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Is India Fit to be the Leader of Non-Communist Asia?

WITH China lost to the West, the Liberal "Manchester Guardian" now expresses the belief that India should be the light and leader of non-Communist Asia. But what non-Indian Asians ask is: Can India fill the bill? In other words, is she qualified to give that spiritual and political leadership which non-Communist Asia badly needs?

There is no doubt that the great respect in which India is held all over the world, including Red China, is due to the fact that at the head of the Indian democracy stands that sublime figure, Nehru. When one thinks of him one is forced to admit that to find his equal as a statesman one has to search the records of the past and one then thinks of Pericles, Washington, Lincoln and Gladstone. A good deal of the glamour then which India has for the West is due to this one man, Nehru.

But unfortunately, apart from Nehru, there does not appear to be any other Indian politician there of comparable stature. And there's the rub.

For instance, take the still unresolved conflict between India and Ceylon over the vast number of temporary Indian residents in Ceylon who claim full citizenship rights here while not being willing to give up their social and economic ties with India. With the exception of Nehru, all other Indian politicians who have expressed their views on this question completely ignore the point of view of the Ceylonese people and are, more or less, in favour of some form of coercion being used against Ceylon in order to enforce Indian claims. So long as so many influential Indians adopt this bullying attitude towards a small country like Ceylon, so long will India be distrusted by other Asians in South Asia. In fact, there is no doubt that but for the restraining hand of Sri Nehru, a very grave conflict would now have arisen between India and Ceylon—a conflict in which the rest of the Commonwealth would have had to intervene and a conflict which would have exposed to the world the existence in India of a core of imperialists worse than any imperialists of the West. It is only the moral force and dynamic leadership of Nehru, that has prevented such a crisis arising.

Nevertheless, the rest of South Asia has not failed to take note of the fact that, so soon after India had regained her independence, there has arisen in that powerful country a band of men who would not hesitate to force a small country like Ceylon to bow to their will over a matter vitally concerning the independence of Ceylon. What would happen, people in South Asia ask, if the great Nehru were to disappear from the political scene in India? Would not the Indian "imperialists" then gain the upper hand?

It is for this reason that in a previous article of mine on the Indian problem in Ceylon (U. N. P. Journal 23.5.52.) I suggested that Sri Nehru should find the time to be the architect of a great South Asian Commonwealth led and developed by India and Pakistan. Such an enterprise would not only bring about a truly fraternal relationship between all nations of South Asia, but would also lead to a radical improvement in the attitude of India and Pakistan towards each other.

As a matter of fact, it is unfortunate that so many Westerners should look only to India to be the leader of non-Communist Asia since, from the point of view of internal stability, economic soundness and homogeneity of outlook, Pakistan has an advantage over her bigger neighbour. Besides, Ceylon trusts Pakistan more than India and a strong bond of friendship has grown up between Pakistan and Ceylon, thanks to the wise statesmanship of that shrewd patriot, the late P. S. Senanayake. In the leadership of non-Communist

Asia, therefore, Pakistan has a vital part to play and it would be fatal to cold-shoulder one of the most virile nations in the whole of Asia. And where Ceylon is concerned, it must be admitted that rabid Indian nationalists and imperialists have brought about a situation where the Ceylonese people have come to trust Pakistan more than India, since it would be a precarious thing for a little country to accept the leadership of a great neighbour whose present restraint is the product of the moral ascendancy of one man.

However, there is no dispute that, if a South Asian Commonwealth could be formed (not divorced from but integrated with the British Commonwealth) the natural leader of such a commonwealth would be Sri Nehru, since he alone has the outlook and the moral fervour to make such a conception a practical possibility. The question is whether the pressing problems of his own country

will permit him to delegate many of his functions there to others and to devote the major part of his energies to the creation of a South Asian Commonwealth. That is a question which he alone can answer.

By A. S. Morrison

In the coming time, if a world war can be avoided, the supreme conflict in Asia will be the struggle between Communism as represented by China and Democracy as represented by India. Who will win?—Nehru or Mao Tse-tung? In the history of the world never have two such antagonists been engaged in such a battle? If there is no world war within the next five years, the battle will be fought out in peace

(Continued on page 2)

Echo of the Open Air Opposition

Dr. N. M. Perera accused of breach of privilege

SIR John Kotelawala, Leader of the House, brought to the notice of the Speaker an alleged breach of privilege committed by Dr. N. M. Perera, M.P. for Ruanwella, in a speech made at the open air meeting held on Galle Face on the 10th inst.

He produced copies of the "Ceylon Daily News" and "Observer" of June 11, and quoted this alleged statement of Dr. N. M. Perera.

"I visited Parliament yesterday, and what did I see—some queer animals! There were people in it who did not understand what politics meant. The very sight of them would make one lose one's appetite for a week. How did they creep into Parliament?"

The Speaker asked Dr. N. M. Perera whether he wished to make a statement.


Dr. Perera said "No."

The Speaker then requested Dr. Perera to withdraw from the House, which he did.

The Speaker held that there was a prima facie case of breach of privilege.

Sir John moved that the matter of the complaint be referred to a Select Committee and that the Committee be nominated by the Speaker and that the Committee have power to send for papers, persons, documents and records and report to the House.

After the matter was discussed, the motion was passed by a large majority.—Ayes 78, Noes 21.



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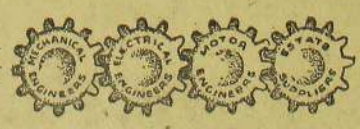
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Scientific Research Council For Ceylon

" ENORMOUS BENEFIT TO NATION " FORESEEN

THE Ceylon Association for the Advancement of Science have presented a comprehensive Memorandum strongly urging on the Government the formation of a Council of Scientific Research in Ceylon on lines similar to corresponding institutions in the other Dominions in the Commonwealth.

It is stated that the work of the Council as it develops would bring enormous benefit to the nation in its scientific and industrial development, as the experience of other countries that have created these councils have convincingly demonstrated.

Under colonial administration, the scientific affairs relating to this country were directed mainly by the Colonial Office on the advice of experts employed by that office. Scientifically developed industry was practically unknown and scientific agriculture like tea and rubber thrived because of the independent advisory councils and research institutions the planting interests had in the United Kingdom. With the advent of independence, the centre of activity was to be shifted from the United Kingdom to Ceylon.

According to the scheme submitted by the Special Committee of the

Association, the Council is to be an autonomous body with the Prime Minister as President, a Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister as Vice-President, and about twenty members.

THE COUNCIL'S TASK

The memorandum details the task of the Council in its early stages, as follows:—

- (a) Advising Government in scientific matters such as the allocation of funds for scientific research.
- (b) Surveying the country's need for trained scientific personnel and taking steps to maintain adequate supply.
- (c) Surveying the main problems to which scientific research can contribute and possibly starting research on a small scale on such problems.
- (d) Establishing close contacts with already existing scientific institutions of an official or semi-official character.
- (e) Establishing an information and liaison service to provide agriculture and industry with technical information.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN CANADA

One feels invigorated to learn how scientific research is carried on in

Canada by many different agencies among whom there is a close co-ordination of effort. Scientists are seekers after truth, and nothing is more to their liking than full and free discussion of difficult research problems by all those who are able to make useful contributions on the different subjects.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century there has been a remarkable change in the relationship of the farmer and the scientist. The scientist has taken his critical methods to the fields; the farmer has brought his problems to the laboratory. Various types of scientific and industrial research are carried out by the different departments.

The National Research Council consists of the President, two Vice-Presidents (Scientific) one Vice-President (Administration) and seventeen other members, chosen to represent industry, labour or research in one of the basic national sciences. Many of the members are drawn from the science departments of Canadian universities.

