

THE RT. HON. THE PRIME MINISTER

ON

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CITIZENSHIP  
STATE RELIGION  
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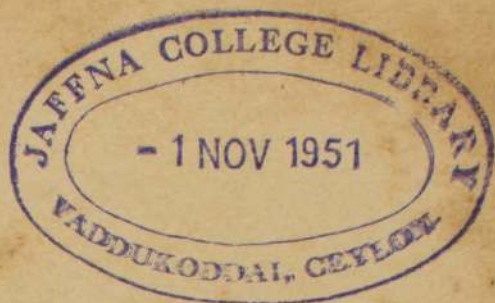
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## INTRODUCTION

In the House of Representatives on 24th July, 1951, the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister, in the course of the debate on the Budget, made a lucid, logical and extremely important statement embodying his own personal views as well as those of the Government on three of the most controversial subjects of today, namely—

- (1) Indian and Pakistan Citizenship Act,
- (2) The demand for Buddhism to be made the State religion of the country,
- (3) The demand for Sinhalese and Tamil to be made the official languages of the country immediately.

Although the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister's statements always receive very wide publicity it is felt that this particular statement deserves to be placed in the hands of every individual in the country so that no one may be led astray by designing individuals through ignorance of the true facts.

In this brochure, therefore, is reproduced the verbatim report of the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister's statement as it appeared in the *Hansard*, the official record of the proceedings of the Houses of Parliament.





## PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH

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The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake : Although there were many points for me to deal with I find now that most of them have been dealt with by other hon. Members. It will therefore be better for me to confine myself to two subjects. One is the question of Indians in Ceylon, and the other relates to the political developments that have taken place recently.

With regard to the question of Indians the hon. Member for Maskeliya (Mr. Aziz) stated that they have been treated very badly and have been politically assassinated, so to speak. I really cannot understand why he persists in this attitude. I am sure he is quite aware of the position that had been adopted by this Government with regard to the Indians themselves. We had definitely stated that as far as this country is concerned if there were Indians who had settled down here and who wanted to make Ceylon their home—and generally they want to do so—and have the means of supporting themselves without being a liability on this country there was ample provision made for them to be citizens. Of course they say that they had not been given time and that owing to the boycott they may have suffered. But I would like to say that even before the boycott they had ample opportunities of becoming Ceylonese if they wanted to do so.

I would like, in the first instance, to refer hon. Members to the voting rights that were given to them and under what conditions they were given. I do not want to refer to the many qualifications that were involved, the qualifications that were laid down in the Elections (Order-in-Council) which enabled people even without having been citizens of this country, because of their income or something of that sort, to get the vote. But I am referring to the provision that enabled them to become citizens and to get the vote. I would like to draw attention to this provision in the Despatch of Sir Herbert Stanley and the decision of the Secretary of State. For the undomiciled—it was then



realised that they were recognized as such—were to be given an opportunity to be domiciled. This is what His Excellency Sir Herbert Stanley said :

“ For the undomiciled (including any whose domicile in the Island might be in doubt), I would substitute the choice of either of two alternative qualifications in lieu of that of domicile, subject in both cases to the requirement of application to be registered as a condition of registration. The one alternative would be compliance with the franchise conditions of the present Constitution in respect of literacy and the possession of . . .

property and things of that sort. The Despatch goes on :

“ The other alternative would be the production of a certificate of permanent settlement granted by some duly appointed officer. The conditions entitling an applicant to receive such a certificate would be as follows : he or she would be required to furnish satisfactory evidence of five years' residence as contemplated and defined by the Commissioners, and in addition to make before the appointed officer a duly attested declaration to the effect that he or she was permanently settled in the Island or was residing within the Island with intent to settle therein, and that, while registered as a voter, he or she would renounce any claim to special protection by any Government other than that of Ceylon or to any statutory rights, privileges, or exemptions to which residents of all races and communities were not entitled.

Only a nominal fee, which was not to be more than one rupee, was to be charged. There was however no nominal fee at all. So hon. Members will see that as far back as the introduction of the Donoughmore Constitution, an opportunity was given to all Indians who were here, who did not want the protection of the Indian Government or did not want to enjoy any privileges, who wanted to be citizens of Ceylon to become citizens of Ceylon. The opportunity was given to them of making a mere declaration, and that declaration was sufficient for them to be admitted as Ceylonese. This is a recommendation that had been made, and this is what Lord Passfield himself said :

“ . . . domicile should be the standard test for inclusion on the Register. The definition of ' domicile ' involves legal questions of much difficulty and complexity, and the qualification would hardly be suitable if it stood by itself. The difficulty would, however, be overcome by your proposal that the applicant, provided he can furnish satisfactory evidence of five years' residence, should be qualified for the vote on the production of a certificate of permanent settlement granted by some duly appointed officer.”

I believe the Donoughmore Constitution was in operation for about 16 years. Within that time everyone who had been in Ceylon for five years if he wanted to be a resident of Ceylon had only to make that declaration. The declaration was that



he does not expect the protection of any other Government, that he will forego all the privileges that were obtained for him by the Indian Government and that he would depend on this Government for his future continuance. Therefore, for this gentleman to say now that we are rushing through registration, an act which would amount to political murder of these good Friends of ours, is not a reasonable complaint. If they did not want to have themselves registered as citizens of this country during the 16 years that were available to them and yet felt that for those 16 long years they should have a person from India to protect them and also that they should enjoy all the privileges of this country as Indians, I think it is an unreasonable attitude to adopt when they say that we have taken this step to murder them. Of course, they say they want an extension of time. I do not want to refer to their boycott, but even before that, before this Constitution came into existence, they had the opportunity of having themselves registered. If they did not take advantage of that opportunity at that time, now, after we have got our independence, for them to claim that they should have a voice in the affairs of this country, is a claim which I humbly beg to say is not justified.

We want to be as fair as we could to them. That is, if they wanted to become Ceylonese, every opportunity was given to them. That opportunity may have been given to them against our will, it may be that the British Government imposed that condition on us. However that may be, they had that opportunity, and, having had that opportunity, they did not make use of it. Now they say something heinous has been done to them. I should like to ask them to consider the position.

We know that during British rule it is the Kandyan people who had lost their political and other rights if any community lost its rights. We know the land that was available for the cultivation of coffee, tea, cocoa, and so on. That land was for the most part in the up-country areas. It had been taken over by the then Government. The Kandyans lost their lands and we know the position they are placed in today. Therefore, if independence means anything to them, and if any political rights are to be enjoyed by anybody, surely, it is they of the Kandyan districts that ought to enjoy those political rights. We must realize that if anything is to be gained by freedom it has to be



by the right of the vote. I ask my hon. Friends here who did not want to become Ceylonese when the opportunity was given to them, why they try to deprive these Kandyans of the freedom that this country enjoys.

They say they have contributed to the economic development of this country. I grant them that, but they will admit that in their own country the Britisher did contribute towards the economic development of that country and still they did not say, "We have contributed for so long towards the economic development of your country, we must continue to enjoy those rights now." The Britisher accepted the rights of the people and graciously withdrew themselves giving all those privileges and rights to the Indian people. If they, in their own country felt that any community that is not in that country had contributed towards the development of it, I am certain the Indian people could not even have asked for independence for that country, because, during that period, I believe the Britisher did develop that country to a large extent.

It is the same question here, but worse. They know very well the sufferings of the Kandyan peasant—never mind the peasant—the Kandyans as a whole had to undergo. They lost their lands, they were deprived of their homes, they died in hundreds in the patnas and with the greatest difficulty eked out a living. Today, when they are in that position, when they are hoping to improve their economic conditions, is it fair for my Friends to come here and say, "Now we must share your rights with you?" I may tell you this. In the Kandyan and Uva provinces—not so much in the Sabaragamuwa province—the Indian population is a little more than 50 per cent. But will it be right for a country to say, "Here you are, we have been given independence, but the people who helped us to develop it must be settled there?" But what did we do? We said that if they have settled here and made this their home they were welcome. Could there be any fairer offer or a more generous welcome than that to our friends? It is rather unfortunate that our Indian friends should not appreciate the generosity of the people of this country, instead they want simply to deprive the Kandyans of their rights. We would not certainly agree to that. I hope my good friends will see the reasonableness of our attitude and will, having realized that, gracefully retire from this agitation.



