteen. Sometimes it so happens that even when these boys do go and return after their apprenticeship, they say that they do not want these jobs.

With regard to divers, as I said before, anybody can dive, but when he comes up and says what is wrong with the ship, nobody would believe what he says unless he has a certificate. It is like the case of a doctor. If you give a man a stethoscope and he examines a patient and says that it is a case of appendicitis—

**Dr. Perera:** Diagnosing appendicitis with a stethoscope! You are a fine doctor!

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** What I mean to say is that the mere fact that a man carries a stethoscope does not make him a doctor.

We have a new scheme where divers are trained here and sent to a shipwright's establishment for a course of apprenticeship.

On the engineering side, the Harbour Engineer was an Englishman, the Deputy-Harbour Engineer was an Englishman, the Chief Assistant, Junior Assistant, and so on, were all Englishmen. But what is the position today?



[Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala.]

The Harbour Engineer is an English man, but the Chief Engineer is a Ceylonese, Mr. Sivaprakasapillai; the Senior Assistant Engineer is Mr. Kulasinghe, and the two junior Assistants to follow them are Perera and Silva, with the B.Sc. (Eng.) qualification. These engineers are taken on after they have passed their examination, and they have to grow up in the Department, so to speak. Now Silva who was taken on in 1936 with his B.Sc., qualification has today risen to the post of Assistant Harbour Engineer, so that on the engineering side the Ceylonization is almost 100 per cent. On the mechanical side, it is the same. There are some Ceylonese who want to pass off as non-Ceylonese. Among these officers there is a Keuneman also. The Chairman of the Port is Hernu, and the Secretary is Van Langenberg. And Van Langenberg, though of Dutch descent, is a Ceylonese. There is Abeysekera, Namasivayam, Perera—

**Dr. Perera:** No Kotelawala?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Unfortunately, no.

So I do not think anybody can ever blame me for not Ceylonizing my departments.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** What about the Fleet Air Arm?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** The hon. Member for Galle sent me a letter just now from one Silva saying that he must have a job; that he was a member of the Fleet Air Arm—

**Mr. Dahanayake:** About 600 of them.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** It is I who started that scheme of a basic training camp, and I took on 300 boys for the purpose of putting them into the workshops for training as mechanics, so that they will know something about machine tools, know the language of machinery, and so on. When I started that, the war was at its height, and the Navy came and said, "Could you get us boys to do the same sort of thing? We will give them Navy pay." They took one of my camps. I laid down the

conditions as to how these boys should be paid, how they should be fed, and so forth, and these 600 boys were then taken on to the Fleet Air Arm. The salary of a Class I mechanic went up to Rs. 150, everything found, including a bacon-and-eggs diet.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** But now they are starving.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** If you are going to employ the whole lot of them again, you will have to continue the war.

Six-hundred air mechanics! Ceylon does not need more than twenty-five; that is more than enough for our show. But we have six-hundred of them in Ceylon. We sent sixty of them to India, twenty-five for our purposes, and the rest to go to the Ratmalana Workshop, or become motor car drivers, or do whatever else they can, and not keep on writing letters to the hon. Member for Galle (Mr. Dahanayake) and to me. This is about the twentieth letter I have myself received from this boy Silva. He was sent to India, but he was rejected by Tatas. Now he is one of the unemployed who would become a first-class communist.

**The Chairman:** Is the hon. Member for Ruwanwella (Dr. Perera) pressing his Amendment?

**Dr. Perera:** No, Sir.

On item 6, can the Hon. Minister give us some details as to the work that has been already done, the public relations and welfare service work? Before that, might I raise the other point, this specialized training abroad. I do not know why it is brought under the Minister's Head.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** The position as regards grants to Welfare leaders in departments is this: We have got a vote of Rs. 10,000. Whenever we have any demand from an association for such things as wireless sets, and so on, or they want money to print their notices, and so on, we want to give them a grant for such purposes. In future we are going to have a scheme where the workers will elect their own Welfare leaders from amongst themselves.



With regard to the item for sending officers abroad for training, the position is this. Formerly, when we had European officers as engineers, architects and other specialists, they used to go on long leave to England and while there take the opportunity of visiting various works and places which were of interest to their particular jobs. If he was an architect who had to build a post office here, he would visit one of these places in England, and then come back and use that knowledge in his work here. Now what has happened? Our Ceylonese officers do not take long leave, and even if they do take fairly long leave, they just go to Nuwara Eliya and come back, or probably stay at home. They are just rustivating or devoting their time to books only. But what one sees is more important than what one reads. So the other day we sent an architect to see the Osmania University, to find out how it has been built. For that sort of thing, we must have a vote, and the Treasury said that as these are specialized officers who are sent, there must be a vote of this nature.

**The Chairman:** There are some official Amendments.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 1,153 in respect of Sub-head 1, item 'Stenographer.'"

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 117 in respect of Sub-head 1, item 'Record Keeper and Binder.'"

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 118 in respect of Sub-head 1, item 'Rent Allowance.'"

Question put, and agreed to.

Question, "That the sum of Rs. 248,755 for Head 144, Vote No. 1, be inserted in the Schedule," put, and agreed to.

Head 144, Vote 1, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

## Head 145.—Colombo Port Commission

*Vote No. 1.—Salaries and Expenses of the Department of the Colombo Port Commission, &c., Rs. 11,755,591.*

**Dr. Perera:** I read in the newspapers that as a result of a certain amount of dissatisfaction among the engineers, or alternatively, because they were dissatisfied with the conditions of work, a number of them had gone on leave, and that, as a matter of fact, some of the ships had to be turned away. I do not know what the present position is. I hope the Hon. Minister will make a statement on that matter.

6.15 P.M.

Then, the second question is the one about seamen. I raised that point last year too when the Hon. Minister promised to look into the matter.

**The Chairman:** We have about 250 local seamen.

**Dr. Perera:** I am raising that question under the general Head. Strictly speaking, it should come under the Master Attendant's Department. It is a matter of policy. I am asking the Hon. Minister to look into the question. He will remember he promised to look into this matter. There are about 250 seamen who have been under training, practically on their own, as firemen, cabin boys, and so on.

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** They are Merchant Seamen.

**Dr. Perera:** Yes. The unfortunate position is that the Colombo Harbour is not a harbour where they take in their full complement. Therefore, they find it difficult to get employment. What happens normally is that when steamers which lack, say, two or three members of the crew, call here, they make up the full complement and take off. There is a rule of the Board of Trade, because, I wrote to the International Union of Seamen and got the information. It confirmed that no merchant vessel can pass through a harbour without its full complement. The Hon. Minister was not quite sure of that, and on the last occasion he undertook to look into the



[Dr. Perera.]

matter. I do hope he has taken steps now and that something can be done to help these people, because, we might be able to build a nucleus for any future eventuality.

Then, I should like to know something about the position of the Chairman of the Port Commission himself. He is a person who has been recruited on agreement. I do not know whether his agreement is over; but, will the Hon. Minister make it clear whether the agreement is to be terminated or whether he intends to continue the officer concerned?

Then, there is one minor point on page 401 on which I want information. I see a whole number of new men provided for.

**The Chairman:** Is the hon. Member referring to the crew of the Dredger?

**Dr. Perera:** Yes. Were they provided for last time? I do not see from where they have been transferred. Can the Hon. Minister enlighten me?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Provision was hitherto made under Head 145, sub-head 6.

