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# THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

AND THE

# REASONABLE USE OF TAMIL

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TEXTS OF STATEMENTS MADE  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
BY THE LATE PRIME MINISTER,  
MR. S. W. R. D. BANDARANAIKE.  
THIS BOOKLET ALSO CONTAINS THE  
RELEVANT ACTS

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION

PRINTED AT THE CEYLON GOVERNMENT PRESS



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## Language Dispute: How it Originated

*(Statement made on the Adjournment Motion in the House of Representatives on June 5th 1956, when the question of the Federal Party Satyagraha on Galle Face Green as a result of the presentation of the Official Language Bill in the House, and the resultant disturbances in the country, was raised)*

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I THANK the House for giving me this opportunity so early of explaining a position which I readily understood that the House no doubt would have liked to have discussed, and indeed did. May I also thank my hon. Friends, generally on both sides of the House, for the general restraint with which they spoke on an occasion where obviously restraint, a sense of perspective, emotion I might almost say, perhaps even a sense of humour, are most desirable indeed.

Now, far be it from me unduly to exacerbate the situation by dealing at undue length purely from a debating point of view with a number of things that my good Friends opposite have chosen to say except in so far as it is necessary for me, as mildly as I can, to remove certain wrong impressions and implications of the description of events.

I do not want in any way to cast blame on this party or that party, but this explosive situation that has arisen over the language issue was really started, no doubt probably unintentionally, by the United National Party and the previous Government. I am not saying that by way of personal blame.

But it does happen to be the plain bare fact, when my Right Hon. friend, the then Prime Minister (Sir John Kotelawala), went to Jaffna and stated openly at Kokuvil that he was going to give parity to both Sinhalese and Tamil as the official languages of this country and that he would be prepared even to amend the Constitution for that purpose. No doubt he did it *bona fide*, on the spur of the moment, without thinking sufficiently of the implications of what he said. He set a fire ablaze both in the South as well as in the North—in the South for the first time although the language issue was not one on which there was any particular heat engendered up to that moment—and also a strong movement amongst all sections of the people, not merely amongst those politically opposed to the United National Party. Thus a tremendous campaign was started.

My good Friends in the North soon became equally inflamed when there was a *volte-face* on the part of the United National Party on this question where even a Junior Minister of the Government said that no greater bit of chicanery could have been perpetrated in a hundred years than when that party went back on that pledge. Both sides became inflamed and it was in that atmosphere of disproportion, of tension and of emotion, mounting emotion, that the last General Elections were fought, won and lost. It was not a situation that was the creation of the Government. That is the point I am making for the purpose of my case now ; I am not trying to cast any blame but the background must be understood.

Certainly we have to reap a harvest today, a harvest of dragon's teeth sown by others. The United National Party felt that it was such a vital issue that at their Kelaniya conference they passed their resolution going back on the past and previous proclamations. Undiluted, without any

pressures of any kind, although we have adopted—I will deal with it when I deal with the Second Reading of the Bill ; and the policy is that while making Sinhalese the official language, due recognition should be given to the use of Tamil. You will see how it works out. Even that proviso was not made by the United National Party ; nothing about fundamental rights. That was the resolution on which the United National Party went to the polls in the last General Elections ; unfortunately it did not work. The expectation that that would induce a number of voters to return that party to power did not materialize, partly because the people did not accept their view rightly or wrongly and partly because of various other accumulations of dissatisfaction.

Now, the ex-Prime Minister in the course of his election campaign assured the people that if they were elected to power, the first Bill his Government would introduce would be the Sinhalese Only Bill. The elections are over. We have now in accordance with our own policy, without delay to introduce this Bill.

I am grateful to you and to this House for giving me an opportunity of explaining the situation. I do not minimise the potentialities of it, although I do not wish to exaggerate it. And I can assure you that with the co-operation of all of you, which I welcome at this time, we shall be able to weather the storm and probably emerge at the end, whatever may be the difficulties at the moment, into that united free Lanka, which, I believe, is the aspiration of us all.

## Official Language Issue: Its History

*(Statement made in the House of Representatives on June 6th 1956, during the debate on the Second Reading of the Official Language Bill. The First Reading was on the previous day)*

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IN moving the Second Reading of the Bill to prescribe the Sinhala language as the official language of Ceylon and to enable certain transitional provisions to be made, I wish to explain fully but briefly the points of view which I have already made in this House.

The House will remember the history of this question, at least in recent years, beginning with the resolution of Mr. J. R. Jayewardene in the State Council to change over from English as the official language to the swabasha. His resolution mentioned the word "Sinhalese"; it was later amended to "Sinhalese and Tamil", and it was passed. Now a Select Committee of the House was appointed after the passage of that resolution, to investigate and report. That Select Committee reported, in effect, that the full changeover could be effected in a period of seven years—I am only quoting certain points that are of importance to the general line of my argument.

That Report of the Select Committee on which were a number of gentlemen who subsequently became Ministers of the first Parliament such as Mr. J. R. Jayewardene and Mr. A. Ratnayake, suggested a detailed scheme for the full changeover within seven years.

Now, when the Parliament was created under the new Constitution, the Soulbury Constitution, this Report was not rejected by the Cabinet. Indeed, what happened was this. A Commission was appointed to show ways and means of implementing it. The Chairman of this Commission was Sir Arthur Wijeyewardene.

That Commission produced a number of interim reports, a final report, and so on, but there was one important point, namely, that whereas the Report of the Select Committee had mentioned seven years for the changeover, the Government at that time placed no target date. As a matter of fact this state of affairs was gravely embarrassing to the Commission because, I believe, the statement was made by Sir Arthur Wijeyewardene himself that, in the absence of an indication of policy as to what sort of target date at least the Government had in view, it was difficult for them to shape their actual recommendations. However, they presented their reports on the matter, which, I believe, have been implemented to some extent by the last Government as far as they were able to do so within their own policies.

At the same time the Minister of Education made various statements of policy regarding the changeover to Swabasha, the holding of public examinations, the changeover in the various standards and classes in schools, and from time to time put forward the suggestions of the Education Department; and an Official Languages Committee or Department was created under the Treasury to implement the recommendations of the Arthur Wijeyewardene Report in the administration and in various other ways, while the Swabasha Department functioned under the Minister of Education for the primary purpose of translation of text-books.