As a matter of fact, these people live on estates by themselves and today, we know, the estate population has increased to such an extent that the proprietors of these estates may think it not economic to maintain that population which has increased many times over and above the population which they would care to maintain. I have heard it said that the present rate of births on estates is about 8,000 a year.

At that rate of increase how does it affect us? If we try to admit all those people into our fold, accept them as our citizens, the position will be that whatever chances there may be available to us to improve the lot of the Kandians will become incapable of realization.

I have seen the Report of the Kandian Commission. It is a very fine document. It is with the printer at the moment but when it is out I am sure everybody will realize how very carefully this Commission has gone into the question of the future development of the Kandian provinces. In fact when I read that Report I realized the extent of land that was still available for development, and although those lands may be far away from roads it is my hope to be able to connect up those interior places with roads so as to provide room for the Kandian peasants for development.

Besides that I may say this. Although the planters may have built up a very useful asset for us and in that process caused a great deal of suffering to the people, still those industries that had been built by them can be utilized for the purpose of rehabilitating these Kandian people. We feel that the small hamlets which contain that population today are not sufficient for them.

We, therefore, propose to make a proper survey of the place. I might state here that I have already given instructions to the Town Planner, Mr. Weerasinghe, to go over at least to one place and to find out what the population is, what their requirements are in regard to schools and hospitals, and how much of land round this village ought to be acquired for this purpose. We are not going to confiscate any land. We are going to pay good money and acquire those lands in order to improve the conditions of the people there. That is our objective.

But for our good friends to come now and prevent us from doing that and, at the same time, give our neighbouring country the impression that we are trying to do them a great injustice is, I think, unfair by us. Even people who by their own industry



were able to acquire lands, not Crown lands but lands which belonged to the villagers, have had to sell them because of the unfortunate circumstances in which they were placed. Now those Indian capitalists who have settled there for generations and who are now occupying those lands today are not in any way going to be disturbed. All that we ask is this: now that we have obtained our independence give us an opportunity to establish those people who have been suffering for so long. That is all that I should like to say with regard to that. But I would appeal again to our friends to be a little more considerate.

I have been told that we at some time or other had come from India. Even if we did come from India many centuries ago we still left India to herself. We let the Indians to remain there. We even left our rights behind there. We only ask those people, now that we have escaped from them, not to come here and poach on us. Is that too much to ask of them? Yes, Sir, we were in India but we left India. We have now come here, so let us be here.

Now, I should like to refer to my good Friend the hon. Member for Attanagalla—I am sorry he is not here.

**The Hon. Mr. E. A. Nugawela (Minister of Education) :** He will never be here.

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** —but before I say anything about him, there is one thing more that I should like to say. “I regret very much his departure from us. I am sorry that a useful Member of the Cabinet, who rendered valuable service to this country, has departed from us. Although he has departed from us I hope that he will not depart from this world and that he will live to be of service.

As a matter of fact, there is much which I do not like to say. During this time I had great difficulties and troubles and I had many a headache but still as I knew the value of that hon. Member I tried to stick to him as much as I possibly could. I regret very much that he should have left us. Although he has left us I would not say that he has by any means been a useless Member.

The position that we always take is this. If there has been anything that has been done whether by this Minister or that Minister, we take that it is done by the Cabinet and by the Government. He has therefore got as much right as anybody else to take credit for the achievements of this Government. I feel certain that our achievements have been something which we can be proud of. I give him his share of the credit for those achievements.



One of the things that he referred to was our foreign relationship. He was rather disturbed about it. If Ceylon can claim any achievement, it is our achievement of satisfactory relationship with foreign countries. Before we got our independence, Ceylon was not so well known. We are a small country and the size of Ceylon may be very small but I do not know whether there is any other country whose relationship with other countries is better than ours : it is not only in regard to the Commonwealth, not only in regard to India and Pakistan, but also with all countries—may be with America—that would like the democratic way of living that we have established the closest friendship.

I would not say that that is due to any action of mine. I would say that that is due to the collective action and attitude of the Cabinet. With regard to our foreign affairs, with regard to our foreign relationship, I think we can well congratulate ourselves.

Of course, there are our good Friends, the Communist Members, who say : “ Why do you not go to Russia? Why do you not go here and there ? ” As a matter of fact, I was rather disappointed that a colleague of ours should have even attributed motives to us when we recognized China.

It is true that England did recognize China. As far as we are concerned, it is also true that we recognized China just after England recognized her. But we did so not because England recognized China but because we felt that it is a people's Government and that we should recognize it. [*Laughter*].

**Dr. Perera :** Hear ! Hear !

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** Our good Friends smile and laugh but the fact is that we did recognize China. I believe that it was after our recognition of China that India recognized her and thereafter the other countries. If it is argued that merely because England recognized China we also did it, the hon. Member would see that Ceylon's attitude towards China is different from that of England or of any other country. We adopt an independent attitude with regard to China.

Of course, we do not very much wish to associate ourselves or get into too much close contact with our good Friend's country. [*Interruption*]. His adopted country or he was adopted there—I do not know.

That was for a good reason. When we wanted to become a member of the United Nations Organization, we really thought that the object of those nations in joining together was to bring



about peace and prosperity to the world. We were therefore very anxious to become members of the United Nations Organization but it so happened that our membership application was vetoed by Russia and other countries.

As far as I am concerned, whatever difference of opinion we may have or it may be that our views coincide to some extent, I do not think that I personally, or my country, would like to go where we are not wanted. They did not want us and we say we do not want them. But, of course, there is another reason. It is quite apparent that, although this United Nations Organization was formed with good intentions, there was an attempt by certain countries to dominate in that Organization. There was an attempt to get a balance of power in that Organization. We were rejected, but what were the conditions under which they wanted us admitted? If certain other countries which are favourable to the views of the Soviet Union are admitted, we can also be admitted. As a matter of fact, under those conditions we certainly did not want to become a member of the United Nations Organization. We do not want to be just a group of people following the dictates of someone else. We do not want to balance things. What we wanted was this : we received our independence and we wanted independence of action.

If my good Friends tell us now, though I do not know what authority they have to do so, "Why do you not go to Russia? Why do you not do this? Oh, they have got tremendous machines," I tell them that their policy in the first place does not appeal to us. I tell them it is our good fortune that has kept us away from closer contact with them.

I feel that this country being a small country with a small population but expanding population—even to that extent I give my good Friend the hon. Member for Attanagalla credit for saving the babies—

**Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike (Attanagalla):** Four hundred thousand last year.

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** Yes, four hundred thousand. And when we know our own position, when we know that it is very difficult for us even to beg of our Indians to look after themselves and their economy, when we have to do all these things for ourselves, to get these hordes from all parts of the world to overrun and finish us is not a policy that I want. Of course, these people say that it is a workers' organization, that all the workers in the world can come here; but if that is so I say, please keep the workers to yourselves. You have



benefited from these workers; you have got wonderful machinery to keep their standard of living at a high level; stick to them; do not come here; let our poor country exist by itself without any such invasions.

Of course, there are other things which we value, but certainly I feel that one of the reasons why we do not want to have anything to do with them is that I would ask my good Friends opposite—they are intelligent people, they are men with brains—

**The Hon. Mr. Nugawela :** Question !

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** There is not the slightest question that they have brains. Perhaps some of them are short-sighted. They are here and I ask them whether, although in Ceylon we have the least trouble from Communists, have we not enough trouble with them. Is not that enough for us? Why should we try to have more trouble? As a matter of fact, if all hon. Members opposite who are Communists want passports or whatever they are to go to Russia to settle down, I will give them all necessary help. Go and live with the people whose policies appeal to you. Go and live there and be happy, and let us be happy here in our way of life. That is all I should like to say to them.