**Dr. Perera:** I see.

**Mr. Keuneman:** Mr. Chairman, I have a bone to pick with the Hon. Minister with regard to the Chairman of the Colombo Port Commission.

I am a Member for Colombo Central, which a vast part of the Colombo harbour fringes, and my electorate has a lot to do with this officer and some of his departments. I must say that in the matter of trying to elicit any information, both from the Hon. Minister and the Chairman of the Port Commission, it has been absolutely impossible even to get a reply from them. During the last Budget Debate I asked for certain information, and, just when I was about to discuss it, I received a letter from the Chairman of the Port Commission saying that the matter was going to be urgently attended to and that in a day or two he

would give me a reply. I am still waiting for that reply. During the last Budget Debate I raised an issue with the Hon. Minister on the question of how people are being recruited to the harbour, particularly labour, and he told me that he would give me a reply to that question. I wrote to his Permanent Secretary, and I also wrote to the Department several times on this matter, but I have still not been able to get any reply. I do not know whether the Hon. Minister is even now in a position to give any information or clarify this issue, because it does affect vast numbers of people in my constituency whose sole occupation is work in the harbour. I find that a large number of these people, when they go direct to one of the shipping companies, are told that they cannot get employed under the shipping companies unless they come through the employment exchange. But, when they go to the employment exchange, they are sent to the labour pool, and nobody seems to know what is happening. I have not been able to get any information which, if it was given, would have saved me and the Department a lot of time. So, can the Hon. Minister even now tell us if he is clear in his own mind how this system of employment of harbour labour is done? Once these men are sent to the employment exchange and to the labour pool would they be employed in a particular job, or, would they have to get employment in the harbour direct through the labour exchange? Or, is the Hon. Minister prepared, through the Chairman of the Port Commission, to permit direct recruitment of labour by the shipping companies? I have known cases where men have been taken on by shipping companies but they have not been allowed to enter the Port. I would like to have a clear statement from the Hon. Minister.

The other point I want to raise under this Head is this: The Hon. Minister must be aware that there has been considerable agitation by the Colombo Municipal Council that it should be given the right to supply water to ships. At the present moment, owing to the fact that our harbour is not nationalized, and is still in the hands of foreign companies, these companies are making mints of money by merely



pumping water into boats, for supplying it to ships. The Municipality has been demanding the right to take over this work.

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** They charge a certain amount.

**Mr. Keuneman:** They levy a normal water rate. Is the Hon. Minister prepared to see that the Chairman of the Port Commission grants this facility to the Colombo Municipal Council?

**Mr. Dahanayake:** The Hon. Minister must remember that, consequent upon representations made by several Members of the State Council, a certain Civil Servant was called upon to report on the allegations of bribery and corruption against certain officers of the Colombo Port Commission.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** That report was published.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** The report of the Commissioner was published in May, 1948, and, according to that report the Commissioner held that the procedure in the Colombo Port Commission in respect of appointments of minor employees did seem to have created excellent opportunities for the practice of corruption on a large scale, although it was not possible to bring home the charges to all the people concerned in the matter. The Commissioner was of opinion that the procedure needed to be clarified and revised. I understand that the procedure has not yet been revised.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Who says so?

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I ask the Hon. Minister, what is the use of an inquiry into allegations, and what is the use of a report on them, if the main recommendation of that report is not going to be implemented?

The Hon. Minister has provided for welfare depots and welfare officers in connection with the work in the harbour. I wish to know from him whether he will take early steps to avoid the errors which have been pointed out in the report and to which I have alluded.

**Mr. Keuneman:** I would like the Hon. Minister to give us a statement, if he can, on any progress that has been made in the modernization of the Port. There were proposals which were made some time ago that there should be a reconstruction of the Port so that big ships could come alongside the jetty. There were also various other suggestions made. I hope the Chairman has submitted his own memoranda on the other matters also. I would like the Hon. Minister to make a statement on the lines on which he thinks the Port should be developed and modernized and to what extent any of those plans have been started.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** May I ask another question? In last year's Budget there was an item under Head 145, Vote No. 1, namely, sub-head 48, for housing C.P.C. employees.

**The Chairman:** We shall come to that later. We are now dealing with sub-head 1, Personal Emoluments.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** One does not find that item repeated. I want to know what progress was made in connection with the vote in the last Budget that was passed.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I shall first answer the question of the hon. Third Member for Colombo Central about Port development.

The Port of Colombo is being patronized more and more today by oil ships for bunkering and for taking oil. Taking oil from tankers into ships is rather a dangerous operation because sometimes tankers catch fire. If a fire should occur in this way, it may well spread because oil floats on water. In that case the whole of the 600 acres of our harbour may be on fire. Therefore, we are going to have what one calls an oil jetty, that is, a place where oil ships both bringing in oil or taking oil would be brought into. When oil is pumped into a ship there will be a boom or a bar to prevent water from getting through the boom. That is what is called an oil jetty. Then, there will be two quays for tying up ships on the northern jetty. That is on the north side of the harbour where three or four



[Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala.] ships can tie up. When ships carrying heavy loads come into the harbour, instead of carrying the goods in lighters, we will get the ships to tie up, and with the help of a crane unload the goods into lorries. That is the purpose for which one jetty would be used.

There are also two other jetties to be built where the present passenger jetty is situated. It is to enable four or five ships to tie alongside it, so that in the future when ships come in one need not get into a jolly-boat and row against the sea spray and then climb along a staircase to get to Colombo. We want to have a moving staircase. We will then bring the passenger up to the top of a ship and from it he will be able to go straight to Colombo without any inconvenience. This scheme has now been drawn up, and it has been sent to our Consulting Engineers. Our rough estimates come to Rs. 54,000,000. Of course, it is not a matter of merely lowering cement blocks into the water. That will not be sufficient to make jetties. At present, for the purpose of giving employment to people, we have started making these blocks ourselves. After all, we know how to make the blocks, and people at the Mahara jail will come to our rescue. In this way too we give work to five or six hundred people.

6.30 P.M.

Now the question arises as to how we should set about doing this work. Asking some firm whether they would do this for Rs. 54,000,000 is of no value nowadays because these are works that take four or five years to complete. This work would take at least 15 years to complete. No big firm is prepared to tender for 15 years unless it makes provision for emergencies, strikes, wars, change of Government, and so on. Therefore, we are now thinking of the target estimate scheme that has been introduced by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands; that is, getting work done by firms and paying them for supervision. That is the stage we are in now. The plans are with us, and we propose to evolve some scheme whereby we could start this as early as we can. That is as regards the modernization of the Port.

The next question asked by the hon. Member was about the Chairman of the Port Commission. He has been with us. He has come on an agreement. He has a lot to do with the development of this Port. The first scheme was scrapped on his recommendation. As he is an officer with wide experience, he pointed out the defects of the first scheme. He had experience in Italy and other places. He is a young man, full of energy, and quite capable, and I have asked him whether he would continue to work here for another few years more because we cannot now take non-Ceylonese on the permanent staff. I have not had a reply from him yet. We will take every European we can get in future on agreement. That is one policy of mine.

The hon. Member wanted to know how labour is recruited. Labour today is overflowing there. The method of recruiting labour by these private companies is as follows: they themselves bring the labourers and produce them before the Port Commission who gives them a badge. That is for private parties and that is a privilege.