So far back as 1953, although our Party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, had also mentioned these words "Sinhalese and Tamil", we felt at that time that a clarification of this was necessary. We decided then to appoint a committee to go into the whole matter and report. A committee was appointed and that committee did make a report which was accepted by our executive committee and passed at our last annual session to the effect that Sinhalese alone should be the official language of the country, while giving due recognition to the use of Tamil. So far back as 1953 we addressed our minds to the need of clearly stating what our policy on the language issue was because we were not, even at that time, satisfied with the wording of that phrase which we had hitherto been following. So far back as 1953 we did that.

The United National Party also apparently thought that a clarification was necessary, strange to say, about 1953 because, at their annual conference, Senator A. M. A. Azeez introduced a motion that Sinhalese and Tamil be given equal status—parity of status—as the official languages of the country. It would seem therefore that the position, *inter alia*, was not sufficiently clear and had need of clarification. Otherwise, I cannot understand why Senator Azeez should have found it necessary so late as 1953 or 1954—I do not have a note of their proceedings and cannot definitely say when it was—to move a motion like that. If their earlier position had been clearly and precisely known, what was the need for Senator Azeez to have moved that resolution at all ?

All that I am concerned with at the moment is that they themselves appeared to feel that there was need to clearly define the position taken up by them earlier. They apparently thought that the issue had really not been finally settled in 1954 and they found it necessary to do that. We, too,

thought it was necessary to have a clarification. We clarified in one way and they clarified on that in a different way. That is all that happened.

Sir John Kotelawala, when he visited the Jaffna Peninsula in 1954, is reported to have made a statement at Kokuvil that his Party stood for parity of status for Sinhalese and Tamil as the official languages of this country, and that he would be prepared to embody that in the Constitution Order-in-Council. We know that Sir John Kotelawala made some statement some months later that, as a matter of fact, he did not quite say that or something to that effect. The report of his statement at Jaffna appeared in the newspapers and was uncontradicted. As a matter of fact, I believe certain of my Friends opposite said that they had been present at that meeting and that he did make the statement.

Then everything exploded. People in the South saw this thing staring them in the face—parity of official languages—and felt that it would be gravely detrimental to the continuance and progress of the Sinhalese language ; that it would almost imply the extinction of the Sinhalese language. That is what a very large majority of the people, the Sinhalese people, felt for reasons that have been explained earlier. They felt that as the Tamil language was spoken by so many millions in other countries, and possessed a much wider literature and as the Tamil-speaking people had every means of propagating their literature and culture, it would have an advantage over Sinhalese which was spoken only by a few million people in this country. They felt that not only in the Northern and Eastern Provinces was there a majority of Tamils, but that there was a large number of Tamil people in the Sinhalese provinces—Indians who are also Tamil-speaking peoples—and that taking into account that business was in the hands of

Tamil-speaking people even to some extent—a fairly large extent—in our large towns, all this would create a situation when the natural tendency would be for the use of Sinhalese to shrink and probably, in course of time, almost to reach the point of elimination.

Further than that, they also felt that there were other reasons that militated against the advisability of giving parity of status to both languages as official languages, namely, the fact that the large majority of the people of this country are in fact Sinhalese. These were all factors that created the feeling that whereas the Tamil language did not run any real risk of disappearance, although given a position of parity, the Sinhalese language in fact did. People may or may not agree with that point of view, but at least take this as fact, that the vast majority of the Sinhalese felt that way very strongly. That at least is fact. Whether you consider them to have been absolutely justified is another question.

The United National Party apparently realised the position and thought it was necessary for them if they were to give themselves the least chance of winning the last election, to completely and radically change their policy regarding the matter. At the session of the United National Party at Kelaniya, shortly before the last election, they passed a pure and simple resolution that Sinhalese alone should be the official language of this country. Without any tags to it, without any mention about fundamental rights of citizens, majority or minority, or any other safeguards, they just passed a simple resolution. In that respect we at least recognised that the reasonable use of Tamil must continue. Both the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna, as we shall see, had that in their statements of policy and programme.

I was about to say “unfortunately” but I will not use that word. The United National Party lost the election ; they were defeated in the last election. Throughout the election campaign Sir John Kotelawala maintained that the first measure he would introduce if his Party was returned to power would be a Bill to make Sinhalese alone the official language. I am merely pointing that out to indicate that even that Party which, only a few months earlier, had asserted in no unmistakable terms through their own leader, the late Prime Minister, regarding this language issue found themselves constrained to adopt a different attitude altogether. Now you will realize therefore that when we were elected with this language issue as one of the main planks of our Party, combined of course with a number of other issues, we really did feel that it was our duty to introduce legislation on the subject early. My answer to those who would urge, “Why not hold a round table conference ? Why not carry out investigations ?” and so on, is that early legislation was needed. The question of Sinhalese alone being the official language really had gone beyond a point when it was a matter that we could not further reconsider.

Then two points alone are left to be considered. Obviously when a language is declared the official language, all the work cannot be done in that connection the following day. Nobody anticipated that, or intended that, when I said the changeover can take place in 24 hours. I am sorry I did not say 24 minutes for the reason that, for a changeover from English, no law is necessary. No law was necessary for English to be the official language of this country.

Well, to make the necessary changes and declare Sinhalese as the official language was not a difficult task. But when the problem became complicated by this clash between, let us say, two communities, then of course legislation on



the matter became necessary. Certain consideration had to be given to two points. One is the interim period that is required ; what is the time required to make the changeover—I am talking apart from the language of the minorities—to change over from English, what is the period ? The Hon. Minister of Justice, in consulting the Supreme Court judges, was informed by them—of course, provided that certain things were done, interpreters were provided, and so on—that they could make the change in four years, and we took the Supreme Court as the body where it would be most difficult to effect a change. Therefore we fixed a date that exceeds four years ; that is to say, 31st December, 1960.

May I say now, at this stage, that it is our intention, as far as is possible, to make that change wherever possible but if, in the course of our proceedings in implementation, we find on sufficient grounds and data that the changeover just cannot reasonably be made during that time, we will not hesitate to come before the House and the country for passing the necessary amendment to the Bill with the facts before us. We are not establishing any law of the Medes and the Persians in this matter. But it was necessary to have some target. It is very unsatisfactory to leave it indefinitely as the previous Government had been doing, though, *bona fide*, they thought it was the wiser course. If you leave a thing vague—to take place 20 years, 50 years hence—it is not very conducive to effective action for a change over.

