

IRRIGATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS UNION



SILVER JUBILEE 1978

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS
OF



LANKA BUILDERS

9, Grandpass Road,

Colombo 14.

Message

from

The Hon. Mr. Gamini Disسانayake MP
Minister of Irrigation, Power & Highways.

Sri Lanka after 30 years of independence is in dire straits.

An awesome un-employment figure of 1.2 million, an annual burden of 4.000 million in foreign exchange on food alone and a legacy of debts which makes the future loom bleak and desolate are but a few of the many facets of this none too happy situation.

The government realizing the urgent necessity for a shift of emphasis from a consumption economy to one of development and investment has made agriculture and industry and consequently irrigation and power high priority issues.

With these in mind I would say that a great responsibility has fallen on the Ministry of Irrigation, Power & Highways which is in a sense the most vital of the infrastructure development ministries in the country.

The Department of Irrigation which was established more than 75 years ago has a significant role to play in the future of this island republic, being responsible as it is for all irrigation works on which the nations economic resurgence depends to a great extent.

The Irrigation Technical Assistants who fall in the middle grade category between skilled workers and professional engineers are responsible for most irrigation schemes from the stage of preliminary investigations right up to the phase of construction.

They thus form undoubtedly the backbone of the department and are vital to the country though perhaps neglected as a body for too long.

In this context I urge the Irrigation Technical Assistants Union which celebrates its 25th Jubilee this year to realize that an immense responsibility is upon them as the country stands poised on the threshold of a development era.

Whilst thanking the Union for inviting me to participate in their celebrations, I wish to state that their co-operation will be essential for the massive development plans the Ministry envisages in the immediate future.

I wish the Union every possible success in the coming year.

Sgd. Gamini Disسانayake,
Minister of Irrigation, Power & Highways

With Best Compliments

from



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AND

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වාර්මාගී, පිදුලිබල හා මහාමාර්ග පිළිබඳ නියෝජ්‍ය ඇමති,

ඒ. එම්. එස්. අධිකාරී මැතිතුමන්ගේ පණිවුඩය

අප අද නව සංවර්ධන යුගයකට පා තබා සිටිමු. ජාතිය ස්වයං පෝෂණයේ සෞභාග්‍යය වෙත යොමු කළ හැක්කේ වෙහෙස නොබලා කෙරෙන සංවර්ධන කාර්යයන්ගෙන් පමණක් බව නොරහසකි.

අපේ ජාතික සංවර්ධන කාර්යභාරයෙන් අති විශාල කොටසක් කෘෂිකාර්මික ප්‍රගතිය මත රඳී ඇත. කෘෂිකාර්මික ප්‍රගතියේ හරය වන්නේ සාර්ථකව නිර්මාණය කළ වාර්මාර්ග ක්‍රමයකි. ඒ අනුව අප ආර්ථිකයේ වාර්මාර්ගයන්ට, නිසැකවම මුල් තැනක් හිමිවෙයි.

ආර්ථිකයෙහි මෙසේ අතිශය වැදගත් තැනක් ගන්නා වාර්මාර්ගය නිර්මාණය කරන්නේ, ජාතික ආර්ථික සංවර්ධනයේ ලා ප්‍රබලව හවුල් කරුවන් පිරිසක් ලෙස හැඳින්වීම අතිශයෝක්තියක් නොවේ. මේ අනුව වාර්මාර්ග කාර්මික සහකාරවරුන්ද අපේ ආර්ථිකය නංවාලීමට උරදෙන සටිමක් ආධාරකරුවන් පිරිසක් වෙති.

වාර්මාර්ග දෙපාර්තමේන්තුවේ කාර්මික සහකාරවරුන්ගෙන්, ගත වූ යුගය පුරා මේ රටට සිදුවී ඇති මෙහෙය අති විශාලය. විශේෂයෙන්ම නව නැමිමක් ඔස්සේ සිසු ආර්ථික ප්‍රගතියක් කරා පා තගන මෙකල වාර්මාගී කාර්මික සහකාරවරුන්ගෙන් ඉටුවිය යුතුව ඇති වගකීම් කොටස නිසැකවම බෙහෙවින් පුළුල් වන්නේ වෙයි. තමන් සතුව ඇති මේ අතිශය වැදගත් කාර්යභාරය වාර්මාර්ග සහකාරවරුන් විසින් අවබෝධ කොට ගෙන ඇති බවට මට කිසිදු සැකයක් නැත.

වාර්මාගී කාර්මික සහකාරවරුන්ගේ සංවිධානය වූ වාර්මාගී දෙපාර්තමේන්තුවේ කාර්මික සහකාරවරුන්ගේ සංගමය අද සිය රජන ජයන්ති උත්සවය පවත්වයි. රජන ජයන්ති උත්සවයක් පැවැත්වීම වෘත්තීය සංගමයක් පිළිබඳව වන අතිශය වැදගත් සිද්ධියක් බව නිසැකය. සංගමයේ සාර්ථකත්වයම එහි දීර්ඝ ඉතිහාසයම සාක්ෂියක් වෙයි.

සිය රජන ජයන්ති සමරු කළම උදෙසා පණිවුඩයක් ඉල්වා මා හට දක්වන ලද ගෞරවය පිළිබඳව, වාර්මාගී දෙපාර්තමේන්තුවේ කාර්මික සහකාරවරුන්ගේ සංගමයට ස්තූතිවන්ත වන්නෙමි. වාර්මාගී දෙපාර්තමේන්තුවේ කාර්මික සහකාරවරුන්ගේ සංගමය දිනෙන් දින පුළුල් වී, දිනෙන් දින ජාතියට වඩ වඩාත් සේවය කරන සංවිධානයක් බවට පත්වේවා'යි ඉති සිතින් ප්‍රාර්ථනය කරන්නෙමි.

අ. කළේ / ඒ. එම්. එස්. අධිකාරී

වාර්මාගී, පිදුලිබල හා මහාමාර්ග පිළිබඳ
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Message

from

The Secretary, Ministry of Irrigation, Power & Highways.

While wishing you all the best on the occasion of your Silver Jubilee, I cannot allow this occasion to pass without expressing my appreciation of the part played by your Members in the past in regard to the development of irrigation facilities for the Country, and the part that they will play in the future in the development history of our Country.

At the time when Irrigation Learners were first recruited to be trained as Technical Assistants, the country did not possess any sophisticated technical institutions which were in a position to turn out both professional and Middle Grade Technical Officers to meet the challenge of the time. Most of the professional training had to be got from abroad. In this context, I am aware that some of the most outstanding Irrigation Engineers first entered their profession as Irrigation Learners and by their perseverance and ability, were able to get up to the top of their profession. This was a distinct contribution that your Members made towards the development of our Country.

I am sure, that in the future too, having had such a galaxy of past members, you would meet the challenge of the time. Never in the history of our country did we need technical talent for the development effort as at present. You should, therefore, take this occasion as an apt one to rededicate yourselves to serve the country in the manner that you have done in the past.

Sgd. T. Sivagnanam,

Secretary,

Ministry of Irrigation, Power & Highways.

With the Best Wishes

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of the

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of

I. T. A. U.



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Message

from

The Director of Irrigation

Technical Assistants of the Irrigation Department are performing an useful function in the development of the country. Technical Assistants, who were formerly called Field Assistants were the national pioneers in the initiation of the Irrigation development programme which commenced in the thirties, after a long period of inactivity. The fruits of the untiring efforts of some of these pioneers are being enjoyed at the present moment.

The Technical Assistant's service could be proud of the fact that it produced some eminent Engineers who rose to positions in the Directorate of the Department.

On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Irrigation Technical Assistants' Union, I wish the Union all success in its activities in the service to the Membership of an important group in the Department.

Sgd. A. Maheswaran
Director of Irrigation

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Message

from

The Executive Committee

The formative years of a growing Union is indeed of vital importance, and so it is to the Irrigation Technical Assistants Union.

Looking back, the Technical Assistants will have the satisfaction of feeling that all his feats including spills, sluices, dams, bridges, canals and engineering feats he accomplished, the finest and most enduring piece of work he did was the organising of the Irrigation Technical Assistants Union.

The 25 year period under review is perhaps the most momentous in the history of Trade Unionism in the Department. It covers a period of trials and tribulations. To start with, we did not have a place for meetings except for a boat lying outside in the departments' premises. Subsequently, when most other Unions were allocated a room to hold their meetings or land to build their headquarters, we were denied both. When our leaders agitated against blatant injustice, they were transferred.

But rallying together we developed into a large militant Union to fight injustice and win our legitimate due. We have learnt that "Solidarity in our struggle is a magnificent expression of true Trade Union Unity".

It will be the duty of all of us to work together in our great brotherhood of comradeship and build up for the future.

We are grateful for the sustained efforts of many of our members who gave their time and imparted knowledge for the happiness of the TECHNICAL ASSISTANT – the back bone of the department.

Let us use our energies, resources and abilities to make our Union more meaningful to all of us.

I. A. N. ALLES

On behalf of the Executive Committee

Colombo

6th July 1978.

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P. Mutucumarana

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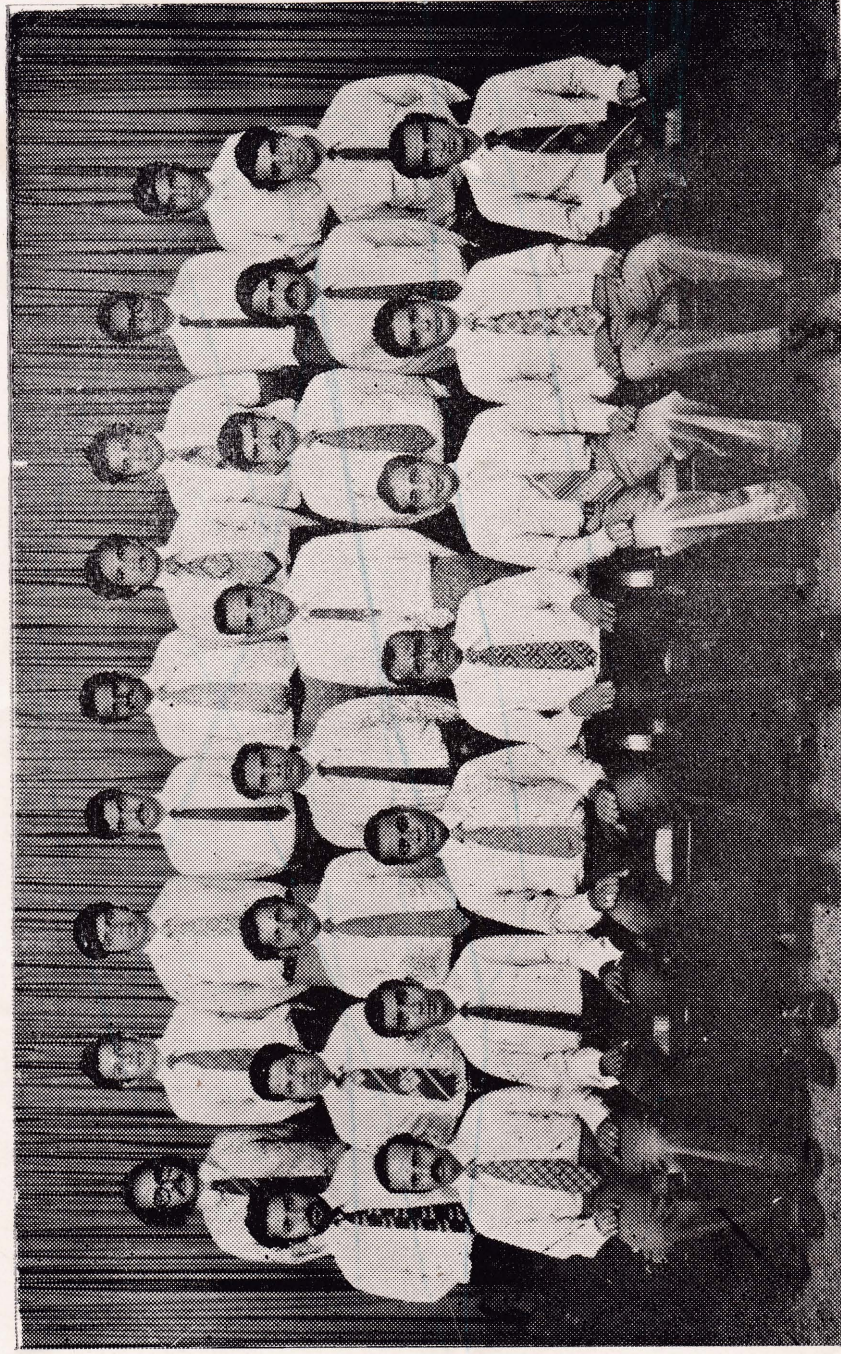
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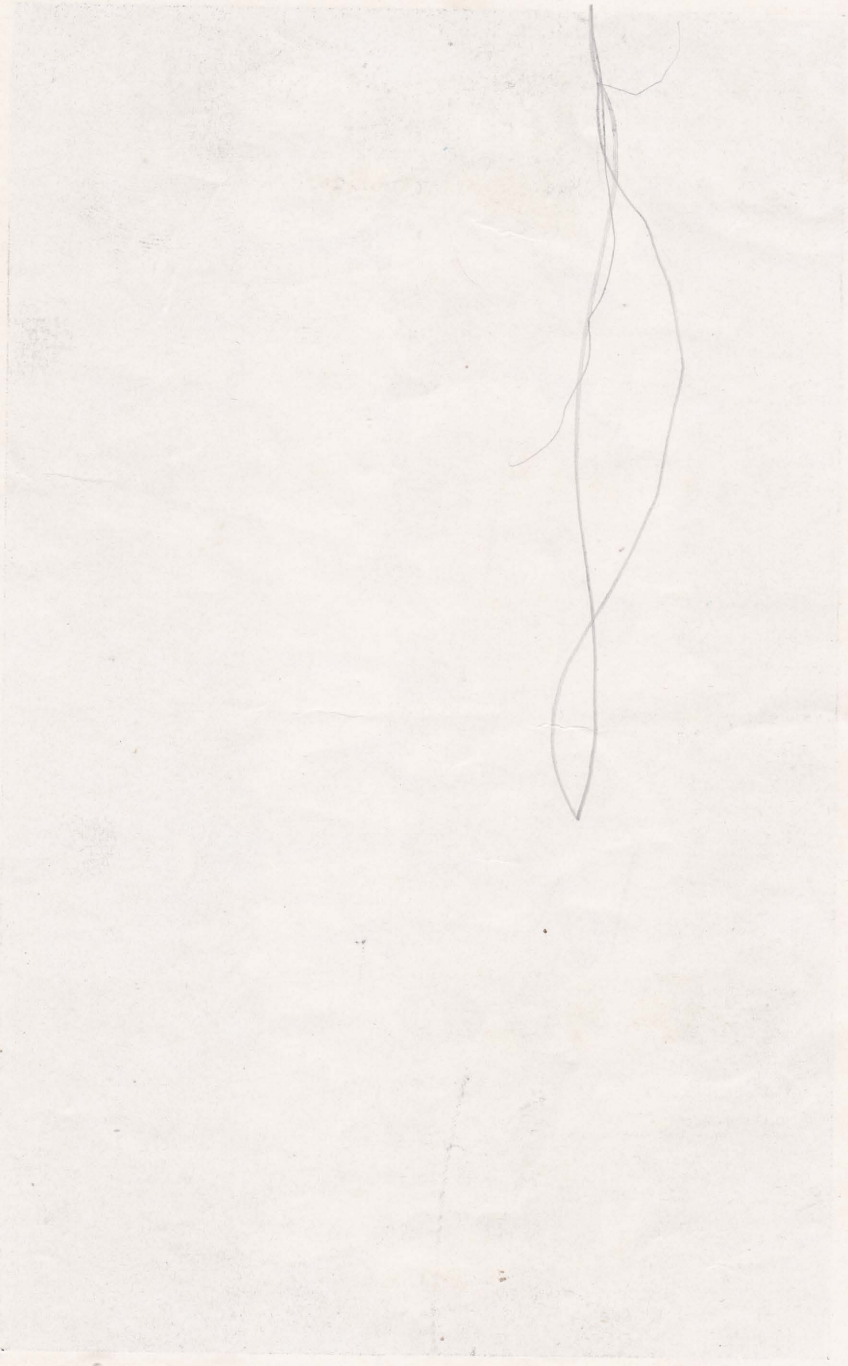
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SILVER JUBILEE YEAR-EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



- Seated - Left to Right* — P. Mutucumarana, D. N. de S. Jayawardena, A. Mahendran, I. A. N. Alles,
H. D. Karunaratne, A. D. Millevitanatchy, L. P. Jayatilake.
- Standing - 1st Row* — P. A. K. R. Theodore, S. Senaratne, M. D. Abeywardena, K. Rudrapathy,
Left to Right S. K. Navaratnam, D. D. S. Dassanayake, S. Naveendran, H. L. R. Perera.
- 2nd Row* — V. S. D. Jayaratne, G. I. H. Bandaranayake, F. Pamunuwa (*representing B. L. E. Mendis*),
D. B. Ekanayake, E. Vamadevan, T. S. D. Peiris, N. Panditharatne (*representing E. M. A. B. Hathnagoda*), R. S. Gunatunga, H. S. Wijepala.
- Not present* — N. C. L. R. Herathge, J. B. A. Jayasekera, B. P. S. Devanayagam, L. R. Perera,
T. B. Udukumbura, M. K. Wijesuriya.