**Mr. Keuneman:** The trouble is that you do not give a badge.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** The Wharfage Company or the Cargo Boat Despatch Company say that they want to employ a particular man and he is allowed to be employed. But Government Employees are taken from the Government Employment Exchange.

If the hon. Third Member for Colombo Central wants to employ somebody in his own household, he can do what he likes. He can go to the Employment Exchange and look at all the faces and not take any. The same right is given to every private employer. But when the landing companies guarantee a labourer, he is given the ticket and the passport photograph so that he will be allowed to enter the harbour on that basis. The Government employees are taken from the Employment Exchange.

Now I may tell hon. Members about the pool. Once these people are given the ticket and the passport to enter the harbour, they cannot be sent away when there is no work. In the



olden days they used to be sent away; they used to attend the hon. Member's meetings at Galle Face. Now when they have work, they cannot attend meetings. Now they have to sit by the quay-side for eight hours. Formerly we used to pay them and ask them to come on the following day. That we found was not advisable. So we asked them to sit down and get their money.

**Dr. Perera:** That is not the policy.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** If that is not the policy, he must be knowing better than myself. The pool labour has to stay in the harbour for eight hours.

**Dr. Perera:** The pool labour that you have got is an entirely different entity from the contract labour. The contractors have their own labour. It is only when there is a shortage that they draw from the pool which the Government is maintaining.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Perfectly right. I shall tell him something more so that he can explain better next time. Supposing contractor A has 100 labourers and contractor B 200 labourers and contractor B has no work to do, contractor B has to pay for his men, namely, the 200 labourers. He has to pay for his men, and he can do whatever he likes with them. But if both the contractors have work and there is a shortage of labour, we get men from the pool and send to those people. But contractor "A" or contractor "B" pays for the pool labourers.

**Dr. Perera:** Quite right.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** We draw from the pool daily so that it is being gradually absorbed. From some 1,000-odd men it has now been reduced to about 200. The point is that as long as the pool exists, the hon. Members cannot send their constituents to work!

**Mr. Keuneman:** There is one point that I want to clear up. I think the Hon. Minister misunderstood what I was driving at. I am aware that, in certain cases, private firms do select their own labour—they have been given that privilege—but I have known cases where,

when private firms bring persons there, the Government authorities refuse them the necessary passes to enter the harbour.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** That is perfectly true. Contractor "A" might select somebody who should, properly speaking, never be allowed inside the harbour at all for offences he has committed perhaps more than a hundred times; who may probably be a *ganja* dealer or one of those *kappenkarayas* as we call them. Those people are not allowed to come in.

**Mr. Keuneman:** I know of men who have good certificates given to them by the Department who have also been refused permission to enter.

**Dr. Perera:** What about the water question?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** The water question is a very old one. Even long before the hon. Member had the honour of going into the Colombo Municipal Council, that body was trying to make a lot of money out of this water question. They were trying to raise the rate for water as high as they could because it was an important source of revenue for them. Now the rate has come to Rs. 5 per 1,000 gallons and that is the highest.

For the information of hon. Members I would like to mention that the rate for water in a place like Djibouti is lower than in Colombo. Djibouti is a place in Arabia.

**Dr. Colvin R. de Silva:** No, Djibouti is not in Arabia—it is in the north-eastern corner of Africa.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** It is a French port, and if you go there once you will never go again.

**Dr. Perera:** How do you know?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Because I have been there. It is in a very parched and dry country and they have a fine system of supplying water there to ships. This port is on the route to Abyssinia. There the water rate is very much less than in Colombo and that is a most curious thing.



[Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala.]

The Colombo Municipal Council has been going on steadily increasing this water rate and now it has come to Rs. 5 per 1,000 gallons. If ships do not get water at a reasonable rate, as compared with the rates in other parts of the world, they will be inclined to keep away from this place.

We have been telling the Municipal Council that we would buy the water from them on a metre system. They get nearly Rs. 400,000 to Rs. 500,000. I can easily say that they are running the whole of their Waterworks Department entirely on the money which they derive from this source. From the money that they get from the sale of water to the port they run the whole of their water works—the maintenance of their plants at Labugama and Colombo, payment of their Inspectors and for everything. We threatened the Colombo Municipal Council that we would go to the extent of digging our own wells or getting water from the Kelani Ganga and purifying it or doing something in order to supply the slips. That is the position, and we cannot afford to allow the Municipality to carry on, just as some of the small U.Cs. are doing, by selling water at all sorts of prices for utility purposes.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** What about Mr. C. E. P. Jayasuriya's Report?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** That report was published, and it is pretty obvious that it must have been put into practice and the conditions laid down adopted. Otherwise, there would be complaints today. Next October when this new system of Welfare Officers comes in, and when they themselves have selected their own Welfare Officers, there will probably be no bribery and corruption as is said to be prevailing now.

With regard to the question of bribery in the harbour, or anywhere else for that matter, you cannot really prevent it. It is entirely left to the self-respect of the individual who takes bribes. Any number of Jayasuriya's reports will not stop it. We are, however, trying a new process which is part of our plan of efficient socialism.

**Dr. Perera:** What about Seamen?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** What kind of seamen?

**Dr. Perera:** Merchant seamen.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Merchant Seamen are so few. Unfortunately there are no ships that come here—

**Mr. Perera:** No perfect crews?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** As you say, there are no perfect crews. A ship does not come here and pay off its crew and take somebody else. We have a place where they register. The seamen would want to know the destination where they will be turned out. Suppose a seaman is taken, and he is told that he would be knocked off at Hong Kong, would say that he wants to come back to Ceylon; but at Hong Kong there is a seaman who is a Negro and who is prepared to work.

Therefore, we are trying our best to find a method of getting groups of Ceylonese people together and having a sort of policy—team policy, 1st, 2nd and 3rd men. This group can go in one ship. Now if one man is wanted, and if there is a Chinaman, they prefer to take the Chinaman. Until we get the seamen into groups, until we get shipping establishments, these difficulties are bound to exist and we have to put up with that difficulty.

**Dr. Perera:** But ships go away without the full complement. If the full complement is insisted upon in the harbour by the Master Attendant, then there will be some work for the local seamen.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** The Master Attendant's Department looks after our craft. Therefore the seamen who are engaged by us for our boats are not people who want to go outside. They live in their homes.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member's complaint is that ships are going with a crew which is less than the full complement.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** If we can forcibly send people like that, I will only be too glad to do that. When a ship comes they may be short of 5



lascars and engineers and they may ask, "Can you get these men?" If there are two Chinamen and a boilerman required who are also hanging about here—in Ceylon you have a lot of these people along with our men who are prepared to go——

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** What they say is that the ship should not be allowed to go without a full complement.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Without taking our men?

**Mr. Chelvanayakam:** Ships sometimes go without taking the required number of men.

**Dr. Perera:** There is a Board of Trade rule.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** That is a new problem, and we will have to inspect ships.

**Dr. Perera:** Without the Master Attendant's certificate the ship cannot leave the harbour.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** That is a new point. If you register yourself, we will send you also.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** In last year's Budget there was an item "Housing C. P. C. employees, Rs. 364,000." This has been deleted this year. I want to know whether houses have been put up, and if so how many.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** All these housing schemes are under Loan Funds.

