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News



Editor: J. L. KOTELAWELA

MYSTERY OF RALAHAMY GARDEN

PLOT TO BLOW UP OIL INSTALLATIONS

How Clerks were led up the Garden Path

I WENT TO Ralahamy Garden. I was shadowed by a Sama Samajist thug who dashed up as I arrived on the scene. He stood by me, looking as grim as he could, while I spoke to the people of the place. I came away with a clear idea as to why Ralahamy Garden was chosen for the fateful meeting of clerks which the country is now talking about.

A CLERK TELLS HIS STORY

WE knew nothing about "Ralahamy Gardens." On the day of the shooting we met at Hyde Park as usual. Someone passed the word round that the meeting was to be at Price Park and not at Hyde Park. We formed into a procession and marched along Darley Road. When we reached Maradana the head of the procession turned right instead of left.

We were taken along Dematagoda Road until we came to Baseline Road. We thought that the venue of the meeting had been changed and we were to be taken to the Dematagoda Playground.

When we passed this park also, the clerks in my batch (the Ceylon Savings Bank) got fed up. I told my colleagues: "This is all nonsense. We are being hoofed about for no purpose. Let's fall out of the line and go off."

We had just begun to drop out when we heard gun-shots. We were at the rear of the line and could not see what went on ahead. The road itself was very narrow.

There was panic in a few minutes and we all ran with the rest.

Ralahamy Garden was the nest of a conspiracy of which the clerks were totally unaware. They were innocent of the intrigues of Sama Samajists. For days, I was told, the Sama Samajist thugs had been gathered in Kolonnawa and trained for the great day which was to start the "revolution."

Ralahamy Garden is totally unsuited for a public meeting. It is a coconut grove with little groups of houses and boutiques. A two hundred yards away is the Dematagoda Playground, but that does not suit the purpose I shall now reveal.

The purpose was to rush the Police Guards at the Kolonnawa Oil Installations and blow it up. The explosion would rock half of Colombo. The oil pipes leading from Kolonnawa to the Colombo Harbour would carry the flames. And nothing is so difficult to put out as an oil fire.

To achieve this it was necessary to cover the tracks of the thugs. That is the reason for this queer choice of a meeting place—Ralahamy Garden. When the procession of clerks was brought up to the turn off into the Garden, the leaders did not turn in. They kept going forward. Those behind were ignorant of the location of the meeting place and when the police barred the way, they imagined it was a high-handed act.

Those behind cried "forward!" and those in front cried "back!"

At this point the thugs took a hand. From Ralahamy Garden came showers of stones and brick-bats which fell on the police and the strikers alike. The thugs then mixed with the clerks and rushed the barricade.

The police baton-charged but the constables themselves were hit with stones and clubs. Who hit whom was difficult to tell in the melee.

Someone fired from the crowd and Police Sergeant Ekanayake fell with a bullet through his thigh.

The police then fired a round in the air and the shots struck the coconut trees.

The crowd pressed on unconcerned, and the police had to shoot a second volley which hit a number of those in the vanguard. One of the Sama Samajist leaders in the van disappeared through the door of a nearby house, leaving the poor clerks without a leader. The clerks broke ranks and fled.

It is now gathered that another group of thugs had been mustered on the Kolonnawa side under another Sama Samajist big-noise.

They had been kept ready to create a diversion at the gates while the main body rushed the barricade, spread along the approach road, and got at the installations across the canal. This "diversionary force" joined in the

general rout.

It is obvious that the general body of the clerks was led up the garden path. They were told that they were going to a public meeting. They knew nothing—except for a very few clerks, probably in the confidence of the Sama Samajist High Command—that they were to be used as a "cover" for violence and "revolution."



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MR. SENANAYAKE

Mr. Senanayake has ushered in a Renaissance in the sphere of Irrigation. He has swept back the tide of decay and rehabilitated the Ceylon peasant. He worked patiently and for many years against great odds. The march of the jungle, the scourge of Malaria, lack of public understanding of the problems that had to be faced, the complete collapse of the ancient irrigation tanks—all these factors militated against success. But no one has a stouter heart than this doughty fighter. The story of the modern agricultural renaissance in Lanka is also the story of the greatest Ceylonese of modern times.