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5 - 4 - 53	F. A. Lobo	C. E. R. Pereira
2 - 5 - 54	N. W. Suraweera	G. Ambikaipahar
1 - 5 - 55	S. O. A. Somanader	D. C. Whatmore
22 - 7 - 56	- do -	- do -
12 - 5 - 57	- do -	- do -
19 - 7 - 58	E. Ranasinghe	G. M. Chandradasa
25 - 5 - 59	S. O. A. Somanader	Pete Mendis
9 - 5 - 60	- do -	- do -
26 - 6 - 61	- do -	- do -
16 - 5 - 62	- do -	- do -
6 - 5 - 63	- do -	Nissanka de Silva
4 - 5 - 64	E. D. M. L. Pethiyagoda	- do -
15 - 5 - 65	- do -	- do -
27 - 5 - 66	- do -	- do -
7 - 7 - 67	- do -	- do -
29 - 1 - 68	T. Sinnarajah	- do -
7 - 8 - 68	Nissanka de Silva	G. S. Hemaratna
30 - 6 - 69	- do -	- do -
5 - 6 - 70	D. W. Karunatileka	- do -
16 - 10 - 71	I. A. N. Alles	- do -
26 - 7 - 72	- do -	H. D. Karunaratna
30 - 7 - 73	- do -	- do -
30 - 6 - 74	N. L. P. Ratnayake	- do -
29 - 6 - 75	E. D. M. L. Pethiyagoda	- do -
28 - 6 - 76	M. M. Hassen	- do -
5 - 6 - 77	I. A. N. Alles	A. Mahendran

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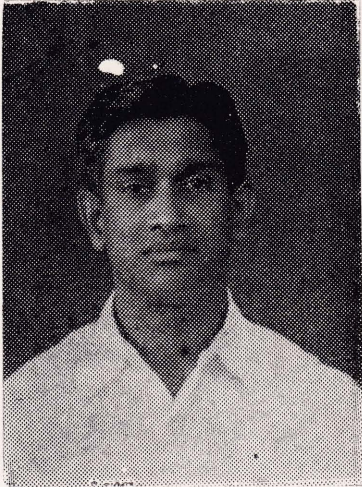
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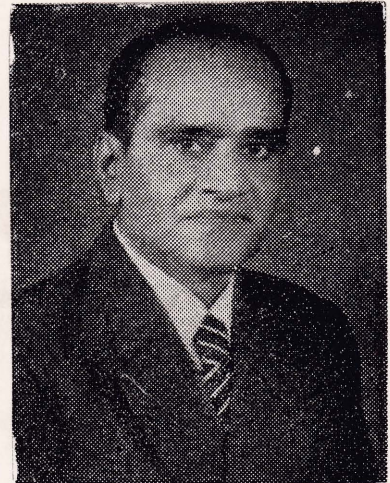
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N. W. SURAWEERA



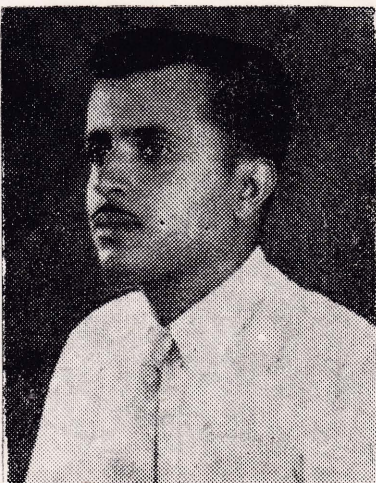
S. O. A. SOMANADER



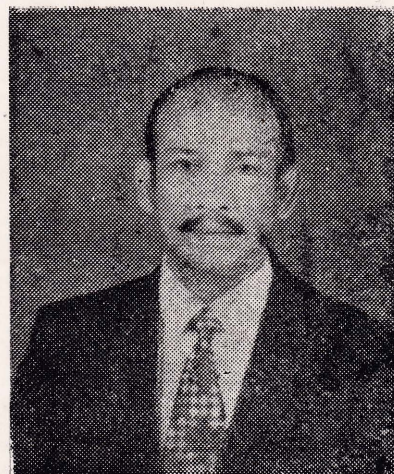
E. D. M. L. PETHIYAGODA



NISSANKA DE SILVA



I. A. N. ALLES



M. M. HASSEN

A Message

from

a Past President

Twenty five years of the life of any institution is a notable achievement. And in this, I congratulate you. As your president for almost ten years, in the formative years of the Union, I am naturally pleased at this achievement. I take this opportunity to salute those few who kept the battle going when most others had fled. One of the things that kept our fight going at the time when all seemed lost were the thoughts expressed by the poet A. H. Clough who wrote -

“SAY NOT , THE STRUGGLE NOUGHT AVAILETH”.

*Say, not, the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.*

*If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.*

After I left your services and ceased to be a member of the Union, I have, with interest, followed the progress of the Union, and am glad that in the midst of triumphs and defeats, you have kept the flag flying.

I wish the Union greater success in the future, and hope that while fighting for their rights, the members of your Union will show by their work and conduct that they realize their responsibilities, for, with every right there goes a responsibility.

S. O. A. SOMANDADER.

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of

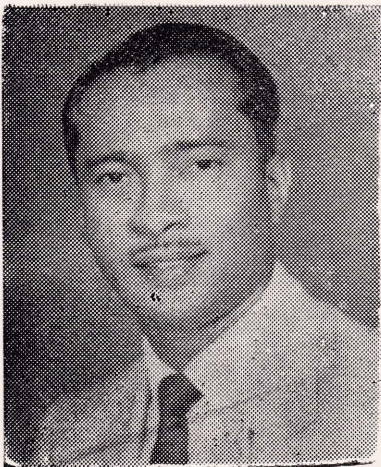


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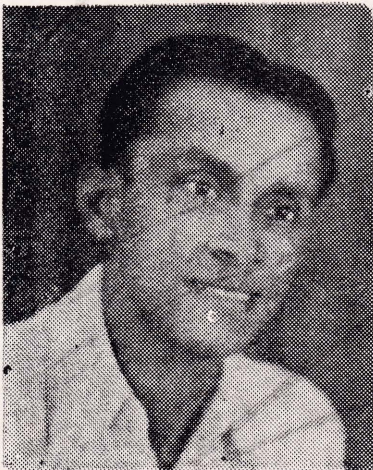
SECRETARIES



C. E. R. PEREIRA



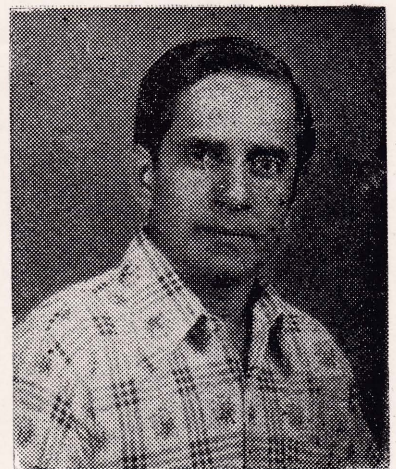
G. AMBIKAIPAHAR



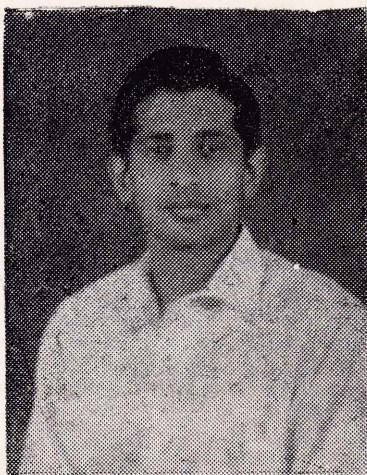
G. M. CHANDRADASA



NISSANKA DE SILVA



G. S. HEMARATNA



H. D. KARUNARATNA



A. MAHENDRAN

THE INCEPTION

To think of it, it is now over 21 years since I retired from as a "disgruntled" public servant. At the time I retired I had already seen 13 years of service in the Department, 13 years of struggle.

Now whether that struggle was just that of an individual or that of the whole body of Technical Assistants is for others to judge because all I can talk about is in terms of my own experience.

Yes it was a struggle; and when one struggles; and when one struggles against odds, that is the time one thinks in terms of unity, and that unity is strength. So when I was transferred to the Hydraulic Laboratory in Colombo after about six years of rigorous service in the jungles, the first thing I did was to enrol as a member of the Irrigation Department Association, an Association which embraced all members of the Irrigation Department including the Directorate, Divisional Engineers, Engineers, Technical Assistants and also the lower grades.

What we as Technical Assistants were fighting for were better salaries, a malaria outfit as recommended by the previous Salaries Commission; more realistic travelling and subsistence allowances; a system of promotions which, whilst not forgetting practical efficiency, would enable those who could progress theoretically to go ahead; and the nomination of papers to enable capable officers to sit the AMICE Examination. There were other matters also that concerned our day-to-day activities that needed representation and solution.

But before long, it became apparent to a few of us that we did not need an organisation like the I. D. A. where we depended on the Engineers and Directorate to sponsor our cause, because, besides increases in salaries, all other matters were within the powers of the Directorate to solve and hence the struggle was really against the Directorate; the solution was to break away from the I. D. A. and to form our own Union. Of course there were the old timers who thought otherwise. They argued that we needed the blessings of the Directorate and Engineers to solve our problems. To me this was nonsense and together with another fire-brand B. G. de Silva we convened a meeting of Technical Assistants and inaugurated the Irrigation Technical Assistants Union. We had a very good response. Technical Assistants travelled from all parts of the Country to attend our meetings. I remember a few who were enthusiastic. They were G. Ambikaiphar, S. Franche, John Vittachi, Neville Suraweera and many more.

At that time, there were but a handful of Technical Assistants, about 12 or so in Grade one, I doubt there was a Special Grade, and all others - about 150 or so - were in Grade two, the lowest grade. This was the time when Government had embarked on opening up colonization scheme. It was just after the war and Technical Assistants were being trained in a systematical manner. I think the first few batches were in 1936, 1937, 1939, but as many of the intake were graduates, many of them went to India to qualify as Engineers. Most of us were in the following batches recruited in

1942, 1943 and bore the brunt of the work. Possibly about 30% of all these batches went on further study and there were possibly a hundred Technical Assistants who spearheaded the work of Surveying and Construction.

When a Technical Assistant goes to work either on Surveys or constructions, he goes into a jungle where often there is not even water to drink. He faces difficulties of transport and food; he is usually away from his family; he has double expenditure in running two establishments; he faces the hazards of the virgin jungles. When the work is complete and water flows through irrigation channels to all parts of the area, he leaves the place for another barren area. Hence he hardly enjoys even seeing the results of his endeavours. After the area has been made habitable, officers from other Departments like the Agricultural Officers, Land Development Officers, Medical Officers come into develop the place, but they do not face the rigors that the Technical Assistants faced.

The only other category of officer who undergoes such difficulties is possibly the Surveyor. But Surveyors always work in parties and are well equipped with camp equipment, tents, furniture, and trained Survey labourers.

As a Technical Assistant I never saw a canvas tent or was able to keep trained Survey labourers. And when I went for Surveys it was on my bicycle with my Level Box strapped over my shoulder and the tripod, staff and cattles resting on the luggage carrier and tied to the cross-bar.

Those were our working conditions. As for me throughout my 13 years excluding about 2 years at Colombo, that was routine everyday life. For eight years I had my bicycle and then went in for a motor cycle till I retired prematurely from service. I do not know whether these conditions were common to many other Technical Assistants. But I reckon about 50% of them should have experienced such a life

Under such conditions, it was incredible that the Directorate did not see the necessity of issuing us even with the malarial outfit that had been recommended by a salaries commission. We were allowed only six nights subsistence allowance although we spent most of the month away from station and for my bicycle they paid me, I think Rs. 7/- per month. For my Motor Cycle, it was commuted allowance of, I think Rs. 30/- per month. My salary when I retired was Rs. 220/- plus Living Allowance of about Rs. 90/-. I was a bachelor and I always wondered how married officers managed to support a wife, servant, children, childrens' education, clothes, etc. Many of my colleagues ran three establishments, one in a town where their family resided due to children's education, one at their station which was usually a sizeable village and one at the worksite where they did some Surveying for a few days then visited their other construction sites staying a few days at a time at each site.

My mind goes back even to the days of my training at the Irrigation Department training classes at Jawatte Road. We were recruited 25 at a time from all parts of the country, and were paid Rs. 30/- a month as allowance. Now can you imagine a person living in Colombo on Rs. 30/-? My home town was Kandy and fortunately

my father had a friend in Colombo who lived by himself somewhere in Maradana. He lived on Arrack and eggs. I did not have to pay him for accommodation, but lived on buns, bananas and tea for that whole year. Of course I had a bicycle so I saved on bus-fare. The second year on the field was no better with Rs. 50/-

As a second year learner on Rs. 50/- per month I was posted to Kalmunai and one of the surveys I did was to survey and cross-section the Gal Oya river from Inginiyagala to the sea a distance of over 30 miles of river. In the upper reaches it was wading through swamps and suffering leach bites. In the lower reaches, it was ticks. All I had for transport was my bicycle. I used to cycle from Kalmunai through Amparai to Kondawattuwan about 30 miles and walk from there to Inginiyagala through a footpath. I covered the area almost upto Batticaloa and 20 miles inland, and down to Akkaraipattu about 40 miles South all on bicycle. There were no jeeps. I think the Divisional Engineer Mr. Poulter, later Mr. T. B. E. Seneviratne, had one. Otherwise it was bicycle or bullock-cart.

What worried us, was not only our day-to-day difficulties; there were no prospects of promotion. For those who wanted to study and sit the AMICE, there was no sponsoring or nomination because the Directorate did not think that we were fully engaged on Engineering works. Now since Engineers are usually posted to offices and the Technical Assistant are on - the - job, I used to wonder how Engineers could claim to have practical engineering experience for part C of their AMICE if they thought that Technical Assistants who were on - the - job did not have such experience.

Then there was the Time-scale. This was asked for by the Engineers because they got stuck at some bar and they wanted to pass through the pipe-line. This time-scale was also imposed on the Technical Assistants. I think the elderly Technical Assistants supported the request for the time-scale because they could not pass the Senior Technical Examination, and hence thought that they could go through into the higher grades without stagnating. The problem to them was the Examination. The time-scale was imposed, but the Examination remained. Thus these elders remained just where they were, but those who qualified for promotion could not get their promotions. The result was that those few who were in Grade One moved into the new special Grade, and there was a vacuum in Grade I because none from Grade II could move up till they finished 20 years of service. Thus 90% of the Technical Assistants were in the lowest of three grades whilst many of us had qualified for promotions under the conditions of service pertaining at our time of recruitment. After the time-scale was imposed the Engineers found it an obstacle, and on their representation had it removed, but for the Technical Assistants it remained.

As I said, the problem facing many Technical Assistants was the Examination. Our counter-parts in the P. W. D. had an excellent system that enabled every officer to progress at his own pace. Thus an officer who was engaged on surveys studied surveying, sat the Examination for that subject only and when he passed it, chose the next subject. Even after 20 years, subject by subject, he could cover the Examination and qualify for promotion. This system was ideal for the Technical Assistants because of the arduous nature of the duties involved.

I wonder whether anyone can accuse us of being too demanding. These demands by Technical Assistants really did not need Union Action. A sympathetic Directorate could have acceded to almost all these demands. Then where was the need for the Irrigation Department Association and the support of the Directorate? We had to break-off from our own Union and sort out our own internal problems. I am wondering how successful the Union has been in ameliorating the difficult working conditions of the Technical Assistants because up to the time I retired we were up against deaf ears.

Ceylon is an Agricultural Country and is blessed with fertile land, plenty of rain, and over a 1000 years of Irrigation experience. It has a topography ideally suited for the construction of Reservoirs and canals for Irrigation. In the construction of these schemes, it is the Irrigation Technical Assistant who is in the forefront. It is he who does the surveying and setting out, and supervises the constructions. It is generally he who translates the ideas of the Engineer into reality and is the link between the Engineer and the Craftsmen and unskilled labour. He is the back bone of the system - you damage the back-bone, you cripple the system. I always felt that the successful implementation of a job depends to a large extent on the ability of the Technical Assistant. That is why, we gave our magazine the title "THE SPINE"!

In conclusion I have to point out that if a problem has to be solved you must first be able to identify the problem itself and then its cause. In identifying the cause or source, you may have to face unpleasant facts. But you must face these facts and be ready to meet the consequences. If you do not like this way of getting your demands, forget about Unions, call it an Association or a Society and organise more sun-downers and invite those who are in a position to listen to your woes, at least unofficially.

Ronald Pereira

Ministry of Water, Energy and Minerals,
P. O. Box 9155.
DAR ES SALAAM 28th March 1978.

GROWTH OF THE UNION

9-3-1953

Mr. C. E. R. Pereira who was Asst. Secretary of the Irrigation Department Association which constituted a membership from the Director of Irrigation downwards, circulated the FIRST NEWS LETTER recommending the formation of a separate Society of Technical Assistants. This decision was a sequel to the failure of the Irrigation Department Association to contribute even in a small way towards the welfare of the Technical Assistants, namely the inability to-

- (a) Secure the Malarial outfit recommended by the 1948 salaries Commission, which the Survey Department had obtained even for its' labourers
- (b) The S.T.E. to be held in line with P.W.D. exams. wherein a candidate could offer one subject at a time.
- (c) Holding an Assistant Engineers Examination as was obtaining in the P.W.D.
- (d) Inclusion of learnership period for pension rights.
- (e) Obtain a cadre ratio as existing in comparable sister services. The cadre in the Irrigation Department was 9 Special Grade, 13 Grade I, 250 Grade II, whilst the Survey Department had 27 Special Grade, 81 Grade I and 162 Grade II

5-4-1953

The Inaugural Meeting was held at the Hydraulics Laboratory—Jawatte Road, Colombo with an attendance of 56 members.

B. G. de Silva was elected the Protem Chairman.

After a brief address by the Chairman the following resolution inaugurating the Union was moved from the Chair, Seconded by C. E. R. Pereira "This gathering of Technical Assistants' resolves to form into a Trade Union known as the Irrigation Technical Assistants Union for the purpose of looking after the economic, professional and Social rights and privileges of the members and resolves to empower the duly elected committee to take all steps necessary to strengthen the Union"

The first office bearers elected were:—

<i>President</i>	:- F. A. Lobo
<i>Vice President</i>	:- N. W. Suraweera C. Vivekananda
<i>Secretary</i>	:- C. E. R. Pereira
<i>Asst. Secretary</i>	:- B. G. de Silva
<i>Treasurer</i>	:- G. Ambikaipahar
<i>Editor</i>	:- S. O. A. Somanader

and the Committee of 8 on sectional representation viz. Special Grade, Grade one, pre 1936, pre 1946, post 1946 were elected.

The first two resolutions passed were.

