

The Jaffna Organ.

"Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached."

THE ONLY NEWSPAPER IN CEYLON FOR THE HINDUS

HAS THE WIDEST CIRCULATION

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Education in Ceylon since British Occupation.

A. CUMARASWAMY, M. A. (CAL. & LOND.) BAR-AT-LAW.

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V.

Measures to Promote Literacy.

I.

"Who would suppose that Education were a thing which had to be advocated on the ground of expediency, or indeed on any ground, as if it stood not on the basis of everlasting duty, as a prime necessity of man"—Carlyle.

The Dutch regime, as has been noticed already, had bequeathed in the 18th century to its successors a compulsory system of education in the Island. Though its avowed object was mainly to influence the young minds towards proselytisation, yet it cannot be denied that it must have had beneficial effects on the people as a whole. They became accustomed to a systematic regular course of schooling, compulsory in its character, unlike the unsystematic and irregular form that prevailed in the Paucal schools of Buddhist Ceylon. True it is that the Dutch carried out their policy by imposing heavy fines in default of attendance and met with serious opposition in the intensely Buddhist parts. In a country where Buddhist learning is held from ancient times in great respect, where religion is woven in the texture of the life of the people, it is not unnatural that opposition should have arisen against a system whose policy was antagonistic to their religion.

Nevertheless, the system deserved respectful recognition at the hands of the British when they became masters of the Island, and had this been done, Ceylon would have had an unbroken record of compulsory education which began as early as the second half of the 17th century. It would also have had a luxuriant growth when combined with the British policy of non interference in the religious beliefs of the people. But the system was abandoned not unnaturally, for at that time it did not exist even in England where popular education was mainly in the hands of private enterprise and a couple of philanthropic associations. The abandonment was followed by a restriction of the amount of revenue to be spent on education which was limited for a while to a small sum of £2000. A new policy was further adopted which laid it down in 1840 that aid from the Government should be given only to instruction through the medium of the English language. But fortunately, this policy did not appeal to the good sense of the Central School Commission who found it impracticable as the time had not come to let in new light through a new medium. The endeavour to spread vernacular education was getting popular by 1844 when the Central Commission was able to "express a conviction that the instruction of the population of Ceylon is now assuming the degree of consideration that its onward course will not be checked. The people in nearly all the parts of the Island are awakening to the advantages which education brings with it." But this onward course was checked when in 1848 Viscount Torrington introduced the principle of self support and restricted educational activities of the Government to aid mainly by means of grants. In spite of this new policy, the Commission expressed its opinion that "It is at all events the interest of a Government

to educate those whom it governs. Every shilling laid out in the furtherance of such an end may well be expected to bring back interest a hundred fold." The education of a country is so vast an affair that it is not practicable to allow it to individual efforts if it is to be made "compulsory, universal, and gratuitous." Nevertheless the new policy left the educational problem in the hands of the different missionary bodies who alone at that period endeavoured to open schools wherever they laboured and contributed to the spread of knowledge. The ultimate object of the Missions could not have been anything different from that aimed by the schools during the Dutch suzerainty.

With the establishment of the Department of Public Instruction in 1869 the policy of the Government was to avoid intruding Government vernacular schools into areas which were provided or seemed to be provided solely with aided schools. The Northern and Eastern provinces which are mainly occupied by the Tamils, and the larger towns, have been left almost entirely to aided schools. In the rural portions of the Sinhalese districts the work and is still divided between the Government and aided schools, the latter predominating in the maritime districts and in the neighbourhood of the towns, the former in the interior and especially in the Kandyan provinces.

Under this scheme of Education there was a total number of 494 schools, both Government and aided with 29,865 scholars, in the year 1871 when the population was nearly two millions and a half. Accepting the rules of the Breslau Tables that one-ninth of the population of a country between the ages 7 and 13 should be in school, about 237,431 children were growing in a state of ignorance harmful to themselves and dangerous to the community. By this year the first great educational legislation was effected in England to educate the "masses", but in Ceylon there was no representative government and provision for universal education was not thought of. When the Department of Public Instruction was established it had 64 schools under its management while the aided schools were only 21. But whatever progress in education there was it due to the aided schools.

| | 1869 | 1874 | 1879 | 1881 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|
| Dept. Schools. | 64 | 243 | 372 | 898 |
| Aided Schools. | 21 | 595 | 814 | 889 |

The Census report of 1881 revealed an appalling degree of illiteracy. The population was 2,759,738 which consisted of 1,469,553 males and 1,290,185 females. In the schools there were 67,777 boys and 21,662 girls while the number that did not attend school was 172,900 boys and 140,000 girls. So nearly 2/5 of the boys and more than 5/8 of the girls were without the advantages of education.

II.

Nothing substantial was done for a long time to promote literacy. But in 1889 an ordinance of some importance was made. Ordinance No 24 of 1889 created the Village Community Committee to work under the general direction and supervision of the Government Agent of the province. Amongst other duties, it was empowered to build school-houses to provide for vernacular education. All the residents within the area of the Village Committee were liable to a stated number of days' labour in each year which could be commuted by a money payment. The Committee had other small funds at its disposal. The school-houses constructed by the Village Committee became the Government schools immediately under the Department of Public Instruction which appointed and paid their teachers and provided them with books, furniture and apparatus, the funds for this purpose being voted annually to the Department from the general revenue. The

percentage of literacy now marked a slow increase in 1891 it became 19.9 and in 1901 it increased by 1.8. It was the census report for the year 1901 published under the superintendence of Mr. (afterwards Sir) P. Arunachalam that opened the eyes of the public and drew the attention of the Government to the backward state of the Island in the matter of education. In the city of Colombo alone there were enumerated 20,906 boys and 14,499 girls of the school age out of a total of 35,405 children. The number returned as under instruction was 9747. "These are facts of grave significance and need no comment".