Another point had to be considered. What about these other factors ? In the region of education, Tamil is the mother tongue of a number of Tamil-speaking people. That is not all. My good friends, the Burgher community, have looked upon English as their mother tongue for a large number of years. English is to them their mother tongue.

Of course, the Malays have been educated in English. Anyway, I will deal with that in a few moments. Therefore with regard to that, the position was this. We found it really not practicable or wise to include various detailed provisions in the Bill.

We thought of including some provision about local authorities, another provision regarding public servants, another provision regarding correspondence, and so on. The moment you get down to that without going into every single detail, without appearing by implication to shut out anything that was not mentioned, it was very very difficult to include such clauses in this Bill. As a matter of fact, in regard to certain clauses that we have effectively put here, I was informed by some minority friends as well as members of certain other parties that they preferred those clauses to be omitted on the further assurance that I gave them and which I give now, namely, that when this Bill is passed I intend to be the Minister in charge of this subject. The word “ Minister ” is used according to the interpretation in the Interpretation Ordinance : The subject be allocated to me.

I would like to say what steps I will take the moment this Bill is passed. There is no earthquake or cataclysm that will take place. We will make the changeover, of course wherever it is possible, without causing hardship. We will set ourselves the task of dealing with the Public Service, the position in the public service of those who are there now, who do not know Sinhalese. It may be that with a number of years' work, those who are about to retire cannot be expected to carry on. Then we must consider those who have recently entered the Public Service, still young, but not knowing a word of Sinhalese. They will be given an opportunity of considering how they can, even after gaining that minimum knowledge with which they will be enabled

to carry on, fit into new conditions. Such other questions as concessions that may be created under suitable conditions for those who feel that their conditions of service are so altered that they would, not in a spirit of mischief but genuinely, feel that they cannot help but retire from the Public Service will have to be gone into. All those questions we will have to go into in regard to public servants.

What about the future? What about examinations in the future, public examinations? As far as these matters are concerned, which is the medium of instruction? We even contemplated a clause here laying down 1967 with regard to public service examinations, which may now be conducted in a language other than Sinhalese, on the footing that 10 years is a period, from the kindergarten to the school leaving standard, where a boy learning Sinhalese even as a second language would have sufficient knowledge of that language to carry on his work without difficulty in that way in the Public Service.

Then we come to local authorities. We had a certain Clause in the draft Bill also worded in that way. We had to examine the whole position of the local authorities. The business of local authorities falls into two sections: one, the speeches made, the questions asked; then certain official acts, such as writing letters—certain official acts as against proceedings. All these matters we considered. Then as regards Parliament which is governed by our Standing Orders, under the Constitution Order-in-Council, we do not propose to interfere with that.

Then we come to education. We will have to hold an inquiry, soon after the Bill is passed, into the question of the medium of instruction. I pointed out that there is no particular close connection between the medium of instruction

and the official language as such. There is an indirect connection, no direct connection. We had to go into the whole question. We do not intend to interfere with the medium of instruction in the mother tongue, provided, of course, that they acquire enough knowledge of Sinhalese to enable those who seek official employment to function. They must know that. So that we have, with my hon. Friend the Minister for Education, to go into the entire question of the medium of instruction.

There are various other points like that which we have to take up. Instead of thinking of all that now and trying to introduce these things into the Bill we felt that the wiser course was to address our minds in detail to each and every one of those problems where they arise. I know it is difficult. I am fully aware of it. I have interviewed deputations, in the last week, of Muslims, Moors, Malays and Burghers and more than one deputation of Tamil Government servants as well as high ex-Tamil Government servants, and I have pointed out this position to them.

One deputation asked me why I did not introduce something general and I asked it please to make a suggestion, now that it had come down to a case of draft, to provide that due recognition is given to the use of the Tamil language. I said that does not make it any more precise unless you proceed to define what you mean by it. Is that a legal term which the courts could interpret? I pointed out this difficulty to them. **But as the Minister in charge of this Bill and as Prime Minister, I am assuring you on the Floor of this House that the method of procedure which I indicated will be the method that will be followed.**

All that I am asking those who feel disposed to be, let us say, even generous or fair-minded is this. This Bill, presented in this way, may be unsatisfactory, but I tried to show that

in the circumstances of the case it appeared to be the only practical thing to do ; and while doing that, I have, as Prime Minister, given certain assurances before this House. Probably, in a month's time I shall have to set about the task of implementing these things. In those circumstances, all I ask of you is a little patience. Please see how the thing works. There may be some who, in any case, do not want to see how anything works. I have not much to say to people who, *bona fide*, may feel like that.

But I would like to say, at this critical juncture, to all Sinhalese, Tamils, and everybody else, in respect of an issue more important, more difficult, than any I can remember to have arisen in this country for many years, I would appeal to all, in the name of this country, to at least give us a chance. Let us not say, on a Bill which is introduced, we will declare war, we will create complete chaos, and so on. I hardly think, in the interests of all concerned that that would be an attitude which would be wise or, to say the least, patriotic, if I may use the word.

I am giving the general assurance that we get down to the question of public servants and one thing and another, after the Bill is passed, the main provision being that Sinhalese is the official language of the country. Anything that vitally cuts across that, naturally, will be so easy to consider while making those concessions to those whose mother tongue is not Sinhalese, to enable them, while fulfilling the needs of the official language, also to take their place as fellow citizens in the country.

I do not wish to prolong my speech. I thank the House once again for so kindly giving me this hearing and I have very great pleasure now in moving the Second Reading of this Bill.

## Official Language: Government Point of View

*(Statement made in the House of Representatives on June 14th, 1956, in winding up the debate on the Second Reading of the Official Language Bill. The Second Reading was passed, 66 in favour and 29 against. The Committee Stage and Third Reading was also passed on the same day. The Third Reading division was 65 for and 28 against)*

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MAY I be permitted generally to express my pleasure, and also to congratulate hon. Members for dealing with this subject—which is of an extremely controversial nature and on which tempers may quite excusably be roused—at least in a spirit of reasonable friendliness and discussing it at a level of dignity and seriousness which one might perhaps not have expected in a Debate of this nature on a subject of this type ? I do not wish to make any detailed reply to the arguments as such : as I stated, hon. Members have replied to each other. So that, I do not think any detailed reply in that way is called for from me, except just a brief summing-up and a further explanation and elucidation of the point of view of the Government on this question.