**Mr. T. B. Subasinghe (Bingiriya) :** What about the hon. Member for Attanagalla?

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** As far as he is concerned, as I said, I am sorry that he has left us. I can only say—

**Mr. Bandaranaike :** I am not a Marxist.

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** —that if he gets inveigled into their clutches, I do not think even the devas could help him. That is with regard to our foreign policy.

Next, my Friend has been rather worried about our agreements with the United Kingdom. Although we should like to be independent, at the same time it will be foolish on our part to feel that we are absolutely safe from attacks by other countries. We want friends and we feel that the best friends we could have are the British and other members of the Commonwealth. As a matter of fact, whatever grievances we may have, whatever hardships we have to undergo, there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the Englishman is the best gentleman that one could trust.



**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala :** Not the Dutchman.

**Mr. Keuneman :** Even in their own country they do not say things like that.

**An Hon. Member :** They are blushing.

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** As a matter of fact, in their own country I admit they will not say so. Perhaps even in this country they will not say so, but those high qualities exist in them. After all, they do not want to say these things because their very conduct shows what superior men they are.

Here in this country, whatever other circumstances there may be, we know this, that they were ruling us. They gave the country to the people of Ceylon; and I am sure you will realize that from the co-operation they have extended to us within these three years, they have realized that we in Ceylon are the masters and they have done all they could to establish themselves and to help us to establish ourselves.

Although I have the greatest admiration for them, and their friendship I value very much—and their friendship means a great deal to us—still I can say that I value our independence more. Because of the value we place on our independence and because also perhaps England and others realize our genuineness, that we as a people who have had an independent existence for 2,000 years have inborn in us qualities that we can ourselves be proud of, I believe that there need not be any binding agreements between ourselves. We would try to respect each other and to carry on in such a way that we could maintain the most friendly feelings.

Now, the question of the Defence Agreement has been raised here, and I was surprised that my good Friend doubted whether we had surrendered ourselves to the British or not. I believe he is aware of our Agreements. I have always made it a point to inform not only the members of the Cabinet but also the people in regard to these Agreements. Perhaps I might, for the benefit of everyone here, read them :

“The Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Ceylon will give to each other such military assistance for the security of their territories, for defence against external aggression and for the protection of essential communications as it may be in their mutual interest to provide. The Government of the United Kingdom may base such naval and air forces and maintain such land forces in Ceylon as may be required for these purposes, and as may be mutually agreed.”

I want to stress the point that it is by mutual agreement that these arrangements will continue. I might quote the whole of it :



“ The Government of Ceylon will grant to the Government of the United Kingdom all the necessary facilities for the objects mentioned in Article I as may be mutually agreed. These facilities will include the use of naval and air bases and ports and military establishments and the use of telecommunication facilities, and the right of service courts and authorities to exercise such control and jurisdiction over members of the said Forces as they exercise at present.

The Government of the United Kingdom will furnish the Government of Ceylon with such military assistance as may from time to time be required towards the training and development of Ceylonese armed forces.

The two Governments shall establish such administrative machinery as they may agree to be desirable for the purpose of co-operation in regard to defence matters, and to co-ordinate and determine the defence requirements of both Governments.”

Hon. Members will therefore see that all these are matters in which there has to be mutual agreement between the two Governments. For my part I feel this is a very satisfactory Agreement from the point of view of this country. I do not take all the credit for this Agreement. I share the credit with my good Friend the hon. Member for Attanagalla (Mr. Bandaranaike) for entering into this Agreement. It is the Cabinet that discussed it in the first instance and it is the Cabinet's Agreement.

**Mr. Cholmondeley Goonewardene (Kalutara):** What about the secret clauses?

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** All the secrecy lies with the hon. Member and his circle only, secretly conspiring with other countries to betray our own. That is not conduct that finds favour with us. I forgive my hon. Friend for asking that question because after all one is likely to judge others by one's own standards.

**Mr. Speaker :** The hon. Member will see how much time has been unnecessarily wasted on account of his interruption.

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** Now I have read the relevant portions of the Agreement and it will be seen how the element of mutuality comes in at every point.

This Agreement was reached when we had no military of our own, no Navy, no armed forces of any kind. The defence of the country at that time had to be undertaken by the British. There was no war at that time and no actual defence to be undertaken, but true to their Agreement with us, when it was necessary in our mutual interests to have their forces here, they kept them until we were able to take up our own defences. Trincomalee was defended by them, but Trincomalee has been handed over to us.



As far as British military personnel are concerned, they have all been withdrawn and it is our personnel who are defending the country. As far as training is concerned, our men are being trained by the British. They are rendering all possible assistance till it is possible for us to be a little more dependent on ourselves. At no time did they complain that we were asking their people to withdraw. There are no guarantees of the kind that hon. Members on the other side think of. The only guarantee is that we act, if it is in the mutual interests of both parties, and if it is not in the interests of either, themselves or ourselves, we look after ourselves alone.

This House is aware of the legislative measures which I have brought before it from time to time to build up our own defence forces. I refer to the Army Act No. 34 of 1949, the Air Force Act No. 41 of 1949, the Navy Act and the Visiting Forces Act. If British Forces come to our help, they will have to come under the provisions of the Visiting Forces Act on a mutual help basis. It is an Act the like of which is in operation even in a country like England, under which any foreign forces, let it be American or any other, will arrive and render assistance. Well, Sir, if it is possible for us, a small country, to obtain the friendship of a powerful country, it is something that is desirable.

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena (Kotte):** Will those documents be tabled?

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake:** They were tabled years ago for the information of everybody, and they were printed. If my hon. Friend wants a copy I can send one to him, and I think it is a very good thing for him to read them.

Some time ago I reported to this House what transpired at my discussions with the military officials when I was in England. I will repeat what I said. There is nothing that I want to keep away from anyone, because an Agreement with another country is not one that lasts only during the lifetime of one individual. It is an Agreement between one country and another and it is for that purpose that in the case of every Agreement or decision I took I exercised particular care to inform this House. This is what I reported:

“ I took this opportunity of my presence in London to discuss with the United Kingdom Ministers some aspects of the mutual assistance which ‘ in the mutual interest of Ceylon and the United Kingdom, ’ the two Governments may render each other ‘ for the effectual protection and defence of the territories of both. ’ My discussions were confined to general principles over which we had no serious differences of opinion, I could assure this House that the provisions of the Defence Agreement published in Sessional Paper No. XXII of 1947 ” —



I wonder whether my hon. Friend the Member of Kotte (Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena) gets these Sessional Papers, otherwise the Hon. Minister might see to it that the Government Press sends him a copy.

**Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardena :** Certain papers are not.

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** The hon. Member has got Sessional Paper XXII of 1947. To continue :

“ . . . and our sovereignty as an independent nation, remain unaffected.”

The hon. Leader of the Opposition asked me for a date for the discussion of my statement. I readily agreed. But that discussion has never taken place.

Before I go on to talk about recent events there is yet another matter my good Friend the hon. Member for Attanagalla referred to. I am very thankful to him for referring to it because this is an achievement I am very proud of. He referred to the Land Development Ordinance. I believed that Bill was introduced at a time when there was no collective responsibility. I feel that I can claim credit for that Bill, and so can the then Executive Committee of Agriculture and Lands. It was not Cabinet responsibility that brought that Bill into being. I feel certain that there had never been a more progressive piece of social legislation introduced in Ceylon than that Ordinance. That was a time when we did not have independence, but I felt that if there was anything that required our attention it was the protection of our lands. The policy of Government in the past was to practically confiscate lands that belonged to the people and to sell them by public auction.

Before I introduced this Bill there was a very objectionable Bill in operation, namely, the Waste Lands Ordinance. Even before that there was the Forest Ordinance of 1840 which certainly deprived our people of the land. There were other problems also.