The Council at Ottawa is organized with three Science Divisions—applied biology, chemistry and physics, and three other Divisions dealing with engineering problems—

building research, radio and electrical engineering and mechanical engineering which includes aeronautics and hydraulics. The Medical Research Division supports and correlates research on approved projects in the Medical Schools of Canadian universities and awards fellowships for post-graduate training in medical research.

By Biyar Jayo

The staff of the Council numbers about 3,100 including more than a hundred students during summer vacation periods. Scholarships are awarded annually by the National Research Council for training in post-graduate research, and grants-in-aid are made to individuals or institutions for the employment of assistants or research projects and for the purchase or construction of unusual apparatus. Up to October, 1950, some 1,600 students have had their training advanced through such scholarships, and more than 5,000,000 dollars has been awarded under grants-in-aid. The activities of the Council cover a broad field.

FRUIT CANNING, A PAYING INDUSTRY

FRUIT canning in a section of the Marketing Department which was originally started a dozen years ago on an experimental scale has now reached a magnitude which was quite unforeseen then and the entire industry is on a sound footing with a considerable margin of profit each year, while a stabilized income is assured to growers and sellers of fruits. Mangoes were canned to begin with. Now the process is extended to pineapples.

Much progress has been made by the canning industry since the end of the last war, as borne out by the figures below:—

PRODUCTION

	No. of tins	
	Pineapples	Mangoes
1945	13,000	4,500
1946	45,000	3,000
1947	35,000	12,000
1948	41,000	5,000
1949	62,000	24,000
1950	95,000	22,000
1951	75,000	24,000

GUARANTEED PRICE SCHEME

The purpose of the canning activities of the Marketing Department is mainly to return a stabilized income to fruit growers. The policy is im-

plemented by a scheme called the Guaranteed Price Scheme. The Department purchases pineapples, mangoes and other fruits at a price which is never allowed to decrease below a minimum guaranteed price so that when fruit is available in plenty, the growers are assured of a profitable income. For instance in the current year the guaranteed price was fixed at 8 cts. a pound inclusive of stem and crown. When the season sets in the price would otherwise have been so low as to make cultivation of pineapple uneconomic. On the other hand, the fruit growers can get a higher price than the guaranteed price in the open market when fruits are scarce. At present the working of the guaranteed price scheme for canned fruit is limited to a certain extent by the quantity of fruit that can be utilized for canning with the existing machinery. It is the endeavour of the Department to step up its rate of production during the fruit season so as to ensure the efficient working of the canning industry and the guaranteed price scheme. As a result of this scheme for pineapples, cultivation of pineapples has increased at least three-fold during the last five years and in certain areas in the Western Province cultivation is carried on systematically, and is reported to be as profitable as that of planting coconuts!

OMEGA.

IS INDIA FIT TO BE THE LEADER OF NON-COMMUNIST ASIA ?

(Continued from page 1)

on an economic plane. The impoverished peoples of Asia (from north to south and east to west) watch this gigantic social and economic struggle with bated breath. In five years' time the people of Asia will be able to judge as to which of the two systems—democracy or communism—will stand a better chance of filling the rice bowl of the Asian peoples and ridding them of the worst features of their poverty and malnutrition.

The "Manchester Guardian" rightly warns India and her Congress Government not to allow Red China to be the pace-maker of her (India's) progress, but that India should set the pace herself and not be a

mere imitator of Red China. These are wise words. But India's achievement greatly depends on the West just as China's depends on the assistance she gets from Russia. Will the West provide India and the rest of South Asia with an adequate helping hand? That is the crux of the problem. The Colombo Plan as conceived by Ceylon's Finance Minister, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, has not yet brought more than a trickle of help from the West and far more is needed (and no doubt, was hoped for by the Finance Minister) if the threat of Communism is to be made to recede. If only a fraction of the vast sums being expended by the Western nations on armaments could be diverted to the East for its economic upliftment the battle against Communism can be won.

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Rice-Key Commodity in the Commonwealth

BERNARD Braine, M.P., writing on the above subject to the "New Commonwealth" (incorporating the "Crown Colonist") shows why it is vitally important to develop dependable sources of supply in a strategically safe part of the world.

There is no more important single foodstuff in the world today than rice. It is the basic food of a large part of the world's population—for millions it is almost their only food. It is the key to much of the political situation in Asia. For in the lands of the rice-eaters plentiful and cheap rice spells tranquillity, while scarce and dear rice can lead quickly to famine, misery and upheaval.

Unhappily, rice is both scarce and dear. World production is declining. Between 1950-51 and 1951-52 the total fell by about 1 per cent. In Asia, where the bulk of the world's rice is both produced and consumed, the decline during the same period seems to have been about 1½ per cent. Prices are fantastically high. And with populations increasing everywhere the general outlook is bleak in the extreme.

None of us in the West can be indifferent to the problem, for it is bound up intimately with our own needs and difficulties. Malaya's rubber and tin production, for example, upon which our industries depend, is influenced strongly by the availability of rice. If supplies were cut off the Malayan economy would come to a standstill, the war against Communism would be lost, and the whole free world would feel the jolt.

VULNERABLE TERRITORIES

The truth must be faced that all four British territories in South-East Asia—Malaya, Hong Kong, Sarawak and North Borneo—find themselves in a most vulnerable position. It is true that strenuous efforts are being made in these territories to grow more rice. The figures speak for themselves. Before the war Malaya produced some 330,000 tons annually. In the season 1950-51 she produced 440,000 tons, and by 1955 it is expected she will be producing 535,000 tons. Against the present troubled background these figures represent a notable achievement.

Nevertheless, they still fall far short of what is adequate. Population is constantly outstripping supplies. Malaya imports about 50 to 60 per cent. of her requirements now. Despite increased production at home she will be obliged to import on this scale for some years ahead. The position is easier in North Borneo and Sarawak, but if the needs of Hong Kong, Mauritius, Seychelles and Aden are taken into account, as indeed they must be, then the present requirements of territories in the East for which the United Kingdom has a special responsibility are not far short of 770,000 tons a year. That is a formidable figure.

What is even more disturbing is that the only sources of supply are the three traditional rice-exporting countries of South-East Asia—Burma, Indo-China and Siam—all of which are menaced by the threat of Communism.

Before the war, Burma used to export well over 3 million tons a year. Today, disorganised and divided, her marginal rice lands long since allowed to go out of cultivation, she exports barely a million tons. Indo-China, torn and racked with bloody strife, tells the same story.

Siam alone presents a more encouraging picture, but even here we are not getting the rice we want. Last year Siam was unable to fulfil her contract to supply British territories. This year we are to get less than three-quarters of last year's contract. Together, the three rice-

bowl countries used to export some 8 million tons a year. Today they are exporting a mere 2½ million tons.

JAPAN A NEW FACTOR

But that is not all. The situation is bedevilled by demands Japan is now making for the first time upon the exportable surpluses of South-East Asia.

Before the war she drew the bulk of her requirements from Korea and Formosa, then included in her overseas empire. Today, denied access to those territories, she is in the market for rice which would normally flow to British territories. Moreover, she can make payment with manufactured goods offered at prices with which nobody else can compete. It must be expected, therefore, that Japan will make ever-increasing demands upon what little rice is available for export.

All this is very alarming. If famine came to India, necessitating the switch of surpluses to that country, or if Communist armies overran Burma and Indo-China, or if the rice lands were visited by drought or flood, our territories could be cut off from their vital supplies with no hope of relief from elsewhere. For there is no sizeable surplus of rice anywhere else in the world. The bulk of the American surplus is absorbed by Cuba, while the Italian surplus is swallowed up in Europe.

It is a matter therefore of the highest importance to develop alternative sources of supply in some dependable part of the world, preferably within the Commonwealth, and to do so with the utmost speed.