Maha Amerasingha

Story of an Achievement Restoration of A Nation's Glory

THE constitutional changes in 1931 gave the representatives of the people an opportunity to undertake works of utility and benefit to the country. These opportunities were seized by the Ministry for Agriculture and Lands to frame a very far reaching Irrigation policy that will, no doubt, leave a lasting impression on the agricultural economy of the country.

Prior to 1931 the Irrigation Department was busy in maintaining and repairing small village tanks and amunas. No large construction works, compared with the big schemes in operation or under construction today found a place in the activities of the Department. From 1931, while realising the need for small irrigation schemes, the energies of the Department were directed on the instruction of the Ministry, to the construction of large irrigation projects. The success achieved in the early years of the period under review have prompted the Ministry to undertake larger schemes to cope with the increasing demand for cultivable land

with facilities unknown a decade ago.

The village works, though not much heard of, played a very important part in the days gone by to keep village agriculture going and they undoubtedly proved their worth. During certain years as much as 75 per cent. of the field staff were engaged on village works. In order to standardize the investigation and design of village schemes booklets on the Scientific Evolution were published to guide those engaged in this class of work. It may appear to some that small schemes require less time. Yes, less time to construct but every scheme has to go through the same routine as a large project—inspection, reports, surveys, plan work, calculations, designs, etc., etc., no matter how small it may be. Every scheme, whether the interested parties are rich or poor, is given due attention and executed just in the same way as any other big scheme.

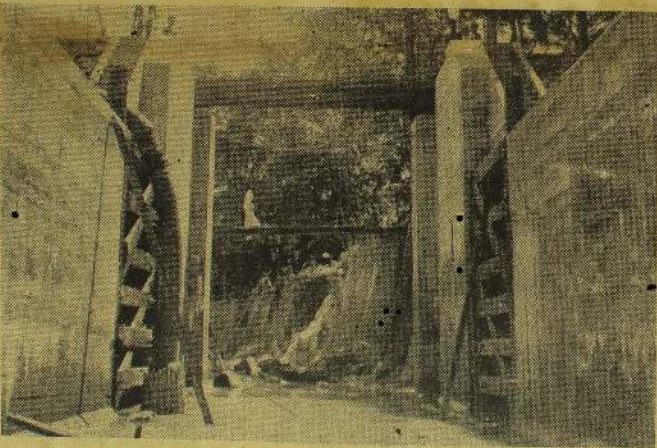
Major works require a little more elaborate method of investigation and design than a village work. The river gaugings section studies the water resources over a period of years. The agricultural chemist goes to the field, takes samples of the soil to ascertain its suitability for agricultural purposes. The Survey Department with a specially trained staff for Engineering Surveys, prepares the plans of these areas. The Soils Engineer explores the area in the vicinity of the proposed dam, studies the engineering qualities of the soil and selects the borrow areas from where the material for the bund is to be taken.

On important projects models are pre-

pared to scale and tested at the Hydraulic Laboratory to study their behaviour. After going through a series of mechanical and chemical tests and years of observation the final reports of the different sections of this department and other departments are sent to the designs engineer for a complete study of these reports. He then prepares diagrams and charts on the Hydrology involving intricate calculations, constructs curves showing a forecast of the driest years, rainfall, cycles, normal, cyclonic and catastrophic floods, and operational charts. The designs and calculations are prepared in consultation with the Directorate and a host of other things have to be fully conceived before a new scheme is born.

This is not all that is necessary. The paddy officer is sometimes consulted regarding the kind of paddy to be grown. The Land Commissioner in consultation with the Government Agents and the Director of Irrigation goes into the question of blocking out the paddy lands, garden allotments, high land cultivation, housing, community centres, roads, etc. Then the Chief Construction Engineer and the Divisional Irrigation Engineers start giving form and shape to the schemes that so far had existed on paper.