The argument for this so-called parity has appeared before us in various forms from various angles of view, varying from the purely sentimental and emotional plane of the hon. Member for Vavuniya, to a higher level of an attempt at argument on the part of the hon. Member for Jaffna ; a different level again from my hon. Friends, the Members of the Federal Party ; and finally to the attempt at justification

of this idea of parity on the part of my hon. Friends, the Members of the L. S. S. P. and C. P., as conducing to greater unity of the country than would result from the opposite point of view. I cannot, I do not wish to attempt to deal with this subject on the level of the hon. Member for Vavuniya . . . . I quite understand the possibility of dealing with a subject like this on a purely emotional plane . . . .

The hon. Member for Jaffna (Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam) put forward the case for parity, but with half an eye on perhaps something less than is implied in that word. He is naturally concerned as a member of the Tamil community on one aspect of the question involving—it may be considered to be—the prestige of the Tamil people. He is far more concerned, if I understood him right, in the practical side of this Bill. Naturally that, too, I can understand—the prestige point of view

They do not want to feel that their language and, through their language, themselves are looked upon as an inferior section of the people of this country. I understand it. But, may I say this? I repeat it because, I believe, I have said this on more than one occasion. There is no desire whatsoever, I assure my hon. Friends with all the strength I possess, of reducing the Tamil people of this country to a position of inferiority, of semi-slavery or a position of helotry. Consider them as helots of this country? No, Mr. Speaker.

**I do not think that in the minds of the vast bulk of the Sinhalese people there lingers any such despicable idea as that. Really this desire for making Sinhalese alone the official language stems, believe me, from the fear that not merely would the Sinhalese, in fact, be reduced to a question of inferiority—the Sinhalese people—but their language and themselves would be pressed back almost to a point of elimination.**

**It may well be—you may not agree with it but believe me—that that fear not only exists in the minds of a very large number of people but is one which is not so illusory as many people may be inclined to think. That is the argument, without undue emotionalism or histrionics, that I want to state simply and try to impress as far as possible on the minds of those who may quite bona fide, and no doubt do, hold a different view. Therefore may I assure my hon. Friends that this idea of reducing the Tamil community, may I say, to a position of inferiority is not correct; certainly not correct in the sense that it is not in the minds, as far as I am aware, of a very large majority of the Sinhalese people. Therefore, this prestige question, in that way, need not arise.**

The other question is one that is on a more rational, practical level, that is, by taking this step are you, in fact, in practice, denying to a section of the citizens of this country certain rights and privileges which they as citizens are entitled to enjoy? It may be the Government service, the public services, or it may be the transaction of their business or the question of education or the carrying on of the functions of bodies like local authorities and so on. Is a section of the citizens of this country, by virtue of the passage of this Bill, going to be deprived of certain rights which any citizen is reasonably entitled to claim?

Far the stronger point of view to which we have to address our minds is that. Believe me, I have addressed my mind to that. I, of course, agree with many of my hon. Friends like my hon. Friend the Member for Wellawatte-Galkissa (Dr. Colvin R. de Silva) to whom I always like to listen and whose speeches are always a pleasure to listen to. But what has he said? That the Bill, as it stands gives no assurance, that the assurance of any individual must necessarily be looked upon as not satisfactory or fully satisfactory.

I know that ; I stated that that defect was present in this Bill in my opening speech in moving the Second Reading. I said so, and I still admit it. But what was the alternative to those who were not prepared to grant parity ? What was the alternative ? To have worked out the details in this Bill where a single phrase such as, due recognition of the use of a language or something of that type, was insufficient and still more unsatisfactory ; to have worked out those details in this Bill itself, I pointed out, created a still more difficult situation, because the moment you try to incorporate those details in this Bill you are up against a task that may take months and months and years to work out and even so provide scope for every kind of argument going on not for a week but for many months of discussion in this House. That is why this Bill has been introduced in this way.

I am fully aware of what is possible and what is not under this Bill as it is worded. I pointed out that I was even prepared, when we have gone into the details of every one of those matters that require to be gone into, to consider the necessary amendments to this Bill itself—apart from Regulations under this Bill or administrative action under this Bill or the amendment of any other Ordinances or laws that may apply to various other matters such as local government, and so on.

I preferred to get this Bill through quickly and early and simply in this way—for many reasons—in order to remove this subject away from the electric atmosphere of storm and stress, of distortion and emotion that is bound to continue. Unless, in some way, legislatively the subject has, even in principle, been disposed of, and having done that, I gave the House an assurance—and I repeat it—that we will proceed to address our minds to all those matters, such as communication with the Government, carrying on of the administration

let us say, in certain areas without the specification and, therefore, the division of the country as such, the question of the public services, the question of education, local authorities, etc. Let us all discuss round round-tables, or any other method, the practical difficulties that arise not merely in the implementation of this Bill as it stands, but the practical difficulties that arise even apart from that ; that is practical difficulties that may well go beyond even this date. Let us discuss all those matters in a quieter atmosphere after the passage of this Bill ; and as Member after Member and Minister after Minister on the Government side has pointed out, without nullifying the main purpose of this Bill, the declaration of Sinhalese as the official language, we will be prepared to meet those difficulties with regard to any other section. That assurance I think that so many Members of this House like the hon. Member for Maturata (Mr. Banda) representing his party and certain other Members representing Moor, Burgher, European or Malay and so on who have spoken in this Debate, have asked, I have given. I cannot, as the House will understand, go beyond, surely at this stage, a repetition of that. I cannot explain to you in detail here what may be done in this matter, that matter and the other, to enter into a full discussion of that. Surely you do not expect me reasonably to do that. That is that. Therefore, for those people who would consider that as obviously important from a practical point of view, I give that assurance once again. I give you that assurance once again.

My hon. Friend the hon. Member for Wellawatte-Galkissa (Dr. Colvin R. de Silva) stated here that we should not go against the opposition of the Tamil community who want parity : that it is unwise and unstatesmanlike to do so and that parity was the solution. Now, Sir, does or does he not

realize this, that a vast majority of the Sinhalese people, rightly or wrongly, feel as strongly as they possibly can that this parity is one that involves serious detriment, I put it as low as that, to their own people. How then are you going to legislate for parity if a very large section of the majority themselves feel like that ? He is anxious that we should placate certain elements of one minority community over this question : that it would be unwise to take any step against the wishes of, as I said, a certain section, even say a majority of one minority community ; but he does not tell us where statesmanship would lead him in dealing with the vast majority of the majority over this question.