"The Union requests the Director of Irrigation to station the Secretary of the Union in Colombo or within easy reach of Colombo where the Head quarters of the Union will be"

"This Union requests that the Director of Irrigation to permit of Union Subscriptions being deducted on the pay abstract"

17-5-1953 The first Committee meeting was held on this day in a boat in dry dock outside the workshop of the Hydraulic Laboratory as the Senior Designs and Research Engineer was unwilling to permit us the use of the Designs Section in which the Irrigation Department Association and the Society of Engineers usually held their meetings.

The Union Journal, a quarterly publication was called the Spine - the backbone of the Dept.

16-7-1953 The membership had further increased to 216 which was 70% of the cadre at which time the G.C.S.U. annual report for 1952/53 claimed their 60% membership as "hard to equal in any Union"

7-8-1953 The Union was officially recognised and registered under Registration No. 537.

30-8-1953 The first Special General Meeting held at the Govt. Services Sports Club to discuss Draft Memorandum to the Salaries and Cadres Commission.

2-5-1954 The first Annual General Meeting was held at the Hydraulic Laboratory, Colombo.

13-5-1954 The Director of Irrigation granted first interview to a Deputation from the Union.

30-5-1954 The Committee decided to contribute Rs. 100/- to the G.C.S.U. "Save Trade Unionism" appeal fund.

30-9-1954 The Treasury rejected Union request to have the Union Subscription deducted on the pay abstract as it would be contrary to a Cabinet Ruling.

14-12-1954 The Union was granted an interview with the Treasury Salaries Commission.

13-3-1955 The Union gave evidence before the Commission of Inquiry appointed to go into the working of the Irrigation Department.

2-4-1955 C. E. R. Pereira represented the Union at the Tea Party to the Public Services Trade Unions by the Hon. Prime Minister.

1-5-1955 The 2nd A. G. M. was adjourned at 1-30 p.m. due to the lack of a quorum.

22-8-1956 3rd A. G. M. held at Guthrie Grounds - Ratmalana. The House resolved to elect its committee on divisional representations thereafter.

6-10-1956 The First Social Event of the Union Dinner at the Grand Oriental Hotel with the Hon. Minister of Lands and Land Development as the Chief Guest.

7-10-1956 S. G. M. to Discuss memorandum to the Anomalies Commission.

12-5-1957 The 4th 'A. G. M. was the first occasion a member of the Directorate addressed an Union meeting.

Deductions of Union Subscriptions permitted by Govt.

The first cheque received from the D. I. was for Rs. 1890/-

9-11-1957 Annual dinner held at the G. O. H.

10-11-1957 S. G. M. held to discuss affiliation with the " All Island Conference of Public Service Trade Unions (which was later Public Service Workers Trade Union Federation).

22-11-1957 Emergency Committee meeting held to decide on obtaining redress by direct action, and date fixed 21-12-1957

5-12-1957 The President and Secretary of the P. S. W. T. U. F. addressed the committee regarding the proposed direct action of the Union.

The committee decided to join the Govt. Technical Officers Trade Union Federation.

19-12-1957 The first interview with the Hon. Minister of Lands and Land Development to discuss the demands.

The interview was granted in spite of the embargo that demands backed by strike threats will not be entertained.

In view of the interview and satisfactory outcome, the proposed Direct action was stayed.

19-7-1958 5th A. G. M. the first time the D. I. addressed the members. The meeting commenced with the observation of 2 minutes silence as a mark of respect to two members Messers Leo Fernando and Annesley Mendis who met their deaths under tragic circumstances at Diyabeduma during the communal troubles of May 1958. Decision to inaugurate a fund, for their families.

The Government had for the first time approved duty leave and railway warrant to attend the A. G. M.

The Union obtained the following concessions from the representations to the Salary Anomalies Commission.

Removal of the Time Scale and reintroduction of Cadre system I : 3 ratio between grades I & II.

Increase in basic initial salary from Rs. 135/- to Rs. 155/- p.m.

10-10-1958 Annual Dinner at Mount Lavinia Hotel

25-9-1959 The 6th A. G. M.

- 8-5-1960 Annual Dinner at the G. O. H.
- 9-5-1960 At the 7th A. G. M. The Director of Irrigation handed over two cheques totalling Rs. 11,483 to the wives of the two members who haddied during the riots in May 1958,
- 26-6-1961 The 8th A. G. M. The Annual Dinner was held the same evening and was a departure from all previous ones. This was because it was informal and confined exclusively for the enjoyment of the members and their families with no chief guest.
- 1-12-1961 The I. T. A. U. joined the Token Strike organised by the G. T. O. T. U. F.
- 28-1-1962 At a S. M. G. The President of the Federation briefed the membership regarding the Token Strike. A resolution to resort to direct Trade Union Action was unanimously passed. One demand was for the release of 8 members of the Radio Ceylon. T. A.'s Union.
- 16-5-1962 The 9th A. G. M. The annual dinner was held the same evening.
- 6-5-1963 The 10th A. G. M. The annual dinner was held the same evening.
- 21-3-1964 The I. T. A. U. participated in the demonstration held by the Joint Front of Trade Unions on the 21 demands.
- 11-4-1964 The committee decided to request D. I. to station at least the Secretary in Colombo.
- 4-5-1964 The 11th A. G. M.
- 7-7-1964 At an interview the D. I. appraised the Permanent Secretary that "T.AA. formed the backbone of the Dept." Agreement was reached to station 4 office bearers in Colombo and for Union representation at Transfer Board.
- 29-12-1964 Govt. recognised the learnership period for pension.
- 29-2-1965 The Ex-Co. decided to seek from the membership a referendum whether the Union should resort to direct trade Union Action, to obtain redress for outstanding demands.
- 13-5-1965 The 12th A. G. M. The house resolved to:—
- (a) Resort to direct Trade Union action to settle outstanding issues.
 - (b) Request the Govt. to Grant political rights to all categories of public servants and
 - (c) Inaugurate a Building Fund with the object of establishing a permanent Head Quarters in Colombo. The A. G. M. was followed by the usual Dinner at the Atalnta Hall-
- 3-6-1965 3 months notice of strike given - The Ex-Co forges ahead with arrangements for proposed strike on 3-9-1965 by appointing Sub Divisional representatives

- 29-8-1965 At a S. G. M. the house decided to postpone the strike scheduled for 3-9-1965 in view of the assurance of the Hon. Junior Minister. The referendum revealed that 86% were in favour of strike action.
- 24-12-1965 The Union blazed a trail by been the first Trade Union in the Irrigation Department to stage a Token Strike to better the service condition of its members. Membership 292, Members on Strike, 235 Members on leave 22. Members exempted to sit for the S. T. E. 5. Blacklegs 30.
- A shining example of Trade Union Solidarity was created by a Member on Medical Leave requesting the D. I. to consider him as having participated in the Strike.
- 27-05-1966 The copper jubilee A. G. M. was historic in that it created many firsts
- (a) The Hon. Minister addressed the Union.
 - (b) That a vote of no confidence on the Director of Irrigation was unanimously passed amidst loud applause.
 - (c) That T.A.A after years of agitation were offered three Scholarships to Japan.
- The Annual dinner was held the same evening.
- 7-1966 The secretary of the Union was elected as President of the G. T. O. T. U. F.
- 8-8-1966 The Asst. Sec. transferred out of Colombo directly in violation of the undertaking given by the D. I. on 7. 7. 64 Perhaps an aftermath of the no confidence motion.
- 24-8-1966 The P. S. C. approved 20% of the Engineering Grade vacancies to be filled by the T. A A
- 10-10-1966 Perhaps to thwart the gain of the Union, D. I. for the first time introduced an interview for promotion to the Engineering Grade.
- 27-1-1967 Memorandum submitted to the Salary Anomalies Commission.
- 28-3-1967 The Union intimated to the Prime Minister regarding the introduction of the interview for Engineering grade promotion.
- 4-4-1967 The D. I. proceeds with the interviews in spite of the protests.
- 12-5-1967 The Cabinet rejected the Cadre ratio proposal on the adverse recommendations of the Treasury. Increased number of special grade posts to 22.
- 7-7-1967 The 14th A. G. M. addressed by the Director of Irrigation.
- 9-7-1967 Notice of Direct Action submitted.
- 19-7-1967 The Minister upholds the union stand and rejects Directors interview theory.
- 31-7-1967 The Hon. Prime Minister granted an interview and agreed to refer the Cadre ratio issue to a Technical Committee.

- 1-8-1967 Direct Action postponed on appointment of the Technical Committee, by then 92% of the Membership had handed over their strike notices.
- 2-8-1967 Technical Committee appointed.
- 4-8-1967 Union gave evidence.
- 31-8-1967 D. I. withdraws misleading circular No GC/G/85 of 31/07/1967 on Union demand.
- 2-9-1967 Union organised Study Classes for S. T. E.
- 14-9-1967 The Committee report was published recommending 50 Special Grade Posts.
- 16-9-1967 The Ceylon Daily News carried a statement by the Hon. Prime Minister at the Bandaragama by-election claiming that our strike has been promoted by the Opposition.
- 1-10-1967 On the protest by the Union the Prime Ministers Secretary replied.
 "The Prime Minister has asked me to inform you that he accepts your statement that your Union had no connection with any opposition political party"
- 19-10-1967 Concession granted to pass S. T. E. in sections.
- 7-8-1968 The 15th A. G. M.
- 31-7-1968 The Union participated in demonstration and Rally under the banner of the Consultative Committee of Clerical, Technical and Allied Services.
- 28-11-1968 The Union participated in the most wide spread and longest General Strike of Public Servants. The Strike was called off after 24 days.
- 1-1-1969 The Death and Retirement Donation Scheme introduced.
- 30-6-1969 The 16th A. G. M. at which the death donations were handed over by the President before the commencement of the meeting.
- 28-6-1970 The Union gives evidence before the Salaries Commission.
- 5-7-1970 The 17th A. G. M. was addressed by the Permanent Secretary and the Director of Irrigation.
 The retirement benefit scheme introduced in addition to the existing Death Donation Scheme.
- 9-9-1970 The I. T. A. U. Office bearer selected for Trade Union Scholarship to U.K.
- 6-11-1970 Approval of Honararium for the Treasurer.
- 19-7-1970 Rs. 50,000/- handed over to the Govt. for "Save the Country Fund" as an interest free loan.

- 3-9-1971 Union severed its connections with the Technical Officers Trade Union, Federation.
- 10-8-1971 The Union addressed the Hon. Prime Minister on "The situation in the Country" extracts of which were published in the Ceylon Bulletin (London) October 1972 issue. The Secretary questioned by the C. I. D.
- 16-10-1971 The 18th A. G. M. held late in the year due to the emergency situation in the Country.
- Loan Scheme inaugurated from 1971.
- The Union decided to request members to make voluntary contributions to finance part of the Ceylon Leprosy Association Project to equip the clinic at the O. P. D. General Hospital, Colombo.
- 4-4-1972 Along with a few other Unions, The Public Service Technical Officers Trade Union Federation was set up to formulate a Unified Salary structure for Middle Grade Technical Officers.
- 26-6-1972 Joint Front Technical Officers Trade Unions in the Ministry set up. The Union wrote to the parents of the learners who were to join the strike.
- 26-7-1972 The 19th A. G. M. The contribution from the I. T. A. U. were handed over to the President of Ceylon Leprosy Association.
- Launched the G. I. de Silva Fund to help a fellow member in need.
- 1-8-1972 Union launched on another historic 38 day struggle along with the other Joint Front Unions in the Ministry. First strike under the Republican Constitution
- 21-8-1972 Essential Service Order invoked, vacation of post letters served.
- 22-8-1972 C. I. D. grilled the leaders and threatened to seal our Head Quarters (G. S. A.)
- 7-9-1972 The Hon. Prime Minister intervenes and the strike was called off on assurance of the appointment of a Committee.
- 27-10-1972 The Joint Front interviews the Prime Minister.
- 2-4-1973 Committee Report handed over to Hon. Prime Minister.
- 12-5-1973 Opening of Ambewela Holiday Home by D. W., Uva.
- 27-7-1973 The Daily Mirror published extracts of the annual report under the heading "Irrigation department like Mahadana Mutha"
- 30-7-1973 The 20th A. G. M. was addressed by the Acting Prime Minister.
- The Executive Committee enlarged to represent on District Basis - the committee increased from 20 - 30
- An informal Dinner was held after a lapse of a number of years.

- 20-6-1974 The 21st A. G. M.
- 27-7-1974 On a request by the Minister the Union agreed to undertake Lower Uva Development Surveys.
- Union organised Stall for Irrigation Dept. Diamond Jubilee Celebrations
- 29-6-1975 The 22nd A. G. M.
- 26-11-1975 No. 15 Melford Crescent Dehiwela purchased for Union Head Quarters.
- 4-1-1976 Committee meetings at our own head quarters commenced with the traditional lighting of lamp, boiling of milk and Serving Kiribath and Kavun.
- 27-6-1976 The 23rd A. G. M. The Irrigation Technical Assistants Welfare Association wss set up.
- 9-10-1976 Union organised the Victor Rannayake "SA" at Kurunegala.
- 26-6-1977 The 24th A. G. M.
- 14-5-1978 The Union Purchased Engineering Text Books to set up a Library at head quarters-
- 16-6-1978 Silver Jubilee A. G. M. and opening of Head Quarters

Compiled by
I. A. N. ALLES

+ + +

I never slept with a man until I married your Father declared the stern Mother to her wild daughter will you be able to tell the same thing to your daughter" "Yes replied the girl" but not with such a straight face"



How about making the evening a Dutch treat?" cooed the delectable medico to her handsome escort. You pay for the dinner and drinks and the rest of the evening will be on me".



On impulse the young Man stopped at the flower shop and purchased a dozen roses for his girl friend. When he presented them to her she immediately tore off all her clothes and leaped on to the couch. This will be for the flowers", she announced stretching Languorously.

"Oh come now" he replied "Surely you have a vase somewhere in this apartment.

MEMORIES OF OUR STRUGGLES

S. O. A. SOMANADAR

The Technical Assistants broke away from the Irrigation Department Association, as they found that their interests were not given adequate representation. The idea of forming a separate Trade Union was brought out by C. E. R. Pereira (a T. A. of my batch). A few of us (about 30) met one day in Colombo to inaugurate the Irrigation Technical Assistants Union. From the time this Union was formed, it was viewed with contempt and suspicion by the Directorate and the Senior Engineers of the Department. This resulted in a general reluctance on the part of the Membership to identify themselves with the Union. The Presidents during the first few years were Special Grade Technical Assistants, and there descended on them a justifiable fear that their taking part in Trade Union activities might jeopardise their chances of promotion to the Engineering Grade. This fear was seen in all Grades of Technical Assistants, particularly those who were stationed in Colombo. As a result of this, the attendance at the Annual General Meetings dropped very low. I remember one meeting where we could not get the quorum of 40 to start the meeting and we had to run around Colombo rounding up our Members, and finally started the meeting at 12 noon.

Our Committee Meetings were well attended, as those elected to the Committee were prepared to face the challenge and bear the consequences. The Committee Meetings were held in the rest-room of the minor employees of the Hydraulic Research Laboratory. Suddenly without notice this concession was denied to us, and we came down to Colombo one day for a committee meeting to find that our usual place was locked up. So we met in an open garage in the premises where a ply-wood boat was stored. The meeting was held 'on board' this boat.

In this background, I had to accept the office of President. I was then a Grade II Technical Assistant, while all my predecessors in office had been Special Grade Technical Assistants. The Secretary at the time was D. C. Whatmore a very genial and pleasant person who was liked by all his colleagues and his superiors. In spite of the antagonism of the Head of the Department towards the Union, the Members of the Directorate were well disposed towards Whatmore.

This was a great advantage to us. Whatmore was a bit of a stammerer and he spoke little, and spoke back nothing, which was one of the qualities that the then Director wanted in his men. At interviews that the Union had with the Head of Department, generally the Secretary and the President represented the Union. Whatmore took little or no part in the speaking, though he prepared all the papers for the interview. It fell upon me to do all the talking. This made me a 'bad man' in the eye of the Director. Any way it was a good team as I did all the bargaining, but whatever was granted to us, according to the Director, was because of Whatmore. The Director was opposed to giving anything that was fought for, because he felt that was an affront to his dignity to give into a fight. And he found it convenient to say that he was granting a 'Concession' because of Whatmore.

Trade Unionism was not given any recognition by the Government upto 1956. When the S. W. R. D. Bandaranayake Government came into power, Trade Unions found a place in the Public Sector. And the Late S. W. R. D. Bandaranayake, in trying to win the support of the working class, gave in to Trade Union Leaders. This made the Trade Union Leaders look important and powerful. With the Trade Unions of the working class becoming powerful, the various political parties of this Country lent their patronage to these Unions and lured the Leadership into their parties, thus getting the Trade Unions into their fold.

Our Trade Union kept out of politics as we were determined to fight our battle on our own merits and strength. We got nowhere. Our main office bearers except Whatmore were transferred to bad stations, and we were treated with contempt by the Director and with indifference by some of the members of the Directorate.

I discovered later that, though we were treated thus, the Directorate had a secret respect for us because we kept politicians out of our struggle and observed certain levels of decency in our transactions. As we had made no progress in improving our positions, a sense of frustration was setting in, and those who were keeping the fight going were feeling the strain of the battle. We were really against a blank wall. Suddenly one day in November 1957 - I had a telegram from Whatmore (our Secretary) asking me to come to Colombo on an important matter. When I went up there, he told me that the Director had some row with the Minister and wanted to spite him, by causing problems to him. This, he thought, he could do by getting us to on go strike. Whatmore and I (Secretary) and (President) then walked into the Director's room in the third floor of the old Secretariat in Fort. Walking into his room had always been an awesome experience to all. As we walked in, he looked up from his table, and addressed us saying 'I have gone through your various memorandum and find that you have a genuine grievance, but the Ministry has not taken any action to do anything for your service. What do you want to do? I told him that I was glad to find that he had felt that we had a grievance, and that if anyone was in a position to promote our case it was only he. He said that there was no use in his taking up the case, and hinted us to take direct action. We agreed to this, and he said, "But one condition - you must call off the strike when I want you to." I said, we must achieve something to justify the calling off the strike. "Don't worry" he said, "I will see that you achieve something."