BRITISH GUIANA'S POSSIBILITIES

A start has been made, although it is doubtful whether all concerned are yet seized of the extreme urgency of the matter. Thus, experiments in mechanised cultivation are proceeding apace in Tanganyika, Nyasaland and Nigeria. Although on a small scale, results so far seem encouraging.

But generally in these territories, as in Northern Rhodesia and Sierra Leone, where there is much land suitable for rice cultivation, the primary need is to increase food production for local consumption, and for some time ahead there is little likelihood of any surplus rice coming out of Africa.

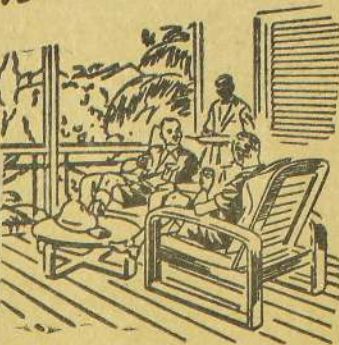
It is in the West Indies—British Guiana in particular—that the best hope lies of producing a large exportable surplus. This Colony already produces about 65,000 tons a year, of which about 25,000 tons is exported to neighbouring Caribbean territories. There is not the slightest doubt that production could be increased at least five-fold, provided capital were made available for necessary water control works.

The Evans Commission recognised the possibilities in 1948, when it was estimating the development needs of the Colony, and rice expansion figured largely in its final recommendations. There followed the Beachell-Brown mission, which carried out an expert investigation and came to the conclusion that the area under rice could be expanded from 77,000 acres to 368,000 acres provided the headwaters of the rivers could be controlled.

If, then, British Guiana could make a substantial contribution to Commonwealth rice supplies, why is development in that Colony proceeding so slowly? Last year £750,000 was advanced out of Colonial Development and Welfare funds to enable work to begin on a number of water control schemes which will bring much new lands into cultivation. In the meantime, the Government of the Colony invited the Colonial Development Corporation to join with them in setting up a Rice Development Company, based on the excellently run Mahaicony-Ahad scheme for mechanised cultivation, which for some years had been operating under Government auspices. Since then, little progress has been recorded.

(Continued on page 5)

Martell makes friends



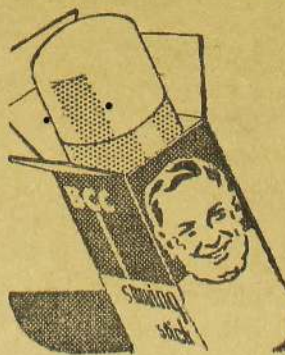
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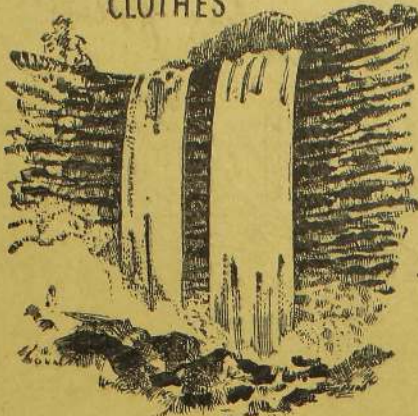
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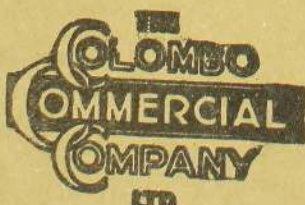


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Collection and Publication of Statistics CANADIAN SYSTEM FOR CEYLON

FROM the time of its colonial beginnings in the seventeenth century, Canada has been closely linked—through immigration, trade, culture and political ties—to a steadily increasing number of other countries. Canada is an independent nation, entirely responsible for its own foreign policy. By choice it is associated with a number of other States. Of these associations, the oldest is that of the Commonwealth, the other members of which are Australia, Ceylon, India, New Zealand and Pakistan, the Union of South Africa and the United Kingdom. The ties that hold them together are common ideals and common interests. For this purpose they maintain a number of committees and other bodies. Among these the recently established Commonwealth Consultative Committee of South and South-East Asia is one. Canada took a prominent part in the Colombo Plan Exhibition and contributed towards its success in great measure.

FELLOWSHIP FOR CEYLON

Under the Colombo Plan the Committee has recognized that Commonwealth countries of South and South-East Asian countries need technical assistance and has offered the much-needed aid. The offer of a fellowship to Ceylon in Statistics is an instance. An opportunity has thus been given to Ceylon to avail itself of the assistance of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics in the latest method of collection and publication of statistics of various types. Hereafter the Canadian system will be adopted in Ceylon.

AID UNDER THE C-PLAN

Following the directive of the late Prime Minister, the Department of Census and Statistics since the middle of last year has become responsible for the organization of the statistical units of all Government Departments. It is a comparatively new department and the work entails a very heavy burden on the administration, and the Government of Ceylon availed itself of the offer made by the Canadian Government under the Colombo Plan of a Fellowship in Statistics. The officer selected was Mr. U. G. P. de Mel, Deputy Director of Census and Statistics, who returned to the Island last week after studying methods and organization in Canada, which has a highly centralised system for the collection and publication of Government statistics. The course of study lasted three months.

DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics is a very large organization consisting of nearly 1,500 employees and is the chief collecting agency for every type of statistics which includes the Divisions of Census, Education, Agriculture, Health and Welfare, Industry and Merchandising, Information Service, International Trade, Labour and Prices, Transportation, Public Finance, Research Development Year Book, Special

Surveys and Mechanical Tabulation.

The Bureau has established itself so firmly as an institution in that country that its findings in the various types were utilised for the initiation of new policies and the expansion of business. One feature of the Bureau was the fact that the Bureau had its own printing unit which enables it to issue statistical publications within a very short period of time. These publications were eagerly awaited both by Government Departments as well as by the business world in general.

By Jurgen

USE OF ELECTRONIC MACHINE

Mr. de Mel who was greatly impressed by the organization of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics has returned with plenty of material and ideas for building up a strong Central Statistics Organization in Ceylon. In taking the Census of Canada which has recently been completed, the Bureau had made use of the latest mechanical punching and sorting machine which has enabled the Canadian Government to publish the result of the Census in what would perhaps be record time. For instance the customary schedule used at a Census was not utilised this time. Instead—a double-purpose card was used with special pencil for ticking off the various entries. This card was put through the electronic machine which sensed the pencil markings and punched a duplicate card containing all the information in the original card. These cards were then sorted and tabulated on other machines. The use of the electronic machine eliminated the laborious and time-killing process of coding and punching that had hitherto been used in all countries of the world. The use of the electronic machine for Census purposes was a pioneer attempt in Canada and would perhaps revolutionize census taking methods.

CANDID CANADIAN CIVILITY

Mr. de Mel was very enthusiastic about the warm reception he had received in Ottawa among all classes of people and found the Canadians an extremely friendly race, ever willing to help "the stranger within its gates". Within a week of his arrival in Canada he felt completely at home. There was not the slightest suspicion of the colour bar or "apartheid" in Canada and before he left he has made several very good friends. Most of his time he spent in Ottawa in the Dominion Bureau. He paid brief visits to one of the provincial statistics offices at Toronto where he was the guest of the Provincial Statistician who took him during a week-end to the famous Niagara Falls.

With the proposed Censuses of Agriculture, Industry and Distribution, followed by a complete census of population scheduled to take place next year, the Department of Census and Statistics, whose Deputy Director has studied the latest methods in Canada, will provide the necessary data for future analyses of the social and economic development of the Island.

TRIUMPH OF DEMOCRACY CELEBRATION

THE Government Parliamentary Party's plan to celebrate the "triumph of Democracy" which takes the form of mass meetings throughout the Island begins with a public meeting on the Galle Face Green on Sunday, the 29th instant, at which the Prime Minister, Mr. Dudley Senanayake, will preside and make a statement on the conduct of the General Election and the meaning of its result.