I will say this too further, let not my Friends of the L.S.S.P. opposite delude themselves into the belief that grant of parity is going, in the circumstances of this country and of this particular case, to conduce particularly towards that unity which he and I and all of us have so much at heart. Let them not delude themselves, I beg of them, into such an easy assumption. My hon. Friends the Members of the Federal Party have made it clear that the question of parity of language by no means solves their problem or meets their wish. They have made it amply clear that in no way will that save them without separation at governmental level, involved at the moment in the federal idea, so strongly and justifiably condemned by members of the L. S. S. P. themselves, leading further to these bleeding fragments of one body which my hon. Friend the hon. Member of Wellawatte-Galkissa so naively imagines he is going to avoid by this grant of parity. No Sir, your grant of parity of language now, from the point of view of my hon. Friends opposite of the Nava Lanka Sama Samaja Party, as it has come to be popularly called, from their own angle the very fact they are trying to avoid and they hope will be avoided are the very things,

believe me, that will eventuate from parity. It is not going to satisfy the federalists. Indeed it is going to strengthen them in their demand for federation. Far from reducing that, if I may use the word, danger, it is going definitely to increase with all those results that would flow there from which so many of us deprecate. Not only the majority of the Sinhalese, but a large section of the Tamil community itself in this country deprecate this idea of federalism. How are you going to solve this question of unity by this grant of parity ? On the other hand, you will be keeping a running sore. Believe me, all along, the Sinhalese will be having a fear in their minds that this parity is going to prove of increasing detriment to them in every way which will continue to militate against that unity which my hon. Friends hope to achieve through the grant of so-called parity. I think it is a point of view in which my hon. Friends may not agree with me, but I think it is a point of view that can be held at least with equal strength, if not more, to the other point of view put forward so eloquently by my hon. Friend the Member for Wellawatte-Galkissa. That is the position as I see it, and therefore we felt, in the point of view that the Government Party holds, that the only statesmanlike solution of this problem was to introduce this Bill, introduce it quickly, introduce it in this way and go into these other matters that I mentioned very early, not trusting to an individual's assurances for an indefinite period of time. Surely these things have to be gone into at one stage and to be dealt with. You will see for yourselves, you will have to see very early, whether those eventualities materialize or not.

I say, I regret much more than any other the unfortunate incidents that have arisen in the last week over this question in the country. I regret them. I trust that those matters are subsiding. I trust that when minorities who are concerned in this matter see the actual materialization of those points which I mentioned, after full discussion of them, that their fears are really groundless, that we will then definitely emerge as one nation.

## Use of Sinhalese and Tamil

*(Statement made in the House of Representatives on June 19th, 1957, in winding up the debate on the Address of Thanks to the Speech from the Throne delivered by the Governor-General at the Opening of the Second Session of the Third Parliament of Ceylon on June 13th, 1957)*

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LET me deal with the language issue. What is the position about the language issue? When Sir John Kotelawala came out with that statement he made at Kokuvil about giving parity of status to the two languages as official languages of the country, there was a breeze through the country among the Sinhalese. What did the Sinhalese—or at least a majority of the Sinhalese whose views, I think, I know—feel? They felt that if this was done, the Sinhalese language would shrink and disappear, because of the enormous strength of the Tamil language, being the language not only of a certain section of the people in this country but also of 80 million people in South India and various other countries, with literature, magazines, books, cinemas, and everything else; also, the whole business of the Tamil people in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in this country is being transacted in Tamil. They thought that there will be a tendency for the Sinhalese language to shrink and possibly disappear.

I dare say that may be an exaggeration but I definitely felt, and feel, there was a quite a measure of justification for that fear. Therefore, they said that this should not be done. **Let it be borne in mind that none of the vast majority of them**

wanted to do anything except to protect, as they felt they were justifiably entitled to do, the Sinhalese language from possible extinction by this parity being granted in that way. They did not want either to harm or be unjust to our Tamil brethren, or their culture or their language. I do not know: there may have been a few Sinhalese who, even if they have not said it openly, had something more in mind—the sort of thing that my hon. Friends opposite fear, namely, an attempt to squeeze out and eliminate the Tamil language. That I do not know. But I can assure them that if there were such people, if there are such people today, they are in a very small and insignificant minority indeed. I can assure them of that, because I know my own people.

Now, what did our party decide in this maelstrom. It followed the line of thinking I mentioned, that is of making Sinhalese the official language of the country and giving due recognition to the use of Tamil. In short, that is what it amounted to. That was obviously what our party decided and the vast majority of the people of this country gave their approval to our policy as was shown by the results of the last General Elections. How were we to set about implementing it, pray? We proceeded to make Sinhalese the official language. That was our first promise.

Having done that, I made it clear, even at the time I introduced that Bill, that the second part of our promise was not something that was relegated to the wastepaper basket; that we were going to keep our promise. Why did we not do it then at that time, you may ask. I think my hon. Friends will agree that there were a number of reasons. Firstly, I wished to try out what were these matters in which such use could be recognized first. Secondly, if you attempted to do that when feelings were very high, it would not have been at all wise. I do not think that the time was quite propitious at

that stage to do it. We had not lost sight of that fact. I do not think we slept for one year before we addressed our minds to that. Administratively, in working even the Sinhala Only Act, I will tell you how we had been giving effect to the basic ideas which I have suggested in that generalized form for consideration regarding the use of Tamil.

Let us take education. It has been recognized everywhere by all, even by the extremist Sinhalese, that Tamil children have a right to be educated in their mother tongue. They were not concerned with the legal official language. Very well. The question arose, then, about education in the University. Some months ago, representatives of the University Council came and discussed the matter with me. There were some there—a few—who thought that it should only be in Sinhalese. I pointed out that there was no question that in this one and only University of ours here, if a Tamil child is permitted to learn through his mother tongue, he must be allowed to go to the highest point in education through that medium; and any Faculty that will turn over from English to Sinhalese must be equally turned into Tamil.