This was a deal, and was accepted. When we came out, a few of our members were waiting for us. We straight away got to work in drafting a Memorandum laying out our demands and given notice of strike. This was all achieved in four days thereafter we sent out groups of members to go out to the outstations to organise the strike. When the memorandum was presented, the Director wrote to the Minister strongly backing our case.

Nothing seemed to happen, but suddenly one week before the date given for the strike, we got a call to meet a Committee appointed by the Minister to go through our demands. We came out very successfully there, and some of our long standing hardships were eased. The most important of them being the abolishing of the Time Scale for promotions.

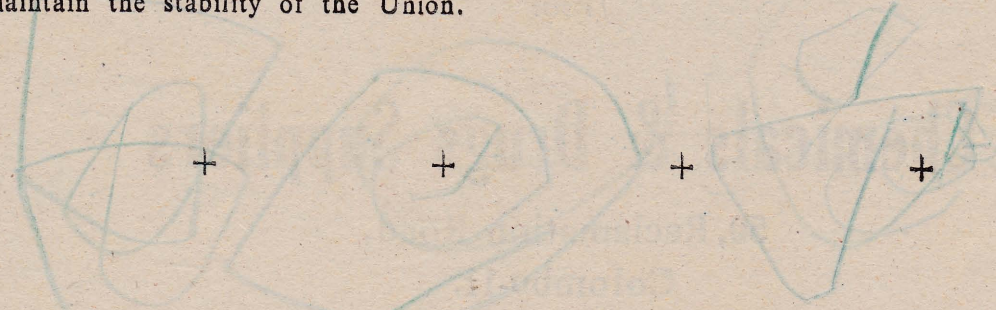
With this, the prestige of the Union went up and there was a steady increase in the Membership and more members started taking interest in the Union. But whenever the Union offended the Director in anyway, the Union officials were penalised. I remember the reaction of the Director to a letter from the Union informing him that he had not taken any action, not even acknowledged our letter in spite of several reminders.

The Secretary of the Union was Ambikiaphar, and he was transferred to Dambarawewa off Mahiyangana. He arrived one evening at my place at Chenkaladi with just two suit cases on his way on transfer to Dambarawewa. I drove him up to Padiyatalawa. A labourer was waiting for him at the turn off from the tarred road. They each carried a suit case and started on their 8 mile walk to their station. I waited there watching them disappear into the distance, and as they vanished out of sight, I muttered a prayer for his safety, and a curse for the person who penalised him that way. I was then serving my period of 'punishment' at Chenkaladi with specific instructions from the Director to be put on surveys of abandoned tanks. Month after month, tank after tank. I did nothing but surveys for 9 months in the jungle having frequent confrontations with wild animals. In the process I became a confident shot having shot two bears in one week - it was not an offence to shoot bears then. In any case it was for self defence.

Our Union activities in the meanwhile were carried on very efficiently, and inspite of hardships the office bearers kept up their work. The Union started growing, and there was keenness in the members to get into the Executive Committee.

I mention all these to give a picture of the rugged road that we had to traverse in the early days. This also gives a knowledge of the problems that were created from without and within the Union. Fortunately now, the problems from without have been greatly reduced, as the Union now is an established Institution.

But the problem from within the Union can still crop up. Such problems are more dangerous to the growth of the Union, than the problems from without. The general membership and the Union Officials should be able to see them in their varied and subtle forms and deal with them before they assume damaging proportions to maintain the stability of the Union.



One of the airlines recently introduced a special half fare rate for wives accompanying their husbands on business trips. Anticipating valuable testimonials the publicity department of the airline sent out letters to the wives asking them how they enjoyed the trip. The puzzled answer was 'What trip?'

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ගල්ගමු සිහිවටන

නිමල් බණ්ඩාරනායක

මා ගල්ගමු ගිය දිනය මට මතක් කළ හැකිය.

මා පමණක් නොව - අප කාණ්ඩය පමණක් නොව එම බිමට පා තැබූ හැමෝම,

එම දිනය විවිධාකාරයෙන් මතක් කරනු ඇති.

දිනිය අතවශ්‍ය හෙයින් බැහැර කළ නමුදු, මදුරුවන්ගෙන් ගහන පියළි කලාපයේ ටකරන් මඩු තුලට යන ගමන එතරම් සතුටුදායක වේයයි නොසිතූ බව නම්, මතක් කළ හැකිය. ඊට පෙරද නොයෙකුත් කථා අප අසා තිබුණි.

එහෙත් දුම්රියෙන් බට පිත්ස අප ඇස ගැසුනේ පෙදෙස වසා පැතිරුණු වැව් තලයයි.

වැවෙන් ලද සිසිල මෙන්ම එහි මන නුවන් අදහා පැහැපත් බවද වාර්මාගී,

දෙපාර්ථමේන්තුව පිළිබඳ ඉතිහාසයක් නොදන්නා නොවේ.

එම තලයෙහි බැමීම මනින් අපි පියවර මනින්තට පිටු.

හිරුගේ පිඩාකාරී හිරුරූප එය පළවා හරින වැව් තල පිසින සුළඟ, පියළුණු තණබිම,

හරිත වර්ණයෙන් සමුගත් ගස් කොළත්, එම තිර කඩින් මැත් වූ පිට,

තණ ඇතිරිය,

පලින් පල මල් පොකුරු,

සුදු හුණෙන් පිළියම් කරන ලද ගොඩනැගිලි

අභියස,

කණිෂ්ඨ කාර්මික විද්‍යාලය - වාර්මාගී දෙපාර්ථමේන්තුව - ගල්ගමුව,

තෝවාසිකාගාර, නිල නිවාස හා පිට්ටනිය - වමට,

දේශන ශාලා - නිල සංචාරක නිවාස, කාර්යාලය, දකුණට

සිත පහන්වී සතුට සිතාසෙන හඳුවනින් යූතුවී.

මා මේ ලිපිය ලිවීමට අදහස් කළේ එකින් එක සිදුවූ සිදුවීම් ලියා පෑමට නොවේ.

දු බිඳු හෙළා, යමක් කමක් ඉගෙනීමට නැත දුරු - ඒ කාලයෙහි පලින් පල මතුවූ,

සිතා රැලි නැවත මතකට නගා ගැනීමටය.

ගිය දිනවලදීම ශිෂ්‍ය සංගමයට නිලධාරීන් තෝරා පත් කර ගතයුතු විය. තවමත්,

හරිහැටි එකිනෙකා හදුනාගෙන නැති වූත් එවකට ලැබූ කෙටි ඇසුරින් මැනූ මිණුම් වලින්,

තෝරා ගැනීම පටන් ගැනින. මුලදීම තේරුණු අය බොහෝ දෙනෙකු නොදැන සිටි නිසා

සුවච්ච උඩ නැග අත් අයට දැකීමට සැලැස්වීමට සිදුවිය.

පිහිණුම පිළිබඳව තෝරාගත් නායකයාද එසේ නැගුණු එක් අයෙක් විය. උපැස් යුවලකින්

සැරසුනු හෙතෙම සිතා මුඛින් යූතුව අවට බැලීය.

“වසිපර් දල ද පිනන්නේ” හඬ නැගුණේ පසු පෙලෙනි.

කොත්ත්‍රාත් කරුවෙකු පිසින් අපට ආහාර සපයන ලදී. සෑදූ තේ පානයට පෝලිමේ

ගොස් ලැබෙන බනිස් ගෙඩිය කා තේ බි යූතුව තිබිණි. පෝලිමේ ගොස් බනිස් ගෙඩිය කා

නැවත පෝලිමට එක්වීම බනිස් කැමටම වඩා ලැබෙන ප්‍රීතිය සඳහාම කරන ලද

ව්‍යායාමයක් විය. අවශ්‍ය ප්‍රමාණයට වඩා ගැනීම නැවතීමට

කොත්ත්‍රාත්කරු යෙදූ උපක්‍රම දියවෙමින් තිබින.

“සර් කලිනුත් ඇවිත් බනිස් ගෙඩියක් ගත්තා” කොත්ත්‍රාත්කරු එක් අවස්ථාවක කැගැසීය.

“තමුසෙ හිතුවද මම බනිස් හොරෙක් කියලා”

“සමාවෙන්න සර්, සර් වගේම තවත් කෙනෙක් ඉන්නවා”

කොන්ත්‍රාත් කරුවන් සපයන අහරින් සැඟිමට නොසමත්වූ අප උයාගෙන කෑම පටන් ගනිමු. කීප දෙනා කණ්ඩායම් වලට වැටී උයා පිහා කෑම ආරම්භකරන ලදී.

අප කණ්ඩායමට විසි දෙනෙක් පමණ විය. මෙය සිදුවූයේ එසේ පටන් ගත් දින වලදීමය.

“අද දර කරත්තය නාවොත් රූට උයන්ට බැරිවෙයි” එසේ කීවේ අපට ඉඩු පිහු සිරිසේනාය.

දර ගෙනීමට කරත්තයකට මීට පෙරද අප ඇණවුම් කර තිබිණ.

තේ පානසෙන් පසුව අප ගල්ගවු නගරයට ගියේ කරත්තකරු සමුවී දර ගෙන්වා ගැනීමටය.

සෑදූ හය පමණ වන තෙක් බලා සිටියද දර කරත්තය හෝ කරත්ත කරු නොදුටුවේ.

“දුන් මොකද කරන්නේ?” සියල්ලෝම වට වූහ.

“දුන් බලා ඉඳලා වැඩක් නෑ. රූට උයන්ටත් දර නෑ කීවනේ, අපි අදට

දර රාත්තලක් ඇරන් යමු.”

“රාත්තලක්?” අන් අය සිනා සෙන්නට විය.

“මම විහිළුවට කීවේ” ඔහු කීය. “අපි දර රාත්තල් පහක් අරන් යමු.”

ඉඩු පිහු සිරිසේනාද අපටම කැපෙන සුද්ගලයෙක් විය. කෑම කනවිට කේන්ති ගිය අයෙක්, “සිරිසේන මස් වලට මිරිස් වැඩියි නේ,”

“ඔව් සර් මස් වලට මිරිස් වැඩියි” ඔහුගේ නිභනලොනි පිළිතුර විය.

එද පොසොන් පෝ දිනය විය. දිනය නිවාඩු වුවද දුම්රියවල වූ තදබදය,

අප ගමන් යාමෙන් වලකන ලදී.

“නිකම් මේකට වෙලා ඉන්ට කම්මැලියි බත්” අයෙක් නෝවාසිකාගාරයෙන් පිටත් විය.

“මම යනවා ටවුමට”

අලස බව මග හැරීමට ඔහු අසල අසල ඇති ගෙවලට යෑම පුරුද්දක් කර ගත්තෙකි.

තරුණියක සිටි තැන් වලින් ඔහුට කිරිටොපි, පොල්අලුවා ආදී කෑම නොලැබෙන්නේද නොවේ.

“සුළුවන්නම් අපටත් කන්ට මොනවා හරි ඉල්ලා ගෙන වරෙන්” ඔහු පිටත්වූ භෑම

අයෙක් කෑ ගැසීය.

පැයක් පමණ ගත වන්නට ඇත. සිනා පිරුණු වුවනින් යුතුව පාර්සලයක්ද බදු

ඔහු එනු. අපි දුටුවු.

“ඉඳු වේලි වේලි ඉන්නවට කාපල්ලා”

එක පොදියට මිරිකුනු අපි පාර්සලය ලිහා කෑමට පටන් ගත්තෙමු. කෑවුම්, කිරිබත්, අඟලා කෙසෙල් ගෙඩි ආදිය පාර්සලේ විය.

“කොයි ගෙදරින්ද මේවා”

“ආයෙ වංගෙ?, ගෙනත් දුන්නා මදිවට”

පාර්සලය සුලු මොහොතින් අවසන් විය.

“ඉවරද” “කාපල්ලා බුලත් විටකුත්” ඔහු තව මල්ලක් දිග හැරීය.

“මං ගියා ටවුමට” අපි සෑදී පැහැදී සවන් යොමු කලෙමු.

ටවුමේ කරන්ට දේකුත් නෑ. ගියා පන්සලට. පන්සලෙන් සිල්කාරයෝ විකක් විහරයි.

හිටියේ. මම ගියා බුදුගේ පැත්තේ - මොනවාද? හරිතටම මට ඇරුණු මහල් මේසයක් වගේ.

කෑවුම්, අඟලා, කිරිබත්, කවුරුවත් පේන්ට නෑ. මම කාගෙන කාගෙන ගියා.

ඊට පස්සේ කිරි පිදුරුවක් තිබිලා ඒකත් බිලා බලන කොට තමයි බුලත් විට දක්කේ.

ඒකත් සප්පායම් වෙලා එන්නට ගැරෙන කොට

“මට උඹලව මතක් උනා බත්”

මෙම ලිපිය මෙතෙකින් අවසන් නොවේ. ලිඛිත සටහන් නොමැති සදු මිහිරෙන් මිහිර

පෙරෙන ඒ රසවත් සිතුවිලි මේවැන්නක සදහන් කර තිමි කිරීම කල නොහැක.

එහෙත් හුදෙක් මතක නංවනු වස් මෙහි අඩංගු කල දෑයින් කිසිවෙකුට භිංසාවක් වුවා නම්,

ගල්ගවු සුභද්‍රාවාගේ නාමයෙන් එය යටපත් කරනු ඇතැයි බලාපොරොත්තු වෙමි.

ජීවිතයෙහි යම්කිසි දිනක නැවත අතීතයෙහි තෝරාගත් යුගයක ජීවත් වීමට

වරයක් ලැබෙතොත් මා නැවතත් දවත්තේ ගල්ගවු යුගයටය.

A Step towards quantitative analysis of problems in Water issues under Tank Schemes

To solve a problem there should be a method. It is preferable to have practicable and a feasible method. If there is no method, a method must be devised.

It has been found that if four holes (placed one inch from the centre approximately equidistant from each other) are made at the bottom of an empty top-removed 393 gms. "Parakum" condensed milk container inwards with a 5" long wire nail of 5 mm dim. it would take eight seconds to sink when placed on the surface of still water.

It has also been found that an empty $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. Lakspray tin has a capacity of 0.07475 Cu. feet.

The above are small discoveries. But small things can go a long way as methods can be devised based on them.

The following are some figures for comparison:-

When field channel duty	= 30 acres per cusec
For one acre, Qty. of water reqd.	= $\frac{1}{30}$
	= 0.0333 cusec
Qty. that should be issued in 8 seconds	= 0.0333 x 8
	= 0.2664
	= $\frac{0.2664}{0.07475}$ tins
	= 3.56 tins
	Say $3\frac{1}{2}$ Tins
ie. when channel duty	= 30 acres per cusec
For 1 acre Qty. reqd.	= $3\frac{1}{2}$ tins in 8 seconds
For 2 acres Qty. reqd.	= 7 tins in 8 seconds
For 3 acres Qty. reqd.	= $10\frac{1}{2}$ tins in 8 seconds
Tin refers to $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. empty Lakspray tin	

PROBLEM

Farmers often complain that they won't get enough water. Most of the complaints in water issues arise because of this statement. In most cases what they actually mean is that they won't get as much water as some of their neighbours get. Very often it will be found that a correct division of water coming into the field channel is the correct solution.

In the ancient times water distribution was started from the tail end. Likewise it should be agreed among the farmers benefitting from a field channel. that each one has an equal right for water, the water should be divided equally among them starting not from the front but from the tail end farmer. If this is agreed upon, the following

method of division of water may be adopted.

Farmers problems pertaining to water issues are our problems. Farmers won't speak in cusecs but he understands measuring with a tin and is an expert at that. A modified indigenous time measuring system is incorporated in this method. This can be very easily understood and even worked out by farmers themselves assisted by a water issue labourer trainted for this purpose.

APPARATUS REQUIRED

- (1) 8 seconds timing tin (with the 4 Nos. 5 mm ϕ holes)
- (2) An empty $2\frac{1}{2}$ ins. Lakspray tin.
- (3) 2 Nos. 8" dim G. I. Buckets
- (4) A 14" dim. G. I. buckets

METHOD

If necessary a small pit may be cut immediately below the down stream field pipe outlet so as to place an 8" G.I. bucket.

The $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. empty Lakspray tin is filled with water. 8 seconds timing tin is placed above the surface of this water. (These two tins touching each other does not make an appreciable difference in the time taken for the condensed milk tin to fill up and sink and is to be ignored). Simultaneously the 8" G.I. bucket is placed d/s of field pipe outlet and water is collected till the 8 seconds timing tin sinks below the surface. If necessary water will have to be collected with the other bucket also or alternately using the two 8" buckets one after the other water may be poured into the 14" dim. G.I. bucket. This quantity will be the water collected in 8 seconds.

Next the $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. Lakspray tin is emptied into the channel. With this empty tin as a measure the total quantity of water collected in 8 seconds is measured and may be recorded with other details such as date, Tract, Field channel Number, Lot Number, etc.

This will give an idea what the farmer gets and should get.

It is highly advisable to carry out these quantitative measurements before and after any alteration of levels of field pipe outlets and record observations. It will convince the farmers that it is not a haphazard alteration.

Method to divide water equally among farmers

When the channel flow is steady this quantitative measurement is repeated for each and every field pipe outlet in the field channel and is recorded and tabulated in number of tins. Total number of tins divided by the number of field pipe outlets will give the average discharge each pipe outlet should get as all measurements had been confined to and based on 8 seconds. Then the levels of field pipe outlets may be adjusted by raising or lowering to get the average discharge from each pipe outlet. The process may be repeated to check that division of water is satisfactory and the f.p.oo. may be fixed permanently.

Finally some may argue that this system of measuring is contrary to the SI unit of measurements that are now being tried and introduced everywhere. But SI units is a far cry to our farmers. This system can be made to gain ground as long as 'Parakum' condensed milk and 2½ ins. Lakspray milk powder tins come in the same gauge and capacity as they do now.

The method suggested is not sophisticated. May be too simple. But therein lies a way to satisfy farmers as far as water issues are concerned. It is our duty to work for that. This method is an aid to achieve it.

With the introduction of Tank Modernisation, this method may be used to divide the water in the field channels.