**The Chairman:** That is on page 568, item No. 15.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** What is the progress that has been made with the scheme of last year?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Some of the building sites are being prepared. If the hon. Member goes to Bloemen-dhal road he would not recognize the place. The levelling is taking place now.

**Dr. Perera:** That is where you knocked off two men?

**The Chairman:** Any other question?

6.45 P.M.

**Dr. Perera:** One more question, Sir. The Chairman of the Port Commission was asked to put up a scheme for de-casualization. How far has he succeeded?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** That scheme of de-casualization is what I explained to you. When one person is absent, another is got from the pool.

**Dr. Perera:** Apart from that there was a whole new scheme that he was trying.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Yes, that is for every Company to say how many men they must have and about wages, and so on. As a matter of fact, my colleague, the Hon. Minister of Labour and Social Services, and I are going to the Harbour now to ensure that things are done well.

**Dr. Perera:** Going to the Harbour to get some garlands?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** To get garlands, not after arranging union meetings. We want the people to have unions not only for the purpose of getting more pay but also to get them to work like human beings and like men—to work 8 hours a day for 12 hours' pay. That is what we are after.

**The Chairman:** Will the Hon. Minister now move his Amendments. There are a number of them.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 900 in respect of sub-head 1, item 'Docking and Slipping Master, Graving Dock and Patent Slip'—Master Attendant's Department".

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 17,584 in respect of sub-head 1, item 'Engineers of Tugs'—Tugs".



**Dr. Perera:** Why is this being increased?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** That is a new rate of pay.

**Dr. Perera:** Why a new rate of pay?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** These Amendments are required to make provision for revision of salaries.

**Dr. Perera:** You mean new scales?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** No, somebody asked for a revision saying that he was going away. Owing to certain circumstances, certain salaries had to be revised and these Amendments are required to make provision for those revised salaries which have been approved by the Treasury.

**Dr. Perera:** I cannot follow the Hon. Minister. Does that mean that there was discontent or some such thing in the Harbour Engineer's Department?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** No. After the Soulbury Constitution was introduced, and with all this talk of Ceylonization, we had to find a method of keeping these officers back. We had to get them to sign contracts and promise to get their salaries revised in order to keep them.

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 1,500 in respect of sub-head 1, item 'Mechanical Superintendent' (Harbour Engineer's Department.)"

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 1,350 in respect of sub-head 1, item 'Deputy Mechanical Superintendent'."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 3,150 in respect of sub-head 1, item 'Engineer, Graving Dock and Patent Slip'."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 3,150 in respect of sub-head 1, item 'Foremen: Oil Facilities Officer'."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 150 in respect of sub-head 1, item 'Foremen: Additional Facilities Officer'."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 217 in respect of sub-head 1, item 'Foremen Harbour'."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 960 in respect of sub-head 6, item 'Foremen: Mechanical Foreman'."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 900 in respect of sub-head 1, item 'Foremen: Assistant Mechanical Foreman'."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 3,150 in respect of sub-head 1, item 'Foremen: Boilersmith and Ship Repairer'."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 3,150 in respect of sub-head 1, item 'First Engineer and Dredging Master'."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 2,880 in respect of sub-head 1; New item '2 Survey Assistants (temporary)'."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by



Rs. 2,733 in respect of sub-head 1, New item '4 Telephonists' ''.

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Chairman:** I think the Minister and the House deserve a suspension of 10 minutes.

*Sitting accordingly suspended until 7.0 p.m., and then resumed.*

*Sub-head 5.—Inshore dredging,  
Rs. 190,000.*

7.0 P.M.

**Dr. Perera:** We would like to know the cause of increase of this sub-head.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** This increase in provision was necessitated by the heavy cost of maintenance and repair. I could give more details of this work. Inshore dredging must be carried out in order to permit cargo and coal barges to come alongside the various jetties and wharves to discharge and load their cargoes, and to permit tugs to operate freely and to facilitate the movement of lighters between ship and shore, and *vice versa*. Here, again, due to pressure of work and the 100 per cent. occupation of inshore berths, jetties and wharves, the maintenance of the necessary depths of water by inshore dredging was considerably hampered and neglected. It is therefore necessary that a considerable back-log of inshore dredging should be undertaken if the maximum use of the shallow berths is to be availed of.

*Sub-head 10.—Fumigation, Rs. 1,500.*

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I would like to know——

**The Chairman:** There is no Amendment under that sub-head, but if you only want to ask a question which can be answered by the Minister, I do not mind it.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I want to know why fumigation is not carried out properly in the Port of Colombo. You will notice that the Vote for fumigation last year was Rs. 2,000, while this year it is only Rs. 1,500. That includes Colombo as well as Galle.

It is necessary that everything that comes into port should be fumigated because there is the ever-present danger of the goods carrying with them the plague flea and various other pests.

**The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake:** That depends on the port from which the goods come.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Therefore, the fumigation should be done without leaving room for any dangerous outbreak of disease to occur later. I know that, particularly in the case of Galle, the absence of necessary equipment to carry out fumigation makes us always live in fear that there may be an outbreak of plague in Galle. The position is just the same in Colombo. Measures in regard to fumigation should not be disregarded but should be strengthened.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** The reason why we have only asked for Rs. 1,500 for fumigation is because there was a balance left over from last year. This is an item which brings in revenue. In 1945-46 it brought in Rs. 10,000-odd. In 1946-47 it brought in Rs. 5,000-odd; but last year it has been very much less. This is because, I suppose, fumigation depends on the question whether vessels have come from infected ports. The normal fumigation of freight does not cost us anything, but when shipments are received from infected ports like Port Said, we have to do the work and that costs us more.

As for Galle, there is no fumigation plant there, but I will arrange to instal a plant if it can be had. The hon. Member for Galle himself spends most of his time in Colombo, and is safe to that extent.

**Mr. Chelvanayakam:** On fumigation——

**The Chairman:** Really, there is no Amendment on that.

**Mr. Chelvanayakam:** As fumigation facilities are available only in Colombo, does the Hon. Minister consider extending them to other ports also?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** We will consider it.



*Sub-head 29.—Mechanical plant for handling cargo, working and maintenance, Rs. 32,000.*

*Sub-head 30.—Coal handling equipment, working and maintenance, Rs. 253,000.*

*Sub-head 31.—Medical attention to Workers in Harbour premises, Rs. 5,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** Sub-heads 29, 30 and 31 are all new. Can the Hon. Minister give us some information about them?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Provision has been made under sub-head 29 for mechanical plant to handle cargo, &c., in order to maintain the working of the plant which has already been installed. This greatly facilitates both the loading and unloading of cargo, thereby enabling the quick turn-round of shipping.

**Dr. Perera:** Where is it installed?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** It is in the harbour.

**Dr. Perera:** But this obviously cannot be used except in the small jetty where ships come alongside.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** No, Sir, this is especially meant for handling cargo and consists of cranes, floating cranes, ordinary cranes and various other mechanical equipment which we have bought from the Army. They are only coming into use just now.

Formerly, when a ship was either being loaded or unloaded, I think all hon. Members know, planks were put on to the quayside and workers used to carry the bags on the planks; but now these cranes pick up the bags and convey them to and from the ship. As for stacking of bags, there is now an elevator instead of the old system of men carrying the bags from below to pile them at the top.

The mechanical plant is used for eliminating inhuman conditions of labour.