Now, what did I do? At this time, when even my good Friend the Member for Attanagalla who recognizes the services I had rendered in the past and who wished to be kind to me in spite of what he considered my failures, my helpless state to be of any further use to the country, is now willing to abandon me so that he may do better, it is perhaps excusable if I take some pride in what I have achieved. At the time the Waste Lands Ordinance was in operation I amended that Ordinance. We know to what extent the late Mr. C. E. Corea fought to get that law amended. We know that Mr. E. W. Perera moved a Resolution in the Legislative Council to get that Ordinance amended. I



believe all would say that it was I, more than anyone else, who was responsible for the Amendment. I discussed the question at every Committee meeting and I had to fight single-handed to get that law altered.

What did I do? I wanted the rights of the Government to be preserved, not for anything else but for the purpose of going into just claims of the people and settling the lands on them. Owing to a number of Ordinances that were in existence the title to the lands of people had been disturbed with the result that there was no proper and clear title. Well, I thought that it would be very much better when there was this Ordinance to utilize it so that the people might be helped to get clear and good title to their lands. To survey the lands, demarcate them, make the necessary inquiries and do all that kind of thing cost us a tidy sum of money per acre. But we only made a charge of Rs. 15 for all that work, and very often this charge was waived. We incurred that expenditure so that the lands may be settled on the people and not kept in an unsettled state.

After that the Land Development Ordinance was introduced. As I said, for that Ordinance my Executive Committee and I can take credit. Without selling the lands by auction I made provision that they should go to the most deserving, and of all the claimants the poorest man had the best chance. At that time there were even Ceylonese capitalists and the Low-Country Products Association objecting to this Ordinance. I believe even my Indian friends made representations to India. I say that it was with the greatest difficulty that I had the Ordinance sanctioned by the Secretary of State. As a matter of fact that Ordinance, I make bold to say, was the most advanced piece of social legislation that was ever introduced in the world.

I am proud to say that after that Ordinance was introduced many countries had written to us on this matter and have adopted our legislation. Some countries have not gone even now to the full extent we have gone. When that was the state of affairs it hurt me a great deal to feel that my good Friend with whom I was associated so long, doubted my sincerity and thought that there is the possibility of my using this Ordinance for the benefit of others. I do not want to say anything more on that matter. But, at the same time, I must say that it is the people of this country that I want to serve. As a matter of fact, since I had taken to politics, not as an hon. Member of this Parliament but as a camp-follower of my seniors, I can assure you that I have practically given up estate management.

Today, fortunately, because of some land that I had inherited from my parents, not acquired by my own exertions, we have a



certain amount of land of our own, but I can tell hon. Members that that land has to look after itself because I seldom go to it. That is the attitude I have adopted with regard to land policy. At a time when my good Friends here were blaming me and telling me that I was rushing into the jungles to induce people to go to their doom bitten by mosquitoes, I was the person who rushed through those jungles before others, and I certainly carried on. I am sorry that so far as that is concerned there is this accusation against me and this doubt that has been created. There is an old saying that evil communications corrupt good manners. My good Friend has been in communication with my friends of the Opposition for only a very short time. Perhaps he may have learnt a lesson now to doubt his old friends.

I remember at the time I started the Minneriya Scheme my good Friend in a Debate here asked me why I wanted to open up land in that way. He suggested that I should get labour from India to open up this land. If I did so, they would have worked for about five years, claimed certain rights, and land would have had to be given to them. I said, "I would rather do the thing myself, let it be slow, but let me not have the trouble of claimants coming in." I know very well that progress was very slow at the beginning. I know very well that my good Friends had been kind enough to tell the whole Island that I was wasting the money of this country, that if the money that has been wasted in this country was heaped up in rupees, it would be higher than Adam's Peak, *Sri Pada*. I survived all that criticism. Progress was slow, owing to initial difficulties and perhaps owing to the war, although the Land Development and colonization work were in my charge for fourteen years. But I can proudly say that within the last three years there has been more progress than I was able to achieve in the past.

I shall now deal with recent events. In fact, I was very glad to listen to my good Friend the hon. Member for Attanagalla (Mr. Bandaranaike). I was sorry because statements had been made that it was I and I alone who was responsible for his running away from our camp. The statement that had been made previously was that there were certain resolutions that had been sent by the Sinhala Maha Sabha to me and I, as the Chairman of the U.N.P. Committee, had rejected them without even considering them. Although I had sent a justifiable reason, that was the reason given. I wonder how my good Friend thought the position was that. But I am glad to find that he resigned for quite a different reason. That may have been his first excuse or the opportune moment he had taken to make such an excuse, but he told us yesterday that he left us because of our failings as a Government. It was not my ruling that was responsible



for his going away. I am glad that as far as that is concerned, the whole responsibility is not mine. Yet I feel it is necessary to tell hon. Members something about this incident and, perhaps, even something more, I mean about the formation of the U.N.P. and things of that sort, something further back relating to the history of this political organization.

I am sure many of you who have taken to politics will realize that I have been an ardent worker of the National Congress from its very beginning. It is true I was nothing more than a camp-follower but even as a camp-follower I can certainly pit my share of the work I did for the Congress against the work done by any other person, and still claim that I have done more work for the National Congress than any one person alive today. Of course, we were good followers. We recognized our leaders and we did certainly work in co-operation with them.

Many of our leaders, the founders of the National Congress, worked hard to gain political rights for this country, but unfortunately they died before we were able to achieve our independence, but still we carried on the Congress. Now at a certain stage, it so happened, my good friends who happen to be Communists crept into this body.

**The Hon. Sir J. Kotelawala :** Surreptitiously.

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** Not surreptitiously. They came there. In fact, when that happened, you can just imagine my position after having worked so hard for the Congress from the very beginning and having done everything for it. When these people came there they were able not only to captivate the hearts of the Members of the Congress but even the support of the whole Congress.

**Dr. Perera :** Your good friends are the people who did it.

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** I am just telling you how these people came to be deceived by my good friends the Communists. They came, they saw and they conquered my friends. I told the members of the Congress that they were making a mistake in admitting them. I told them that having served this Congress with so much enthusiasm I felt that we would be doing great harm to it if we admitted this group of people.

In fact, I remember while speaking on a public platform at Kelaniya relating a story on that occasion, one of the Jataka stories, that is, that there was a big isolated rock under which



all the swans lived without being disturbed by anyone till one fine day they gave shelter to a crow. Now that crow deposited some seeds and out of that there grew up a banian tree which enabled monkeys to climb the rock and destroy the swans. Similarly, I told these people that if they admitted that group of people, who were in actual fact red, they would be doing themselves great harm. I asked them not to do it, but unfortunately my advice was ignored. So reluctantly I left the Congress with the feeling that I would, at least, try to do my duty by myself.

Now in that state I thought it would not only be possible for me to work by myself but also that I would be able to act in the way I thought best rather than be encumbered with associates whose way of thinking might cramp my style. In fact my advice being disregarded at that time was a fortunate circumstance because I was able, by being free and left to my own devices, to do something which we would otherwise never have been able to achieve in this House.

But when we were about to get freedom, my good Friend the Member for Attanagalla, your predecessor, Sir Francis Molamure, the Hon. Minister of Transport and Works, and many others, came to me and said, "Let us form a Party." I told them then one thing, that is, if we are to have a party in Ceylon then it has got to be one national party, so that we can make every one feel that he has got equal rights in this country. I also told them that we cannot have communal parties or political parties inside a united national party. At that time there were many people in Ceylon who suspected us, who were not certain of our attitude, but yet they were willing to give it a trial on one condition, and that was that there should not be inside this united national party a communal party. You will realize that, Sir, for this reason. How could we trust each other if, when we were trying to work together as one organization, there were to be some sections of it which were trying to get some advantage over the others? Therefore, for trust to be established our hearts must be pure and our intentions must be above board. They all agreed to that proposition.

It was only after that I said that I was prepared to join that association, only if that association will pass a resolution that it will not dabble in politics except to support the programme of the United National Party. That was also agreed to and a resolution to that effect was passed accordingly by the different associations which, thereafter, did me the honour of electing me their Chairman.