The next point is about the Public Service. What have we been doing in the Public Service with regard to public servants who were appointed prior to the Sinhala Only Act? They were appointed under different conditions where they expect to work in English; where, if they are now expected to change over to Sinhalese, it will be a somewhat important change to the conditions under which they took up service. We know that in the Public Service such a change should not act detrimentally to public servants; if the change which they had not anticipated took place subsequent to their appointment to the Public Service, they are free to carry on.



However, we have offered them bonuses if they show some proficiency in the official language. I believe that quite a large number of them have taken advantage of that offer. Some Tamils—not only Tamils but also Sinhalese who are not very proficient in their own language—are availing themselves of the facilities provided to learn even a smattering of the official language. That is something reasonable.

With regard to the position of the new entrants vis-a-vis the Sinhala Only Bill, we are already following this course : they are permitted to sit for the qualifying examination in the medium of their own language. The things that I have been explaining are being done now. Of course, we expect them to acquire proficiency before permanent appointment is given to them. They must have a knowledge of the official language. I do not think that there is anything wrong in that.

I certainly hope we can come to some reasonable solution of this problem. Sinhalese will be taught as a second language in Tamil schools. Let Sinhalese also learn Tamil. Why not ? Then it will be possible for us to dispense with this requirement of a probationary period. They can study the language and sit for one or two papers in the official language, although the general medium for the qualifying examination will be in their own language.

Then the next question is in regard to correspondence. A Tamil child who is taught in Tamil would have to use the language he knows. He is doing it today and he is receiving replies in that language. Then in regard to local authorities we said that in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, if they so decide by resolution, of course, they could carry on or transact their business in their language, though eventually in the case of correspondence between the semi-governmental bodies and the Central Government as to what language

it should be in, is a matter that will have to be considered. Whatever it is, those are details to be considered. Those are, in my opinion, generally subject to detailed consideration, the uses of Tamil which will ensure to the Tamil citizens of this country the use of their own language without making them feel that they are at a discount or that some injustice or some discrimination is being done to them.

Furthermore, I must also put things forward in a way that the majority of the Sinhalese people will be prepared to accept. **I would only appeal to my Friends, the Members of the Federal Party, not to try to plunge the country into chaos. On the question of federalism, I say here and now that their real basic demand has always been this idea of federalism. No section of the people of this country, even a fairly large section of the Tamil community itself, is in favour of federalism. They have made use of this language issue to whip up opinion for federalism.**

My hon. Friends speak of a plebiscite. What does a plebiscite in this context mean—a plebiscite of the whole country, of the entire population of this country ? Is that what they have in mind ? Obviously not. They want a plebiscite of the Tamil community only. In that case have a plebiscite of the Scotsmen in the United Kingdom to find out whether they would like to have a separate Scotland—they are always agitating for that—or among the Welsh, or have a plebiscite among the depressed classes to find out what their wishes are. How can you carry on this concept of a plebiscite in this way ?

## The Place of the Tamil Language

*(Statement made in the House of Representatives on August 5th, 1958, while moving the Second Reading of the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Bill. The presentation and First Reading of the Bill was on July 17th, 1958. The Second Reading was passed (44 in favour, 3 against) on August 5th 1958. The Third Reading was also passed on the same day, without a division)*

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ON an important Bill like this it is my duty to explain even briefly the position in English for the benefit of those who may not be familiar with the Sinhalese language.

The history of this matter is well known to the House ; nor need I repeat it in detail. The issue we all know. It is a difficult issue for which some solution has to be found. It cannot be solved according to the wishes of the extremists of one side or the other. It is not a problem that will ever be solved by extremism—either Sinhalese extremism or Tamil extremism. It is a problem for which we have to find some middle way where the Sinhalese interests are reasonably and fairly safeguarded and also where justice is done to a section of our fellow citizens.

The first important issue that arises and which we have to settle for ourselves is this. What really is it that we want to achieve by some solution or settlement of the language question ? What is it that we are trying to achieve ? There may be some Sinhalese who feel that this really is a country

only for the Sinhalese, that only Sinhalese have a right to live here ; and any others who live here must be forcibly converted to become Sinhalese in some way or to be subordinate to the Sinhalese. I have not the least doubt that there are some Sinhalese who have not the courage to say that openly. I think they should not be taken seriously.

On the other hand, there are Tamil extremists who want a Tamil medium. In South India, East Africa, Malaya, and so on, there is the Tamil Nad, or whatever you call it, there is the Tamil flag flying over this farflung empire. That is equally wrong. We are all fellow citizens of one country. We have differences, in countries like ours, of race, of religion, of language and customs. But above all those, we have one common factor—our common humanity which must be emphasized today throughout the world, internationally and nationally, above our differences ; we have that common factor, which is more important, emphasized today throughout the world—the common factor that we are all human beings faced with common problems.

Well, now, in such a situation what are the lines on which these problems can be solved ? It must surely be that while you do the just thing by the Sinhalese, even providing the Sinhalese language as a link between the various communities, just as English was earlier, at the same time recognizing the valuable needs of our other fellow citizens—maybe their religion, their language, and so on—all sections of the people must live as friends and as brothers and none as slaves or inferiors. Surely, that is how we must look at this problem ! Looking at the problem in that way, what did our Government Party do before the last General Elections on the language issue ? We felt that it was just and fair that Sinhalese should be the one and only official language of the country. Seventy per cent. of the citizens of Ceylon are Sinhalese. So that,

to have Sinhalese as the only official language was not unjust or unfair. While making Sinhalese the only official language, we recognized the fact that a fairly large section of our fellow citizens use the Tamil language, the Tamil literature, and so on, and that due recognition should be given to the Tamil language. Surely the solution of the problem must lie on some such line ; otherwise, people will say there is no solution to this question.

I challenge any of those parties which have solutions of their own, which, they think, are better than ours, who have turned and gone out of this Chamber without having the courage to express their view on this Bill, to give us those solutions. To them I say it was their duty to express their views if they had any. But they are hiding behind our coat-tails. They are waiting for us to solve this issue bearing the brunt of the blows from right and left and everywhere. Once we have solved this issue they will say, there is nothing more to do, let us get on to some other issue. That is all I wish to say about those parties ; whether it is the Party that masquerades as the U. N. P., which is neither united nor national, or the L. S. S. P. for what reasons I do not know, or the Communist Party who have begun to talk of democracy.