Sub-head 30 is concerned with coal handling equipment. Formerly, as you know, coal labourers used to appear jet black because they used to be coated with coal dust; but now there is what is

called a "coal sucker" the valve of which is inserted into the ship and the work is done by means of it. This is a new device and a revenue-producing facility because we hire it to coaling agencies just as we hire out our bunkering facilities to oil companies.

Expenditure on medical attention to workers in the harbour premises which comes under sub-head 31 was hitherto distributed among several recurrent sub-heads. It has now been proposed to charge the expenditure to a single sub-head. Under the old system these things took a long time before they were accounted for.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** The Hon. Minister will agree that there is need for an ambulance van in the Port. The present provision is for rickshaws to take workers to hospital if an accident befalls them. Cannot he get an ambulance van?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** We can easily do that. I do not think that rickshaws are used now.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 33,350 in respect of sub-head 33."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 29,000 in respect of sub-head 34."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 67,200 in respect of sub-head 35."

Question put, and agreed to.

*Sub-head 36.—Supply of free midday meal to Government labour in the harbour area, Rs. 420,000*

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 15,000 in respect of sub-head 36."

**Dr. Perera:** There is only one question I want to ask on sub-head 36. The way in which this midday meal is supplied is not at all satisfactory. I know that no plates are provided, and I have seen people taking pieces of dirty



paper to wrap their food. Those conditions should be improved. Will the Hon. Minister look into this matter and provide better amenities as well as better food to these workers?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** The Vote has been increased because the Food Supply Department has raised the price of meals supplied. The midday meal is cooked and supplied by the Marketing Department at a cost of about 30 or 35 cents per meal, and the entire cost is borne by Government.

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 8,000 in respect of sub-head 37."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 52,000 in respect of sub-head 38."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 110,050 in respect of sub-head 39."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 33,000 in respect of sub-head 40."

Question put, and agreed to.

7.15 P.M.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 22,500 in respect of sub-head 42."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 30,000 in respect of sub-head 47."

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 55,000 in respect of New sub-head 56, 'Housing C.P.C. employees.'"

Question put, and agreed to.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Members can now make their observations or raise questions on these sub-heads.

*Sub-head 41.—Issue of rice, &c., to the employees of the Colombo Port Commission at Mahara, Rs. 10.*

**Dr. Perera:** May I ask why this is on a token vote?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** In view of the difficulties experienced by the labourers employed at Mahara in buying their provisions after working hours because of the boutiques being closed by then, the Department buys provisions and sells to the labourers at cost price. This is a trading activity on a very small scale. No losses are incurred. The token vote authorises this service. When conditions become normal, this service will cease. This is another amenity provided for the labourers.

*Sub-head 42.—Coconut Oil Facilities Scheme, Rs. 83,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** Could the Hon. Minister give us some idea of the profit the Government are making on this Scheme? This is a new scheme of pumping oil.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** It was only started this year; although I inaugurated it last year, the scheme comes into operation only this year. Hence I cannot give any information just now, but I will be able to provide the necessary information when the Estimates for next year come up for discussion.

*Sub-head 46.—Scholarship for a student at the London School of Economics and Political Science, Rs. 5,700.*

**Mr. Keuneman:** Will the Hon. Minister state what this scholarship is?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** This is a scholarship award for the purpose of studying in the London School of Economics and Political Science. The Rs. 5,700 provided for is made up as follows:

	Rs.
Separation allowance, Rs. 125 per mensem	1,500
Examination fees, books, medical expenses	2,200
Visits to Continental ports and other contingencies	2,000
	5,700



[Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala.]

The student is B. D. H. J. Silva. The Chief Port Controller was selected to avail himself of this scholarship, and he is now in London.

**Mr. Keuneman:** What is he studying?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** He is studying all the methods of a modern port, in other words, how to handle goods and how the labourers should be treated.

*Sub-head 47.—Motor transport,  
Rs. 49,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** May I have some information about this item?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** This amount is required for the replacement of vehicles which are beyond repair. The vehicles are required for the transport of material and men to the different places where work is in progress.

*Sub-head 48.—Lake scheme, Rs. 49,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** Will the Hon. Minister give some information about the Lake Scheme?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** This is a Scheme to carry out the following necessary works:—

(1) Provision of a shallow lock. There are major repairs to be done in this connexion.

(2) Provision of deepwater locks at Mac Callum Road. These locks have to be repaired. Actually what takes place is this. There is a considerable amount of leakage going on as a result of the wear and tear of the locks. Consequently these locks have to be repaired with new boards and new timber.

(3) Provision of rainfall or sluice valves. This is a maintenance item.

(4) Provision of new lock for Mac Callum Lock. A new one had to be built.

(5) Provision of lake-verges. There are lake-flies all round the lake. We have to overcome the nuisance of lake-flies by having a cement coping round the edge of the lake. The lake-flies go to the water and lay their eggs on the verge. When there is a cement coping, they cannot come down to the water, and consequently that nuisance has been put a stop to.

*Sub-head 50.—Loss on working Mahara Quarries, Rs. 170,000.*

**Mr. Dahanayake:** There is a loss on the working of the Mahara quarries. I believe these quarries are worked by the prisoners of Mahara jail. Is there any reason why there should be a loss on working these quarries?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Yes. This work is carried out by the regular departmental labour as well as the prison labour.

The amount provided is to write off a deficit on working the Mahara quarries during the financial years 1944-45 and 1945-46. The deficit was due: (1) to the heavy working cost mainly caused by a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rd per cent. increase in the wages of daily-paid labour, as recommended by Sessional Paper X of 1945, and the payment of war bonus to labour according to factory conditions; (2) to the heavy increase in the cost of stores, such as jumper steel and so forth; (3) to the low output of hands.

The point that should not be overlooked is that the quarry system is maintained as a task established for convicts to perform functions integral to the policy of the Prisons Department. Metal is broken by prisoners not on an economic or regulated scale, but according to the nature of the crime. There are, what are called, "full-task work" and "half-task" work. If you get a prisoner who has committed a serious crime, then the loss is less, for he will have to do full-task work. But when you get a prisoner who does half-task work, that is, one who had committed a normal crime, the loss is more.

**Mr. Keuneman:** A U.N.P. crime?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Then the loss is nil.

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:** I know a place where the Railway authorities are dumping waste-iron and things like that on a large scale.

**The Chairman:** In the Mahara quarry?

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:** By the quarry. I wish to know why that cannot be disposed of.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Every kind of waste material cannot be disposed of. There is plenty of waste material that is of no value.

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena:** But this waste iron is of much value; thousands of rupees worth of waste iron.



**Dr. Perera:** On the question of the loss on the working of Mahara quarries and the loss on Harbour Works Stores this matter should come up as a separate resolution before the House. You will recollect, Mr. Chairman, that in the present Constitution there is no provision in regard to the losses incurred prior to the coming in of the Constitution. There is a little hiatus on that point. I think this matter had been discussed by the Public Accounts Committee as well. I do not know what the correct procedure should be. I think a special resolution should have been brought up before the House, especially because there is no provision to bring up this matter in the normal Estimates. It is a matter that should be your concern, Mr. Chairman, at the present moment. I should like you to consider the matter because, I think, this is not the only item; there are other items where losses have been incurred prior to the coming in of the Constitution.