Special train services will be run to Colombo and back for the convenience of people from outstations including Jaffna. There will also be special bus services from nearby towns such as Negombo, Gampaha, Panadura and Kotte.

Speakers at this meeting on Galle Face will include Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam, Mr. A. Ratnayake, Dr. C. W. W. Kannan-gara, Dr. M. C. M. Kalleel and Mr. S. Natesan.

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"THE past year has been one of outstanding progress and without any disturbance. The working results have been very satisfactory. New high-water marks were reached in gross earnings, coaching receipts, goods receipts and the number of passengers carried. The loss in working showed a 50 per cent. decrease as compared with the previous year."

Thus the General-Manager of Railways sums up the situation of the Department of which he is the head, in his Administration Report for 1951. Other achievements worthy of note were a marked improvement in the loading and turn-round of wagons, increased output in the workshops, reduction in claims for compensation and successful efforts, at reducing ticketless travel and minimum of loss, and pilferage of goods in transit.

PASSENGER TRAFFIC

As regards passenger traffic, naturally the largest number of patrons was among third-class travellers who totalled 26,750,401 and contributed a sum of Rs. 19,253,992 to revenue. In 1938-39 the Railway had 839 coaches and with that rolling stock carried 10,705,510 passengers. In 1950-51 the rolling stock consisted of 806 coaches, but carried 27,581,603 passengers. The magnitude of the operating difficulties and the discomfort of the travellers in such a limited number of vehicles cannot be over-emphasized.

PILGRIM TRAFFIC

During the past year pilgrim trains ran for the following major festivals and the number of pilgrims conveyed was as follows:—

Vesak	... 263,975
Kataragama	... 111,700

Anuradhapura (Poson and Esala)	... 107,607
Madhu (Lady of Madhu festival)	... 62,085
Chilaw (St. Anne's, Talawilla)	... 27,850

ACCIDENTS

There were 625 cases of derailments, collisions and other mishaps as compared with 630 in 1950. Nine deaths and 73 of the cases of injuries caused to passengers were due to foot-board travelling and attempting to entrain or detrain whilst trains were in motion.

There were 6 cases of collisions of trains at ungated level-crossings, resulting in three deaths and nine injured. 37 persons sustained injuries and 66 were killed while trespassing on the rail track in 1951. There were also 31 cases of suicide.

REVENUE & EXPENDITURE

The revenue earned by the Railway has, it is stated, been increasing since 1947 and reached the all-time peak figure of Rs. 65,999,474 during 1951. The year has indeed been a record one for the Railway in more than one respect.

The increase of revenue over that of the previous year has been very substantial and amounts to Rs. 8,349,335, compared with the earnings of 1945 which had hitherto been the peak year, there is an increase of Rs. 6,407,433. Of course, it must be remembered that 1945 was a year of heavy military traffic and a time when road competition was still negligible owing to the effects of the war.

The expenditure during the year was Rs. 72,762,646 and was in excess of the previous year by Rs. 1,490,125. The increase was mainly due to annual increments and extra expenditure in cost-of-living allowances to staff. The deficit was Rs. 6,762,172 or nearly 500 per cent. less than the previous year's deficit.

SENEX.

INCIDENCE OF POISONING IN CEYLON

ACCORDING to the Administration Report of the Government Analyst for last year, the Police and the Courts submitted 272 productions in 123 cases for the detection of poison which was identified in 66 cases. The positive cases included 8 of acetic acid, 7 of arsenic, 5 each of nitric and sulphuric acids, 4 each of powdered glass, mercury, copper and cyanides, 2 each of strychnine, croton, alcohol, and seeds of datura and ganja, adrenaline, potassium chlorate, kaolin, nitrous acid, camphor, cordite, quinine, D.D.T., magnesium sulphate, sulphonamides, potassium ferricyanide. Of productions from Hospitals throughout the Island, poison was identified in 141 cases. These included 50 of acetic acid which continues to occupy pride of place as a very easily obtainable poison. Fifty out of 141 positive cases needs no further comment.

SOME CASES OF INTEREST

Several children and adults were taken to hospital, suffering from gripe, vomiting and diarrhoea after eating some muscat which had been sent to a teacher of a school by a pupil. On examination of a specimen it was found to contain arsenic in the form of arsenious acid.

Six persons were admitted to hospital suffering from purging and vomiting after eating hoppers. Croton oil was identified in the baked hoppers.

A woman felt giddy and started purging after drinking some water from a pot. Croton seed coats were found in the water.

Both strychnine and brucine were identified in a plate of rice and curry which had been given to a woman by her husband whom she was

suing for maintenance.

Arsenic was identified in a meal of cold rice and jak curry which was eaten by a family of three, all of whom fell ill with gripe, vomiting and purging.

Arsenic was identified in the water from two wells in two cases, where the inmates of the houses had fallen ill after using water from their wells.

A man who was given a drink of arrack felt a burning sensation and later suffered from purging and vomiting. Mercuric chloride was identified in the arrack.

A person who received a parcel of cakes and sweets by post from an unknown admirer handed it to the police on suspicion. Crystals of potassium ferricyanides looking remarkably like pieces of glazed cherry were found embedded both in the cakes and the sweets!

CANTOR.

RICE—KEY COMMODITY IN THE COMMONWEALTH

(Continued from page 3)

In the world-wide struggle against poverty and hunger time is not on our side. Unhappily, we do not possess the funds or the technical means to ensure such an expansion in production that poverty and hunger can be banished altogether. But what we can do is to decide upon certain priorities, to select those projects which, if carried out efficiently, would set in motion other developments.

The expansion of rice production in areas where it is known that high yields can be expected—and British Guiana is the most promising country—is surely one of these key projects. More rice means more rubber, tin and copra. Conversely, less rice means less of these commodities and possibly the loss of territories vital to the peace and prosperity of the whole free world.

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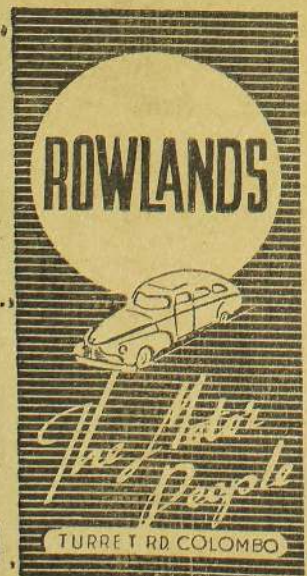
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u.n.p.

Friday, June 20, 1952

PRACTICAL BIAS IN EDUCATION

THE need for a practical bias in the education of the country was emphasised recently at a school prize-giving by the Minister of Food, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke. Such a bias is vitally necessary in the field of agriculture which provides the life-blood of the country.

Our economy is so closely linked up with agriculture that, unless we make the maximum effort to improve the agricultural skill of the people, the whole fabric of our economy is in danger of collapse. In developing this skill, the school garden plays an important part. In the circumstances every one genuinely interested in the welfare of Ceylon will be very pleased to learn that a directive has been sent to all teachers that the school garden should form the pivot of the curriculum. By that means, as Sir Oliver pointed out, a real meaning will be given to so many subjects in a rural environment which may otherwise appear to be somewhat illusory.

For too long have the boys and girls in our schools looked on their student days as a period of cramming and gaining some book learning which serves very little purpose when it comes to the tackling of the day-to-day problems of life. While the Government is committed to its policy of giving the fullest opportunity for every person in the country to have his or her education from kindergarten to university at State expense, it also realises that it is not every boy or girl that is fit for academic studies. The technical skill of the student must first be probed and developed so that his education is based on his aptitude. In both industry and agriculture the country needs the highest technical skill and this can be obtained only if a practical bias is given to education.