Now in regard to the Constitution of our Party my good Friend the Member for Attanagalla helped us a great deal to



draw it up. The other person, I believe, was the late Sir Francis Molamure. But the hon. Member for Attanagalla played a very important part. It was through their joint efforts, not of myself, that the Constitution of this Party was drawn up. I believe all these gentlemen took part in that. There is this section in the U.N.P. constitution :

“ Members of a Political Organization which existed on the 1st January, 1946, may become members of the Party while retaining membership of any such organization, if they so desire, provided that such organization agrees:

- (a) to accept the Principles, Policy and Programme of the Party ;
- (b) to conform to the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Party ;
- (c) to be bound by and loyally to accept all decisions arrived at by the Executive Committee of the Party in respect of matters referred to in Section 9 ;
- (d) not to put forward candidates for Parliamentary and Local Elections and to support candidates nominated by the Party ;
- (e) that any political activities it may engage in shall not conflict with clauses (a) to (d) above.”

It was on those conditions that the U.N.P. was formed. When these Sinhala Maha Sabha resolutions were brought up I pointed out that they were contrary to our rules, contrary to our agreement and that therefore they could not be accepted. At the same time I went into the resolutions in great detail and pointed out how conflicting the views that have been expressed are to the views that not only our Party but also the Parliament held.

Before I deal with each one of the resolutions, I should like to say this. After I went through all the resolutions and after a long discussion, one of the things that was stated was that these resolutions were framed by the Sinhala Maha Sabha to cover only that aspect of the problem in which they were interested and that it would be quite possible to formulate resolutions which would be acceptable and in keeping with the constitution of the U.N.P. I then told that they could be members of the U.N.P. under those circumstances. And it was then that the hon. Member for Attanagalla himself said that he could frame the resolutions to be in keeping with our constitution and that it would be all right. He then asked me whether if he brought forward those resolutions at the next meeting of the Working Committee his action would be misunderstood, and I replied in the negative. I believe even my good Friend the Hon. Minister of Transport and Works was prepared to accept that position if the resolutions were properly modified to be in keeping with the policy of the Government or the Cabinet. The hon. Member said he would do so and we parted quite happily.



**The Hon. Mr. A. Ratnayake (Minister of Food and Co-operative Undertakings)** : Yesterday he denied it.

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake** : As a matter of fact, I believe he took part in drawing up even the minutes of that day's meeting. The matter was then considered by the Committee of the Sinhala Maha Sabha, and to my utter surprise a deputation came to see me. I expressed my opinion to the deputation and Mr. Bandaranaike's subsequent action completely surprised me.

After the Cabinet had gone through the whole Budget and approved it, it was considering the revenue proposals on Thursday morning, and on that day the hon. Member was not present at the meeting of the Cabinet. When I went back from the meeting I had his resignation.

With regard to the resolutions, the first one is with regard to religion.

**The Hon. Mr. A. Ratnayake** : Or is it about languages ?

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake** : The first one was about religion.

**The Hon. Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam (Minister of Industries, Industrial Research and Fisheries)** : As the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister will take some time to get at the papers, can the House be adjourned now, Mr. Speaker ?

**Mr. Speaker** : The Sitting is now suspended until 6-30 p.m.

*Sitting accordingly suspended until 6-30 p.m., and then resumed.*

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake** : The first point I should like to mention here is with regard to the suggestion that has been made that Buddhism should be made the State religion. I must add that my hon. Friend has stated that he never asked nor wanted the Buddhist religion to be made the State religion. However, I am not referring to it because I want to attribute it to my hon. Friend, but because there seems to be a confusion of ideas in the public mind, and I want to explain my position in regard to the question of a State religion.

I should like to say that I as a Buddhist would follow the Buddhist *Dharma* according to my own conception. It is true I have not conquered myself and there would be many more births before I can do that. Still I follow Buddhism according to my



own conception. I feel that making Buddhism the State religion is quite contrary to my conception of Buddhism. I feel that when Lord Buddha attained supreme knowledge he did so having as his object the saving of humanity and removing them from all this misery. He felt that there is a certain stage which man has to reach before he can get away from this continuous circle of re-births. All of us know that Lord Buddha's father was a ruling prince, and if he felt that humanity could be saved by kingly action the first person he would have gone to would have been to his father. He did not do that. What he did do was to try and pick out a person who could grasp the *Dharma* and benefit by it.

The second thing is that Lord Buddha knew that after his father his own son would succeed to the throne. If he had the idea of saving humanity by that means, well he could have left his son to become king and then render service to the people. He did not do that either. What did he do? He ordained his own son a priest. Why he did that, according to my way of thinking, is because he knew that it was only by establishing a Sangha that the *Dharma* could continue for five thousand years. Now, once the sangha is established, to try and get the son to control the Sangha, to my mind, is not Buddhism as I see it to be.

Therefore, if I refuse to associate myself with a proposal to make Buddhism the State religion, I do so because I do not want the Sangha to be under the control of any Government. As I mentioned earlier, that is not the resolution that was moved by my Friend.

**Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike (Attanagalla):** Nor is it my point of view.

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake:** I quite agree. I am only mentioning a point of view that exists outside, and I took particular care to say that he does not claim it to be his point of view.

**Mr. Bandaranaike:** I do not want to interrupt my right hon. Friend, but I am sorry I was not here when he quoted from some rules of the United National Party Constitution. Would he be good enough to table the Constitution from which he quoted?

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake:** Certainly, yes. I have not the slightest hesitation in doing that.



Perhaps I will deal with the resolution itself before I go to the other points. The resolution is this :

“ The Sabha is convinced that for the prosperity and happiness of the majority of the people of the country who are Buddhists, it is necessary that Buddhism which has seriously decayed during foreign rule should be revived and that the assistance of the Free Government of Lanka be afforded by such Government in addition to other steps necessary in helping in the formation of a Constitution for the Buddhist Sangha Sasana and setting up a suitable Department to help in protecting and maintaining Buddhism and Buddhist institutions until the aforesaid Constitution becomes operative.”

With regard to this matter, I believe he mentioned here yesterday that he is not opposed to all religions getting assistance.

**Mr. Bandaranaike :** It has been stated in that resolution itself, in the second part of the same resolution.

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** The second part of the resolution is :

“ The Sabha wishes to make it clear that in asking for Government Assistance for the revival of Buddhism there is no intention whatsoever either that Government should usurp the powers vested in the Sangha regarding the control and direction of Buddhism in this country or that any discrimination or injustice should be done to any other religion. Indeed the Sabha feels that the reasonable and just claims of other religions in our country should receive the sympathetic consideration of the Government.”

That is the whole resolution, I believe. Now, the first point I should like to make with regard to this matter is this. If this resolution means that any consideration that is to be given to Buddhism should be equally available to any other religion and that all religions should receive equal consideration, then there is no difference between himself and myself. If that is the idea, I think we can both march hand in hand and save ourselves from being mixed up with the Marxists. If that is his idea, I can only say that it can find fulfilment by his being with me instead of being with the enemies of religion and expecting help from them. His present action reminds me of the old saying: පිල්ලෙ හකුරු සහමනවා වාහෙයි which means, “ like hiding jaggery in the gutter.” In this case it is not in the gutter, it is in a worse place, because in that place they will not find protection for Buddhism or any other religion ; there they will meet with the destruction of all religion. It will be a question of “ *Stalin sara-nang gachchami.*”

The other point I want to stress is this. In regard to this matter, there are certain limitations in our own Constitution. The relevant provision—Section 29—of the Constitution reads :



“ Subject to the provisions of this Order, Parliament shall have power to make laws for the peace and good government of the Island.

No such law shall—

- (a) prohibit or restrict the free exercise of any religion ; or
- (b) make persons of any community or religion liable to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of other communities or religions are not made liable ; or
- (c) confer on persons of any community or religion any privilege or advantage which is not conferred on persons of other communities or religions ; or
- (d) alter the constitution of any religious body except with the consent of the governing authority of that body :

Provided that in case where a religious body is incorporated by law, no such alteration shall be made except at the request of the governing authority of that body.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, people may go round the country and say they are going to give special privileges to this religion or that, but to my mind that would be deceiving the people and making them believe something which no one is capable of doing according to our constitution itself. For my part, I shall try to be fair by all people and shall never pretend to be able to do something which I know cannot be done.