**The Chairman:** If it is an excess, I know.

**Dr. Perera:** But this is a question of losses.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** These are between Government accounts.

**Dr. Perera:** That is true, but there is a little difficulty in the Constitution itself.

**The Chairman:** I know if it is an excess. I will look into that matter.

*Sub-head 55.—Purchase of C.P.C. locomotive, Rs. 30,000.*

**Dr. Perera:** Could the Hon. Minister explain this item? What is this C.P.C. locomotive?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** This is a locomotive. A locomotive is an engine. This is to meet the balance sum due to be paid for the locomotive purchased by the C.P.C. railway. That is a Colombo Port Commission railway. They have got a railway there. We purchased the locomotive, and we were short of Rs. 30,000 because the price had gone up. It costs Rs. 135,000.

Question, "That the sum of Rs. 12,202,778 for Head 145, Vote No. 1, be inserted in the Schedule", put, and agreed to.

Head 145, Vote 1, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

#### **Head 146.—Ports other than Colombo**

*Vote No. 1.—Salaries and expenses of the Department, &c., Rs. 179,732.*

**Mr. Dahanayake:** I would request the Hon. Minister to give a little thought to the Port of Galle. As the hon. Member for Wellawatta-Galkissa (Dr. Colvin R. de Silva) so correctly pointed out, if there is a comprehensive scheme of co-ordinating and unifying the transport system in the Island, ports other than Colombo will also have to be considered. It is unfortunate that in the past the treatment meted out to the Port of Galle has been the treatment that a person gets from a step-mother—

**Mr. Keuneman:** The Cinderella!

**Mr. Dahanayake:** The attitude of the Government towards the Port of Galle has been the attitude of a step-mother towards a step-child. The Hon. Minister will admit that the Port of Colombo is overcrowded, and that large sums of money are being spent each year in order to try and meet the situation of congestion. If hon. Members will look at page 397 of the Estimates, they will find that lakhs upon lakhs of rupees are being spent in order to make the accommodation and the available facilities in the Port of Colombo nearer to the demands of the day. Now, the correct thing for the Hon. Minister to do is to try and explore the possibilities of using the Port of Galle as a stand-by. It is very unfortunate that all the items of expenditure allotted for the Port of Galle are items relating to recurrent expenditure. The Port of Galle, as the Hon. Minister is aware, is a very much better port than the Port of Colombo. In the olden days vested interests, in the way of shipping firms and other interested parties, stood against the development of the Port of Galle. Today there is no reason why there should not be a diversion of the development that Government proposes. The main difficulty in



[Mr. Dahanayake.]

regard to the Port of Galle is that during certain times of the year, vessels cannot enter the port because of the presence of certain rocks, and because the sea then is rather rough.

7.30 P.M.

What is necessary, therefore, is the construction of a jetty and the removal of the rocks I have referred to. I am surprised that the Minister has dropped the idea of getting modern equipment for removing the rocks. How does he remove rocks in other harbours? I find a vote for Rs. 300,000 for the removal of rocks in Colombo Harbour, but I find that the provision for a rock breaker has been deleted.

The position today is that the Port of Galle cannot receive the big vessels diverted from Colombo because there are a number of rocks in the harbour, and secondly because there is no break-water at Galle. I want the Minister not to think of the cost of the scheme, but to give some thought to the idea that we should have a stand-by harbour, as an alternative to Colombo Harbour. The Minister will recall that when there were difficulties in the Port of Colombo he looked to Galle for help. The Minister is also aware that at that time, when there was trouble in Colombo Harbour, he diverted certain ships to Galle, and by providing special facilities he had the food ships unloaded at Galle.

If that could have been done under emergency conditions, I do not see why the Port of Galle cannot be permanently improved so that it might bring some benefit to the people of South Ceylon. The Minister has travelled extensively not merely in the electorate I represent but also in the electorates represented by the hon. Members for Baddegama and Weligama, both of whom are the bosom "pals" of the Minister. The Minister ought to know therefore that the prosperity of the people of the entire district, and even the Province, rests on the improvement of Galle Harbour. The Minister has long resisted the claims of Galle Harbour. I shall claim no credit for the improvement of Galle Harbour, and now that the Minister has had two of his men elected for two Southern Province seats—Baddegama and Weligama—I hope he will do

the work and give those two gentlemen the credit for it. All that I want is that the work should be done. Let others take the credit for it.

**Dr. Perera:** On the question of Ports other than Colombo, I listened to the statement made by the Minister about the difficulty of opening the Northern ports to passenger traffic. I regret to say that I am not convinced by what he stated. Certain quarantine arrangements will of necessity have to be made, but when we take into account the general improvement of the whole of the Northern Province that is bound to result from the opening of some of the ports in the Peninsula, the expenditure involved would be well worth while. A modified form of quarantine might cost less. Was the sum mentioned by the Minister (about Rs. 2,000,000) computed on the basis of the total number of people who are likely to come across?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** All will come through those ports.

**Dr. Perera:** Then you should be able to reduce the expenditure on Mandapam Camp. I am not suggesting that Mandapam Camp should be closed down, because some people would continue to come through that camp.

I maintain that the expenditure involved in the opening of the Northern ports to passenger traffic would be worth while, taking into account the development of the country as a whole. I want the Minister to consider the question afresh.

Now that the Minister has permitted the shipment of goods as between the Northern ports and Indian ports, the time may come when, owing to imports of rice from India, it may be necessary to set up a fumigation plant, as was pointed out by the hon. Member for Kankasanturai. In that event, you will in any case be putting in hand some scheme of port expansion for that particular area. I would therefore strongly urge the Minister to reconsider the matter and give thought to the feasibility of opening some of these Northern ports.

**Mr. Chelvanayakam:** On the question of fumigation of rice, one now sees the spectacle of rice being brought all the



way from Burma to Colombo, and then being sent, by an expensive mode of transport to Anuradhapura and beyond, up to Jaffna.

As regards the cost of maintaining a quarantine camp at one of the Northern ports, the estimate given, Rs. 1,500,000, has I think been highly exaggerated. At Thattaparai Camp, which is smaller than the Madapam Camp, I notice from the Estimates (page 278) that the expenditure on Personal Emoluments is only Rs. 13,000 a year; other expenditure totals Rs. 51,000—altogether Rs. 64,000.

Somebody has given the Minister an inflated estimate of the cost in order to frighten him off the project.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** A certain amount of income is derived from these quarantine camps. I gave only the expenditure figures. These quarantine camps are to a certain extent money-earning concerns.

Be that as it may, there is one important point which must be borne in mind. The hon. Member for Ruwanwella must admit that we cannot afford the luxury of a number of modern ports for this Island. We have so many other important items of work to be carried out that would raise the standard of living of our people. We cannot afford to maintain first-class ports in Galle, Kayts and Trincomalee in addition to Colombo. Of course, I admit that it would be very good if we could afford to have all these ports, but do hon. Members not realize that we have more important development schemes for this country which must take precedence over the opening of new ports?

I shall consider all that hon. Members have urged in this connexion, and put up proposals later. Whether my proposals will have the sanction of the higher authorities, I cannot say, nor can I give any guarantee beyond saying that I shall do my best.