A very heavy responsibility rests not only on teachers but also on parents to see that those who are entrusted to their care are directed to those forms of education in which they can naturally excel and through which the interests of the country can best be served.

The days when the ambition of every boy and girl was to become a white-collar worker are gone. In the grim struggle for existence which characterises the modern world, only those can survive who can contribute something to the material prosperity of their fellow-beings.

“Ceylon Peaceful and Prosperous” Visiting Educationist's Impression

I AM also glad to mention that in spite of the fact that this town is tainted with totalitarian ideas our lay staff is very loyally democratic and they stand for God and fatherland, for Law and Order, with earnest increasing vigour,” stated the Revd. Bro. Callixtus, B.A. (Lond.), Director, St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa, in welcoming Very Rev. Bro. Lawrence O'Toole, M.A. (Lond.), Assistant Superior-General of the Institute of Christian Brothers on Monday, the 9th June.

On arrival he was garlanded by Mr. H. V. Peiris, a senior Teacher and was conducted to the Platform.

Rev. Bro. Director gave a brief resume of the College. He was glad he said to make special mention of the success of his students at the University Entrance Examination held in 1951, when four students were accepted for a course in the University—two for Engineering and two for General Science, which was best School performance for 1951, south of Colombo. He further said that in the field of sports, they came off champions in the South Western Group Meet, and one of their youthful athletes became the 2nd best high jumper at the All-Ceylon Public Schools Meet. In conclusion, he extended to Very Rev. Bro. Assistant a warm welcome, “a welcome that will be fruitful with a rich load of

prayers for his numerous intentions.”

MOST PEACEFUL CEYLON

In reply Very Rev. Bro. Lawrence O'Toole thanked the College for the welcome accorded to him. He visited Ceylon then for the third time and he liked Ceylon not only because the charms of their beautiful isle fascinated him but also because the endearing charms of its kind-hearted people allured him to its shores.

While congratulating them on the progress of their school he remarked that they in Italy were running schools for the maimed and mutilated children which taxed their capacity and energy to a large extent.

He said: “Ceylon is by far the most peaceful, the most prosperous and the most cultured country in all Asia. Here are a people peaceful and happy. The peaceful way and the democratic manner in which their recent elections were held last week astonished me, although your town of Moratuwa only failed to return the democratic candidate. It is a consummation most devoutly to be wished that our schools should produce citizens worthy of the national ideals of the country. Your College is dedicated to the Warrior Saint of Christianity, St. Sebastian, who stood for God, faith and truth. True to your Motto “Await the Lord and do Manfully”, I ask you to brave the storms of life heroically in defence of your faith and country. I also thank the lay members of your staff for their co-operation and partnership in the work of our Holy Founder.”

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SOIL CONSERVATION PROVIDES WAY TO GROW MORE FOOD

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SOME people think that soil is permanent. But that is not true.

Under many conditions, soil is very unstable. When wind and water move across bare earth, they usually carry some soil with them. They may move it hundreds of miles or only a short distance, but eventually they carry away large amounts of topsoil. When the fertile topsoil is lost, only the mineral subsoil is left—and this subsoil will not grow good crops.

Erosion can damage one farm, a dozen farms, or an entire region. If you want proof, glance back through history. In Roman times there were fertile and productive fields in North Africa and at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Basin. Today a large part of this land is desert. In Syria, modern archeologists had to dig down 28 feet to uncover the once

magnificent buildings of the former city of Antioch. Twenty centuries ago Adria, Italy, was a busy seaport; today it is 12 miles inland.

What happened?

The thing that happened is this: People cut down the forests; they let goats and other livestock eat every blade of grass; and they cultivated the land up and down hill, instead of across the hill on the contour. When the grass and trees were gone, nothing was left to hold the soil in place. Each rainstorm carried soil downhill—at first in small amounts, later by the tons.

Do not think, though, that soil erosion is just an ancient problem. It remains with us today. In many parts of the world, there are large areas of severely eroded land that produce little or nothing.

Fortunately, many nations are now awakened to the danger. Agriculture officials in 52 countries of the Free World are studying the needs of their land. Twenty-one of these countries already have soil and water conservation agencies at work, repairing past damage, restoring fertility to the soil.

Many of the world's soil conservation leaders have been trained in the United States. More than 1,000 soil specialists have come here to study U. S. methods, have gone back home to apply many of the things they learned.

BITTER EXPERIENCE TAUGHT THEM

It was only through bitter experience that Americans saw the need to protect their land. During World War I, many farmers ploughed grass-land in semi-arid sections of southwestern United States and planted wheat. For a while, all went well. Then prolonged drought settled on that region in the early 1930's.

By 1932 a "dustbowl" had formed. The light prairie soil, no longer held down by grass, began to move with the wind. Duststorms shut out the sun. Sand piled as high as houses.

The U. S. Congress, shocked by the duststorms, took emergency action in 1933. Among other things, the Congress created the U. S. Soil conservation service as a Federal agency to work with American farmers. This agency has carried on a Nation-wide campaign against soil erosion. It has provided soils scientists, engineers, agronomists, and other specialists, to help farmers improve their land.

The results have been amazing.

The scars of the old "dustbowl" are healed. Once barren fields are yielding good crops, year after year. Every section of the Nation is producing 25 to 30 per cent. more food and fibre than was being produced 20 years ago.

Most of the credit must go to the American farmers themselves. They have voluntarily banded together into more than 2,400 soil conservation districts which include three-fourths of all U. S. farmland. Working through these districts, they have planned complete soil conservation programs. They call on State and Federal agencies for technical help, but they do the actual soil-building work themselves.

This kind of teamwork between government and private landowners pays big dividends—both for the individual farmer and for the Nation.—(USIS).

WHAT YOUTH THINKS

DEMOCRACY WILL NOT PERISH IN CEYLON

THE general Election results of the second Parliament in Free Lanka shows us clearly that Democracy in this country can never be defeated. It has taken deep root in Ceylon soil. Democracy triumphs over, and the false propaganda and false promises of the leftists ended in utter confusion. Their misleading campaign did not succeed. The Democratic idea at the present moment dominates the minds of men. With ardent and firm determination the free people, fought for democracy. Democracy triumphed over the Red fortresses, defeating the Red leaders like Drs. S. A. Wickremasinghe and Colvin R. de Silva.

The first day results of the general Election itself, shocked the leftists that they created cock-and-bull stories, like the leakage of ballot-papers or the introduction of illicit ballot-papers. These incredible stories they issued in print in order to mislead the masses.—to create chaos or disorder between the peace-loving citizens of this country and to mar the orderly Election which was going on at the time.

Under the leadership of a man, who is a shining example of honesty and integrity, the people must know that the so-called corruption or dishonesty will never take place, and moreover in a democratic country such political tricks are impossible. This method of rousing the common masses against the government will never succeed in this country. But still the cry of Revolution prevails among the Marxist. One Marxist had appealed to the masses, after having been defeated in the Elections to capture power "not through the ballot but by revolution." Revolution will never be welcomed here, unless the people seek to sacrifice all their freedoms for a dictatorship as a form of government. Dictators undoubtedly will deteriorate. As Lord Acton puts it, "all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Moreover, dictatorship suppresses all freedoms, especially the freedom of thought.

K. ALAHAKONE.

Godigamuwa, Maharagama.

YOUR CHOICE—WAS WISE

TWO weeks ago, the majority of the people of Ceylon, I mean the voters, were confronted with a new enemy in the shape of Communism. This enemy came totally disguised in order to hoodwink the masses, but the manner in which the masses responded to this political ideology was admirable. On the pretence of transforming Sri Lanka into a heaven on earth, they sought power to make her a satellite of Russia. Hence my countrymen it was crystal clear that the recent political battle was not between Capitalism and Socialism, but between Democracy and Totalitarianism.