Shortly afterwards, in 1901, the question of compulsion was brought to public notice by the deplorable figures of illiteracy the census revealed.

For the first time in the Island's history of education a committee was appointed in 1901 to consider "whether it is or is not desirable that education should be made compulsory for all the inhabitants of the Island, and suggesting this to be answered in the affirmative, to what species of education should this apply." The Committee reported in favour of taking steps to compel parents to give their children a good vernacular education. This recommendation was left in abeyance for the next five years before any step was taken towards universal education. In the meantime population increased and the proportion of children in school showed no marked increase. In the year before any school ordinance for compulsory education was passed, there was about 2/3 of the children of school age not attending any school. The figures for the various provinces in 1905 were as follows:—

| Province. | Population. | School-age. | Boys | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| | | | Boys at school. | Boys not at school. |
| Western | 920,688 | 78,297 | 66,916 | 16,381 |
| Central | 622,832 | 10,875 | 16,093 | 34,782 |
| Northern | 840,986 | 25,828 | 21,861 | 4,467 |
| Southern | 866,736 | 43,300 | 24,589 | 18,711 |
| Eastern | 178,602 | 13,576 | 61,227 | 7,449 |
| N. Western | 858,626 | 29,548 | 10,312 | 19,236 |
| N. Central | 79,110 | 6,489 | 2,611 | 8,878 |
| Uva | 186,674 | 15,135 | 2,782 | 12,862 |
| Sabragamuwa | 321,755 | 25,817 | 8,925 | 16,894 |
| Total. | | 289,855 | 147,664 | 184,191 |

These figures show that over 60% per cent of the boys of school age were not attending school. The figures for the girls show a still worse state of affairs:—

| Province. | school age. | Girls | |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|----------------------|
| | | Girls at school. | Girls not at school. |
| Western | 64,924 | 30,796 | 34,128 |
| Central | 42,584 | 3,282 | 89,252 |
| Northern | 25,374 | 7,646 | 17,728 |
| Southern | 41,697 | 8,694 | 88,008 |
| Eastern | 12,455 | 1,668 | 10,792 |
| N. Western | 24,084 | 8,212 | 20,872 |
| N. Central | 5,874 | 192 | 5,182 |
| Uva | 12,892 | 191 | 12,871 |
| Sabragamuwa | 21,741 | 1,249 | 20,492 |
| Total. | 261,115 | 57,225 | 193,890 |

It is clear that less than one-fifth of the girls were in school. In short out of a total number of 489,960 boys and girls, 328,081 were growing without any education at all.

III.

If education was to be left on a voluntary basis it was apparent that the per-centage of illiteracy would increase. Consequently the *Town School Ordinance* was passed in 1906 which made it lawful for any Local Authority in charge of local government, if they considered it expedient to do so, "to make provision for the establishment and maintenance of one or more schools within the limits of their jurisdiction for the instruction of the children in the vernacular languages." This body which it is to be observed, is a Town body only, was given the power to frame by-laws requiring the parent of any child between the ages of six years and twelve years, (or in the case of Muhammedan and Tamil girls, between the ages six and ten) residing within the jurisdiction of the Local Authority to have the child sent to school. One or more attendance officers were to be appointed whose duty was to report any child of school age not attending school. "If any child of such age as to be liable to attend school habitually and without reasonable excuse neglects to attend such schools or is found wandering about the

Continued up

Education in Ceylon

A. GNANAPRAKASAM, B. A., ADVOCATE, DIP. ED. (LOND)

I have read the first three articles by Mr. A. Cumaraswamy M. A., appearing in your paper on the subject of "Education in Ceylon Since British Occupation." The articles are methodically written, very interesting and full of accurate scholarship. Mr. Cumaraswamy deserves the congratulations and the best thanks of the country. What I appreciate most is the judicial equanimity with which Mr. Cumaraswamy states facts.

I do not wish to anticipate what Mr. Cumaraswamy is going to say later on. But I wish to note with interest the following points which appear in his historical summary relating to Education in Ceylon anterior to the British period:—

1. That Education through the vernacular as media of instruction did succeed during the Dutch period.
2. That local organisations did carry on such education with competence.
3. That so far as 1710 "two Jaffna youths distinguished themselves by their correct grammatical Dutch"—Even Dutch, not merely mathematics. Well-done Jaffna!
4. That in 1744 two of the most promising were sent to the University of Leyden.

I may add that in framing a scheme of National Education we may remember that 3 above may be due to 1 & 2, and 1, 2 & 3 must lead to a National University and to the best Universities of the world not merely Leyden or London.

Imperial Preference.

RESOLUTION REFERRED TO COMMITTEE.

At Tuesday's Meeting of the State Council the Financial Secretary moved the following resolution:—

"That in order to secure the continuance and possible extension of the policy of preference to Ceylon produce over foreign produce which has been embodied in the tariff recently introduced in Great Britain, this Council approves in principle the giving of preference to imports into Ceylon from Great Britain, provided that the imports on which such preference is given shall be selected with due consideration to the interests of the local consumer."