At this stage I should like to make a reference to my attitude towards my own religion. As far as I am concerned, I know that as a Buddhist I have to go a long way to become perfect, and I hope I will proceed from birth to birth and get closer to perfection. That is my hope. But at the same time I should always expect to be guided by, and have the protection and blessing of, the *Thun Sarana*.

I shall give an illustration of that attitude. When I was elected Prime Minister, Sir Henry Moore was in Nuwara Eliya while I was in Colombo. I was to take my Oath before His Excellency. I could have gone to Nuwara Eliya, or, it was likely, His Excellency would have come here. But I requested him to come to Kandy. I went to Kandy and took my Oath there. Thereafter the first thing I did was to go to the Maligawa expecting to get the blessings of the Sangha and the help of the Triple Gem, at the same time taking the opportunity of worshipping the sacred Tooth Relic before I came back.

As a Buddhist I have faith in my religion and keeping my religion in the forefront is one of the best aids I could find to discharge my duties. When I went to the Temple of the Tooth on that occasion and took the oath it was never my intention—and



never did it occur to me—to rob or deprive anyone of his rights. I thought to myself that I will do my duty with the help of the Triple Gem. Some time previous to that I remember that there were certain objectionable practices that had been adopted in Kandy. I had a consultation with regard to that with the High Priests of Malwatte and Asgiriya and some other members of the Committee. I told them that I felt that the arrangements that were made and the Act of Appointments they received were not to my mind in keeping with Buddhist doctrine or its dignity. I had occasion to go to one of these functions with Sir Henry Moore when he was Governor and when I went there I found that the respect that was due to a priest was not shown to the priest. So I told them we should try to cry halt to such a thing.

There was a report in the papers about my conference which was not quite accurate. As soon as this was seen by His Excellency the Governor-General he wrote a letter to me dated 21st December, 1950. It was one year ago. The letter runs thus :

“ My dear Prime Minister,

I think that the Press reports of the recent conference of Nayaka Theros at “ Temple Trees ” may, possibly, give to the public the impression that I, as Governor-General, am responsible for—

- (1) the procedure by which the Maha Nayaka Theros of Malwatte and Asgiriya receive the Sannas of their appointments at my hands, and
- (2) the wording of the Sannas pledging allegiance to the King and promising to report acts of a traitorous nature.

**The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike :** To spy for the British Government.

**Mr. Speaker :** Order, please! Let the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister go on.

**The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake :** The letter continues—

“As regards (1), I consented, as you know, to hand the Sanna of appointment to the Anunayaka Thero of the Asgiriya Vihare last January at the request of the Asgiriya Chapter, which was supported by Sir Tikiri Banda Panabokke, in the capacity of First Adigar, and by the Minister of Home Affairs.

It was impressed upon me that in so doing I should be carrying out an age-long custom which could be traced back to the first introduction of Buddhism into Ceylon.

Sir Andrew Caldecott and Sir Henry Moore had acceded to similar requests.



As regards (2), I had not, of course, the remotest idea of the wording of the Sanna or that it contained a pledge of allegiance and a promise to report acts of a traitorous nature.

Incidentally, it would be interesting to find out when that pledge and promise were first incorporated in the Sanna of appointment. They do not sound to me like official British phraseology and I am wondering whether the wording was copied and translated from Sannas current in the time of the Kandyan Kings.

Anyhow, should you be speaking on this subject later on, would it be possible for you to make it clear that, as Governor-General, I had no responsibility for a procedure or a document which, I agree with you, should be radically revised ? ”

That is in 1950. I will read my letter to His Excellency, the Governor-General ; as a matter of fact this is how I viewed the position. Whether it is historically accurate to the very detail I cannot say but this is my view of the position—

“ Your Excellency,

I thank you for your letter No. B. 67 of 21st December, 1950, regarding the Press reports of the recent conference of Nayaka Theros at the “ Temple Trees.”

It is unfortunate that the Press reports give only the pressman's report on scrappy information obtained by him and does not bring out accurately the points that were discussed at this conference.”

As a matter of fact the Press was not present at that conference which was only between myself and the Priests. Probably what happened was that some one must have heard about it and given the Press his own version. My letter goes on to state :

“ I shall certainly take the earliest possible opportunity to make it clear that you had no responsibility in the drafting of the acts of appointment or in the procedure by which the Maha Nayaka Theros received the Sannas of their appointment at your hands.

I have made some enquiries into these matters, but it is very difficult to find out who was responsible for the actual wording of the Sannas. I presume the practice of appointing the two Nayakas was in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Vinaya and according to the succession prescribed by Buddhist laws. The Asgiriya and Malwatte Chapters are really the offshoots of the Maha Vihare Chapter at Anuradhapura established by Arahat Mahinda, who first introduced Buddhism into Ceylon, and the two Nayaka Theros of Malwatte and Asgiriya are really the inheritors of Arahat Mahinda's rights, and these offices are not really ones created by any King. The Sannas of their appointments, however, state that the Chapter of monks makes the selection for the appointment of the Maha Nayakas on the delegated authority of Governor Torrington.

“ . . . and pledge their loyalty by virtue of their appointment to His Majesty the King.”

My own view is that the loyalty of any subject to His Majesty the King has to be assumed. A fresh declaration of loyalty becomes necessary only



in the discharge of the duties entrusted to a person by an appointment made on behalf of His Majesty, and the only temporal duty that seems to have been entrusted to the Maha Nayakas is also embodied in the Sannas of their appointment, namely, to bring to the notice of His Majesty any traitors. By this the Maha Nayakas, who are the spiritual heads, are to some extent converted into temporal heads by the incorporation of such a clause in their Sannas of appointment. This is against the tenets of Buddhism.

Perhaps it is possible that justification for the inclusion of such a clause in their appointments is sought in the Kandyan Convention where the King agrees to protect Buddhism but in fact it destroys the fundamental principle laid down by Buddha for the conduct of Buddhist monks.

I for one feel that it is necessary for the Governor-General to see that no action of his should be interpreted or should give the impression that he, as His Majesty's representative in the Island, is not interested in the affairs of Buddhism. At the same time it is necessary that the King or his representative, the Governor-General, should not be substituted for the Buddha or His chief disciples. When I discussed this matter with the Nayaka Theros the other day, my suggestion to them was that they should make the appointment of the Maha Nayakas on the inherited right of their sect, and they should only be expected to carry out the spiritual duties entrusted to them according to the tenets of Buddhism. The Governor-General could show his interest in these matters, particularly, as the Kandyan Convention forms part of the law of the land, by associating himself in the ceremony connected with the presentation of the Sannas of their appointment.

As regards the objection that has been taken to the procedure adopted in presenting the Sannas of their appointment, I feel that there is considerable justification for this. I hasten to state that Your Excellency is in no way responsible or could be blamed for the procedure, which was one followed by some of your predecessors in office. The Buddhist monks are invited to the King's Pavilion to come with their supporters and are all made to stand; the Governor-General in full uniform is seated and their Sannas of appointment are handed to them.

I had occasion to be present at one of these ceremonies when Sir Henry Moore was Governor-General, and I must confess that I felt that the recipient of these Sannas of appointment did not receive the courtesy shown by the representative of the King, when even an honour of a Muhandiram is conferred on an ordinary citizen where the Governor-General stands in his seat when the honour is conferred. The Minister of Home Affairs and the Nayaka Theros of the two Chapters are looking into this matter, and I feel confident that a more dignified procedure to fit this occasion would be evolved."

I saw His Excellency the Governor-General after this and I mentioned to him the procedure I would suggest. I shall say what the procedure was. As I mentioned, the act of appointment should be made by the Chapter whether it is by inherited rights of the Sanghas or not, but, as it is desirable that His Excellency should associate himself with this matter, I suggested that those Sannas should not be handed at the Governor's residence and that the Maha Nayaka Theros should not go there. I suggested that we should make arrangements for this ceremony to take place in the Audience Hall. I knew that if I suggested the Maligawa, His Excellency would have agreed to it. I did not put it to him but I felt that if he came in his uniform with hat



and shoes and had his back turned to the Tooth Relic, it would not be respectful. So, I suggested the Audience Hall where, when these Sannas of appointment are handed, he might attest them as a witness. I must say that His Excellency readily agreed to the suggestion. Then I saw the priests and I wrote to the other people concerned. I am awaiting their decision from 1950, and I hope it will come.