The work done by a big department like the Irrigation over a period of nearly sixteen years cannot be compressed into a few words without leaving out a big bulk of its activities. However a sketch of these activities are given to indicate the ground covered during this period.



Bolgoda Flood Scheme Lock - Gates

Western Province Saved From Flood Menace

AREAS like Wanathamulla, the lands surrounding the Oval, Dematagoda, Kolonnawa, etc., were subjected to frequent flooding and very often during years gone by the poor people who were compelled to reside in those areas had to leave their homes and find temporary lodgings elsewhere when the Kelani river was in flood. Now these areas are well protected from floods by the construction of flood bunds and controlled sluices with a proper system of drainage. Vegetable gardens, houses and towns have now sprung up on the lands that were once pools of stagnant water. Building schemes for workers are being planned in some of those areas and with

the extension of Colombo Town limits in time to come these reclaimed areas will act as safety valves to release the pressure for expansion.

A series of electrically-worked recorders are installed along the Kelani Ganga to warn the department and the people of the rise in the river and give sufficient time to make suitable arrangements for coping with an emergency if a necessity arises. This information is particularly useful for those living in the unprotected areas to give them time for any makeshift. A flood protection scheme for Colombo South is also under way to safeguard the residents of these areas. Flood protection schemes were con-

(Continued on page 3)

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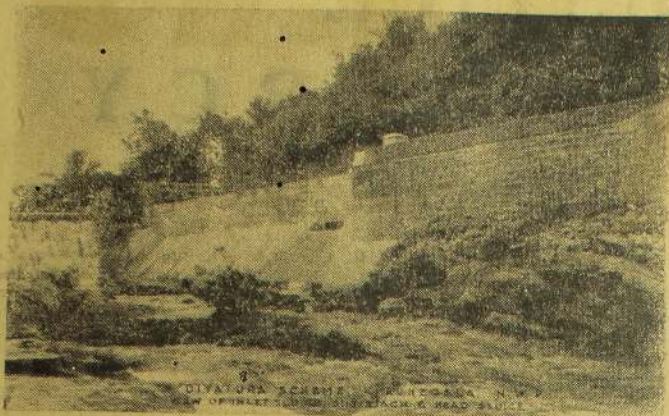
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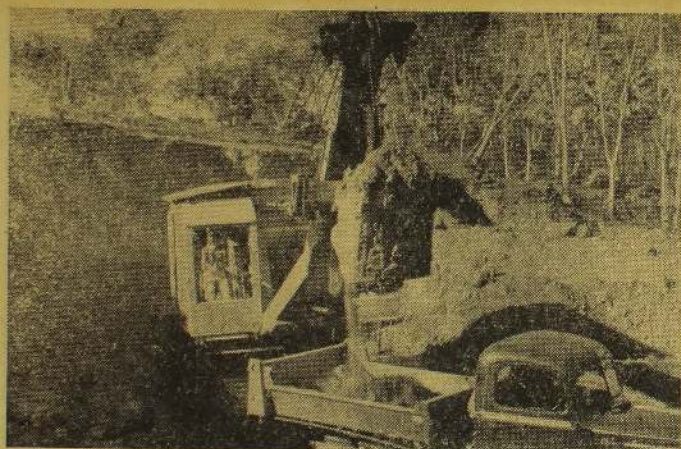


Diyatura Scheme, Kufunegala N.W.P. View of inlet sluice, Silt reach and Head Sluice

THE Ridi Bendi Ela Scheme consisting of an anicut and inlet channel to augment the supply of Magallawewa is the most important irrigation scheme in the province. This tank used to fill up only during exceptionally heavy rains but now it is a common sight to see it full. Large tracts of land are now being opened up below the tank. Kottukachiya Tank is now well known for the State Farm and the aid the farm

received by its restoration with the channel system. Tinipitiwewa anicut and channel system near Madampe is of great value to the cultivators of that area and risks are now eliminated.