**Mr. Dahanayake:** What about Galle Harbour?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** As for Galle Harbour, the facts are not exactly as the hon. Member stated them. Galle has a natural harbour, and there is what is known as a "swell" there. Like

everything else in Galle, the sea there goes up and goes down rather alarmingly! The waves go up sometimes as high as 20 feet. When that happens the ships sometimes touch the bed of the sea—

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Then have a breakwater.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** You cannot build a breakwater round a reef. In any case, the construction of a suitable breakwater would cost millions.

In the old days ships coming to Ceylon made for Galle Harbour, which was then one of the best harbours in the Island. In those days ships had a draught of not more than ten or fifteen feet; nowadays ships are much larger and require much deeper anchorage. We learn that in those days the ships that called at Galle used to take away peacocks and monkeys. That is what the hon. Member for Galle himself told this House. Now there are no ships calling for that purpose. The peacocks and the monkeys remain in Ceylon—

**Mr. Dahanayake:** Now they are all U.N.P. monkeys!

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I move, "That the Vote be increased by Rs. 2,250 in respect of New sub-head 16, item 'Replacement, Kandala Rock Buoy'".

Question put, and agreed to.

Question, "That the sum of Rs. 181,982 for Head 146, Vote No. 1, be inserted in the Schedule", put, and agreed to.

Head 146, Vote No. 1, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

#### **Head 147.—Public Works Department**

*Vote No. 1.—Salaries and Expenses of the Department of Public Works, Rs. 3,985,900.*

*Sub-head 1.—Personal Emoluments, Rs. 3,061,450.*

**Mr. Keuneman:** I want to make some general remarks under this sub-head.

I want to urge on the Minister that so long as he continues to do so much of the work of the Department through contractors, at least there should be



[Mr. Keuneman.]

some provision in the contracts to ensure that fair wages are paid to the workers by the contractors, and that the normal labour regulations which one should expect to be observed, are in fact observed.

I do not know whether the Minister has studied some of the recent developments in this regard in England. There they have now introduced a "fair wage" clause into all contracts which the British Government gives to any private contractor. We would like to see such a clause introduced here. I have looked into some of the contracts here, and there is no such provision made.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Every contract that is signed today has as its first clause the requirement that no labour other than Ceylonese labour should be taken on without sanction from the Minister—

**Mr. Keuneman:** Wages?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Wages are to be paid in accordance with the standards obtaining for that particular trade.

**Mr. Keuneman:** That clause is never adhered to.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** That should have been brought up by an officer of the Labour Department or on a complaint by a workman. Laws and regulations all over the world are broken every day. The hon. Members themselves know how they break rules. We all break rules!

**Mr. Keuneman:** The Minister of Transport and Works set up a miniature Labour Department in his Ministry. He has the staff to go into these questions regarding labour welfare. They could see to it that these contractors observe the regulations.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** We did that in respect of Government labour. That organization is functioning today in the Harbour. As for contract labour, the contractor has to deal with the Labour Department.

Take the case of a building that is put up by a contractor at some out of the way place. The Engineer and the other supervising officers (overseers, &c.) are there to look after Government property and safeguard Government interests. If the hon. Member thinks that it should be the duty of the Government officials there to see to it that labour regulations are observed, I shall think of a scheme under which it would be possible for the Government to ensure that correct wages are paid. If wages are not paid correctly, the Department can withhold payment.

As a matter of fact, these contractors generally pay good wages to their labourers. They pay more in order to get more work. Contractors pay masons more than the Government rates.

**Mr. Keuneman:** Under-payments occur for overtime work. Labourers are required to work for more than the 8 hours laid down by Government, but they do not get overtime. Provisions relating to overtime payments are violated, although the basic minimum wage officially laid down may be paid.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I shall look into that.

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera:** As has often been pointed out, this is a very important Department, important not merely on its own account, as the organization for carrying out the schemes of the Ministry of Works, but because it does the building work of the other Ministries as well.

The Minister of Transport and Works told us that out of 290 items of work entrusted to the P. W. D., 81 were completed and 187 started. These figures, taken at their face value, look very attractive and point to a standard of efficiency.

I would like to know what stage the 187 items of work, on which work has actually started, have reached. It can be said that a work has started when the blue prints have been prepared, or when the foundation stone has been laid!

On a close examination of the facts it can be said that this Department is not as efficient as the Minister would make out. Of course the Minister has his excuse ready made—the difficulty of obtaining material and machinery. In regard to that difficulty, I am prepared to



meet the Minister half way. But I would draw his attention to delays occasioned even in the case of very small jobs, like the building of a minor bridge in connexion with which there seems to be absolute chaos in the Department. Take the Anguruwela bridge. Work on this bridge has been going on for years together, and yet the work has not been completed, because of inefficient handling of the project—

**The Chairman:** Bridges come under another Vote.

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera:** I am dealing with the general inefficiency of the Department, due to factors within the control of the Director and his assistants.

On this particular bridge they had a concrete mixer and a crane working for one week. Suddenly they were dismantled and shifted to a place four miles away, and again to another place eighteen miles away. This business of dismantling concrete mixers and cranes and removing them to some other place before the work on which they were originally employed is completed, involves considerable waste of time. If there was concentration of effort on one item of work, on one bridge, at a time, till that item of work was completed, there would be a tremendous saving to Government, a tremendous saving by finishing up a job without allowing all these schemes to hang fire year after year.

7.45 P.M.

I would also like to raise the question of transfers in the same Department. I know that P. W. D. Engineers are transferred from one place to another place as far distant as 100 miles, and that within three months they are again transferred.

**The Chairman:** We are again going over the same ground.

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera:** Apart from this Department in the P. W. D.—

**The Chairman:** Hon. Members have already attacked the policy of the Minister. The hon. Member is again speaking on the policy of the Minister.

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera:** That is a share of the blame which the Director must take upon himself.

**The Chairman:** The Hon. Member cannot say that. He has already attacked the policy of the Minister.

**Mr. A. Reginald Perera:** That is due to the lack of organization within the Department which he has in hand.

**Mr. Keuneman:** I would like to know from the Hon. Minister what plans are being made for the expansion of this Department. When the hon. Member for Galle called this Department a "bottle-neck", he was absolutely correct. I think it is well known that when other Ministries put up plans, their plans have very often to be scaled down because the P. W. D. cannot tackle that particular amount of work. That is due to the fact that there is no development of the Department. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister what practical steps are being taken to expand this Department. It is all very well for the Hon. Minister to come here and praise the Department and give us some rather suspicious figures—

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** Why suspicious?

**The Hon. Mr. A. E. Goonesinha (Minister without Portfolio):** Withdraw that!

**Mr. Keuneman:** I will establish what I have said. The Hon. Minister says that they have done Rs. 13,000,000 worth of work. Today, that is nothing, because in actual fact Rs. 13,000,000 worth of work would be about Rs. 4,000,000 or Rs. 5,000,000 worth of work according to pre-war costs. However, when he goes on to argue about the Railways, and when we point out losses he talks about the rise in the cost of materials, et cetera. The Minister cannot have it both ways.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member is again going back—

**Mr. Keuneman:** I do not want to labour the point, but the Hon. Minister challenged my statement. The point I want to make is this, that the Hon. Minister should, instead of in a self-satisfied way trying to make out that this Department is forging ahead, show us that there are plans made for the expansion of the Department.