Hon. Members will see that where religious ceremonies are concerned, where the dignity of the Church is to be maintained, I certainly have an interest. Besides that, for the last 14 years I have felt that if it is possible to have one incorporated body of the Sanghas, it should be governed by an Ordinance. But that is not possible. There is so much disagreement about it. I had suggested that these matters of the different sects might be dealt with by having an Ordinance incorporating the different sects. This has got to be done with the consent and approval of the priests. This idea of mine did not originate some time ago, and I can tell hon. Members that for the last 14 years I have been working at it with one section with whom I have certain influence. We have almost completed the Ordinance under which this body could be incorporated, and it is in the hands of the lawyers. So, as far as I am concerned, I have done whatever I could for my religion without conferring any additional benefits which it is not entitled to. But if there is still anything more to be done I shall endeavour to do so. I did it not for any political reasons but because I believe in the Sansara and the Sangha.

Now coming to the question of languages, the Sinhala Maha Sabha was more convinced than ever that if the policy to adopt the national languages as the official languages of this country was to materialize within any reasonable space of time, it would be necessary to fix a definite time limit for the change over which alone would make it possible to adopt a definite programme to achieve its object. The Sabha therefore, was of the opinion that Sinhalese should immediately be declared the official language with the proviso that a limited time be given for the change over in any case of special difficulties. If there was a strong demand by the Tamil-speaking people of Ceylon that Tamil should also be declared an official language, the Sabha had no objection to it.

Now I will tell you what our objections are to that resolution. As it is, it has been decided by this House that Sinhalese and Tamil should be the official languages. It is a decision of this House and as such we as Ministers are pledged to give effect to it. Now with regard to this matter itself, as has been stated the one person who is as keen or as optimistic about achieving this object is no other than my good Friend the Minister of Finance. I



must admit that I am not so optimistic about it as either the Minister of Finance or, certainly, the Member for Attanagalla. I shall give you my reasons for it.

There is not the slightest doubt that if you want to make Sinhalese and Tamil the State languages for all purposes—whether it is possible I am very doubtful—then steps have to be taken in that direction more by the University authorities than by ourselves, that is, you have got to make those languages to come up to the standard of the other languages ; otherwise our programme of development would be retarded.

Besides that, I might say that I have my own personal views about the matter which I am prepared to express quite frankly without any mental reservations. I feel that if the language is to become a live language it has to be of use to the people ; otherwise it would die away. Now take the Pali language. Although it may be considered a dead language, that is, not spoken, yet Pali will last according to my belief; as long as Buddhism lasts. Then there is the Sanskrit language. It is also no longer spoken here but as long as the *solokas* of our indigenous system of medicine are found in Sanskrit and as long as the Vedaralas are there, it will still continue to be used. But take the case of the Dutch language which was spoken here for over 100 years or the Portuguese language which was used for over 150 years. What has happened to them ? They have died out because there was no use for them. A language will therefore become useful if it will serve a purpose and will be of help to us. So, why try to think of destroying it ? That is one thing.

Then there is another grave objection to the fixing of a time limit. To my mind there is no way of fixing a time limit, because we all want to improve our conditions, our knowledge and to keep pace with the rest of the countries in the world. Now what progress can be made in the development of a language will depend on the success that can be achieved by its great pandits. Therefore, I feel that before that could take place, it is not possible for us to fix a date and say that everything in this country should be carried on in the Sinhalese language.

Why, Sir, we have today a large number of people who have been admitted to the Government Service. They are supposed to be perhaps the best selection for the Government Service. Whatever it is, I ask, if by one stroke of the pen we say, " Do everything in Sinhalese " could we replace all these gentlemen in the Government Service and get another lot of people in their place ? I do not think that is possible.



Besides that there are other things to be considered. It has been stated, for instance, that books could be translated. Well, when we sometimes have a dispute in the Law Courts—I was wondering, I may be wrong—we pay huge sums of money to the lawyers to appear for us. But for what purpose? It is to interpret the law, as it is written there, to suit each side of the case. It is for that purpose that we pay so much of money to these lawyers because so many interpretations can be given to the law as it stands. When that is the case, do you expect that we would be able to get translators to translate all these legal enactments without any ambiguity? Why, it has taken us nearly 18 or 19 years for our Sinhalese Dictionary to be compiled and even then we have not gone beyond “*අ*”, in spite of our ablest scholars being engaged on it. So, when that is the state of affairs, it is quite easy for me to say, “Well, let that be done in 10 or 15 years”, but I may not be in Parliament to answer questions that may be raised in that connection. It might lull the people of the country; in 15 years’ time I may not be in this world and it would then be said, “This man has deceived us and God.” I do not want to deceive any one—not for a vote, not to be Prime Minister or anything of that sort. It is my desire and my intention to be honest to my people and it is for the people to judge me or my usefulness on my conception and on my honesty.

There is another point of view which I asked my good Friend to take into consideration when he said that Sinhalese and Tamil should be made the official languages. There are a large number of doctors who do not write prescriptions even in English—they use Latin—and I told him: “Why not get your doctors to write their prescriptions in Sinhalese and see whether poison or medicine is given to the patients?” I added: “Well, I do not want to run a risk. It is not possible for me to allow doctors to prescribe in Sinhalese because there may be so many people poisoned by the faults of these people. I do not want to be a murderer in that respect.”

There is yet another very serious objection. As I said before, a language could be developed, could be advanced, according to the capacity of the great pundits that we have. Sinhalese people only live in Ceylon and there are 4,500,000 of them. Now, if all our Sinhalese pundits are superior to the Tamil pundits in India, where there are 42 million Tamils, and if we try to compete with them, do you, Mr. Speaker, think that the standard of our Sinhalese would be up to the Tamil standard? I am all for the Tamil language advancing. It is good, and we welcome it. But at the same time should we not give an opportunity for our people to acquire some knowledge even through a foreign language so that we can live on equal terms with our brothers—even my good Friend the hon. Member for Kankasanturai (Mr. Chelvanayakam)?



After all, what is going to happen to us? If we have our education through the medium of English, it is through that that we would be able to acquire sufficient knowledge to maintain and seek equal status with our brothers. So, these conditions do exist, and under the circumstances do you feel that we would be doing justice to either this country or to our community by introducing immediately Sinhalese as an official language? This is my feeling of the matter. I am proud of being a Sinhalese as much as anyone else, but at the same time I can tell you that my pride does not permit me to deceive the people and allow them, because of some sentiment or other, to be handicapped for the future.

Of course, there was another objection to this resolution of the hon. Member for Attanagalla, and it was this. We decided that Sinhalese and Tamil should be the national languages. We have appointed a commission to give effect to that. Wherever possible we get people with a knowledge of Sinhalese and Tamil into the Public Service and we are going on with that practice and are trying our best to maintain it. How soon we would be able to give effect to that decision of ours to introduce Sinhalese and Tamil as the official languages depends on the success of the University and the pundits. The commission will see how that could be done. In this instance, although we decided that the official languages should be Sinhalese and Tamil, the Sinhala Maha Sabha resolution refers to Sinhalese only and, if the Tamils like it, Tamil also. In spite of the fact that it was pointed out at the U.N.P. committee meeting that the decision was that Sinhalese and Tamil should be the official languages and that we were doing our best to introduce them, this resolution places the Tamil language in a doubtful position.