The Attorney-General seconded and the resolution was referred to the Committee of Labour, Industry and Commerce.

Continued

streets and not under proper control, or in the company of disorderly or immoral persons or of reputed criminals," he should be whipped if a male, under the provisions of "The Flogging Regulation Ordinance, 1904," after the warning to the child and to his parents, or ordered to go to an Industrial School for a period of not less than three months or more than six months. Such schools of the Local Authority would be treated for purposes of grant as any one of the aided schools.

It is difficult to find any reason why the poor child because of the failure of his parent to send him to school, should be punished with flogging or sent to an Industrial School. The Ordinance itself was and is still unfortunately far from establishing universal education. The Local Authority may not have sufficient funds available to meet the local requirements, and further the exact extent of the compulsion to attend school is left to their discretion.

So far we have discussed the Town Schools Ordinance. Let us now turn to see what steps were taken to arrest the progress of illiteracy in the rural areas.

(To be continued)

JAFFNA, MONDAY, MARCH 14, 1932.

ENTER NARADA.

GREAT EVENTS ARE OFTEN TRACEABLE to trivial incidents. Some one tore off Jenkin's ear-lobe and England drew sword against Spain. A tax was sought to be imposed against the consent of a people and America won her independence. The ruler of a small state in Central Europe was assassinated and the whole of Europe went mad and bathed in blood. The author of the immediate incident which was as a "spark necessary to set the combustible material aflame" may be a petty mischief-maker or the willing instrument of a higher purpose. Time alone will show whether the activities in certain quarters hatched in secret, and pursued with almost religious fervour, fail to produce the atmosphere necessary to stiffen the people against the system of constitutional tyranny sought to be imposed on them and force them to another act of self-purification.

Narada, the redoubtable champion of Truth and the confidant of the high gods is regarded by the vulgar as a contemptible wire-puller. He sought the company of Vibushana, the meek and valiant brother of Ravana, and inspired in him love for righteousness and rectitude of conduct and created in his mind veneration for Rama. He then quietly slips into the royal chamber of Ravana, the arrogant King of Lanka and tickles his vanity and stirs up his feelings against Rama.

The learned say that Narada fulfilled a divine purpose and our readers will want to know whether an exalted aim moved Mr. C. K. Swaminathan to write the letter which we re-produce elsewhere. Mr. Swaminathan, is or at least was, till very recently, an ardent supporter of Council Boycott. He, of his own accord gallantly ventured out of his isolation and in the presence of a prominent lawyer exercised his arts of persuasion on a gentleman to get him to withdraw his candidature for the Kanke-senturai Seat. This was on 2nd May 1931. He attended the open-air mass meeting held at the Jaffna Esplanade to ratify and confirm the action of the leaders with regard to Council entry. At a meeting of the North Ceylon National Association he was present and heard Mr. W. Duraiswamy speak on the work before the Association and the necessity to maintain the boycott of the State Council and Mr. C. K. Swaminathan without a word of protest from him was elected a Committee member of the N. C. N. A. On 10th March 1931, he, and behold, Mr. Swaminathan is in the opposite camp. This sudden change in views will need a lot of explanation and we have no doubt that it will be forthcoming in the contributions to follow.

The parallel between Narada and Mr. Swaminathan ends about here. Narada, whatever his ultimate purpose, does not indulge in misrepresentations. Mr. Swaminathan on the other hand, seems to revel in mis-statements. Mr. Swaminathan knows, or should have known, that the resolution to boycott the Passfield scheme was accepted at a Committee meeting of the Youth Congress held many months before Mrs. Chattopadhyaya arrived in Jaffna. The resolution to boycott the State Council was framed and passed at the Committee meeting long before the Annual Sessions of the Youth Congress at which Mrs. Chattopadhyaya presided and gave eloquent tongue to the sufferings of India. The Chattopadhyaya-spark myth had been exploded and laid to rest long since, but Mr. Swaminathan must prepare the ground for his entry into political life and, therefore, seeks to revive it. By this means he, perhaps,

expects to step over the shoulders of the youths in Jaffna and reach the ears of the older folk.

He doubtless touches a soft chord in us when he tearfully recalls the death of Sir Ramanathan. The people of this country would have echoed with heart-felt sincerity had Mr. Swaminathan merely followed the example of Mark Anthony and said "My heart is there in the coffin with Caesar". The reference to the Government Agent with a "vision" and his conversation with his "Tamil friends" is symptomatic of a disease which Max Nordau in his "Degeneration" labelled as "fin-de-siecle". England has survived the death of Gladstone, France that of M. Briand, India still lives without Tilak and Ceylon is hardly likely to commit Suttie for a very natural even in the life of Sir Ramanathan.

Mr. Swaminathan might feel himself safe to insinuate that those who were unable to find money retired from the field under the cloak of patriotism. Be it so; why did the monied certainties withdraw from the contest? Mr. Swaminathan says they did so "in order to save themselves from the charge of being unpatriotic men seeking personal glory and aggrandisement". This is patriotism, indeed!

If Mr. Swaminathan is in earnest about securing another nomination day he should move the heart of H. E. the Governor and not fire crackers at the heels of boycotters. Fine words butter no parsnips and few people are likely to be converted by his tissue of mis-statements.

We would point out to Mr. Swaminathan the desirability of educating public opinion on the merits of the present Council and how it will please the G. A. to see the four vacant seats in Council filled up. The voters in the four constituencies are the final judges of the situation and it is them that Mr. Swaminathan should enlighten and not the English-educated newspaper reader.