M. L. J. R. Fernando



It was a farewell dinner for I. E. Mr. M. Ismail who was leaving the Department to join the Gal-Oya Board. There were 15 Technical Assistants, who were the hosts. A fried rice dinner was served in five service dishes (at the rate of 3 diners per dish) with a sixth as a standby with slightly more rice in it. Whils't rice was being served to the guest and the rest of the Technical Assistants our friend had drawn the desh that contained about 4 dinners in front of him, had served himself the requisite quantity of curries and had already started on his dinner, Mr. Ismail whose normal meal consisted of 2 spoonfuls of rice or 1½ string hoppers watched with amazement as the dish became gradually empty. Our friend was quite unaware that he was being surreptitiously watched. He finished his dinner at the same time as the others. Whils't curd and treacle were being served to the guest and others, he ate a whole pot of curd with half a bottle of treacle. I certainly would not have believed this story, if I were not actually present. During his speech he said "I had a fairly good dinner" and brought the house down.

E. D. M. L. P.

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— த. கதிர்காமநாதன் —

“வரப்புயர நீருயரும்
நீருயர நெல்லுயரும்
நெல்லுயர குடியுயரும்
குடியுயர கோனுயர்வான்”

தரைநீர் — நிலநீர் (Surface Water — Ground Water)

எமது மூதாதையர்கள் நெல்வயல்களில் மாத்திரமல்ல வீட்டு நிலங்களிலும் தரிசு நிலங்களிலும் நான்கு பக்கங்களிலும் வரம்புகளைக் கட்டி மழைநீரைத் தேக்கி வைத்துள்ளார்கள் என்பதற்கு ஆதாரங்கள் உண்டு. இந்த நோக்கு காலஞ் செல்லச் செல்ல அற்றுக்கொண்டு போய்விட்டது மிகவும் கவலைக்குரியதொன்றாகும்.

வடமாகாணம், குறிப்பாக யாழ்குடா நாட்டைப் பொறுத்த மட்டில் மாரி 6 மாதமென்றும் கோடை 6 மாதமென்றும் பிரிக்கப்பட்டிருந்தது. ஆனால் இப்போது இயற்கையே பூமிசாஸ்திரத்தைத் திருத்தியமைக்க வேண்டும் என்ற குறிக்கோள்போலும் கார்த்திகை, மார்கழி இருமாதமே மழைபெய்வதைக் காண்கிறோம். சில வருடங்களில் இந்த இரண்டு மாதமுமே பெய்வதில்லை. இதனாலே வாளை நம்பிப் பயிர் செய்வதை அதிகம் கைவிட்டு விட்டார்கள்.

யாழ்குடா நாட்டைப் பொறுத்த மட்டில் நீர்ச் சேமிப்பு இரண்டு வகையில் காணப்படுகிறது. ஆண்டுதோறும் இருமாதம் பெய்யும் மழைநீரைக்கொண்டே இருவித நீர்ச்சேமிப்பையும் பெறுகின்றோம். சராசரி வருடத்திற்கு 45” மழைமட்டில்தான் யாழ்ப்பாணக் குடாநாடு பெறுகின்றது. பூமியின் மேற்பரப்பில் மழைநீரைச் சேமித்துவைப்பது சிறிய குளங்கள் (Ponds) ஏரிகள் (Lagoons) என்பனவாகும். வாசிகள் (Tanks) குடாநாட்டில் இல்லை.

பூமிக்குள் மழைநீரைச் சேமித்து வைப்பது எமது நீர்த்தாங்கு படுக்கையாகும் (Acquifer) யாழ்குடாநாட்டைப் பொறுத்த வரையில் இயற்கை எமக்கு சுண்ணாம்புக் கற்பாறையை (Limestone) நீர்த்தாங்கு படுக்கையாக அளித்ததனாலேயே, நாம் இன்று பூமிக்குள் இருக்கும் நில நீரைக் கூடுதலாகப் பெறமுடிகின்றது. சுண்ணாம்புக்கல் யாழ் மக்களுக்கு ஒரு வரப்பிரசாதமென்றே சொல்ல வேண்டும். இதே பேன்று தென் பகுதியில் வாசிகள் பயன்படுகின்றன.

பூமியின் மேற்பரப்பில் சேமித்து வைக்கும் சிறிய குளங்களுக்கும் (Ponds) நீர்த்தாங்கு படுக்கைக்கும் (Acquifer) மிகக்கிட்டிய தொடர்புண்டு. தரைநீர் (Surface Water) நிலநீராகவும், நிலநீர் தரைநீராகவும் மாறக்கூடிய புவி அமைப்பை யாழ்குடா நாடு கொண்டுள்ளது என்பது கவனிக்கத்தக்கது.

தரைநீரை மிகக் கவனமாகப் பேணுது விடுவோமாயின் எமது நில நீர் குன்றிவிடும். ஆகவே நிலநீரை வளம் பெறச் செய்ய வேண்டுமானால் தரைநீரைப் பேணுதல் மிக அவசியமென்பது உள்ளங்கை நெல்லிக்கனி, எமது நீர் வளத்தைப் பெருக்குவது எப்படியென்றும், தரைநீர் வளமாகிய சிறிய குளங்கள், ஏரிகளை எவ்வாறு பேணல் வேண்டுமென்பதையும் நுணுக்கமாக ஆராய வேண்டும்.

தற்போது யாழ் குடாநாட்டில் ஆயிரத்து ஐம்பத்தெட்டு (1058) குளங்கள் (Ponds) இருக்கின்றன, இவை இயற்கையாகவோ அல்லது முன்னோரால் அமைக்கப்பட்ட

டலையாகவோ கணிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. இக் குளங்கள் முழுவதும் ஏழாயிரத்து ஐநூறு ஏக்கர் அடி (7500 Acre Feet) தண்ணீரைக் கொள்ளக்கூடியதாக இருக்கின்றன. [ஒரு ஏக்கர் நிலத்தில் 1 அடி நீர் இருக்குமானால் அது 1 ஏக்கர் அடி எனப்படும். 1 கன அடி நீர் 1 செக்கன்டிருப் பாயுமாயின் அது ஒரு கனஅடி/செக்கன்ட் (1 Cusec) என்று சொல்லப்படும். Cusec 24 மணி நேரம் பாயுமாயின் அது 2 ஏக்கர் அடி எனப்படும்]

நமது முதாதையர்கள் ஆங்காங்கு பலவித குளங்களை அமைத்துக் கொண்டார்கள். கால் நடைகளின் பாவனைக்கும், மனித பாவனைக்கும், விவசாயத்திற்கும், ஆலயங்களின் பாவனைக்கும் ஏற்றவாறு குளங்களை அமைத்துக் கொண்டார்கள்.

கால் நடைகளின் பாவிப்புக்கென அமைக்கப்பட்ட பல குளங்கள் தூர்ந்துபோயுள்ளன. இதற்கு ஆதாரங்கள் உண்டு. கால் நடைகள் மேய்ந்தபின் தண்ணீர் குடிப்பதற்கு குளத்தை நாடிச் செல்லும். வயிறு நிரம்பத் தண்ணீர் குடித்தபின் மேயும்போது உடம்பில் பற்றிய ஈ, பேன் போன்றவற்றை உரைஞ்சித் தேய்த்து அஹ்றைப் போக்குவதற்கு 4 அடி உயரமுள்ள 2 அடி விட்டமுள்ள கரடுமுரடான கற்பாறைத் தூண்கள் நாட்டப்பட்டிருப்பதைக் காணலாம். இது ஆவுரஞ்சி எனப்படும். இதை இப்போது கால் நடைகள் பாவனைக்குரிய எல்லாக் குளங்களிலும் காணலாம். குளங்கள் இல்லாமல் மேற்குறிப்பிட்ட கற்பாறைத் தூண்கள் மாத்திரம் காணப்பட்டால் அதன் சுற்றாடலில் குளம் இருந்ததற்கு அறிகுறி. கால்கதியில் அவை தூர்ந்து போயிருக்கலாம்.

அநேகமாகப் பல ஆலயங்களின் அண்மையில் அமைக்கப்பட்டுள்ள குளங்கள் கேணிகளாயும் மனித பாவனையையும் புனித பாவனையையும் கருதி அமைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. இக் குளங்கள் கேணிகளில் வறட்சிக் காலங்களிலும் நீர்த்தேக்கம் இருக்க வேண்டியது அவசியம். அநேகமான கேணிகள் ஆழமாக்கப்பட்டிரு சுண்ணாம்புக் கற்பாறையினுள் தேக்கப்பட்டிருக்கும் நிலநீரை அடைந்தனவாகவே இருக்கின்றன. இவற்றுள் கோடை காலத்திலும் நீர்த்தேக்கம் இருப்பதைக் காண்கிறோம். இவை பெரிய கிணற்றைப் போன்றே அமைகின்றன.

ஆலயங்களுக்கென கட்டப்பட்டிருக்கும் கிணறுகளில் நன்நீரே காணப்படுகின்றது. அதுவும் கோயில் உட்புறத்தில் காணப்படும் தீர்த்தக் கிணறுகள் இன்னும் தரமுயர்ந்து நன்நீரைத் தருகின்றன. காரணம் என்ன? இக் கிணறுகள் ஒருபோதும் அசுத்தப்படுத்தப் படுவதில்லை. சவர்க்காரம் போட்டுக் குளிக்க அனுபதிக்கப்படுவதில்லை. முக்கியமாக இக் கிணற்றிலிருந்து நாளாந்தம் அதிகநீர் இறைக்கப்படுவதில்லை. (No over extraction)

இடிகுண்டுகள் நீருற்றுக்கள்

நிலாவரை [நிலவறையிலிருந்து மருவியிருக்கலாம்] யில் ஒரு எலுமிச்சம்பழத்தைப் போட்டால் அது கிரிமலைக்கு வந்து சேரும் என்பது பழங்கதை. பல மைல் தூரமான இவ்விரு இடங்களுக்கும் ஏதாவது தொடர்பு உண்டா? கிரிமலைக்கும் நிலாவரைக்கும் இடையே ஒரு நேர்க்கோடு தொடுத்தால் அதில் மாவட்டபுரம், வீமன்காமம், குரும்பசிட்டி, புன்னலைக்கட்டுவன், நவக்கிரி முதலிய கிராமங்கள் உள்ளன. யாழ்குடா நாட்டின் சிவறு பல பகுதிகளுடன் ஒப்பிட்டுப் பார்க்குமிடத்து இந்த இடங்களில் நல்ல நீர் கிடைப்பதில் கஷ்டங்கள் குறைவென்றே சொல்ல வேண்டும்.

பெண்களுக்கு வேறு ஆண்களுக்கு வேறாக கடலுக்கு மிகச் சமீபமாகவே கட்டப்பட்டிருக்கும் கிரிமலைக் கேணிகளில் சிறு ஊற்றுக்களினால் தண்ணீர் வந்துகொண்டிருக்கும். பாவிப்பினால் அசுத்தமாகியும், கடல்நீர்மட்டம் உயரும் நேரங்களில் உவர்ப்புத் தன்மை அதிகரித்துமிருக்கும். கேணியீரை, கடல் நீர்மட்டம் பதிந்து செல்லும் நேரங்களில் பல கைக் கதவுகளைத் திறந்து வெளியே செலுத்திவிடுவார்கள். பின்னர் ஊற்றுக்களின் ஊடே வரும் தன்நீரால் கேணிகளில் சுத்தமான நீர் நிறையும். இவ்வளவு நல்லநீரும் கிரிமலைக்கு எங்கிருந்து வருகின்றது?

மாவிட்டபுரத்திற்கும் கிரிமலைக்கும் இடையே குகைவழி ஒன்று உண்டென்பது பழங்கதை. ஆனால் சில காலத்திற்கு முன்பு காங்கேசன் சேமந்துதொழிற்சாலைக்காக அந்தப் பகுதிகளில் கண்ணாம்புக்கல் அகழ்ந்து எடுக்கப்பட்டபோது பல பெருந்துவாரங்களும் இயற்கையாகவே ஏற்பட்ட சுரங்கம்பொன்ற வழிகளும் காணப்பட்டன. பலரும் சென்று

இவைகளைப் பார்வையிட்டனர். சிலர் சிறிது ஆரம் உள்ளே துணிந்து சென்றனர். ஆங்காங்கே நீரும் சேறும் கிடப்பதையும் கண்டனர். இப்படியான சுரங்கங்களும் நில வறைகளும் ஏன் உண்டாகின்றன? சுண்ணாம்புக்கல் உள்ள இடங்களிற் தானே இப்படி ஆச்சரியமான இயற்கைச் சிற்பங்கள் தோன்றுகின்றன?

நிலாவரையின் சரித்திரம்:

(*தென்னாற்காசிய*)

நிலாவரைக் கேணி நீர்மட்டம் கடல் மட்டத்திற்கு சற்று கூடுதலாக இருக்கும். ஆழம் 148 அடிக்குமேல். காதலில் ஆழமாகாடுப்பின்பு தோல்வி கண்டவர்கள் கூட இந்த நிலாவரைக் கேணியில் ஆழத்தை அறிய ஆசைப்பட்டு இருந்தார்கள் என்பதையும் கேள்விப்பட்டுள்ளோம். கடந்த 150 வருடங்களுள் நிலாவரை பற்றிய பல பரிசோதனைகள் நடத்தியுள்ளார்கள்.

1824ல் பிரசித்த வேலைத் திணைக்கள உத்தியோகத்தர் பொல்கார்ட் (Folkard) என்பவர் இங்கு நல்ல நீர் முதல் 40, 50 அடிக்கும் அடுத்து உவர்ப்புத் தன்மை அதிகமாய் வருவது 100 அடிக்கும் அதன் கீழ் ஜதரசன் சல்பைட் (H₂S) கலந்திருப்பதைக் கண்டார்.

1826ல் தேசாதிபதி பாண்ஸ் (Governor Barnes) உத்தரவுப்படி யந்திரங்களால் இறைக் கப்பட்டது. நீர்மட்டம் 3 நாட்களில் ஒரு சாண் மட்டுமே குறைந்ததாகவும் மறுநாட் காலை நீர்மட்டம் சாதாரண நிலையை எய்தியதெனவும் தெரிகிறது.

1895ல் பிரசித்த வேலைத் திணைக்களத்தில் பெல்லாமி (Bellamy) என்பவர் முதல் 20 அடிக்கு நல்ல நீரும் அதன் கீழ் படிப்படியாக அடுத்த 128 அடிக்கு அதிகரிக்கும் உவர்ப்புத்தன்மை கொண்ட நீரும் பின்னர் மிக உவர்ப்புள்ள நீரும் இருப்பதைக் கண்டார்.

1896ல் ஆவணியில் பிரதேசப் பொறியியலாளர் எச். எஃ. தொமாலின், (H. F. Tomalin) என்பவர் நடத்திய ஆராய்ச்சியினால் முதல் சில அடிக்கு நல்ல நீரும் அதன் கீழ் உவர் நீரும் காணப்பட்டது. நீர் மட்டத்திலிருந்து 130 அடி ஆழத்திலிருந்து ஜதரசன் (H₂S) நீரில் கலந்திருப்பதுடன் உவர்ப்புத் தன்மை மிகவும் அதிகரித்திருப்பதும் தெரிந்தது. இயந்திரங்களால் நாளொன்றுக்கு 388,000 கலன் வெளிப்படுத்தப்பட்டு முதல் 5 நாட்களில் நீர்மட்டம் 3 அங்குலங்கள் குறைந்ததாம். அடுத்த நான்கு நாட்களுக்கும் பகலில் இறைக்கப்பட்ட நீரினளவு இரவில் கேணிக்குள் சேர்ந்துவிடக் கண்டனர்.

1946ல் நீர்ப்பாசனத் திணைக்களத்தினால் பரிசோதிக்கப்பட்டது பற்றி திரு. எஸ். ஆறுமுகம் (இளைப்பாறிய நீர்ப்பாசன பிரதிப் பணிப்பாளர்) விரிவாக ஆராய்ச்சிக் கட்டுரை வெளியிட்டிருக்கிறார். ஒரு வாரத்திற்கு இறைக்கப்பட்ட இக்கேணியில் நாளொன்றுக்கு 150,000 கலன் நீர் எடுக்கப்பட்டதுடன் நீரின் மட்டம் மாறவில்லை எனவும், ஆனால் நல்ல நீரின் ஆழம் 80 அடியிலிருந்து 50 அடியாகக் குறைந்து வந்ததும் காணப்பட்டது.

இப்படியே 142 நாட்களுக்கு நாளொன்றுக்கு 8 மணித்தியாலங்கள் வீதம் தொடர்ந்து இறைக்கப்பட்டபோது நல்லநீர் முதல் 50 அடிக்கும் சற்றே உவர்ப்புள்ள பாவிக்கப்பட்டகூடிய நீர் அடுத்த 20 அடிக்கும் நன்னீர் உவர்நீர் மாறுபடும் நிலை நீர்மட்டத்தின் கீழ் 70 அல்லது 80 அடி ஆழத்திலும் இருந்தது. அதன் கீழே விரைவாக உவர்ப்புத் தன்மை அதிகரிப்பதும் 130 அடி ஆழத்தில் கடல் நீர்த் தன்மையும் இன்னும் ஆழமாக அதிக கனமுள்ள நீரும் இருக்கக் கண்டார்கள்.

இந்த ஆராய்ச்சிகளின் பயனாக நாளொன்றுக்கு 10 மணித்தியாலங்களில் 30,000 - 40,000 கலன் நீர் தோட்டப் பாவப்பிற்காக எடுக்கப்படக்கூடுமெனத் தெரிந்தது அதிகமாக எடுத்தாலோ உவர்ப்புத் தன்மை விரைவில் அதிகரிக்கக் கூடுமெனவும் நீர்நிலை மறுநாளாக்குள் விருத்தியடைவது குறைந்து விடுமென்பதும் காணப்பட்டது.