Schemes of minor importance were also constructed like Battulu Oya, Pullichchikulame improvements, Boyawalane anicut scheme, Diyatura anicut scheme, restoration of Mahakumbukadawela Tank, etc. A number of agricultural roads were also constructed such as Nagolla-Kosgolla road and Tabbowa Circular road.



Bolgoda Flood Protection Scheme

WESTERN PROVINCE SAVED FROM FLOOD MENACE

(Continued from opposite page)

structed at Mora Ela, Henpita, Pugoda, Mutturajawela, Bolgoda, etc.

BOLGODA FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME W.P.

Ingress of salt water had been a menace to paddy cultivation in some areas and acres and acres of valuable land had to be neglected for want of proper protection. Schemes to exclude salt water were provided at Ambalanmulla, Tudella, Ittapane, etc. Experiments are being carried out by the Agricultural Department to find out a strain of paddy most suitable for this type of land. Numerous village tank schemes were taken up and among the oya schemes, the most important is at Gampaha on the Attanagalla Oya. This

Scheme consists of four anicuts and a complete channel system to irrigate 4,000 acres and have replaced about forty temporary amunas that were in existence before the completion of the scheme. These temporary amunas were not able to withstand a minor flood and invariably they got washed away wholly or partly causing a great deal of inconvenience, expense and annoyance to the field owners and on several occasions the cultivations were abandoned. Now the flood water is under control and there is no real danger to cultivation. This is the result of scientific study and design to utilise and control river water over a large tract of fields taken as a whole to give the maximum benefits with the minimum risks.

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Friday, June 13, 1947

STRIKE LEADERS UNMASKED

OUR analysis of the motives which prompted the Sama Samajists to force a strike on the Clerical Servants has been proved entirely correct. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, one of the leading Reds, made a slip in the course of a peroration on the Galle Face Green. "Every blow at the Board of Ministers," declared Herr Doctor, "is a blow at the Soulbury Constitution." Herr Doctor N. M. Perera loudly applauded. This was like Homer nodding. In the fever of the moment these Fascists in Marxist disguise could not contain their secrets and let them slip. That is what we said ourselves. We knew that this was the real sinister design of the Sama Samajists. They made tools of the Government clerks.

It is now clear to the public, as well as to the clerks themselves, that at no stage did the clerks stand to gain by the destruction of the existing administration. Marxist theory states that the "middle class" is the most reactionary and dangerous class as it will never fight for the "revolution." The Sama Samajists, therefore, duped and deceived. When they called the clerks "comrades" they were practising their technique of hypocrisy. They used the clerks to cover their own tracks, to get their own election propaganda spread into the very class they must destroy in order to run a workers' state!

Why, then, did the clerks fall into this trap. It is to be expected of a class like the clerks that they would be too intelligent to fall into such a booby trap. The reasons are easily discernible, and we appeal to our administrators to analyse the situation and see whether our contentions are not sound.

Firstly, the men who were most vociferous and intimidated their colleagues into going out on strike had been handpicked and impregnated with Sama Samajist doctrine. The lecture classes in "trade unionism" held at the Saiver Kala Mandalam Hall, at 34th Lane, Wellawatte, in the early half of May were a cover for other activities. The men trained at these "classes" were then weeded out, and a secret contact was thereafter maintained with a few of them.

These men worked on their colleagues who had a sense of grievance and were willing to listen to any reasonable proposals which might help them to obtain redress. As for the rest there arose a question of loyalty to their colleagues.

THE story of the strike of the Government clerical servants is now clearly before the public and the Government. I do not propose to elaborate on the situation except to say that it is in the fitness of things to temper justice with mercy.

We who detest the bloody methods of Sama Samajists must not become hard in our dealing with clerks who have had no alternative except to come back to their posts.

I do not blame the Chief Secretary for the announcement that all those who did not return to work by a particular day would be dismissed their office. What else was he to do? When authority is flouted, the person in authority must first re-establish it. That is a duty he owes to the community. The public has the right to demand that the person who holds the very responsible post of Chief Secretary, who is the Head of Administration, should be strong and level-headed.

The Chief Secretary must be congratulated on the acceptance with which he discharged his duties to the community.