It would have been against the principles of democracy if I postponed this Bill unduly, if I postponed it too long. It was already postponed too long. It should have been introduced simultaneously with the Official Language Bill. I did not do it at that time. I regret that we did not even delay the Official Language Bill and introduce the two Bills simultaneously. There is no violation of a democratic principle to which any objection may be raised. Everybody knows all about this issue. Any hon. Member can come here and discuss the Bill to his heart's content and express any views he wishes.

Now, about the Bill itself. There are one or two fundamental principles that we have to bear in mind. First of all, what is it that we are after ? Are we seeking to establish a Sinhalese imperialism, to forcibly make everybody Sinhalese or make everybody speak Sinhalese, or to establish a Tamil hegemony covering a large part of the world ? Let us make quite clear what we want. If what we want is to live here, protecting and safeguarding what is valuable to the Sinhalese people, while giving fair and just recognition to the valuable things of others, so that we can live together as a friendly lot of citizens of this country, working in friendship for the progress of the country as a whole, then the line that we have adopted has been entirely justified. If what we want is any of the other things, then I can understand criticism. If we want to adopt the extremists' point of view, then also I can understand criticism.

Many people do not understand what is meant by the term "official language". That is interpreted in various ways. The official language conception is a Western conception. In our country, we had no official language as such. Even in many Western countries, they have no legal official language today ; it has grown up by practice. When you have a language declared by law as an official language, what does it mean ? It only means that you recognize that language for necessary official acts. That is the meaning of the term "official language". For instance, if I send a letter to a foreign country, it should really go in the official language, with a suitable translation. In due course, official records and things like that should be kept in the official language. Documents that a court would recognize would have to be in the official language, though there may be, for purposes of convenience, a translation. That is what an official language means. An official language

does not mean a language that is thrust down the throats of everybody for every purpose. Most of these troubles arise out of a misconception of the term "official language".

The second point I wish to mention is this. What does this Bill itself do? Every one of its clauses is subject to the proviso that it does not conflict with the position of the Sinhalese language as the official language of the country. In fact, it is in the preamble of the Bill. The principles stated in the clauses of the Bill become operative under the Regulations framed for the purpose. We have not yet framed the Regulations.

Now, what are the terms of the Bill? Clause 2 says:

"A Tamil pupil in a Government school or an Assisted school shall be entitled to be instructed through the medium of the Tamil language in accordance with such regulations under the Education Ordinance, No. 31 of 1939, relating to the medium of instruction as are in force or may hereafter be brought into force."

Anybody now drafting or redrafting those regulations under the Bill in keeping with this clause will have two things to bear in view—not to create a situation of conflict with the position of the Sinhalese language as the official language, while at the same time extending this amenity to the Tamil child. That is how we will shape the Regulations under every one of these clauses.

Similarly with regard to the University, please remember this. Under any conception of fundamental rights, held by international law earlier in the world, or later as promulgated in the Statement of Human Rights by the United Nations Organization, one of the most important ingredients of fundamental human rights is the preservation of language. For instance, if you give a Tamil child the option of studying

in the lower classes through the medium of Tamil, have you the right to say that, when he enters the University, he should turn over to the medium of Sinhalese? Surely, we must provide him an education in the University also in the Tamil medium. I do not see anything wrong in that.

Then I come to the Public Service. There, again, we follow the principle that a person educated in the Tamil language can sit for the examination for admission to the Public Service in the medium of the language in which he has learnt. He cannot answer the papers in Sinhalese. But you will ask me, then, what is the position of the Sinhalese language as the official language? That person will be only given a probationary appointment and will be required under the Regulations, to acquire, within a specified period, the necessary knowledge of the official language. Otherwise, he ceases to be a member of the Public Service. If he knows Sinhalese beforehand, all that process can be cut out by setting one or two papers in Sinhalese in the examination for admission itself. At a point of time in the future when Sinhalese, I trust will be taught as well as learnt as a second language in Tamil schools, you can do away with this provision of subsequently obtaining a knowledge of Sinhalese by setting one or two papers in Sinhalese in the entrance examination itself. It will take some years to do that, but I am sure, that position will normally and naturally be reached. I do not see anything wrong in that.

Of course, Mr. Mettananda has a good deal to say about disproportionate appointments to the Public Service. He maintained that the Tamils in the Public Service are far too many in proportion to their total number and that this Bill will only weigh the balance in their favour. It will do nothing of the kind. The other suggestion which Mr. Mettananda makes in this connection, of having in the Public

Service numbers in proportion to the total population, is not an issue that I am dealing with under a language Bill. If, indeed, the other communities like to have it, I am perfectly sure that, from the Sinhalese point of view, we will not object to proportionate representation in the Public Service according to population. As a matter of fact, there are some Tamils who are urging it. I will mention one name openly, that of Senator S. Nadesan.

With regard to correspondence any Regulations framed under this will have to conform to these two principles. It must be seen that there is no conflict with the position of Sinhalese as the official language, while at the same time extending a certain amenity to those who know Tamil.

Let us consider how such Regulations may be framed. I am now speaking without prejudice. I am speaking in order to give an example with a view to allaying the fears of some of these people. Up to December 1960 under the Official Language Act the status quo can be preserved. No difficulties will arise till then because we have the power to do it. After December 31, 1960, how will we deal with it? That is a question which has often been asked. Any Tamil gentleman must have the right to correspond in the Tamil language but the position of Sinhalese as the official language must be preserved. He can be sent a reply in the official language, Sinhalese, but for the convenience of the Tamil gentleman who may not know Sinhalese a copy of a Tamil translation or the substance of the reply will be attached to such letter. But as Sinhalese is also taught in the Tamil schools we might quietly be able to drop the Tamil copy. What on earth is wrong with that? I cannot understand whether anything is wrong with that.

We are told terrible things. We are told that one Tamil man in a Sinhalese village will write in Tamil and if he is sent a reply in Sinhalese he will be caused grave hardship. Then again according to Mr. Mettananda 5,000 to 10,000 extra Tamil clerks will have to be employed to do the translations. In these matters the proof of the pudding is in the eating. We are having the courage to deal with the language issue according to the policy of our Government. Let us see how it turns out. If we have done wrong the people of the country have the remedy in their own hands. If the people feel we have done right, in one year's time there will be no language issue spoken of in this country. I can tell you that. There will be no language issue for people to exploit or on which lives are to be sacrificed. It would have ceased to be any real live issue. That is what some people are afraid of. That is the position with regard to correspondence.