MAINTAIN THE BOYCOTT.

During the past few weeks our readers have had the privilege of reading the views on the subject of the boycott of Council of Mr. C. E. Corea of Chitlaw, Mr. Advocate Ganaprasadam of Colombo, Mr. Advocate Masilamani of Anuradhapura, Mr. Valentine S Perera of Colombo and Mr. J. Thagarajah of Colombo. We are in a position today to publish in another column the views of some of the leading and influential gentlemen in Jaffna. We do not expect Mr. Swaminathan and his gang of patriots to efface themselves or cease their activities. It will be a misfortune if they do so. We wish them success in their enterprise as we feel sure that the people of Jaffna will have another opportunity to demonstrate their faith in themselves and confidence in their leaders. It is not in the leaders of the people or the boycotters to lift the boycott. The matter rests entirely with the Governor and the question whether the voters will go to the polls is for the voters themselves to decide. The Council boycott is a strike and a lock-out both in one.

Board of Income Tax.

GOVERNOR YIELDS AT LAST.

The Governor has yielded to the wish of the State Council on the subject of the Board of Income Tax, as indicated by the following notification published in the latest Gazette:

In accordance with Section 3 (1) (a) of the Income Tax Ordinance No. 2 of 1932, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the following members of the State Council to be members of the Board of Income Tax, with effect from March 11, 1932:—

Mr. W. A. De Silva (Moratuwa), Sir Stewart Schneider K. O. (Nominated Member)

The remaining member of the Income Tax Board, in terms of the Ordinance, is the Financial Secretary.

A Symposium of Views

on the

Boycott of State Council

Mr. K. Balasingam, Advocate, Colombo, writing on 13 3 32 to the Secy: North Ceylon National Association says:—

"Your question admits of only one answer. I do not think there is any use in entering the State Council today. Government acts as if the Council's opinions were not worth considering. Whatever doubts there might have been as to the wisdom of the boycott in May last, there is none today.

Jaffna's action is widely appreciated now and before long all Ceylon will be with us."

Will not advise Council entry

Mr. S. Kanagasabai B.A. Advocate, Jaffna:—

The proceedings in Council ever since its inauguration have amply justified the wisdom of the boycott. The events of the past three months have proved the utter helplessness of the Councilors under the present constitution. In view of the recent incidents in Council, I for one, am not prepared to advise our countrymen to seek entry into the State Council. On the other hand I would urge on the people to take steps to have the Constitution revised immediately.

"Absurd to Say Boycott has failed"

Mr. T. R. Nalliah, B. A., Advocate, Jaffna:—

The State Council is a farce and a mockery. The three Officers of State are practically rulling the country. Members of the State Council have not the powers enjoyed by the members of the old Council. The apprehension of those who advised the boycott have been fully borne out. The present constitution does not carry us nearer to Self-Government. I quite agree with Mr. Swaminathan that bureaucratic Government suffered a good deal at the hands of the elected members of the defunct Council. I feel strongly that we did the right thing in boycotting the Council. The events of the past year conclusively establish the character of the State Council as a place to which no self respecting person will care to get himself elected. The Ministers are really the spokesmen and brief-holders of the Officers of State. A Minister is recently reported to have said that he was a Government Servant. The Ministers are said to be responsible for departments in the administration of which they have no power to interfere even in the slightest manner. It is absurd to say that the boycott has failed. Rather, it is the other way about.

Many gentlemen are beginning to realise the utter futility of the Council and would join the boycott. In my view the State Council is a useless luxury which we can ill-afford to maintain at this present time of widespread depression. The constitution may be scrapped and the Governor assume sole control of the destinies of this country than cheat the people with the trappings of a popular government.

The Government which looked on with scorn the boycott of Council does now seem anxious by some means or other to tempt the boycotters in. This feeling of uneasiness on the part of Government is not the least of the effects of the boycott. The rest of the Island cannot stand out for any length of time. Soon they will get tired of the Donoughmore boy and join the boycott and demand the substance of self Government. The pseudo-politicians who are out scattering their seeds of wisdom and endeavouring to persuade the people to lift the boycott have no credentials to get a hearing from the people. They will fail in their purpose to upset the boycott. It is easy to say things on behalf of the whole of Jaffna in the press. Did not the three tailors of Tooley Street speak for and on behalf of the nation? The Government is not likely to be impressed by the statements of these self-constituted spokesmen of the nation and expose its prestige to humiliation once again.

It is sickening to see Mr. Swaminathan assign unworthy motives to our leaders for deciding to stand out of Council. I would appeal to my countrymen not to allow themselves to be carried away by the efforts of propagandists who appeal to communal feelings or parochial interests.

Ridiculous.

Mr. R. Sivgurunathar Proctor and member Jaffna U. D. C.:—

"To my mind, Mr. Swaminathan's letter does not represent the views of the people of Jaffna. At a time when people in South Ceylon are almost ready to call for a boycott of Council, it is ridiculous for Mr. Swaminathan to advocate Council entry in Jaffna. When the boycott was received upon, we were quite aware that some sacrifices will have to be faced. Though we were disappointed that our friends in other parts of Ceylon who agreed with us with regard to the unworkability of the present constitution could not act as we did, still the defects of the Sobama are so patent, more so today, that if called upon to work the constitution now for the first time I, for one, should have no hesitation to advise boycott. The boycott movement, if at all, is stronger today than ever and any artificial agitation to lift it without substantial change in the constitution is doomed to fail.