The weapon, I mean the vote which was mainly instrumental in accepting or rejecting a political ideology was used very judiciously by a good majority of the people and once again we are endowed with the opportunity of retaining Parliamentary Democracy as our Political faith. Thus with Peace, Stability and Progress as our motive we should march forward earnestly to achieve our goal.

South, East, North and West, Sri Lanka! was agog with zest, Democracy stood out as liberals best,

And vetoed the greatest social pest.

Doubtless our Premier had a fight, To oust Communism, the labour blight,

Sri Lanka! blessed isle of light Now faces the world with great delight.

Let not our leaders make the path clear

For opportunists to come up and cheer

May freedom flourish in Sri Lanka forever

And march to prosperity with pomp and power.

Noel Abeywickrama.

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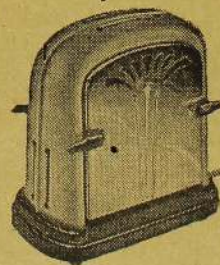
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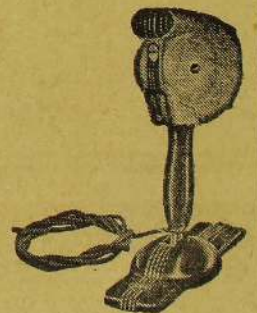
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DRINK MORE MILK



In Holland, the country people and fisher-folk wear quaint wooden shoes called "Klomp" (clogs). The custom, at night, is to deposit the "Klomp" outside the houses, and one can often determine the numbers of each family simply by counting the pairs of shoes.



Holland is mainly flat, consisting in reality of a single great plain. There graze some 2,400,000 cattle, the source of milk for Holland's vast dairy industry.

Milk is an important factor in the economic life of the Dutch nation. It is also an important part of the diet, the people using nearly one pint per person per day (or almost ten times as much as we do in Ceylon). For milk is one of the most valuable of foods, and among the least expensive to buy.

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Small-Pox Accompanied Immigrant Cooly Gangs

OCCASIONAL outbreaks of small-pox in towns and villages of Ceylon show that the disease could be underground like a Shakespearean sore under a seemingly whole skin. Yet vaccination against small-pox has been with us for some 140 years—long enough with the development of preventive measures in medical research to rid the Island of the scourge as malaria has been got rid of in 15 years of malaria control.

If aversion of some to co-operate in the prevention of small-pox could be the cause for lack of better control of small-pox epidemics how much worse could the position have been when people firmly believed that when small-pox is prevalent in the country the Gods were pulling horns to stop it. Thousands now roll in to be vaccinated when there is an outbreak of small-pox often keeping the authorities worried that vaccine stocks may not be able to hold out. In 1802, however, the population resorted to passive resistance when vaccination was introduced. People had to be compelled to be vaccinated. Imposing the regulation requiring vaccination of the citizen was no easy matter in those sequestered hamlets where medical aid was only beginning to be known.

Recorded figures indicate that from 1st October, 1800 to September, 1802, persons attacked numbered 2,110 of whom 473 died. The disease caused desolation in villages, the Dutch having been themselves enemies to the practice of inoculation had done nothing towards controlling the disease. Four years after the Kandyan Convention small-pox for the first time made its appearance in the Kandyan provinces where vaccination had yet to be introduced. In 6 months out of 7,374 cases 2,945 died. But in 1836, after a vigorous campaign of vaccination in 1,102 cases in 10½ months only 303 died.

In January, 1845, the Superintendent of Police, Kandy, wrote thus: "The Kandyans of the interior, the headman included, have such a mortal aversion to shelter or assist any Malabar man labouring under sickness that it is found difficult and inconvenient to the policemen to give to the perishing sick the required aid and assistance." Small-pox accompanied the immigrant cooly gangs and hundreds died of starvation and disease as they toiled along the lonely jungle paths leading from Mannar to the estates. It was the duty of the Police to erect temporary hospitals to report whether the sick were well treated and fed and whether arrangements to bury the dead had been made where today it is the concern of a whole community.

In Colombo in 1830, small-pox was endemic and Police engaged peons who were provided with yellow belts and paid 6d. per day. It was customary when a case of small-pox was reported to post 2 of these peons at the door of the affected house to prevent ingress and egress. The duty was perhaps performed satisfactorily during day but at night peons were often found drunk or were bribed so that communication between the sick and healthy took place without hindrance.

Directly some people were attacked whole areas panicked resulting in many complications in the situation for the authorities. The husband on such occasions forsook the wife, the mother her children and the son his father, often leaving the victims whom they banished from their homes in miserable huts open to the ravages of famine and the wild beasts of the forests. The more fortunate were provided with a temporary shed in which a little food cooked was placed to take their chance of recovery. When members of the family had died of the malady it was customary for others to leave the village for good.

The whole of Eravur in Batticaloa, was once deserted by the inhabitants owing to the breaking out of small-

pox. The Superintendent of Hospitals visited the scene some weeks later. The scene was described by him as follows:—

"After the inhabitants had left their village they became the prey of wild elephants, hogs and cheetahs. The elephant broke down the feeble fences, took possession of the gardens, tore up the plantain trees by the roots. The ravaged gardens exhibited scenes of horrible devastation, the mangled trees were strewn on the ground, the straw stripped from the roofs of cottages, the surface of the earth broken up and filled with hollows, the fences shattered, earthen pots, wheels, reels, looms and all the apparatus of the weaver lying useless and forsaken."

Villages in early British times used to proclaim Ankeliya whenever there was an outbreak of small-pox and other pestilence. Ankeliya or "Pulling Horns", a purely religious game in ancient times was performed to propitiate the Goddess Pattini.

Its mythological origin has it that the Goddess Pattini was out one day with her husband gathering "sapu" flowers. To enable them to reach the flowers they had long hooked sticks and while they were stretching out together their 2 sticks caught in each other in the tree and they could not extricate them. While they were considering what they should do the 3 sons of Maha Vishnu came by and on being appealed to by the Goddess, they good-naturedly took hold of the ends of the 2 sticks and with "a long pull, a strong pull and a pull together" broke the crook of the husband's stick, and so liberated them both. The Goddess was so pleased with the performance that she suggested a game after the model of what she had seen. So the game of Ankeliya was inaugurated and whenever it is necessary to appease the Goddess, the game which she is said to be so fond of performed to propitiate her to rid the country of the particular epidemic which she is considered in her anger to have brought upon the country.

A place is cleared in the jungle and in the middle of the clearing a deep hole is dug. In this hole is put a coconut tree about 10 to 12 feet high rooted up for the purpose with its roots upwards. The people of the village divide themselves into 2 parties called the Upper Party (Uda Pila) and the Lower Party (Yata Pila) and each party has a large branch of a tree with the bark peeled off notched in the middle and another piece of wood very strong fastened tight across it, so as to resemble a hook. In most places the horns of the elk are used. When they have linked the 2 together they are fastened to the coconut tree by very strong ropes or creepers from the jungle and each party pulls with all their strength at the same time making a tremendous noise till one of the horns or sticks break. If this does not occur, the coils round one horn are attached to those round the tree and those round the other to the tree stem and both parties take hold of the ropes attached to the latter and pull till one horn or stick breaks when there is a rush to see which it is.

The broken article is put into a cadjan shed specially built for the purpose and the other is carried in procession on a man's shoulder wrapped in white cloth together with the ropes with which it was fastened round the coconut tree about a dozen times under a canopy supported by 4 men. They then stop at a tree in the middle of which is placed a coconut shell used as a lamp and putting the victorious horn and stick (the unbroken article) on the tree some verses are recited, the object being to invoke the Goddess Pattini to take away the pestilence prevalent among the people. Having concluded this ceremony the horn is worshipped. Dancing, singing and beating tom-toms the winning party go round the coconut tree now while the conquered party separated from the others sit down on the ground suffering themselves to have all the abuse which the Sinhalese language supplies heaped upon them.