Then comes the other side of the picture. We must not disregard it. I do not like to think of the end of this recent strike as a sort of triumph and crow over it. I feel infinitely sad that such a situation should have arisen at all.

I appeal to the Government to weigh the evidence and make all the allowances

It is perfectly clear that 90 per cent. of the clerical service had no intention of going on strike. It is also clear that it was a sense of loyalty to their fellow clerks that kept them hoofing about the streets on mad processions over which they themselves had no control.

The clerks themselves realised that the Sama Samajists had led them up the Garden Path. They resented this, but they had no choice except the one choice of carrying on together or going back to work together. They also feared the charge of "traitor," "sneak," "black-leg," etc., that might have been hurled at them. Only the more intelligent and cultured of them could have been expected to understand that there is always one loyalty that transcends everything — the loyalty to one's country. We, therefore, appeal to the authorities to take all these factors into consideration when dealing with the strikers now that they have come back to work. The Government has cause to be confident that the public appreciates its firm stand. Now it is necessary to be generous to those who had erred. Full allowance must be made for the fact that there had been a deception practised on the clerks. From all quarters that is now apparent. Let the Government temper justice with mercy.

WE MUST TEMPER JUSTICE WITH MERCY

J. L. KOTALAWALA

that can possibly be made and then deal with the question of disciplinary measures in the light of such information as is now to hand with regard to the origin and the development of the strike.

The clerks should have some sort of organisations for themselves. There should be some sort of Unions. This privilege should be extended to them, even provisionally, until the Government goes into the question of the activities of the new Whitley Council Expert whose services are now available.

I would also suggest that the Heads of various Government Departments should adopt a more positive attitude to their clerks. I have been closely associated with the members of various Departments and I have confidence in the character and loyalty of the clerical servants of this country.

They were misled. Let us who can, give them the help they need so that they will conduct their affairs in the future on better lines and avoid falling a prey to the designs of self-seeking blusterers.

WE are fortunate in that the clerical servants are intelligent enough to know what this govern-

ment has done for the development of this country. They are aware of the huge jump Ceylon has made in the fourteen years of the State Council's existence. They also know the difficulties under which these achievements have been hewn out of the raw.

I am sure they will appreciate the importance of a united effort of the entire nation during the difficult days of the New Constitution. We may have more than what we have already obtained, and our responsibilities and the demands on our fund of service will proportionately increase.

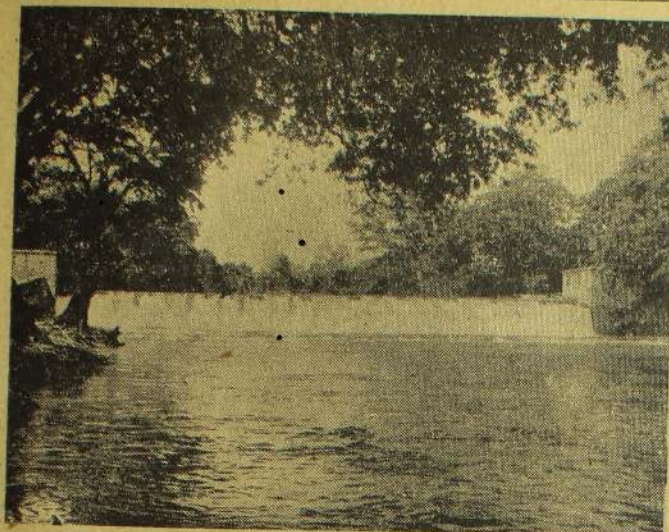
The Government must inquire into the various causes of discontent and remove such sources of grievance as may exist.

Heads of Departments who have not already done so must come to earth and honestly seek more direct contact with their subordinates.

If a man knows his job he has nothing to fear from social contact with his men. It is only the weakling who need be afraid of being found out and must put up a barrier of cold reserve and a dozen secretaries between himself and his men.