In fact, I remember the occasion when at a U.N.P. committee meeting the question of introducing Sinhalese and Tamil as official languages was considered. There were certain people at that meeting who felt that Sinhalese should be the official language, and the reason was the ancient culture and association of the Sinhalese. It was then stated that Tamils also could claim to have a culture of their own. It was ultimately decided that if the culture of the Sinhalese has to be preserved as it is to the benefit of the community, then the culture of the Tamils also has to be preserved. That was the decision of the U. N. P. That was the decision of this Parliament. In spite of all that, to put that decision now in an altogether varied form and to keep the Tamil language in suspense is not the right attitude. Of course, the reason that was given for having worded the motion in that way was that the Sinhala Maha Sabha was concerned with the Sinhalese, and of course if Tamil is to be there they had no objec-



tion. That shows the danger of communal organizations dabbling with politics in Ceylon.

Then there was the question of temperance raised. I can say that it gladdens my heart to find my good Friend espousing the cause of temperance. I can say that we have marched a great deal forward. It is a welcome sign that the grandson of that revered legislator Sir S. C. Obeyesekere is today a supporter of prohibition. It is a great advance that we have made, but still I can tell you this much, that even before the time that he and his generation had to be converted I was a total prohibitionist.

There are many friends of mine who have disagreed with me in the methods that we adopted. I can proudly claim that in the achievements of temperance there is hardly any one else who has done more for temperance and total prohibition than myself, but at the same time I feel absolutely convinced—this view was held not by me alone but even by Sir Baron Jayatilaka who was an ardent temperance worker—that by legislation you could never make a nation sober. That is one of the reasons why we wanted local option. If you want to keep the people free from evil, there must be constant digging into the minds of the people how harmful it is. If you try to do it by law, the tendency of human nature is to defy the law. By persuasion, by public opinion, by constant agitation, if you try to make a country sober, you will succeed. That is my point of view and I believe in that point of view. It is because of that that I say if you try to prohibit by law you will fail in your attempt. I say it as a person who has grown old working in the cause of temperance. I say take my advice, I am speaking from experience and with the best of intentions. It is a matter that is dear to me. I started my public life as a temperance worker and I can tell you that I got my heart in the temperance movement. That is one of the reasons why I say that total prohibition is a mistake and that it is something which would betray our very object.

With regard to horse-racing, I am very fond of horses, but at the same time I am neither fond of gambling nor of going to the races. For years I have not been to the races, but lately I have been to the racecourse on the Governor's Cup Day, not to gamble, not to see the races, but because when his Majesty the King's Representative visits the place the Stewards wish me to be there. I go there as a—(An Hon. Member: Guest)—not as a guest, but because I have been a member of the Turf Club for a very long time, as I have to do my riding there, and without being a member I do not want to use the facilities of the Turf Club. That is all I had in mind. I do not gamble, but at the



same time I feel that to try to make this world free from all—(An Hon. Member: Vices)—not vices, but to make this world free from all pleasures is a very difficult thing to do.

As far as I am concerned I feel that all of us should work towards attaining Nirvana but there is a difference between the functions of the Government and the functions of religious institutions. I believe Governments have to think of the desires and the pleasures that people would like to have. It may be that giving up these desires is a good thing to escape from Sansāra, but we have to manage the affairs of life in this world according to the needs of the people. We have come to Parliament to do public service and not to send you to Nirvana. I do not think it is necessary for me to say anything more with regard to that.

Something was said with regard to the indigenous systems of medicine. I can tell hon. Members that we have established an institution which is doing very useful work. We started by giving them Rs. 50,000 as a grant, and I believe now our expenditure on it is about Rs. 1½ million. It is a useful institution which is doing great service and it encourages the Unani and Siddha systems of medicine. I am glad we have been able to introduce that system of medicine here. Whatever system of medicine is likely to benefit or relieve the sufferings of people is given help, but that is not the way of trying to induce our people to take to the indigenous systems of medicine.

In this Budget we are providing for that. What we are trying to do is this. Where indigenous medicine is practised, where it is taught, we give such institutions grants so that that system of medicine will be preserved. We are trying to do that. We know of many places where there are specialists who have got specifics that are of great use. We want to make those places institutions where the knowledge is passed on to others. We want such institutions, if possible to be converted even into small hospitals, so that people will benefit. This time we are starting with only a grant of Rs. 150,000 but although that grant is small, we are ready if it is necessary to establish more institutions, to ask for more provision. That is how we are trying to protect the indigenous systems of medicine.

Now I believe I have dealt with many of the subjects. Of course, from the remarks made by my good Friend, it is quite evident that he felt that although I am one who had rendered very valuable service in the past, my days are gone and there is not much useful service left for me to do. I wish I could think so. I may be conceited, or I may not appreciate the ability of the people who are there to succeed me. I can say that it was my hope, when this new constitution was accepted by us, when



independence was given to us, that within about two years' time I might be able to take a rest. The position I occupy is one I am greatly proud of, but still I felt that a little rest in the twilight of my life would do me some good. I believed sincerely that so far during my life I had rendered some service to my country and that soon I would be able to devote some little time to think of the world to come. But it is unfortunate that I have not been able confidently to give up the reins at the present moment. Perhaps my friends may have by their attitude and actions contributed to that feeling of mine. If that is so, my anxiety is greater now, because even my good Friend who has been with us has been captured, and I do not know what is going to happen to him and to his cause. Under these circumstances Sir, it is my intention to remain in harness for some time longer.

I recall the time when I was asked to form a Government. I was not conscious at that time that my good Friend was really making a sacrifice by supporting me in that task. I am glad to hear that that was the position. Whether that is a fact or not, it may be his belief that if not for him I would not have been Prime Minister. Whether it is the truth or not, the very belief is kind and I am thankful to him for it. Anyhow, when I became Prime Minister, my good Friend felt that I should nominate my successor. I told him that that was not a thing I could do, for the simple reason that when I give up the reins of Government I become a nonentity as far as these things go, and I go back to my private life. It is the people who remain here afterwards, I told him, who should choose a successor to me. I said it would be my endeavour to do what I could for the purpose of enabling him to take my place. I made it clear that if any of the younger men wanted to take my place before that, such a person was free even to work against me, but that I could not work against any of them for the simple reason that I was not going to take their place, and I would go out. With the greatest difficulty, therefore, I carried on and did my very best to build up a younger generation that could take responsibility in due course. That is still my endeavour and my wish. I am sorry that at this stage the mere appearance of someone from some place or other should have made a friend of mine lose his balance and have prompted him to attempt to upset the Government, ruin the country and all that we have together been able to achieve. I can assure everyone that if there has been any wish, any attempt, on my part it has been to help one and all to carry on.

With regard to the Budget itself, it has been stated by my Friend that we have no plans at all and that we are simply rolling on. What has happened to him? On his very suggestion he was made Chairman of a planning sub-committee of the Cabinet, and I thought he had been hard at work because for three



years we had not seen the results of its work. Now till that Report was available and we were able to frame a proper plan, each Minister on his own prepared a plan, as has been stated by him. These were all co-ordinated into one comprehensive plan in which we all had a part. I think he will admit that even in the case of this Budget, before it came up finally before the Cabinet, I discussed with each Minister his own proposals and pointed out the priorities that we should observe. I claim that we have framed a plan. If we had had no planned action I wonder whether we would really have made the progress we have made. We have made great progress, and I am sorry my good Friend has overlooked it.

I do not have much time left and I do not want to repeat the progress we have made. I am convinced about it. I challenge anyone to deny that, comparatively speaking, Ceylon has made greater progress than any other country in South-east Asia during these years. Of course, there are people who may ask: "What have you done? There are so many people unemployed." To them I say, "That is your achievement. As far as we are concerned, we have made ample provision in our estimates so that there need not be a single unemployed person in Ceylon." It is true that there are those who are able to keep people away from employment, it is true they want people to work less than three or four hours a day and can make the cost too high for us. We know that in that respect those who sit opposite in this House have achieved some results. But we are convinced, and the progress we have made and the economic standards we have attained justify our belief, that with greater effort we could do what still remains to be done.

I thank you and the hon. Members for the patience with which you have listened to me. I am most thankful to you, Mr. Speaker, for no other reason than this. I cannot say that it is my eloquence that kept hon. Members silent. It is the way in which you kept order that helped me to make my speech.

I thank you.