(Continued on page 11)



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The Caste System Has no Place in Modern Society

Says Eardley Gunasekera

IT is regretting to note that despite the positive strides the world has made, traces of this dastardly caste system still hang on. Its survival, in my opinion, is mostly due to the fact that a small band of enthusiastic supporters continue to contaminate the more liberal minded of our citizens with its infection. To them a farewell to it would mean the parting of an age-long friend, the kind of friend who allowed certain sections of society to move in different 'grooves'. To them life had only one meaning—birth in that groove, marriage in that groove and finally death in that groove. They rather live in a socially cloistered fashion than in the completeness and fullness of a democracy. Are not all men conscious animate creatures possessed of body and soul? What is human dignity worth if we are to despise individuals who do not belong to ones own caste? Is not the caste system a fallacious human invention? The answers to these questions are obvious and a little reasonable thinking can make one arrive at them with the least amount of difficulty.

The significant feature of modern times is to live in full activity a democratic life. It would be tiresome at this point to remind you what a democracy is but one thing we must keep in mind is that a democracy knows no barriers whether it be social or otherwise. It is a socio-political creed that pays respect and attention to the individual no matter what position in life that individual may occupy. Nevertheless in the caste system we see people seeing to the welfare of their own caste. If the caste system there-

fore is a brake on the democratic life of a country. The caste system becomes increasingly evident during the time of marriage—specially when fossilised conservative parents take particular care that their in-laws belong to their own caste. It would be interesting to find out whether these very parents would accede to the idea of the newly-wedded ones parading the streets, or getting about the normal course of everyday life with placards on their backs denoting the caste they belong to. At such a proposal they would register utter consternation. The only inference one could invariably make from such a situation is that there is indeed a great lack of education, which I believe is one of the more important solutions to this festering social evil.

The caste system promotes nothing but unhealthy rivalry, deep-seated jealousy and enmity. If then we are to allow for the existence of an institution that tends to disrupt the working of a smooth social order we can expect nothing but inevitable chaos. It is an institution which may have proven its worth centuries ago but today it is definitely obsolete more because the entire world's political and social get-up has changed beyond recognition. What existed say 2,000 years ago would definitely be a misfit today. The caste system, as I said before is a human invention which is considered more or less a hallmark of an individual stamped on during the time of birth. According to the ethics of this system it is not possible to migrate from one caste to another. The time has indeed come when we must get rid of it more because it is an impediment to progress. If we are to trace the origin of the caste system then it will date back to the early Indian civilizations where caste was identified with trade and occupation. The estimation of a particular caste was related to the occupation one followed so that if one indulged in menial work then one belonged to a low caste. This tradition has continued to date but is now considered as the rusting debris of tools whose utility is done.

Whether one belongs to the shoemaker, jeweller, fisherman, farmer or any other caste it must not be overlooked that each is performing a vital function in a democratic society. It would be impossible to visualise a society engaged in the same trade or occupation for we need a great many things for a comfortable life, and they must be produced by different people. This necessitates not only trade and occupational co-operation but also social co-operation for stability. The very deplorable factor in this caste system is that it has a demoralising influence on social life. It may be observed that when this is brought to bear, people feel slightly uncomfortable in their behaviour. This is at least so among the more sensitive and uneducated section of the general public. We are sometimes confronted with the disgusting spectacle where people of the same 'caste' single out individuals or families and treat them as outcasts because of their liberalism and broader outlook on life. One begins to wonder at this point whether people of different castes have physical novelties too.

The time has come when we must get rid of this caste system and the only way it could be done is by educating ourselves. Education, here, must not only mean academic education but in the broader sense of the word when it would develop our latent faculties. This is the only method of facing life in its correct perspective and not be drifted away by imaginary conservative phenomena as the caste system.

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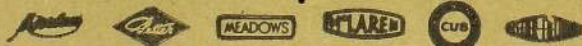
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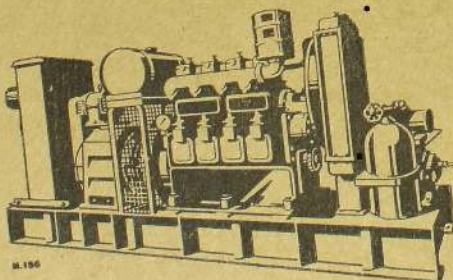
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NILA MAHA YODAYA AND URU SITANO

By Shirley J. Payoe

AS someone said legends are a poetic form of history. But it is not to be wondered at that legends grow with the telling and that in the course of their passage through the generations they undergo unavoidable wear and tear. Yet, though not exact in every detail, they are representative, and hence shed a clear beam of light on the dark and vague Past. And like any stone inscription with its lasting record, a legend may lead us to a better grasp of the ways of life and conditions, prevalent during ancient times.

For instance, legends dealing with irrigation appear to reflect the importance with which irrigation schemes were held by our ancestors. A glance at a relief map of Ceylon clearly shows that owing to the physical peculiarity of the land, the salvation of our nation depends entirely on a sound, reliable irrigation system. From the Central Hills, it will be noticed, perennial sources of precious water, so essential to the cultivation of our staple food, flow westwards, southwards and eastwards—leaving the unlucky North, comparatively, unproductive and dry. Deduru-Oya in the west and Mahaweli Ganga in the east form the limits of the favoured section of our country—while the area roughly north of this territory is an unblest region without a ready supply of water. But it was within this very region (Dry Zone, we may call it) that the population was concentrated during the times of the Sinhalese kings. Our ancestors knew that they had to have a reliable irrigation system—and their industriousness saw to it that they did have. True, they had no bulldozers, but whoever would expect the indefatigable little beavers to use labour-saving devices! Handicapped as they were, they criss-crossed the land with a vast network of channels and built tanks, big and small, by the thousand. Irrigation works became a part of their lives, and as colourful stories began to be told about one scheme or another, pioneer irrigationists among them became legendary figures. Suffice to deal here with two such legends.

The first of these is about Nila Maha Yodaya.

It is said that king Gaja Bahu was a giant in build and had a strength that we are prone to associate with strong-men who perform nowadays at carnivals. It was his habit to carry a yaka-dave, or massive iron-staff. Naturally he did so quite showily, for it was known throughout his kingdom that none but he alone could even raise the staff. His Palace was regularly visited by a certain woman whose job it was to wash and dry the royal clothes. One day this woman brought along her son, Nila. While she was attending to her soaping and scrubbing the boy was happily engaged on the more pleasanter task of playing about with his top. It so happened that the top spun behind the iron-staff which had been left leaning against the wall. To regain his toy our little hero moved aside the staff as if it was just a broom-stick, and carried on with his playing.

Evening came. The washing was over and by now Nila too had grown weary of his top. Together mother and son left the Palace and headed for their own humble dwelling.

The King returned from wherever he had been and to his surprise discovered that his staff had been shifted during his absence. He was anxious to make friends with the giant, his equal in strength, who had performed the feat. A search was begun, and greater still was the king's surprise when the story that it was the washerwoman's son who moved the staff leaked out. The boy was summoned. As he stood before him Gaja Bahu exclaimed, "Nila, Maha Yodaya!"

If you will permit me to translate, I shall put those words in expressive

and modernised Biblical language: "Damn it, Nila, thou art indeed a giant!" My version may sound strange, but you will observe that it states clearly what Gaja Bahu meant.

In time Nila Maha Yodaya (Nila, the Great Giant, as he was now known) served with the king's expeditionary forces in India. He returned to his native country with his fame re-doubled, and was granted land by royal edict. One tract of land granted by his royal master was at Kaltota in the Walawe Ganga area. This Nila planned to irrigate by building a dam across the river. Having selected two rocks, he placed huge beams between them and soon completed what was to go down in history as the Yoda Bemma.