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WORK IN THE

CENTRAL PROVINCE

ELAHERA Scheme consisting of an anicut across the Amban Ganga and a channel twenty-two miles long to feed Minneriya Tank is one of importance as its benefits are of value not to one particular province but to the whole of Ceylon. This scheme not only brings into cultivation land along the channel but helps to increase the acreage under the Minneriya Tank.

Minipe Scheme is similar to the Elahera Scheme but all the water that is conveyed along the channel is distributed to the fields below it. The other anicut schemes are Murapola Ela, Kande Ela, Udugoda Bandara Ela, Gampolawela, Raja Ela, etc. Anicut schemes are common in the Central Province as the rainfall and topography are suitable for this sort of schemes. The construction of large reservoirs for irrigation purposes is not possible immediately as the would-be reservoir beds are cultivated under important economic crops.



UVA PROVINCE

THIS area is very thinly populated with the local peasant disinterested in paddy cultivation, as compared with some of the other provinces. The lands are mostly cultivated with crops other than paddy. Several scattered areas of paddy lands had been provided with Ela Schemes. The most important one is Bathmedilla Scheme where water from Uma Oya is conveyed along a channel and dropped into a stream called Wela Oya in another valley. This water is again picked up by an anicut to irrigate a large tract of fields. This scheme is bound to be a boon to this backward area.

Heenarangolla Ela was reconditioned and extended. Construction of a road to Elk Plains and extension of Kumbukkan—Okkampitiya road were carried out. Improvements have been effected to the following: Soroborawewa Randeniya Amuna Scheme and Taldena Ela Scheme. Loggalwila Anicut Scheme is almost complete.

SOUTHERN PROVINCE

ONE of the rivers in the Southern Province that has been harnessed to benefit the people is the Walawe Ganga. Some of the water of this river is now diverted to Ridiyagama Tank by the Liyangatota Anicut. Recently a left bank scheme was opened up and in all about 7,000 acres are under cultivation in this area.

Some of the tanks restored are Cannoruwewa, Battuwawewa, Kahatagaswewa, Landajulana, Bogamuwa Mahawewa, Kottakaduwa, etc. Salt water exclusion schemes were provided at Dedduwa, Bentotawila, Tangaluweyaya, Godawaya, etc. Anicut schemes were provided at Kinchiguné, Medemulane, Udadebarawa, Karagoda, etc.

Extension and improvements were done to the Kirindi Oya Scheme, Walawe Left and Right Bank schemes and a number of new agricultural roads were opened up. Major repairs and improvements were carried out to the then existing schemes by reconditioning them to such an extent that some of the old schemes are almost like new ones. In fact the design and construction took as much time and expense as for new schemes and even more in cases where important sites for permanent structures had been damaged beyond repair.



NORTH-CENTRAL PROVINCE

THE Kalawewa spill was raised in 1940 and the capacity of this tank was increased by 85 per cent. At Kagama now called Senapura, a colonization scheme is gaining rapid success.

Minneriya Scheme: In 1931 the acreage cultivated under the tank was less than 100 and now 8,000 acres are under cultivation and the extensions to this scheme are still proceeding. This was the testing ground for dry zone colonization. With the experience gained here, the restoration of the greatest achievements of Parakrama Bahu the Great was started in 1938. This treasure hidden in thick jungle has been reclaimed and large tracts are already under the plough. Under Nuwarawewa the Right Bank Channel is being extended to bring an additional 2,000 acres under cultivation. Many improvements to village tanks were made.

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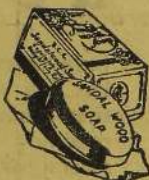
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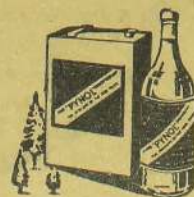
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The Bund Pitching at the Irinimadu Tank in the Northern Province

EASTERN PROVINCE

PATTIPOLAI Aru Scheme, in the granary of the Eastern Province, had many improvements to give it a new span of life. Several anicuts, channels and roads were constructed. These roads have helped the farmers to transport their paddy, etc., with greater ease and have solved a problem the cultivators were faced with for very many years. Ilukuchenai Tank near Akkarapattu was restored and additional lands are now brought under cultivation. Improvements have also been made to Rottawewa, Lahugala and Panama Tanks. Work is now proceeding in connection with Kantalai Augmentation Scheme, Allai Extension Scheme, Verugal Anicut and Tambelegam Agricultural Road.