நிலத்தைத் துளைத்தும் கேணியின் சுற்றுப்புறங்கள் எப்படியிருக்கின்றது எனப்பரீட்சித்தனர் (Drilling Machine) எனப்படும் இயந்திரம் பாவிக்கப்பட்டு மண் கற்பாறை முதலியன துளைக்கப்படுவதுடன் அவைகளை மேலே கொண்டு வந்து ஆராயவும் சேர்த்து வைக்கவும் முடிகின்றது. கிழக்கில் 50 அடி தூரத்தில் துளைத்தபோது நிலத்தின் கீழ் 20 அடி ஆழத்தில் நீர்மட்டம் காணப்பட்டதுடன் 88 அடி ஆழம் மட்டிலும் கற்பாறையிலிருந்தும் அதன் கீழ் 92 அடிக்கு கல்லோ மண்ணோ இல்லாது சுரங்கம்போல் காணப்பட்டது. அடுத்த

நீர் பாய்ச்சு திணைக்களத்தினால் 50 அடி நீர்நிலையுத் பயிர்
எய்யப் பட்டதைத் து. சுரணம் 1985 இல் திறந்து
யுத்தம் நாடினமேல் திறத்தபுட் 6- தற்போது
யாங் இது திறக்கி சுரங்கம் படுகிறது.

பக்கத்தில் 81 அடி ஆழத்தின் கீழ் முன்போல் குகைபோல் துவாரம் மேலும் 100 அடி ஆழத்திற்கு இருந்தது. தெற்கே துழைத்தபோது 63 அடி ஆழத்திலிருந்து இன்னும் 103 அடிக்கு முன்னர் போலவே நிலவறை தெரிந்தது.

இவை யாவற்றையும் கவனத்திற்கொண்டால் நிலத்தின் கீழ் 60, 70 அடி ஆழத்தில் குகையோ சுரங்கமோ நிலவறையோ பரந்து கிடக்கக்கூடுமெனவும் அதன் ஆழம் 90, 100 அடி இருக்குமெனவும் தெரிகின்றது. சுண்ணாம்புக் கற்பாறை உள்ள இடங்களில் இப்படியாகப் பல நிலவறைகளும் சுரங்கங்களும் செயர்க்கையாகவா அமைகின்றன. இல்லை, இவை இயற்கையாகவே நிலநீரின் அரிப்பு வேலைகளாலும் கரைக்கும் வலிமையினாலுமே உண்டாகின்றன.

(2) பேய்க் கிணறு:

பேய்க் கிணறு ஒன்று குரும்பசிட்டியில் உண்டு. இது மிக ஆழமாகவும் பாவிக்கப்படாத நிலையிலும் இருக்கிறது. சுற்று முற்றும் பற்றைகள் உள்ளன. இது 9 அடி விட்டமும் 35 அடி ஆழமும் உள்ளது. இங்கு அதிக நீரைப் பெற முடியுமென்று கருதி 1967 ல் பம்பு மூலம் இறைத்தனர். உவர்ப்புத் தன்மை எழுந்து கலந்துவிடாமல் நல்ல நீரை ஒரு நிமிடத்திற்கு 100 கலன் வீதம் எடுக்கமுடியும் என்று கணிக்கப்பட்டது. இந்த நீர் எங்கிருந்து வருவது?

(3) மாயக்கைக் குளம்

பருத்தித்துறைக்குத் தெற்கே அல்வாய்க்கருகில் மாயக்கைக் குளம் உள்ளது. சுற்றுப் புறங்களில் (1 மைல் ஆவது இருக்கும்) குளத்திற்கு வந்து இதற்கென அமைக்கப்பட்ட சிறு வாய்க்கால் ஒன்றின் வழியாக சின்னக் கந்தன் என்ற கிணற்றுக்குள் அல்லவா நீர் செல்கிறது. கடுமையான மழையின் பின்பு நீர் சுழியோடிக் கொண்டு செல்வதை மணித்தியாலக் கணக்காகப் பார்த்துக்கொண்டே நிற்கலாம். இவ்வளவும் செல்வது எங்கே?

(4) அத்துளக் குளம்

கரவெட்டியில் அத்துளக்குளம் என்று ஒன்று உண்டு. அங்கும் வெள்ளம் சுற்றுப் புறங்களிலிருந்து சேர்கிறது. இக் குளத்தின் நடுவே ஒரு கிணறு அமைத்து குளாய்-நீர் விநியோகம் கரவெட்டியில் நடைபெறுகிறது. இந்தக் கிணறு ஒரு போதும் வற்றாது என்பர்.

(5) ஊரணி நீர் ஊற்று

வல்வெட்டித்துறைக்கப்பால் வடக்குக் கரையோரத்தில் ஊரணி என்னும் கிராமத்தில் கடலருகே நீர் ஊற்றுத் தென்பட்டதால் அங்கு கீரிமலையைப்போல் கேணி அமைத்தார்கள். ஆனால் அவை கட்டுப்பாட்டுக்குள் அடங்க வில்லை. கட்டிய கேணிகள் பாவிப்பற்றுத் தூர்ந்து போய்விட்டன. மழை காலங்களில் இப்போதும் நீர் குமிழியாக வெளிப்படுவதைக் கேணியிலும் கடற்கரையின் சில பகுதிகளிலும் பார்க்கலாம். எங்கிருந்து வருகின்றது இந்த நீர்?

புன்னாலைக்கட்டுவனில் அக்கம் பக்கமாக இரு கோவில்கள் உண்டு. இவைக்குப் பின் புறமாக சிறியதோர் குளம் உண்டு சுற்றுப்புறம் உள்ள இடங்களிலிருந்து மழை நீர் வடிந்து வந்து சேரச் சேர அந்த நீர் எல்லாம் குளத்தின் அடியில் சென்று கொண்டிருக்கும் இப்படியாக நீர் நிலத்தினுள் செல்வது எங்கே?

வல்வெட்டியில் கம்பர் மலை - கொம்மன்துறை என்ற கிராமத்தில் விராச்சிக்குளம் (வரட்சிக் குளத்திலிருந்து மருவியிருக்கலாம்) என்று ஒன்று உண்டு. இதன் நடுவில் ஒரு கிணறு உண்டு. சுற்றுப்புறமாய் உள்ள இடங்களிலிருந்து மழைநீர் வடிந்து வந்து சேர்ந்து எல்லாம் கிணற்றின் ஊடாகச் செல்லும். இப்படி நிலத்துள் செல்வது எங்கே?

நவாலியில், தொண்டமனூற்றில் — பொந்துக்கிணறு, ஊரெழுவில் — பொக்கணை மீசாலையால் வேம்பிராய்நீர் ஊற்று என்பன போன்றவை வற்றாக் கிணறுகளாகக் கணிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. விபரமான படிப்பின் பின்புதான் அதிக நீர் இறைக்கப்படும்போது நீர்த்தன்மையின் அளவும் மாறுபடுவது பற்றியும் அறிய முடியும்.

மாயக்கைக் குளத்தின் அருகே, கற்பாறைகள் இருக்கின்றன. இவற்றின் அடியே நீர் வெளியே செல்லக்கூடிய அறிகுறிகள் தென்படுகின்றன. இவ்விடத்தில் ஒரு எலிமிச்சம் பழத்தைப் போட்டால் அது மயிலிட்டியில் வந்து சேரும் என்பது பழங்கதை. பல மைல் தூரமான இவ்விரு இடங்களுக்கும் எதாவது தொடர்பு உண்டா என்பதை நன்கு ஆராய் வது நல்லது மாயக்கைக் குளத்தில் மழை காலங்களில் வெள்ளம் கற்பாறைகளிலூடாக ஒந்திராய்க்குளம் (மாலி சந்தைக்கருகில்) வந்தடைந்து பின்பு அத்துளக் குளத்துக்குப் போய்ச் சேர்ந்து பின்பு தொண்டமனூற்றை வந்து அடைவதற்கு ஆதாரம் உண்டு.

இதேபோன்று கரையோரங்களில் கீரிமலை, சடயம்மா மடம் போன்ற இடங்களில் நில ஊற்றாக கடலை நோக்கி ஓடுகின்றன இப்படியான இடங்களில் அணைக்கட்டு (cut off wall) அமைப்பதை விட வேறு வழியில்லை. இதை அரசாங்கம் செய்வதை எதிர்பார்க்காமல் பொதுநலசேவைப் பெரியோர்களும் பணம் படைத்தவர்களும் கட்டுவதற்கு முன் வர வேண்டும் இதைச் செய்தால் நிலநீர் சேமிப்பை அதிகரிக்க முடியும்.

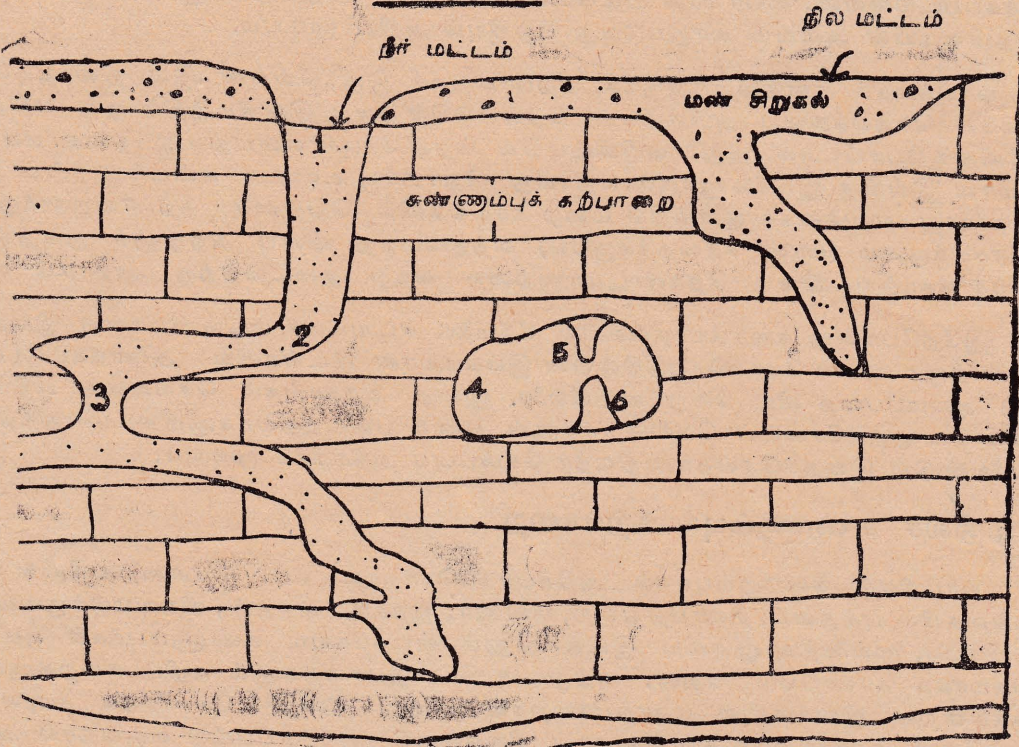
யாழ்நிலச் சுண்ணாம்புக் கற்பாறை

யாழ்நிலச் சுண்ணாம்புக்கல் அதிகமாகக்கொண்ட படிவுப் பாறைகளினால் ஆனது. இலங்கையில் புத்தளம், சிலாபத்துறை, மன்னார், பூநகரி, பரந்தன், விசுவமடுக்குளம், புதுக் குடியிருப்பு, முல்லைதீவு முதலிய இடங்களிலும் வடக்கேயும் சுண்ணாம்புக்கல் படிவங்கள் அதிகமாகக் காணப்படுகின்றன. அத்துடன் மணற்பாறைகளும் கழிப்பாறைகளும் கலந்திருக்கின்றன. இவைகளில் மணற்பாறைகள் ஓரளவு நீரைச் சேகரிக்கக் கூடியனவாய் இருப்பினும் சுண்ணாம்புக் கற்பாறைகள் நிலநீரினால் கரைக்கப்பட்டு வருவதால் அடிநிலக் குகைகள் (Underground caves) குகைப் பாதைகள் (Tunnels) உறுஞ்சித் துளைகள் (Sink Holes) முதலியன உண்டாகின்றன. இப்படியான நிலங்களை கார்ஸ்ட் நிலங்கள் (Karst) என அழைப்பர்.

வல்வெட்டித்துறைக்கருகாமையில் உள்ள கெருடாவில் என்ற இடத்தில் பெரிய மண்டபம் சிறிய மண்டபம் என்ற நிலவறைகள் உண்டு (Karudavil caves) என்று அழைக்கப்படும். இவை சுண்ணாம்புக் கற்பாறை பல ஆண்டுகளின் பின் உக்கிர கரைசலால் உறுஞ்சித் துளைகள் ஏற்படுகின்றன.

சில வேலைகளில் அடி நிலக் குகைகளில் கல்சியம் காபனேற்று (CaCO_3) கரைந்து சொட்டுச் சொட்டாக விழக்கூடும். அப்போது குகையின் மேற்பகுதியில் சொட்டுக்கள் காய் வதினால் படிவு உண்டாகி தொங்கும் தூண்களும் (ஸ்டாலக்கைட்டு) (Stalactite) உண்டாகின்றன. இதே போன்று குகையின் கீழ்ப்பகுதியிலும் வளரும் தூண்களும் (ஸ்டாலக் மைட்டு) (Stalagmite) உண்டாகின்றன. (கீழுள்ள படத்தைப் பார்க்கவும்)

படம்



1. உறிஞ்சித்துளை
2. விழுங்கும்துளை
3. குடைப் பாதை

4. அடி நிலக்குகை
5. ஸ்டாலக்கைட்டு
6. ஸ்டாலக்மைட்டு

யாழ்ப்பாணக் குடா நாட்டின் சில பகுதிகளில் கிணறு வெட்டுவதில் முதிர்ந்த அனு பவம் உள்ளவர்களும் இருக்கிறார்கள். முன்பு ஓரளவு ஆழத்துக்கு வெட்டப்பட்டுப் பாவனையில் இருந்து வந்த கிணறுகள் சில பல ஆண்டுகளின் பின்பு நீர் வற்றிப் பின்பு வீட்டுப்பாவனைக்கே நீர் போதாத அளவுக்கு ஊற்று அற்றுப் போவதைக் காணலாம். இந்த நீர் வற்றும் கிணறுகளில் “ஊசியடித்தல்” (பேச்சு வழக்கில் உள்ளது) என்று இரண்டு மூன்று இடத்தில் அடித்தளத்தில் 20, 30 அடி கூடத் துளைத்து நீர் பீறிட்டு எழக்கூடிய முறையில் செய்கிறார்கள். இவற்றின் மூலம் தற்காலிகமாக நல்ல நீரைப் பெற்றாலும் காலகதியில் உவர் நீர் வருவதை அனுபவத்தில் காணமுடியும். ஆகவே கிணற்று அடித்தளத்தில் மேலதிகமாகத் துளைக்கும் பொது நுட்ப அறிவு படைத்தவர்களின் உதவியில்லாமல் மேற்கொள்வது ஆபத்தானதாகும்.

நிலநீர் ஆராய்ச்சியின் பயன்.

மேற்கூறப்பட்ட பிரதேசங்களில் புவியியல் திணைக்களமும் பின்னர் கடந்த சில வருடங்களாக நீர்ப்பாசனத் திணைக்களமும் நடாத்திய பரிசோதனைகளினால் அவ்விடங்களின் புவியியலை அறிந்தது மட்டுமல்லாமல் அவற்றுள் சில இடங்களில் கமத்தொழில் விருத்திக்கு நன்றீரும் மற்றைய இடங்களின் விருத்திக்கு நிலநீரைப் பெறக் கையாளக் கூடிய முறைகளை அறிந்ததுமே இதுவரை நாம் கண்ட பயன்.

புத்தளம் வண்ணாத்திவிலுப் பகுதிகளில் மல குழாய்க் கிணறுகள் 300, 500 அடி ஆழமாக அமைக்கப்பட்டு ஆங்காங்கே உப உணவு உற்பத்திக்கு உதவி அளித்து வருகின்றன. இவைகளுள் சில தாமாகவே வெளிப்படுத்தும் “ஆர்டிசியன்” (Ardesian) கிணறுகளாக இயங்குகின்றன.

சிலாபத்துறை கொண்டாச்சிப் பகுதிகளில் குளாய்க் கிணறுகள் அமைக்கப்பட்டு சில அங்குள்ள தோட்டத் தொழில் கூட்டுத்தாபனத்தின் தேவைகளுக்கு உதவுகின்றன. மன்னார்ப் பிரதேசத்தில் துளைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளவை இப்போ விவசாயத்துக்குப் பாவிக்கப்படுகின்றன. இங்கெல்லாம் அமைந்துள்ள குளாய்க் கிணறுகள் 150—200 அடி ஆழம் கொண்டனவாயினும் வடக்குச் செல்லச் செல்ல அங்கு அமையக்கூடிய நல்ல நீர் உற்பத்திக் குளாய்க் கிணறுகளின் ஆழம் குறைந்து கொண்டு வருவது தெரிகிறது.

புதுக்குடியிருப்பிலும் 500 அடி ஆழத்திலிருந்து சிறிது நிலநீர் ஆர்மசியன் முறையாக வெளிவந்தாலும் வடக்கே செல்ல குளாய்க் கிணறுகள் குறைவான ஆழத்திலேயே நல்ல நீரைத் தரக் கூடுமென்று பரந்தன் விசுவமடு பகுதியில் நடந்த துளைவு ஆராய்ச்சிகள் காட்டுகின்றன. மேல் மட்டத்தில் நல்ல நீரும் கீழே உவர் நீரும் இருப்பதால் இங்கெல்லாம் பெரிய விட்டத்துடன் அமைக்கப்பெற்ற சாதாரண கிணறுகள் உப உணவுப் பயிர்ச்செய்கைக்கு இன்றியமையாதவையாக விளங்குகின்றன. இப்படியான சாதாரண கிணறுகள் ஆழமாக்கப்பட்டோ அதி விரைவாக இறைக்கப்பட்டோ விட்டால் உவர்ப்புத் தன்மை அதிகரிப்பைக் காணலாம். நன்னீர் உவர் நீரின் மேல் மிதந்திருக்கும் தன்மை பொருந்தியதால் மேலுள்ள நன் நீரை அதிகமாக ஊற்றெடுக்கப்பண்ணுவதற்கு கிணறுகளின் விட்டத்தை பெருப்பித்தும் ஆழத்தைக் குறைத்தும் வைத்துக்கொள்வது நன்று.