Nila faced a difficult problem as soon as the dam was completed: In which direction must he construct a channel so as to divert the water to his fields? It was a great problem, but chance provided him with a solution. As luck would have it, Nila noticed a sugar-cane leaf partly caught by the bund with its free length fully stretched by the current of an escaping flow of water. In the direction pointed out by the sugar-cane, Nila dug his 16-mile long channel.

Dam built, water diverted, Nila sowed his land, vowing to reap such a harvest that when the grain was piled up in a heap, anyone climbing to the top will be able to see the waves dancing in the ocean some sixty odd miles away. To achieve this became his one obsession and his wife feared that if he attained his aim, Nila would spend the rest of his life resting on his laurels, without doing a stroke of work. So she coached her son. When the harvesting was over and the grain was finally gathered in a heap, the lad clambered to the top and lied to his father, even though the ocean was visible.

Nila Maha Yodaya felt frustrated and humiliated beyond endurance. In a fit of rage he scattered the grain in the wind, broke his dam and ran away from his village never to return. To this day no one knows where he went. Truly he is the mystery man of our legends!

Our next legend is about Uru-Sitano.

During the reign of king Kavan Tissa there lived a cultivator who whilst keeping watch over his fields one night fell asleep, with the result that a roaming herd of wild boar damaged the crops. Lest heavy punishment be meted out to him for his slackness, this cultivator thought it best not to return to his village. He followed the hogs, and after wandering about in the jungle came at last to an abandoned tank where the hogs had established their permanent settlement. It was from this spot that they went out seasonally to do damage in the neighbouring chenas and crofts. In the bed of the tank were yams and roots upon which the hogs fed. With such scanty food for nourishment and the grunting herd for company, our hog-follower remained until the beasts ventured out again on their marauding campaigns the following season.

Following closely behind them the self-exiled farmer came to his old village. The man who had taken his place did not neglect his duty. The hog-follower was captured. In order to escape punishment he pretended to be dumb this time, but his cunning wife worked a ruse and made him break his silence. Thereupon he told the people of his adventurous journey, and disclosed the whereabouts of the abandoned tank which was being used as a sort of headquarters by the boars.

Needless to say, the herd was driven out, the tank was repaired and put to use, while the man himself was detailed to look after it.

He was the accumulating type, and in a few years amassed a good fortune and was made a Sitano, or

(Continued on page 11)

Atomic Radiation to Create New Plant Strains

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SUPERIOR types of plants are likely to be developed as Free World scientists study the effects of atomic radiation upon plant reproduction and growth. Scientists believe that changes brought about by exposure of seed to atomic radiation will eventually improve plant strains and increase crop yields.

One of the most promising experiments is being carried out at the Brookhaven National Laboratory of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. By exposing corn kernels to atomic radiation, scientists are creating mutations, or changes in hereditary characteristics.

Atomic radiation provides a means of creating a great number of mutations in a short time, and scientists at Brookhaven are now studying the first and second generation offspring of irradiated plants. They are seeking desirable mutants or characteristics which could be developed on a commercial scale.

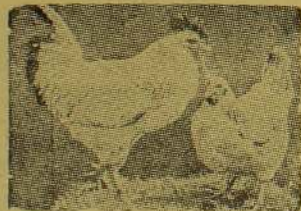
These studies are based on the science of genetics, one of the great sciences of our time. Each living cell, plant, or animal contains thousands of specialized chemical units called genes. These determine the physical inheritance of offspring. They are the basic regulations of processes involving the life, growth, and health of each living thing.

Each of the multitude of genes normally reproduces itself faithful from generation to generation—except about one time in a million. Then a chemical or physical change occurs which results in a changed individual or mutation. These mutations are inheritable.

By using radiation, the geneticist can induce a variety of mutations. Sometimes the new strain produced is more valuable than the original. By inbreeding the new strain with the best of the old strains an entirely new and better plant is developed.

Researchers at Brookhaven hope to speed the incorporation into hybrid corn (maize) of a genetic mutation which will result in a shorter hybrid plant with a higher proportion of grain to stalk. This desirable mutation appeared in a sweet corn line and has been incorporated into several inbred strains of field corn.

Hybrid corn, developed by inbreeding various strains, has already brought greater yields to many parts of the world. Its introduction into the United States has increased the production of corn (maize) by hundreds of millions of bushels in the last 10 years.



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RADIOPHOSPHORUS INTRODUCED INTO RICE PLANTS

Scientists in other countries also are experimenting in plant genetics. At the Agricultural Research Institute in Tokyo scientists have introduced mutations. In Sweden, scientists at the University of Stockholm are using atomic energy in their studies of mutations in agricultural plants and fruit trees.

The study of genetics has interested scientists throughout the world for many years. Shortly after the revolution, Russian scientists pushed way ahead in this field. They realized the significance of genetics in improving agriculture in their country.

Beginning in 1936, however, the Soviet government began attacking genetics. Scientists were forced to make "confessions" of error and guilt. By 1948 all noted Russian geneticists had disappeared. The Communist Party came out with the official decision that the principles of genetics were a heresy. Because no real scientist could be found to confirm their stand, the Party delegated a man named Lysenko as their spokesman. Lysenko had done some work in plant breeding, but was ignorant of scientific principles.

The campaign against genetics has been carried out in all Communist-controlled countries, thereby depriving them of the agricultural benefits of modern genetics techniques developed by scientists in the Free World.

Dr. H. J. Miller, Nobel prize winner and professor of zoology at Indiana University in the United States, says: "The reaction against genetics has set back the viewpoint of the whole Soviet world, as regards the most essential problems of living things, by about a century."
—(USIS).

SMALL-POX ACCOMPANIED IMMIGRANT COOLY GANGS

(Continued from page 8)

Borne under the canopy the victorious horn is now taken in procession through the village, those participating engage in singing, dancing and in frenzied evolutions shouting with strange words accompanied with demonical gestures their victory and the humiliation of that of their rivals. Wherever the procession goes it is supposed to carry blessings with its special protection from illness and disease. Every house in the village which aspires to the honour of a visit from the victorious article must be cleaned, its inmates must bathe and don clean clothes. The compounds must be swept and all rubbish and dirt burnt the previous day. In consequence of this custom the place gets thoroughly cleaned and purified. The pestilence naturally abates. During epidemics the "Ankeliya" is held over and over again until the upper horn breaks 3 times in succession. When that rare coincidence occurs it is believed that not another woman or child will succumb to the sickness. Very often by the time the upper horn breaks thrice the village is so often cleaned and perfect sanitary conditions unconsciously established that the sickness naturally disappears.

T. M. G. SAMAT.

NILA MAHA YODAYA AND URU SITANO

(Continued from page 10)

Chief—becoming known rightly as Uru-Sitano, or Hog-Chief.

It was the custom those days for the king's tax-gatherers to go on tour demanding a portion of the yield in payment of dues. The king's officers once visited the Sitano's property and removed all the hoarded grain without his knowledge. Uru-Sitano was overcome with grief when he found that he had been robbed, and was so pre-occupied with his loss that he neglected his duties once again.

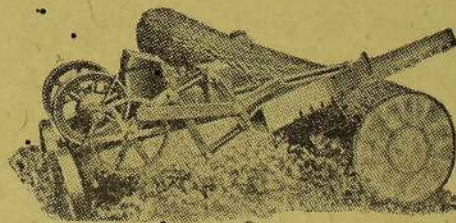
As guardian of the tank it was his responsibility to control the outlets so that too much strain was not placed on the bund. Stricken with grief as he was, he failed to attend to this, and the pressure of the water breached the bund and the tank was completely destroyed! So ends the legend of Uru-Sitano, the Hog-Chief.



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