"Touch not, Taste not, Handle not."

Mr. J. A. J. Tisaveerasingha, Proctor, Jaffna:—

Whatever title-hunters may say to the contrary, the idea of boycott is daily gaining strength in the North and is bound to grow stronger by the farce enacted by the State Council. The only argument urged by some boycott seceders is that certain local interests stand to lose by non-representation. As against this, it may be asked what advantages have been gained by those who have been represented in Council at great cost to the Island's exchequer. Whatever may be the spirit behind the boycott the fact is conspicuous that the boycott is a strong expression of the general feeling in the Island that the present constitution needs immediate revision. Therefore, the attitude of "Touch not, taste not, handle not" is more genuine than that of those who would have us associate with the serpent forgetting its fangs.

Failure in Fertile Brains.

Mr. K. Somasundaram, Proctor, Jaffna:—

The failure of the boycott is seen nowhere in Jaffna except in the effusions of Mr. Swaminathan. If anything, people are getting fixed more and more firmly in the cult of boycott as a result of the daily exhibition of the impotency of the State Council. The exact cause of failure of boycott originates in the fertile brains of title-holders and job-hunters. By yielding to the machinations of ultra-loyalism to lift the boycott, Jaffna will be committing political hara-kiri.

"The Master's Voice"

Mr. A. S. Wanniasooriar, Advocate:—

As far as the people of Jaffna are concerned Mr. Swaminathan's contribution to the Press on the boycott question deserves hardly any repudiation, for our people are shrewd enough to discern the "Master's voice" in it. As for his claim to speak on behalf of the public of Jaffna they are best known to him as well as to the public. One has only to read his letter to see that Mr. Swaminathan does not quite know his own mind; for does he not say that even those who were for entry into Council had not the courage to say so in public. When Mr. Swaminathan, now at all times, speaks of the "slow awakening of the Jaffna public in favour of Council entry", one may be pardoned if he feels that he draws inspirations from effluvia from those who look upon Council seats as their family heritage. Mr. Swaminathan claims to make a dispassionate survey of the events that led up to the Boycott; for is he not one of those who visited one of the candidates at dead of night to persuade him to boycott Council, even at the risk of his being suspected by the particular candidate of being there with certain sinister motives. Mr. Swaminathan says that the public of Jaffna has been misled by its youth. Evidently they prefer the virility of youth to the caution of the senile. I am confident that the people of Jaffna are wise enough not to lay down this weapon of boycott till they have achieved the purpose for which they in common with the rest of Ceylon are fighting for.

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OFFICIAL POLITICAL PROPAGANDA.

Government's Secret Agents at Work.

Anti-Boycott Wire-Pulling.

Frantic Efforts to Convert the People of Jaffna.

(From A Special Correspondent)

Frantic efforts are being made in Jaffna by a small coterie to cajole people of influence in the various villages into signing a petition or a series of petitions praying to the Governor to fix an Election Day to enable the four boycotting constituencies to elect representatives to the State Council.

Government Agent's Part.

The Government Agent has been actively canvassing certain members of the Youth Congress. One of the arguments he used with them was that the Tamils being a minority community will be committing a grievous blunder if they do not take advantage of the Special Powers vouchsafed to the Governor under the Donoughmore Constitution as a protection against the majority community. To an Indian Tamil member of the Youth Congress he pointed the part played by certain Sinhalese leaders to prevent Indians in Ceylon gaining the full franchise rights as recommended by the Donoughmore Commission.

"Inner Secrets."

The Gravets Mudaliyar of the local Kachcheri is now making himself busy by day and by night, in the company of the Headmaster of a well known Girls' College, a retired Post Master, the Chairman of a Village Committee who is his own brother-in-law, and one or two others. The Mudaliyar and his comrades are going from village to village and are making frantic efforts to obtain "influential" support against the boycott. At a recent secret conference with the four Village Committee Chairmen of Valigamam North he is reported to have stated that from his intimate knowledge of "inner secrets" of the Government he was convinced that the Tamils stood very much to lose by refusing to participate in working the Constitution and letting the Sinhalese be the sole masters of the show.

Story of a Secret Conference.

The secret conference above referred to was held at the residence of the Principal of an English School at Kanterodal. Among those who participated were the Kachcheri Mudaliyar, Mr O K Swaminathan, Headmaster of Ramanathan College, the ex-Postmaster above mentioned, the Chairmen of the four Village Committees of Valigamam North, the Principal who was acting as host, and a former member of the Legislative Council.

The conference was especially arranged to convert the four Village Committee Chairmen. They had openly stated in writing to the recent Conference of Village Committee Chairmen held at Paramaswara College, that they were for the boycott of the constitution and had refused to have part or lot in the anti boycott propaganda which that conference was planning.

Before the present secret conference at Kanterodal, the four non-operating Village Committee Chairmen of Valigamam North were seen either by the Kachcheri Mudaliyar or by his emissaries. When the Conference assembled, the ex-member of the Legislative Council above mentioned who was invited, it is reported, without the knowledge of the Kachcheri Mudaliyar, was asked for his views.

A. Challenge

He unequivocally told those present that it was nothing short of political madness to think of persuading the unwilling people of Jaffna to agree to work the constitution, especially at this juncture when public opinion all over the Island has been rudely awakened to a sense of the revolutionary nature of the reforms by the arbitrary manner in which the administration is being run by the Governor's Government, the State Council being treated with contempt.