The Karachchi Scheme under this tank is still being developed and there is a proposal to take up the Murrasmokka Extension. Experiments are now going on in connection with a proposal to irrigate lands in the vicinity of Puttur Well by providing a pumping scheme. If this proves to be a success improved methods of well irrigation will be introduced to the Peninsula.

Detailed investigations had been made to convert Vadamarachchi Lagoon into a fresh water lake. The reports are very promising and will be taken up for construction shortly.

SABARAGAMUWA PROVINCE

UKKGALKALTOTA Scheme.

The old head works were almost completely obliterated by floods and a new anicut and head sluice were provided to irrigate the lands that had to depend on the old structures.

Hingurawe Scheme: The Right Bank and Left Bank main channels were extended with branch channels and a road along the right bank was constructed. The construction of Bandara Anicut and other improvements at Molligoda are almost complete. Several other small schemes were constructed and improvements to existing schemes were done.

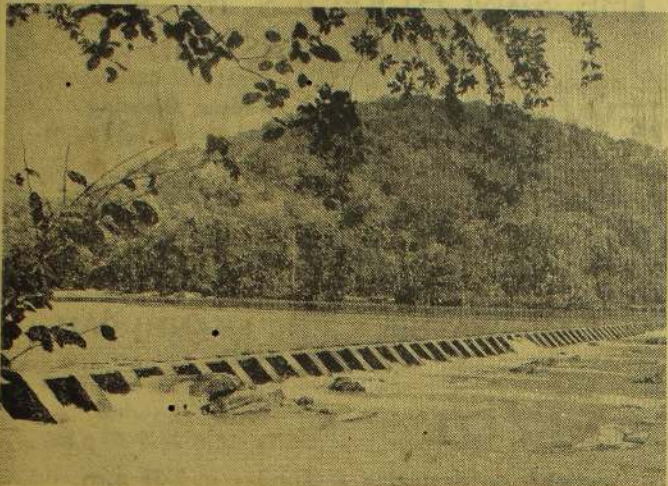
NORTHERN PROVINCE

A GLANCE at the map of Ceylon will show that nature has not favoured this area with large rivers. Beyond Puliyanakulam the only one of some importance flowing through land with a suitable topography is dammed across to form Irinimadu Tank.



Soundings in progress at the Putter Wells in the Jaffna District

These Figures Mean New Life for the People and Wealth for the Nation



The Minipe Anicut

Gigantic Schemes to Complete Great Plan

DURING a period of severe drought when cultivation almost all over the Island failed a number of relief works, mostly pertaining to irrigation were taken up by Government Agents and officers of the Irrigation Department were called upon to assist the Revenue Officers in addition to their normal duties. The maximum assistance was given with the staff available and some of these works are now of benefit to the villagers of these areas.

Colonization schemes of importance to landless peasants all over the Island were started at Minneriya, Minipe, Kagama, Beragama, Paranthan, Polonnaruwa, Elahera, etc., to settle people in these areas. At first the assistance that was given to colonists was negligible compared with what they are getting now. Each colonist is given about five acres of paddy land, three acres of garden land, ten acres of high land for cultivation and a house built of bricks roofed with corrugated asbestos sheets or tiles and a water-seal latrine. All the assistance from the Agricultural Department and the advice of experts in Government Departments are available to them to solve any practical difficulty. The Irrigation Department had to open up a special branch for land development work only, as a result of the urgency and demand for colonies.

The increase in the department's work and the hydraulic problems that had to be solved necessitated the establishment of a hydraulic laboratory. This is used as a training centre as well, for field assistants and village cultivation officers. Here they are given the theoretical training necessary for the proper execution of their work. The river gauging section establishes river gauging stations on important rivers and studies the water resources of the Island.