யாழ்குடா நாட்டிலோ தீவுப் பகுதிகளிலோ சில வருடங்களாக 900 க்கு மேலான கிணறுகள் ஆராயப்பட்டு நீர்மட்டம் நீரின் இரசாயனத் தன்மை முதலியனபற்றி குறிப்புகள் சேகரிக்கப்படுகின்றன. அதுபோல் நீர் நிலைகளுக்கு ஆதாரமான குளங்களும் பரிசீலனைக்கு உள்ளாக்கப்பட்டு வருகின்றன. இவ்வகையான ஆராய்ச்சிகளைச் சில வருடங்களுக்குச் செய்ததும் வருங்காலத்தில் இன்ன இன்ன பகுதிகளில் இந்த இந்த மாதங்களில் நல்ல நீரின் தன்மையும் அளவும் இப்படி இப்படியாக இருக்கக் கூடுமென்றும் எதிர் பார்க்கலாம் திட்டமிட்டுத் தகுந்த பாவிப்புக்கு நடவடிக்கைகளும் எடுக்கலாம்.

தீவுப் பகுதிகளில் நீர் வளங்களை மிகக் கவனமாகப் பேணவேண்டும். தீவு எவ்வளவு சிறியதோ அவ்வளவுக்கு அங்கு நன் நீர் தொடர்ந்து வருடம் முழுவதுமோ கிடைத்தல் அரிதாகிவிடும். உதாரணமாக எழுவைதீவை எடுத்துக்கொண்டால் அங்கு சில காலங்களில் இக்கரையிலிருந்து அரசாங்கத்தின் உதவியுடன் நன் நீர் எடுத்துச் சென்று விநியோகிக்கப்பட்டது தெரியவரும். இத்தீவு அகலத்தால் மிகச் சிறியது. ஆகையால் மழை நீர் நிலத்தின் மேலோ நிலத்தின் ஊடாகவோ இருபக்கத்தாலும் கடலுக்கு வழிந் தோடிவிட முடியும். தென் பகுதியில் கடற்கரையிலே மணலைக் கவனமாகத் தோண்டி நீர்மட்டத்தையடைந்ததும் இன்னும் ஆழமாக்காமல் மெதுவாக சிரட்டைகளால் மேலிருக்கும் நன் நீரைச் சேகரிப்பார்கள். தீவின் நடுப்பகுதியில் சில நல்ல கிணறுகள் நீரைத் தருகின்றன. இவையின் ஆழம் நில மட்டத்திலிருந்து 3, 4 அடிக்குள்ள்தான் இருக்கும். நீர்மட்டத்தின் கீழ் 9, 12 அங்குலமே கிணறு வெட்டப்பட்டிருக்கும். அதன் கீழ்ச் சென்றால் உவர் நீர் கலப்பு வந்துவிடும்.

பருத்தித்துறைக்கு அருகாமையில் வல்லிப்புரக் கோவில் என்றழைக்கப்படும் பெயர் பெற்ற விஷ்ணு கோவில் ஒன்றுண்டு. இதன் சுற்றடலில் அதிக நிலப்பரப்பு வெள்ளை நிறப் பருமணை மணலாக்கொண்டுள்ளது. இந்த மணலை (Silicon) கண்ணாடி உற்பத்தி செய்வதற்குப் பாவிக்கமுடியும் என்று ஆராய்ச்சியாளர்கள் கண்டு பிடித்துள்ளார்கள்.

வல்லிப்புரக் கோவில் பகுதியை அடுத்து மணற்காடு என்றொரு இடமுண்டு: இப்பகுதிகளில் நீர் நிலமட்டத்திலிருந்து 5 அடிக்குள் இருப்பதைக் காணலாம். சில இடங்களில் மணலைக்கவனமாகத் தோண்டி நீர்மட்டத்தை அடைந்ததும் இன்னும் ஆழமாக்காமல் குடங்களால் மேல் நிற்கும் நன் நீரைக் குடிப்பதற்கு எடுப்பார்கள். இதுபோன்ற பெரிய பள்ளங்களைத் துரவு என்று சொல்லப்படும். துரவுகளின் உதவியுடன் பயிர்ச்செய்கையும் நடைபெறுகின்றது.

மணற்காட்டிலிருந்து சுண்டிக் குளத்தை நோக்கிப் போகும் போது பல சிறிய கிராமங்கள் இருக்கின்றன. (குடு—அத்தனை) குடத்தனை, அம்பன், நாகர்கோவில் குடாரப்பு (குடார்—அப்பு), செம்பியன்பற்று, மாழனை, மருதங்கேணி, தானையடி, ஆழியடுவனை,

உடுத்துறை, கொடுக்கிளாய், பச்சிலைப்பள்ளி, வெற்றிலைக்கேணி, முள்ளியான், நித்திய வட்டை (நித்திய—வெட்டை) வண்ணன்குளம், போக்கறுப்பு, சண்டிக்குளம் போன்ற இடங்களில் எல்லாம் நன் நீர் மிக மேல்மட்டத்தில் காணப்படுகின்றன. விவசாயத்திற்கு அதிகம் இறைக்கப்படாததால்தான் நன் நீராகத் தொடர்ந்து இருப்பதற்குக் காரணம்.

யாழ் நகரை அண்டியுள்ள கிராமங்கள் எல்லாம் குடிசனத்தொகை அதிகரித்ததால் நிலம் நீர் இரண்டினதும் வளமும் குன்றிவிட்டதைக் காணலாம். வடமராட்சி கிழக்குப் பகுதிகளில் நிலவளமும் நீர்வளமும் நன்குள்ளதைக் காண முடியும்.

செயற்பட வேண்டும்.

நன் நீர் இன்றேல் வாழ்க்கை இல்லையாதலால் மேலே விவரிக்கப்பட்ட இடங்களில் நடக்கும் ஆராய்ச்சி வேலைகளையும் பரிசோதனைகளையும் அவ்வப்பகுதிகளில் வாழும் மக்கள் கவனத்திற்கெடுத்து இந்த ஆய்வுகளின் பயனாக நிலநீரைப் பேணும் அறிவை பெரியோர் மட்டும் அல்ல சிறியோரும் சிந்தித்துச் செயலாற்ற வேண்டும்.

கல்வித் திணைக்கள வித்தியாதிபதி மூலம் பாடசாலை மாணவர்களை வட்டார ரீதியாக ஒரு இடத்தில் கூட்டி நிலநீர் தேக்கத்தைப் பற்றியும் சேமிப்புப் பற்றியும் விரிவான கலந்துரையாடல் நடத்த வேண்டும். இதில் நீர்ப்பாசனம், கமத்தொழில், புனியியல் போன்ற துறைகளில் நிபுணர்களை கலந்து கொள்ளச் செய்து புது நடைமுறைகளைக் கையாளல் வேண்டும். பல்கலைக்கழகம் ஒன்று யாழ்ப்பாணத்தில் தற்போது இயங்கி வருவதால் இந்தத் துறையில் ஒரு ஆராய்ச்சிப்பகுதி ஏற்படுத்தி யாழ்வளாகம் இதில் சிரத்தை எடுத்தால் யாழ்குடா நாட்டின் நன் நீர்ப் பிரச்சனைக்கு திருப்தியான முறையில் தீர்வுகாண இடமுண்டு என்பதில் ஐயம் இல்லை.

தோட்டப் பாவிப்புக்குரிய கிணறுகளில் அளவுக்கு மிஞ்சி நீர் இறைப்பதையும் (Over Extraction) புதிய கிணறுகள் தோண்டும் போது அரசாங்கத்திடம் அனுமதி கோரல் என்பவற்றை சட்டரீதியாகக் கொண்டுவந்தால் நன் நீர்ப் பிரச்சனைக்கு ஓரளவு நிவாரணம் காணமுடியும். ஆகவே மனித பிறவி எடுத்ததினால் கிடைத்துள்ள மூளைவளத்தைப் பாவித்து நிலநீர்த்துறையின் ஆராய்ச்சி செய்து யாழ்குடா நாட்டின் நன் நீர் பிரச்சனையைத் தீர்க்க நாங்கள் ஒவ்வொருவரும் எங்கள் பங்கைச் செய்வோமாக.

துணை நூல்கள்

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2. சிதம்பரப்பிள்ளை. பி. எம்.

யாழ்குடா நாடும் நீர்வளமும்.
நீர் இனிது! நிலம் இனிது!
நுட்பம் 1974—தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்
கட்டுப்பெத்தை வளாகம்.

HISTORY OF THE UNION

(In a Lighter Vein)

It augers well for one and all that this year of the Silver Jubilee of the Union has brought back the pride of place of the Irrigation Department after a period of years.

As for the article itself, it is my preference to run through the history of the Union in a lighter vein with respect to all and with disrespect to none.

To begin with, the writer is privileged to blow his own trumpet in boastful tune that he held several offices in this Union including that of the Hony. Secretary. Perhaps yours will be the last laugh on his predicaments in his role as Secretary for the events that will be described in sequence.

The beginning of the era that set to improve the conditions of service of the membership through collective participation commenced with Ronnie Pereira, a rebel by nature, being elected Secretary to spearhead the progress drive. Though handicapped with a slight stammer Rebel Ronnie spoke his heart out at every meeting, be it a casual one on the road or a scheduled one in a hall. Those were days 25 years ago when kings had scope to be emperors and the Technical Assistants of the Irrigation Department had ample scope to carry their original grades and designations into retirement.

Ronnie wrote politely to the authorities at the initial stages for action on matters for the betterment of the service. He wrote with venom when the replies and actions by the authorities were delayed. In one such instance he wrote with sufficient venom to provoke the Gods to send Rebel Ronnie reeling on transfer to Minipe where he could cool his heels in bed with malaria.

Then there was the period when Militant young Ambikaiphar of the early 1950s, and from a ferocious part of the North was elected Secretary. Tact and good relations with the Directorate brought in good returns for sometime during this period. Again there were the delays in implementing decisions by the authorities and together with the natural traits of the Militant Secretary, a house was on fire and another Secretary of the Union was sent to meet the exigencies of service at Minipe.

Two Secretaries were in rapid succession condemned to the Minipe of the 1950,s.

Union tactics changed and there was then a Peace Period with a peaceful Whatmore as Secretary. Waty was conveniently placed at the Head Office within reach of the ears that mattered and many things including partial pardon for the two condemned to Minipe were obtained.

The dreadful dragon of a Time scale of 18 years service in the lower grade prior to promotion to the next grade of the Technical Assistants service was lifted during this period.

The spade work for this reward, perhaps the best so far obtained for the service came from the sacrifices that were then at Minipe.

The next period vivid in the mind of the writer is when he, without much knowledge of it or Trade Unionism was proposed, seconded and elected Hony. Secretary of the Union. The poor fellow had no knowledge of the procedure to be adopted to decline or resign such post. Ignorance had to be weathered by the writer for a full period as Secretary. Luck and skill seldom go together, they say, and I can tell you that luck is a great sympathiser of ignorance. Having taken the liberty to categorise the past periods, I am in a way duty bound to identify my period also, and that I do as a period of comedies that turned favourable to the Union. Knowledge, hard work and sacrifice tendered in the earlier periods matured into results in several cases during this period.

The main issue of the time was the procedure to be followed in implementing the removal of the Time Scale without damage to those who had completed 10 years of service but not passed the S. T. E.

The young who had passed the S. T. E. and with 10 years of service naturally pressed for promotion above the old who had more years of service and a good excuse for not having had a fling at the examination as they preferred to do it at the last moment in the eighteenth year. Then there were the few without the S. T. E. who had gone beyond excuse and the 18 years of service. They presented a good appealing smile in their faces that demanded and generated more force for promotion than any memorandum a wrist could write or a girl could produce off a typewriter.

The secretary wrote and wrote to all quarters for compassion in this matter for the senior to be given a chance to retain their seniority, and he wrote with all the vigour of one who had completed 12 years of service but not the examination. Quite by chance the Union tumbled on a precedence in the Government Service in this direction where, in another service the members with the requisite period of service were all promoted subject to the proviso that they completed the examination within a specified period. We persued in this matter, in this direction and our Members with the required period of service were all promoted on credit, where credit is only a commercial termology equivalent to the colloquial "on tick".

Perhaps, by an accident decision over a conference table to which the Union hung on like Neil Harvey or our owa Nissanka de Silva hung on to catches around gully during their hay day, the promotees were given 3 years to complete the examination or to get back to their former peaceful grade. It lies to their credit that almost all the promotees passed the examination within the specified period.

The real comedy of the period was at the dinner we hosted to celebrate the removal of the Time Scale, and the impending promotions on tick, etc. Whisky was then cheap and was liberally served and even more liberally consumed mainly by the Membership which includes the Secretary.

Just at the correct stage of intoxication when refusals are seldom tendered, Showman Balaratnam of Ambewela fame approached the Secretary with 'half a request for the Secretary to deliver the main speech after the dinner which I later understood had to accommodate the vote of thanks to our honoured guests. The Secretary left the half and accepted the request in full measure like the drunken sailor accepting a fully willing dancing hostess. The Director of the time was a much revered and more feared personality plus plus. Dinner was over, so were the speeches. Mine was the last speech and immediately on completion of it I had the Director at me with outstretched hand. I shook hands with mighty pleasure wishfully assuming that I was being congratulated for a bad speech well delivered. The Director said something which the whisky and the Secretary together could not quite gather but obedience in him still said a smart 'Yes Sir'.

Hell, they say, knows no fury than that of a woman scorned. I know no fury than that of a Director annoyed and whipping my hand off. Soon I was lonely in a crowded hall, out of grace with the Director and out of company altogether till good old Stage Master Bala, my pal, patted me on my back to console me that Minipe can be good with Ronnie and Ambi. According to him the Director is supposed to have claimed that I disregarded him in my speech and Bala was accusing me for the smart 'Yes Sir' that I had earlier uttered.

The next day was also very heavy in my mind with faint recollections of odd things here and there, but of nothing uncharitable in my attempted speech. Uncle Sam and Ambi dropped in to see me and Ambi repeated his commentary on my speech which was something like "he is on doubtful grounds - he is treading on dangerous grounds - Yes, he has put his foot in" - and so had I, of course to be pardoned later by that magnanimous personality of a Director.

The next period is the victory period spearheaded by Nissanka de Silva and young Macky Hassan in the forefront when the carde in the higher grades of the service was increased and outstanding promotions expedited. In fact there were times when this duo were reported to have gone underground, but yet kept the struggle alive. Hard work and sacrifice pay well. In addition to obtaining many rewards for the Union these two, Nissanka and Macky, both won their 'National Caps' in the field of Trade Unionism.

History is unique in that it gives preference to the past over the present and in keeping with Good Tradition the writer refrains from touching on the current period. Nevertheless, a bouquet is due to the leadership for having kept this Union alive during the last seven years when the Membership was scattered all over the T. C. E. O.

As for the future of the Union I join the others in wishing the Union success and nothing but success.

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UNFORGETTABLE CROFTON

Yes, anybody who had met him will never forget him. He was a man of many talents, not because of his 6 foot frame and his 42 inch waist line. He never got tired; he could walk miles at a stretch, his Survey Plans were beautiful with all details in, his W.P.R. was always written in BLOCK CAPITALS and complete. His diary carried, in addition to the work done for the day, the details of the movements of his Boss and other officers. Because of this, he was very often stationed far away from office. His capacity to consume food and drinks was the most admirable quality and perhaps the most troublesome for himself; for no chummery was prepared to take him as a partner. Boarding houses offered him only lodging. Once at the table, he could easily make five others starve.

The Irrigation Technical Assistant belongs to a category of Public Servants that has been dedicated to the assigned duties from as far back as late 1930s. Mid 1940s and 1950s saw them put their heart and soul to the task of restoring the Major Irrigation Schemes that had been abandoned for centuries. It was during this period that Comrade Crofton was assigned to survey proposed channel traces of Gal Oya Valley Development Project. One day as usual, Comrade Crofton started his field work at 6.00 a.m. after only a cup of tea. He started levelling along a channel trace 5 miles long which he expected to close back before noon. When he checked back he found an error of 0.08' which is an admissable error. But my friend was not satisfied. He levelled these 5 miles again and returned to the camp in the evening with an error of 0.04' — a T. A. satisfied with his day's work. These are the T.A's who helped build up an honourable and respected service, and kept our flag flying.

On the days when his duties include surveying and levelling, the T. A. starts off very early after only a cup of tea. At the end of a hard day's work he comes back for a late lunch. When Comrade Crofton returned one day from the field, it was getting dark and almost time up for an early dinner. Methodical as he was he took a quick bath, sat at the table and called the servant, "Boy, bring my breakfast". Knowing the Master well, the boy brought the breakfast which he had preserved. As he finished the breakfast, the master called the boy again, "Now bring my lunch" he ordered.

The table was cleared and lunch was served. Soon the boy was taking the empty dishes of a lunch, back to the kitchen.

"Boy, you know what next". "Yes Sir", said the boy and he quickly brought the master's afternoon tea — a loaf of bread; jam and a bunch of bananas. Having completed his daytime programme, he got up and called the boy again. 'I am going to the Club for a drink and will be back in an hour. Have my dinner ready when I come.'

Hattota Amuna was a God-forsaken corner of Matale District, and he was stationed there. Those were the days when there was no proper transport, and Naula, Elahera and Kalu Ganga areas were mostly jungle. Once my friend Crofton was instructed to attend office to discuss works. His W. P. R. for the week was later submitted thus —

MONDAY	HATTOTA AMUNA PROCEEDED TO ELAHERA. NO TRANSPORT AVAILABLE NIGHT AT ELEHERA	WALKED 16 MILES.
TUESDAY	FROM ELAHERA TO NAULA BY BULLOCK CART. NO BUSES TO MATALE	BULLOCK CART 14 MILES.
WEDNESDAY	TO MATALE I.E'S OFFICE. DISCUSSED WORKS STUDIED PLANS & ESTIMATES	BUS 17 MILES
THURSDAY	TO NAULA. NO TRANSPORT TO GO TO ELAHERA. NIGHT AT NAULA.	BUS 17 MILES
FRIDAY	TO ELAHERA BY BULLOCK CART. UNABLE TO PROCEED BEYOND DUE TO WILD ELEPHANTS ON ROAD, NIGHT AT ELAHERA	BULLOCK CART 14 MILES
SATURDAY	TO HATTOTA AMUNA	WALKED 16 MILES

I. E. while on inspection instructed my friend to get the Regulator and Sluice painted, and promised to send the necessary paint from office. But paint did not reach the T. A. and for the next two weeks his W. P. R. carried the following statement in addition to the work done each day; "PAINTING SLUICE AND REGULATOR GATES AS PER I.E'S INSTRUCTIONS. (NO PAINT AVAILABLE)."