He challenged the anti-boycott wire-pullers to come out in the open and hold public meetings all over the district to ascertain the wishes of the people. The Kachcheri Mudaliyar and his men demurred to the proposal, confessing that they could not state in public the communal considerations which formed the essence of their arguments for lifting the boycott.

"Anti British" Principal

The School Principal, at whose house the Conference was sitting and who is a relative of the Kachcheri Mudaliyar, is reported to have made a passionate speech. He said that in spite of his "anti-British" convictions he was an ardent advocate of the reformed constitution because as a result of his close association with "successive" Government Agents and other British officers in the Northern Province, he realized that no constructive work for the good of the people—such as paddy cultivation under the Karabohi Scheme—could be successfully organized if the Tamils as a community incurred the displeasure of the Government. Prudence required that the Tamils should befriend the foreign rulers to avert possible tyranny by the majority community who have come into power.

The Kachcheri Mudaliyar also spoke,

The village Chairmen for whose conversion the conference was called, it is reported, remained unconvinced. The Mudaliyar and his men then engaged the Chairmen in individual interviews. It was almost midnight when the parley ended.

Continued from page 2
Travesty of Truth.

Mr. K Ayadurai Proctor, Member U D O said:

If any event, more than another, may be regarded as having won for at least a section of the Ceylonese, the admiration of thoughtful men, it is the boycott of Council by the four constituencies in Jaffna. There was some difference of view with regard to the expediency of the step when the boycott was launched, but the majority of sober minded and independent leaders throughout Ceylon have expressed their admiration for the political sagacity of our leaders who advised the boycott. This could not be otherwise. When they see the farce enacted in the Council Chamber in the name of responsible or popular Government any attempt to lift the boycott, at the present time ought to be viewed with disfavour. It is a travesty of truth to assert that public opinion in Jaffna is slowly awakening in favour of Council entry.

Continued up

Retrenchment Commission.

MR. R. L. PERERA K. C. WILLING TO BE CHAIRMAN.

It is understood that Mr. R. L. Perera K C, has signified his willingness to be the Chairman of the Retrenchment Commission.

It now remains for the Governor to approve the personnel of the Commission submitted to him.

J H C Old Boys' Association.

The Annual celebrations of the Jaffna Hindu College Old Boys' Association (Colombo Branch) which were to have taken place on Saturday last, have been postponed for Saturday the 19th instant.

New Art Gallery.

OPENED ON SATURDAY.

The new Art Gallery, at Victoria Park, Colombo, was declared open by the Chief Secretary, Sir Bernard Bourdillon on Saturday last, in the presence of a large gathering.

Punitive Police Tax.

ORDINANCE TO BE REPEALED.

To repeal "The Repression of Crime Ordinance 1903" and to absolve the inhabitants of Egoda Uyana, Kukuluranda, and Pirampalai (Jaffna) from liability to pay Punitive Police Tax is the object of a draft Ordinance published in the latest Gazette.

Summons to Defendant.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF JAFFNA,
Paul Daniel of Tellippalai
No. 27201. Vs. Plaintiff
Class
1. Soosil Everest and wife
2. Ananthasy both of Chunnakam
3. Kaito Varappagasam of Kopy
Defendant

To the abovesaid 1st Defendant
Whereas the abovesaid Plaintiff has instituted an action against you in this Court for the recovery of the sum of Rs. 5534 74 with interest on Rs. 5000/- at the rate of 10 per cent per annum from the date of action till payment in full due on a mortgage and to recover costs you are hereby summoned to appear in this Court either in person or by Proctor on the 24th day of February, 1932 at 10 o'clock or the forenoon to answer the abovesaid Plaintiff. And you are hereby required to take notice that in default of your appearing the action will be proceeded with and heard determined in your absence. And you will bring with you or send by your Proctor and the Plaintiff desired to inspect, and any documents on which you intend to rely in support of your defence.

Jaffna 23rd day of January, 1932.

Drawn by
Sd. K. R. Nalliah,
Proctor for Plaintiff,
By order of Court
Sd. A. K. Alvapathila,
Secretary
Chief Clerk,
Returnable 31-3-32.
By order of Court
Sd. K. R.
Secretary.

Note 1. Should you apprehend that your witness will not attend of their own accord, you can have a summons from this Court to compel the attendance of any witness and production of any document you have a right to call on any witness to produce by applying to the Court at any reasonable time before trial, and depositing the necessary subsistence money.

Note 2. If you admit the demand you should pay the money into court with the cease of the action to avoid the summary execution of the decree which may be made against your person or property, or both if necessary.

O. 341, 14 & 17.

Continued

A Fatuous and Futile Body

Commenting editorially on Mr. C K Swaminathan's letter, the Times of Ceylon says:

"Mr. Swaminathan is by no means the first man to come forward and urge that Jaffna must take its place, and perform its share in administering the affairs of the Island, but up to date, whatever some of the elder men may think, the will of youth prevails and the boycott is maintained..... But it would be interesting to know what the responsible people in the North really think. Perhaps, after all, they possess a wisdom which is not fully appreciated. Perhaps they have a prescient instinct that anything they could do in the State Council would be fatuous and futile, and, indeed, that the State Council is itself a fatuous and futile body. Who shall say that they are not right?"

Our Agricultural Policy.