Tests on various kinds of soil are carried out here to ascertain the qualities of these and their suitability for the various works. Behaviour of floods and their control is studied on scale models and research work is done. The printing department provides all the prints required and thus the hydraulic laboratory does silent service to the Ceylon Agriculturists.

Machines to save labour and increase the output of work was necessary. Earth moving machines of the most modern types were imported. The plant store at Ratmalana was opened in 1942 to maintain and repair these machines. There are now 155 tractors, 40 dozers, 15 excavators, 11 scrapers, 23 dumpers, 122

lorries and 158 pumps of various delivery capacities.

A big organisation was set up within a short space of time and is rapidly expanding to meet the demand for mechanical appliances to suit the present day construction methods. Blue prints are ready for a housing scheme to accommodate the store workers. This store is now more of a factory and stands second only to the Railway Workshops.

If the expenditure on the different schemes carried out to completion by the department are to be given in detail this article would be a mass of figures and very uninteresting to most of the readers. However, if the total expenditure against time will convey any meaning regarding the amount of work done, then the diagram published on this page should be of help.

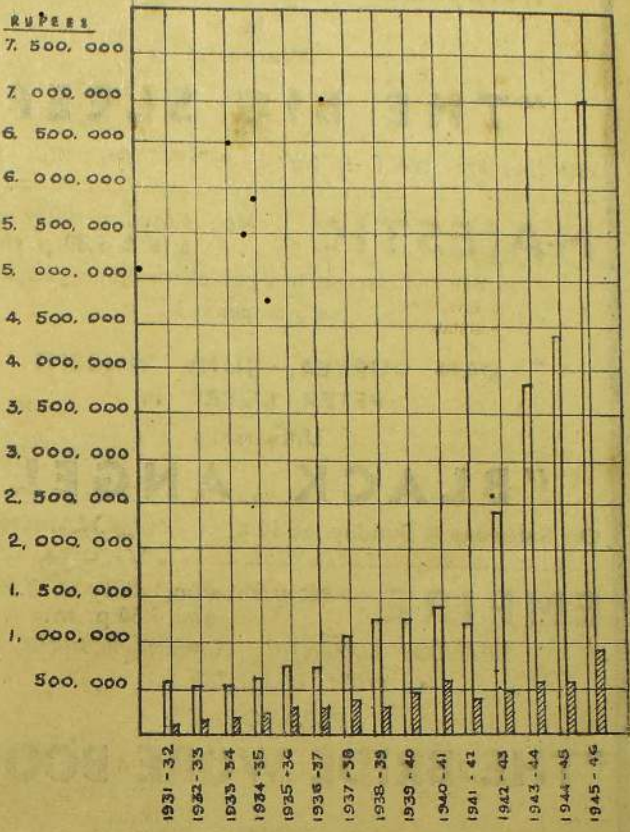
The acreage brought under cultivation since 1931 is 133,000 but it has to be remembered that some of the big schemes, still uncompleted and not developed to the maximum, have not brought a full harvest. This might take a few years more.

In addition to major works that are being constructed very large irrigation projects across the Walawe Ganga, Gal Oya, Heda Oya and Malwattu Oya are being investigated and a good deal of progress has been made in this direction. Borings have been taken by some big machines to depths varying from thirty to eighty feet to analyse the samples of soil and rock. The Government Mineralogist's reports were sent and the world famous Dr. Savage has seen the sites of some of the more important ones to give his advice on these schemes. Years of observation and intricate calculations on the Hydrology connected with the various schemes are now available for the preparation of the final designs. These schemes when constructed will dwarf the biggest irrigation scheme now existing in Ceylon. Hydro-Electricity, Power, factories, roads, towns and all the modern conveniences connected with these are to be provided. Playing fields, cinemas, theatres, water-sports, holiday resorts are just a few of the things that strike the imagination of the planners. Every department of the Ceylon Government will have its portion of work to do.

These gigantic schemes that loom large on the horizon will within our lifetime be realities to stand as monuments to those who were responsible for founding them and mark the noon tide of Ceylon's glory.

We are now at the dawn of another era in Irrigation History.

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