**Mr. Dahanayake:** The Hon. Minister will admit that there are about 80 qualified engineers in the P.W.D. My figure is, perhaps a low one, but let the House note that there are at least 80 qualified engineers in the P. W. D. Now, the Hon. Minister has admitted tacitly that he has been able to take up only Rs. 2,000,000 worth of work in the Medical Department for the coming year out of an allotted sum of Rs. 20,000,000. I say that if the Hon. Minister and his advisers will only give a little thought to the question of planning, he can, with the number of engineers he has today, carry out this full programme of work. I say that 80 engineers for a small country like Ceylon are too many. I have seen the work that an outstation Superintending Engineer or a District Engineer does. What is the work he does? The greater part of his time is spent in routine work in the office. I know that the engineers of the P. W. D., the majority of them, are really clever men, and if they will only set their hearts to the task—

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** That is the trouble!

**Mr. Dahanayake:** If they will only set their hearts to the task before them, then I say only one man would be sufficient for the whole of the Western Division.

May I put a very practical question to the Hon. Minister? What does he expect of an engineer? Does he want an engineer to be messing about with departmental routine matters in the office? Does he want an engineer to keep on holding inquiries about disciplinary matters in the department? Does he want an engineer to be making calculations on the check rolls that are maintained? If the Hon. Minister goes into the question of the work which engineers do, he will find that they do one-tenth engineering and nine-tenths fooling; without any discredit to them, fooling, because the policy of the Ministry is nothing but fooling. They can do more work. They are prepared to do more work. Let the Hon. Minister get his engineers together, and consult them as to whether all this work, for which money is provided for the coming 12 months, cannot be carried out. I

can say, from what I know of these engineers, that they will be able to give the Hon. Minister a plan to enable him to carry out the full complement of work in the coming 12 months. If the Hon. Minister will do that, I wish him and his engineers all success.

**Mr. Subasinghe:** I find that the Hon. Minister is trying to modernize his office. He has introduced new machinery, like adding machines, and so on, into his office. In most of his departments I find that he has employed a number of Punch Operators, but the scales of pay given to them in the various departments seem to differ. For instance, in the Electrical Department, the scale of salary for Punch Operators is Rs. 840 to Rs. 1,920 per annum and in the Railway Department it is Rs. 840 to Rs. 1,560 per annum. In the Public Works Department, however, they start on Rs. 660 per annum and rise, by annual increments of Rs. 42, to Rs. 1,660 per annum. The annual increment of this class of operator in the other departments is Rs. 72.

I understand that most of the operators in the Railway and in the Electrical Departments are girls, whereas in the P.W.D. they are all males. I should therefore like to know why there is this difference in pay.

**Dr. Perera:** I can understand that.

**Mr. Subasinghe:** Will the Hon. Minister raise the salary scale of those Punch Operators in the P.W.D. to that obtaining in the other two departments?

I am told that these boys and girls—especially boys—who have passed their J.S.C. examination, are not allowed to sit for the Clerical Examinations. Will the Hon. Minister go into the matter?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I will look into it.

**Dr. Perera:** I wish to raise a general question. The Hon. Minister is perhaps aware that in the science of road-making, particularly since the war, America has forged ahead, especially in the metalling of roads. There is a considerable amount of new knowledge on this subject. I do not think there is at



present one engineer in the departments under the Hon. Minister who is competent enough to tackle the question of road-making along the latest scientific lines. I would urge the Hon. Minister to consider the question of sending at least one young engineer for the purpose of specializing in this subject of road-making. It is becoming a very important subject today—particularly in view of advanced knowledge on the subject—and it is worth while sending an officer for the purpose of studying the question of road-making. That is by way of a general question.

I would like to ask the Hon. Minister some detailed questions. Recently a number of engineers have, I think, been found wanting. At least one case—a celebrated case—went up to the Privy Council, and a number of other engineers have also had charges framed against them, and inquiries are pending. Apart from that I think the Hon. Minister should make a determined effort to stamp out some of the corruption that is proverbial in this Department, particularly from the point of view of overseers. I saw in the papers the other day that the Hon. Minister has started a new scheme of getting Supervising Engineers to have monthly or bi-monthly discussions for the purpose of eliminating some of the corruption, particularly among overseers. I do not know how successful he will be with this scheme because, apart from the fact that these engineers would not be in a position to go and individually check up the work of the overseers, the overseers are quite adept in getting round most of the engineers, by producing absolutely false quantities of work, and so on. I would like the Hon. Minister to devise a method by which he could check more effectively the work done by these overseers.

I am glad the Hon. Minister of Health and Local Government is here. I would like to ask him a question with regard to the Waterworks Scheme. I see that there is provision for an Assistant Director of Waterworks on a sterling salary of £2,000. Has that officer been recruited, and if so, who is the officer in question? We would like to have some details about that officer, whether he is on agreement, and so on.

I see a number of temporary hands still in this Department—Temporary Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors, 6 to 7 Temporary Draftsmen and some Temporary Junior Factory Engineers. Why are they temporary?

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I am very glad the hon. Member is now talking of American roads. I am glad that he is going to a capitalist country.

**Dr. Perera:** We have never refused to take the best out of everything.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** The hon. Member said that Russia was the best. Well and good. This vote enables me to send people outside. So I shall take advantage of it. My Personal Emoluments vote enables me to send people out.

The first question asked was why people were not sent abroad. For this purpose we might send somebody to America.

With regard to the question of the hon. Member for Bingiriya, I quite agree that lady operators are really better than men.

**Mr. Subasinghe:** What I asked was why there is this inequality in salary.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** I shall look into the matter and see what we can do.

The position with regard to the Waterworks Engineer is this. We are trying to expand this department in every possible way. We have subdivided the Waterworks Department and put it in the charge of the Deputy Director of Public Works. Unfortunately, we have selected a man called Sands or Sandeman over whom some trouble has arisen. He is employed in Scotland under His Majesty's Government. We wanted him to be seconded for service here. He is 54 or 55 years old. His Government said he could not be seconded and wanted us to take him on permanently. That would mean that we will have to pay him £300 as pension for life. The Treasury is going into the matter. We are asking that he be seconded, but they want him to be taken on permanently, otherwise we would have got him almost immediately.



[Hon. Sir. J. Kotelawala.]

As regards architects, about fifteen or twenty are being trained, and engineers of all varieties are also being trained. The main point is this. Please do not forget that these engineers are called upon to spend two or three lakhs, and Superintending Engineers must be there to supervise, because there must be some check.

*Sub-head 7.—Incidental expenses including welfare expenditure, Rs. 12,500.*

**Dr. Perera:** I move that the Vote be reduced by Rs. 100 in respect of this sub-head. We would like to have some information about this welfare expenditure.

**The Chairman:** The Hon. Minister explained that under his vote.

**Dr. Perera:** That is, he is co-ordinating that work. But here there is provision made under this Department. We must know what he is doing.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala:** The sum of Rs. 12,500 provided here includes the cost of typewriters, conservancy charges, and various other things, and for welfare expenditure the amount set apart is Rs. 2,500. That is to give these societies formed in the Public Works Department financial assistance in respect of sports meets, and so on, and to provide other amenities.

**Dr. Perera:** Can we have some information on Sub-head 9?

*It being 8 p.m., the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again on Tuesday next.

### ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: "That this House do now adjourn." [*Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike.*]

Adjourned accordingly at 8.01 P.M. until 10 A.M. on Tuesday, August 17, 1948, pursuant to the Resolution of the House this Day.



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