K. SIVAPATHAM, MATALA.

Ceylon is essentially an agricultural country, and Ceylonese from times immemorial had been paddy cultivators. With the advent of the Europeans, however, Ceylon lands were ruthlessly treated as Imperial Estates for the growing of Tea, Rubber, and Cocoa.

The chief lesson of the trade depression is that our vaunted economic prosperity is a pure myth. We are living in a fool's paradise when we think with self complacency that 400 million rupees are annually flowing into our coffers from our export trade. During the last ten years the money that went out of Ceylon was much in excess over the money that came into the Island. This is evidently wrong economy, and even a child can understand it. The persons who are most affected by the blasts of depression are the planter, the clerk, the trader, and the labourer, while the person who is least affected is the cultivator. His is a stable occupation in which there can be no danger of over production. Hence the real source of the Island's economic prosperity is the man behind the plough.

If paddy cultivation is to flourish once more in Ceylon, our agricultural policy should be immediately revised with a view to arresting the alarming decrease in the bulk of our peasantry and the consequent dwindling of the acreage under paddy cultivation.

Some years back a Land Commission was appointed to report, among other matters, on the feasibility of evolving a scheme by which Crown Land might be given out to small holders for the cultivation of paddy. In accordance with certain recommendations made by the Commission the Government launched out a Colonisation Scheme. But the Department of Agriculture is rather surprised to find that this experiment has not been a success because only a few cultivators took advantage of this offer. The reason why the tender overtures made by the Department of Agriculture were not adequately reciprocated by the peasant is not far seek. It is useless for one to advise him to migrate towards the North Central Province and settle down there, promising to give him an acre of land for cultivation on the basis of restricted tenancy, unless one can find him the money necessary to keep him and his family above water for some time. For the Government cannot make any grants towards the maintenance of these people because of the depleted condition of its finances. Thus the fault is not in the cultivator but in the aimless policy pursued by the Department.

The Land Laws at present are extremely harsh and oppressive, and unless they are substantially modified, the "Back to the land" cry will be a cry in the wilderness. The irrigation facilities now afforded to the cultivators are quite inadequate. Almost all village tanks are in a state of extreme disrepair. Malana, the scourge of the villager, reigns supreme in the lowlands of Northern and North Central Provinces. In order to stamp out this pest from these regions several malaria experts had suggested a better drainage system and a pure supply of drinking water from artesian wells; but the Government was never in a financial position to take up this work in hand seriously. The distinctly miserable conditions of the pasture in the villages makes it impossible for the cultivators to procure a healthy breed of cattle. Though lands are reserved by the Government for the grazing of cattle in almost all villages, the grass found there is so insufficient for the animals and is of such poor feeding value that it is seldom we find any cattle straying into these areas.

If paddy cultivation is to be made more attractive in Ceylon, we should direct our energies towards rice research with a view to increasing the productivity of the land and investigating the question of producing a better quality of rice. Japan produces 3000 lbs. of rice per acre, India produces nearly 1000 lbs., while the lands in Ceylon produce a much lower figure, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 400 lbs. per acre. It is therefore incumbent on the Agricultural Experts to find ways and means to increase the productivity of our lands. Several people in Ceylon who have developed a taste for Muttusamba treat all local varieties with contempt. Rice experts will have to find out a local substitute for Muttusamba if we want to wean these people from the use of outside rice, and incidentally to stem the outflow of hundred million rupees annually to India.

Our system of Education is not a little to blame for the contempt in which agricultural pursuits are held by our young men. A lad who has had just a smattering of English will do anything to save himself the shame of stooping to agricultural work even when his means do not permit him to continue his English Education. He would rather be employed as a peon in a Government Office than be engaged in so undignified an occupation as tilling the ground. He looks down upon the farmer and considers his work as something menial. This bias against agriculture fostered by our system of education is threatening to lead to national calamity, and unless we remove this unreasonable prejudice from the minds of our lads, the perplexing problem of unemployment will remain unsolved.

Our Department of Agriculture which is costing the country nearly one and a half million rupees annually has on its staff more than a hundred Agricultural Instructors besides a number of highly paid specialists who sit very comfortably in well equipped laboratories. It was pointed out times without number, that the utility of the Department is not proportional to the cost of its maintenance. Though the Department is supposed to confine its activities solely to the improvement of paddy cultivation and garden crops and have very little to do with the triple industries of tea, rubber and coconut, yet the experts seem to be more attracted by Tea and Rubber diseases than by any research work in paddy cultivation. While the specialists are busy experimenting in secret, and the instructors in filling up Returns, the cultivators for whose benefit the whole system is intended are feeling shy to intrude on these Officers. This is indeed a sorry spectacle. Undoubtedly there is a total absence of friendly contact between the Department and the cultivator, which is due to the lack of a definitely sympathetic and well directed policy on the part of the Department.

Letter To The Editor

THE POLITICAL ISOLATION OF JAFFNA.

Sir,
A certain Government Agent of the Northern Province with a prophetic vision of the future asked his Tamil friends a few years ago what the fate of the Tamil Community was going to be after the Hon Sir P. Ramasathan's death. Nobody believed at the time that his gloomy forebodings were going to be fulfilled so soon after the passing away of the venerable statesman. But in the absence of his guiding hand, the political situation underwent a sudden and unexpected turn for the worse, and on the eve of the nomination day the candidates for the Council of State agreed among themselves not to submit nomination papers and thus deprived Jaffna for the first time in its history of all representation in the legislature of Ceylon. This fatal step was condemned by most of the thoughtful and responsible men of our community, but even they at the time hesitated to condemn publicly a policy which was bound to bring nothing but disaster to the Tamils of Jaffna. They thought it advisable to wait till the excitement caused by the boycott of the Council elections passed away before taking any effective steps to combat the evil. With the complete failure of the boycott to achieve any good, public opinion in Jaffna has been slowly awakening, and every day it is becoming increasingly clear that there is no meaning in allowing the boycott of the Council to continue any longer.