Then I come to the fifth Section which relates to the Northern and Eastern Provinces. In these provinces we are going to permit certain administrative work to be done as prescribed. But we have to look into it. What are the administrative purposes that will be served and how will such work be carried on in Tamil? The question is asked: Why do you specify the Northern and Eastern Provinces? Are you not thinking of one community? It is not that at all. It is because there are a very large number of Tamil citizens. Then the question is asked: What is the position of Sinhalese and non-Tamils in those areas? Why, anybody who wants to transact any business in Sinhalese has the fullest power to do it not only in the Northern and Eastern Provinces but also in any part of the country. That concession is there and it can be made use of. What on earth is all this fuss about?

The other Sections are merely formal ones which I do not want to refer to in detail.

It has not been a pleasant or easy task for this Government to handle this language issue during the last two years. We have attempted to do it according to our expressed principles prior to the last elections in a way which we sincerely believe is a really satisfactory solution of this problem giving to the Sinhalese language its due place, giving due recognition to the other important language in the country, Tamil, in the way that we proposed to do. In doing so we have been criticized from all sides. From the Tamil side, from the Sinhalese side, from this side and from that side. Every kind of opprobrious epithet has been flung at me. Sinhalese anonymous letters have come to me that I have been a traitor to the Sinhalese people. From the Tamil point of view I have simply ruined the Tamil race. All types of things have been said. They are all wanting to bump me off. I have no objection, for the purpose quite sincerely of what I consider to be right if anybody wants to bump me off. If anybody, in fact, succeeds in doing so I have no grievance. But the Government as well as I are satisfied that we are doing the right thing. We are ready to let the people of this country decide when the time comes whether we have done right or wrong. I leave that final and ultimate decision in the hands of my people and my country without any fear or any doubt. In the meanwhile, the task of governing this country which the people of this country have entrusted to us will be carried out without fear but with sincerity to the best of our ability, undeterred by threats of all kinds, leaving it democratically for the people to decide in due course whether in fact we have been right or not.

## The Official Language Act, No. 33 of 1956

*An Act to prescribe the Sinhala Language as the One Official Language of Ceylon and to enable certain transitory provisions to be made*

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(Date of Assent : July 7, 1956)

BE it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and the House of Representatives of Ceylon in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :—

### Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the Official Language Act, No. 33 of 1956.

### Sinhala language to be the one official language

2. The Sinhala language shall be the one official language of Ceylon :

Provided that where the Minister considers it impracticable to commence the use of only the Sinhala language for any official purpose immediately on the coming into force of this Act, the language or languages hitherto used for that purpose may be continued to be so used until the necessary change is effected as early as possible before the expiry of the thirty-first day of December, 1960, and, if such change cannot be effected by administrative order, regulations may be made under this Act to effect such change.

### Regulations

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

(2) No regulation made under sub-section (1) shall have effect until it is approved by the Senate and the House of Representatives and notification of such approval is published in the *Gazette*.

## The Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act, No. 28 of 1958

*An Act to make provision for the use of the Tamil language and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto*

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(Date of Assent : September 4, 1958)

WHEREAS the Sinhala language has been declared by the Official Language Act, No. 33 of 1956, to be the one official language of Ceylon :

And whereas it is expedient to make provision for the use of the Tamil language without conflicting with the provisions of the aforesaid Act :

Be it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and the House of Representatives of Ceylon in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :—

### Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act, No. 28 of 1958.

### Tamil language as a medium of instruction

2. (1) A Tamil pupil in a Government school or an assisted school shall be entitled to be instructed through the medium of the Tamil language in accordance with such

regulations under the Education Ordinance, No. 31 of 1939, relating to the medium of instruction as are in force or may hereafter be brought into force.

(2) When the Sinhala language is made a medium of instruction in the University of Ceylon, the Tamil language shall, in accordance with the provisions of the Ceylon University Ordinance, No. 20 of 1942, and of the Statutes Acts and Regulations made thereunder, be made a medium of instruction in such University for students who, prior to their admission to such University, have been educated through the medium of the Tamil language.

**Tamil language as a medium of examination for admission to the Public Service**

3. A person educated through the medium of the Tamil language shall be entitled to be examined through such medium at any examination for the admission of persons to the Public Service, subject to the condition that he shall, according as regulations made under this Act in that behalf may require,—

- (a) have a sufficient knowledge of the official language of Ceylon, or
- (b) acquire such knowledge within a specified time after admission to the Public Service :

Provided that, when the Government is satisfied that there are sufficient facilities for the teaching of the Sinhala language in schools in which the Tamil language is a medium of instruction and that the annulment of clause (b) of the preceding provisions of this section will not cause undue hardship, provision may be made by regulation made under this Act that such clause shall cease to be in force.

**Use of the Tamil language for correspondence**

4. Correspondence between persons, other than officials in their official capacity, educated through the medium of the Tamil language and any official in his official capacity or between any local authority in the Northern or Eastern Province and any official in his official capacity may, as prescribed, be in the Tamil language.

**Use of the Tamil language for prescribed administrative purposes in the Northern and Eastern Provinces**

5. In the Northern and Eastern Provinces the Tamil language may be used for prescribed administrative purposes, in addition to the purposes for which that language may be used in accordance with the other provisions of this Act, without prejudice to the use of the official language of Ceylon in respect of those prescribed administrative purposes.

**Regulations**

6. (1) The Minister may make regulations to give effect to the principles and provisions of this Act.

(2) No regulation made under sub-section (1) shall have effect until it is approved by the Senate and the House of Representatives and notification of such approval is published in the *Gazette*.

**This Act to be subject to measures adopted or to be adopted under the proviso to section 2 of Act No. 33 of 1956**

7. This Act shall have effect subject to such measures as may have been or may be adopted under the proviso to section 2 of the Official Language Act, No. 33 of 1956, during the period ending on the thirty-first day of December, 1960.



### **Interpretation**

8. In this Act unless the context otherwise requires—

“ Assisted school ” and “ Government school ” shall have the same meaning as in the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 ;

“ local authority ” means any Municipal Council, Urban Council, Town Council or Village Committee ;

“ official ” means the Governor-General, or any Minister, Parliamentary Secretary or officer of the Public Service ; and

“ prescribed ” means prescribed by regulation made under this Act.