To understand the Jaffna boycott, it is necessary to make a dispassionate survey of the events which led to it. Every one knows that the Donoughmore Commission was sent to Ceylon not at the request of the people clamouring for constitutional advancement, but in response to a confidential despatch to the Colonial Office in London by Sir Hugh Clifford in which he is said to have reported that it was difficult to govern Ceylon with the existing constitution. When the Commission arrived in Jaffna, its leaders, anxious to retain effective communal representation, pleaded for Tamil representation in Council in the ratio of one to two allowed to the Sinhalese, but otherwise supported the demands of the major community in favour of responsible government. But the Commission in its report recommended the abolition of communal representation and the introduction of a novel scheme of government by committees. As the responsibility for the good government of Ceylon was still vested in the Governor, the report gave him increased financial powers and complete control over the public service. The scheme was considered unsatisfactory in several respects by all sections of the community, but the Government succeeded in winning over the Sinhalese leaders into accepting the scheme because it gave them a predominant position in Council based on adult suffrage and a very big share in the administration of the country. They thought it best to accept the scheme for the sake of its allurements and to resume the fight for responsible government after giving the new constitution a fair trial. The measure was therefore passed by the non-official members of the Legislative Council, and most of the political associations in Ceylon gave their approval to the scheme at the request of the Sinhalese leaders, although the great veteran leader, Sir P. Ramasathan, continued to condemn it. Even politically minded Jaffna refused to stir in the matter, feeling that it was useless to fight against a scheme which had obtained the support of the major community for it. Sir Ramasathan however carried on the fight single handed, and when he returned to Jaffna after his fruitless mission to England, resolved to enter the Council of State and carry on his fight there. He felt more than ever before the need of strong and experienced men in Council, and every one knows full well that there would have been no chance for any boycott move if he had lived a little longer. All sections of the people in Jaffna solemnly took part in the registration of voters and candidates were vigorously carrying on their canvassing activities till the day previous to the nomination day. There was no desire shown by any of the candidates in favour of the boycott; none of the candidates can say honestly even now that they were the originators of it. Nobody in fact ever thought of such a course till the Jaffna Youth Congress held its annual session last year under the presidency of one of the foremost women workers for India's freedom. Fresh from her sufferings in jail, her eloquent appeal for freedom produced deep resentment in the country against the manner in which the British in India were trying to suppress legitimate agitation for freedom. In the excited atmosphere produced by her speeches, only a spark was necessary to set the combustible material aflame, and the suggestion of some impetuous youth to boycott the Council and the British Government was eagerly taken up

Continued up

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Continued.

and put forward for the acceptance of the candidates on the eve of the nomination day. Those whose election chances were poor or were unable to find the money for a contested election eagerly embraced the opportunity to retire from the field under the cloak of patriotism. Their action placed the other candidates in a difficult and embarrassing position, and they too were forced to retire from the contest in order to save themselves from the charge of being unpatriotic men seeking personal glory and aggrandizement. The Youth League was immensely gratified with their success in forcing the hands of the candidates and confidently predicted the early attainment of Purna Swaraj for Ceylon by their action. It was no doubt a very grand thing to talk of Bardoli, to declare a boycott of the government and foreign goods, to constitute war councils and to lead political processions. The whole thing captured the imagination of the youths, but it showed an utter lack of political wisdom and appreciation of realities on the part of some of our leaders to imitate the actions of the great Indian leaders in their struggle for freedom.

The decision of the candidates in not submitting nomination papers suddenly deprived Jaffna of the right of being represented in Council. Their precipitate action was regretted by a large majority of the public, and most of the older leaders dissociated themselves from all the activities of the Youth League. They felt that the candidates had done serious injury to the cause of Jaffna by their action and that they had no right to decide such a momentous question without a reference to the people by a referendum after giving them ample time to consider the question in all its bearings. They were not the representatives of the people and were not clothed with authority to speak and act for the whole of Jaffna. The argument that the four men who would have been elected as representatives were among the candidates who agreed to boycott the elections cannot meet our contention that the boycott had not the sanction of the people, because they were not free agents and because the decision in favour of the boycott was influenced largely by eleven others who would have been rejected. Besides there was no unanimity even among the candidates as to the advisability of the step taken by them. Two of the candidates were not even present at their meeting, and persisted in their opposition almost till the last moment. There were others who warned their fellow candidates that the boycott would be a political blunder if the rest of Ceylon did not follow their course of action. But for the sake of avoiding a split, even those who were opposed to the boycott fell into line with the others, and retired from the contest. The public were keenly disappointed at the turn of events and were forced to acquiesce in the action taken by the candidates in order to avoid the division of Jaffna into two warring camps. It was hoped that counsels of reason and common sense would prevail with those responsible for the boycott when its failure became evident and they would join with the rest of their countrymen in reversing the decision at an opportune moment. The reasons which are influencing the Jaffna public in favour of Council entry at the present moment will be stated in a subsequent article.

Yours etc,
C. K. SWAMINATHAN.

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Manager.

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