At parties he was a very interesting figure and kept the parties going. In addition to helping himself lavishly with food and drinks, whenever music stops he used to come out with interludes from Radio commercials such as "Horlicks....." or "Vincent ge A. P. C.....". It was not easy to get him sufficiently tuned to join a Balla dance, but once he joins it becomes a real spectacle.

It was a hot day in Hambantota and our Comrade Crofton reached the Rest House after a hard day's work and a 6 mile trudge. He ordered three bottles of beer and without waiting for anybody's compliments, poured one by one, off the bottles, down his throat! An old gentleman seated a couple of tables away and sipping a beer watched our friend, surprised at his audacity to insult the drink. After the third bottle was put down on the table, that nice old gent walked upto my friend, tapped him on the shoulder and said —

"Young man, that's not the way to drink beer, you must sip it. Then only you can enjoy it".

"Yes uncle, I know", replied my friend, "but I'll be ordering another six bottles to sip."

In 1960s his stay in Anuradhapura was not very happy. He was confined to office doing M. P. RR. Nobody entertained him in chummeries and after a months stay in a boarding-house in the Old City, the boarding mistress was prepared to give him only lodging. He was a sad man. Every morning he was seen trudging with a measured tread like Mr. Phealius Fog, umbrella in hand, from Old City to Vanniyanikulam Office. I met him one day coming out of Salgado Hotel, — 'Hi Abey' said he, "You know, I am starving these days. Today I had only three pounds of bread for lunch."

From a God-forsaken corner of Badulla S.D. which could be reached along foot-paths through valleys and mountain slopes he was transferred to Kalutara S.D. His Change of Station Travelling Claim included transporting his household goods on caravan of mules upto the nearest road and by double bullock carts upto Badulla Railway station and by train to Kalutara Railway station. When the Travelling Claim reached Head Office it was promptly returned with the query — "What happened to the goods after they were unloaded at Kalutara Railway Station? The T. C. is incomplete and cannot be paid." Comrade Crofton took one glance at the query and wrote back his explanation.

"When I unloaded my household goods at Kalutara Railway Station, I got a good offer and I sold them. F. RR. do not say anything against selling my own goods at anytime I want. Please pay".

And he was paid.

(Mr. Crofton is now living in retirement in Jaffna. We wish him happiness and long life, and happy memories of his service in the Irrigation Department).

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OUR FAILING

M. MACKY HASSEN

We Technical Assistants have been showered with a host of commendations and citations at various instances during this twenty five years.

Once a Director of Irrigation at a Ministry Interview referred to us as the Back Bone of the Department. A Hon. Minister accepted the fact that we are a talented lot. A Permanent Secretary admitted that we are a militant and united force and a President of the Union compared us to the proverbial ant. Such is the moulding of a Technical Assistant.

Yet, I do not want anyone of us to hide our failings. We do not get over them by hiding them. One of our principal failings has been, and is, a great tendency to disrupt, a great tendency to forget the basic unity of a Union, and to get excited about secondary matters, and the moment you make them primary matters, you lose your sense of perspective and proportion and you are lost. This is what we have seen in the recent meetings regarding the intergration. They have been very healthy meetings, and I think we can be proud of these meetings inspite of some odd happenings here and there. But what I am trying to put before you is that meetings have brought up not only this business of a status symbol again, but departmentalism as well. Kept in their place, these may be all right, but if they get out of their proper place, they are dangerous to the Trade Union movement as a whole. I am not entering into the merits of the arguments that have been raised. The things has been finalised after a series of deliberations by all concerned and the Cabinet and it seems to me very foolish, without adequate thought and adequate time having been given and experience gathered, to upset things which have been decided. I want all to think of this. Here we are struggling against grave political and economic problems but some of our friends and colleagues have their minds completely occupied with the question of the status or a designation being changed or not. It passes my comprehension that we do not see how the concentration on matters of secondary value injures our work in the primary fields of activity in the union and in the national or International sphere.

It may be that many are annoyed or angry with decisions our Union has taken. In certain circumstances seniorities have been lowered, some promotions delayed. I do not think anyone will like this. I think it is a bad thing and I hope that it will be possible to redress many of these cases. We have to sympathetically understand the plight of those who suffer, but having noted that, let us not mix up sentiment, however justified it may be, with higher considerations of the Union's and Nation's welfare. After all a Nation and a people are judged in terms of their maturity. How mature are they? Do they get swept away by tides of sentiment or do they balance things and then act? These are what will be taken into consideration. I hope we are a mature Union and I hope, therefore, that we shall consider questions that come up before us in a mature way and not merely in an emotinnal sentimental way.



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BETRAYAL - '71.

by

CAMILLUS PEIRIS

*The events described are not imaginary.
Hence similarities not coincidental.*

It all started with the formation of the Territorial Civil Engineering Organisation, an exercise that promised so much but achieved so little. Its failure and ultimate disintegration was both predictable and inevitable as it was founded on bent ideals and promises that could not be kept or more likely not meant to be kept.

Briefly, the composition of the T.C.E.O., was from personnel attached to many different Departments. The bulk was formed from Irrigation, Highways, Agrarian Services and the Local Government Departments. Though many categories of Officers were involved, this article is devoted to those who formed the Technical Officers in the Organisation. To be precise it deals with the ominous plight that Technical Officers lured into this infamous Organisation had to face and the exposition of omissions and commissions of the various people concerned both directly or indirectly.

The bent ideals-that would have made a spiral stairway look like a Fireman's ladder-were obvious. In the main it was the subtle furtherance of advantages to a minority ignoring the disadvantages to a majority. To spell them out would be superfluous as well as shaming the shamed. The unkept promises such as that no one would lose anything enjoyed hitherto, the setting up of a Model Service etc., could be due to two reasons. The inability to simply obtain them, somewhat like a boy attempting to perform a man's task and failing, or perhaps just another saying which lacked honesty of purpose. Whilst other Ministers did obtain Cabinet approval for their respective proposals, that the memorandum submitted by a Senior Minister that had no financial implications should have been rejected leaves room for much conjecture.

Thus, when it was apparent that a massive let down had been perpetrated and failure to obtain approval was only a viable refuge, the only remedy available was direct Trade Union Action. So the Technical Officers under the banner of a Joint Front launched its historical strike in August 1972.

When it was imperative that all Technical Officers should have participated en-masse as it did concern every single one of them a group of dissidents chose to breakaway ignoring the more noble principles involved and spurning camaraderie because of a misguided sense of loyalty. When Godfathers' of Trade Unionists' who should have championed for the just demand that promises held out should be honoured chose to look on complacently. When a Minister who should have used his influence to establish and convince the importance of keeping his promises chose to turn all guns instead, what seemed to the Joint Front a matter that needed only attention from the right quarter

suddenly became an enormous fight for survival. That this struggle continued into its second month causing immeasurable hardship to entire families was due to all three factors but mainly due to the fact that unity among the Technical Officers could not be achieved though attempts were made at various times. However sanity prevailed in the end, and a negotiated settlement was possible.

This, then is the end of a story. A story of a betrayer who fittingly had to witness the shattering of his own creation. A story of a betrayal by a misguided group who were responsible for many a heart burn. A story of the betrayed, a band of militants whose courageous struggle against overwhelming odds and their willingness to make sacrifices will always remain a shining example. To them greats and their heroic leaders I salute and dedicate this humble contribution.



Billiard Table

Ex — members of the Irrigation Technical Assistants' Union who are residing in U. K. maintained typical 'Irrigation Spirit' by responding to the request made by Our Union for a Billiard Table Cloth.

Almost all the Ex — members rallied round AMARA WIJESINGHA, STANLEY FERNANDO and D. C. JAYARAJAH to organise a Billiard Table Cloth within a very short spell of time.

We sincerely thank all of them for their spontaneous gesture.

I. T. A. U.

The Middle Grade Technical Officers

H. D. KARUNARATNE

The Middle Grade Technical Officers fit in below the Professionals and above skilled workers in the Engineering and Scientific Structure. They are trained for varying periods of one to five years in the different fields they are engaged on.

The important role played by this category in the Development of the Country is unheard and unsung being over shadowed by the Professionals. It is the Middle Grade Technical Officer who does the pioneering work, collection of data and the execution of designs of the professionals, not forgetting the fact that the research and designs by the Professionals are dependent entirely on the data and analysis carried out by this category. In addition to the responsible work performed they are burdened with the responsibility of the output of skilled and unskilled workmen, quality control and being in charge of stores plant and machinery especially in the Civil Engineering Field.

Although almost all Middle Grade Technical Officers have the basic qualifications their salary scales, service conditions in various departments, differed considerably. There were over 150 different salary scales. This difference was due to the Technical men being spread out all over the Island in the performance of their duty by the country and being unable to meet very often for joint action to rectify this ridiculous position. The Administrators took advantage of this to maintain the difference.

Realising the importance of joining together the Technical Officers Union Federated to win the just place due to them in the society. Representations made through the Federations enabled to reduce the 150 odd salary scales to 53 scales through the L. B. de Silva Commission but with no due recognition for qualifications and the importance of work performed. The pathetic position of the Middle Grade Technical Officers could be very clearly seen by the comparison of their wage structure with that of the Clerical Service. The position was the Clerical Service on the 28th year was able to draw a salary of Rs. 1200/- while a Middle Grade Technical officer ended up at Rs. 840/- on the 19th year under the best conditions.

We were able to better this position considerably after 6 years of agitation which culminated in a General Strike on 11th May 1977, by the Cabinet approving a Unified Salary Structure for the Middle Grade Technical and Scientific Officers. Our success emphasises the importance of the Unity and clears any doubts regards the strength of Technical Officers. Attempts to get the Unified Salary Structure implemented have not borne fruit in some departments due to the disinterestedness of the authorities thus wittingly or unwittingly creating frustration affecting development.

No Government to-date had given recognition to the importance of the work performed by us and given the justifiable place. To pin point a few discriminatory actions —

- (1) In the Irrigation Department Engineers are paid a construction allowance of Rs. 300/- but those who are responsible and does the actual construction are not paid a cent extra.
- (2) In 1965 the G.A.A. were paid an additional Rs. 500/- under the guise of the production drive.
- (3) In 1978 the Engineers are paid a pensionable allowance of Rs. 500/- and granted other concessions under the brain drain.

In all these instances it would be seen that Middle Grade Technical Officer had been ignored. Like the Engineers the Middle Grade Technical Officers too were prevented from retiring under the normal rules applicable to other Public Servants, but when it came to the payment in recognition of our Services we are ignored. This very clearly shows that those close to the powers have made them to wear blinkers and are being compelled to see only the advisors point of view. However the proof of the importance of the Middle Grade Technical personnel is Germany today. After the World War I, the professionals were taken away by the imperialists to be used for their development and the resurrection of the country was left in the hands of the Middle Grade Technical men and they built it to be one of the worlds most advanced countries.

The development of Our Country and ascertaining that we are rightly remunerated are responsibilities that devolve on us. The small differences should not weaken or divert us from the goal. The sense of superiority in some created by their own uncertainties should not divert us from the purpose. Let us do everything within our power to march forward to our goal under one banner.



A sixty year old man who was on a holiday telephoned his sixty year old wife and said that he was having a time of life with a thirty year old girl he had met. She replied that she was certainly enjoying herself more because she met a thirty year old man.

"How do you figure that" She responded in an irritated tone. "Simple mathematics, my dear, she replied, "Thirty goes into sixty more times than sixty goes into thirty".

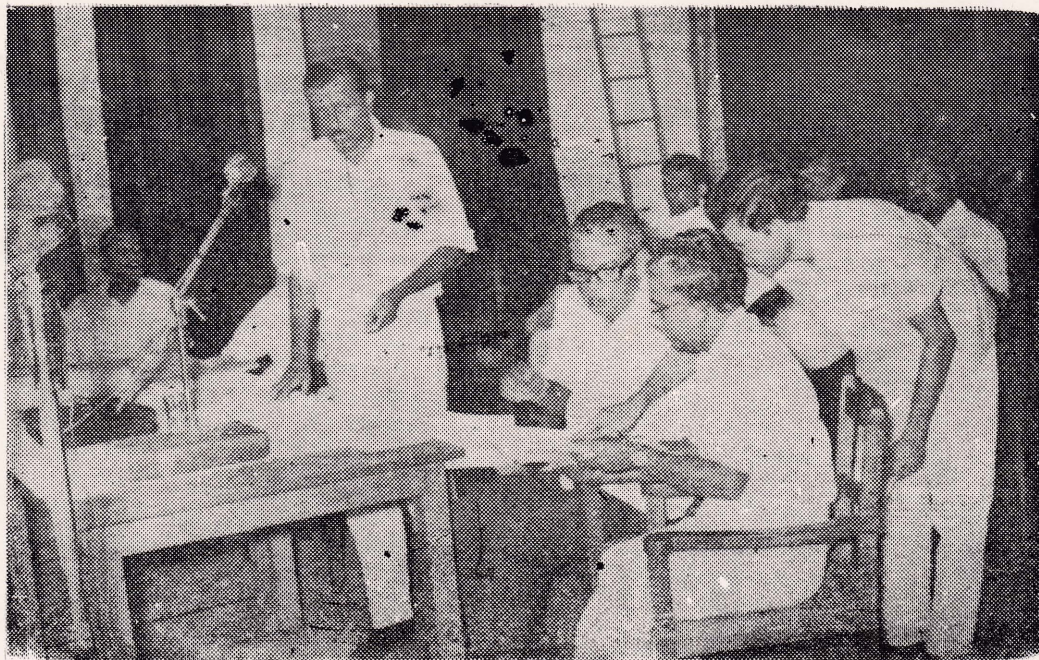


Jean, Audry and Monica were comparing notes about the greatest thrills of their lives. Jean said the greatest thrill of her life was when she walked down the aisle". Monica said it was when her fiance slipped the ring on her finger.

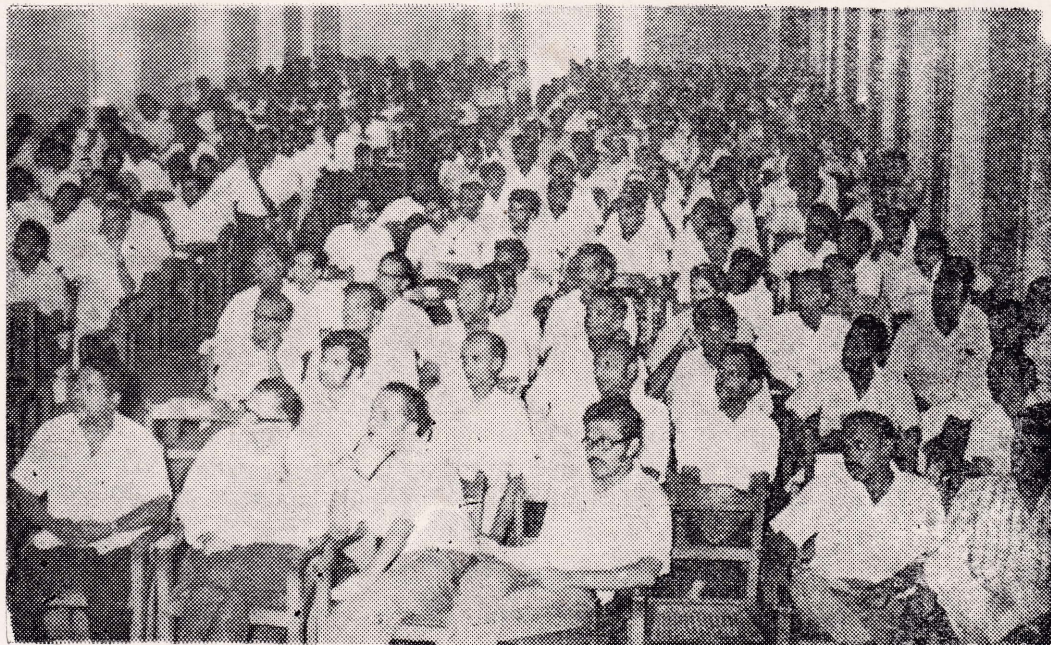
Audry said the greatest thrill of her life was when her squint eyed sister gave her an enema.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1973

(Just after the Longest Strike of the Union)



The President I. A. N. ALLES, addressing the members.



Members at the meeting.

IRRIGATION

N. W. SURaweera

It was in the Year 1933 at the very inception that young lads, two of each of Sinhalese, Tamils and Burghers, were selected by Mr. B. G. Meadon, Director of Irrigation from among the Engineering Ex-Apprentices ("Apperintaas" as we were then commonly called) of the Public Works Department, for posts of Irrigation Sub Inspector.

Mr. D. S. Senanayake, who was the Minister of Agriculture and Lands observed that the "Apperintaas" of the Public Works Department who were languishing for want of permanent jobs, after having passed qualifying examinations, owing to a serious financial depression, were just the young men, who, without much further training, could get on to the field and help him implement his then "Food Drive" and Agricultural Policy.

The six young men viz : Messrs. Melville D'Silva, Eustace Conderlag, V. Selvanayagam, C. C. Canagasunderam, M. D. Fernando and I were instructed to report to Mr. John Clogg, Superintendent of Surveys, at Queen's House about the middle of January 1933. For a fortnight we were put through the use of Circumferentor, Dumpy Level and Theodolite in the rear compound of Queen's House now Janadhipathi Mandiraya. Finding that the very able instructions of Mr. Clogg were producing good and quick results we were put to a test in which all of us accomplished ourselves with credit.

In a day or two all six received marching orders and in the first week of February 1933 I reported at Bandarawela to Mr. W. A. Guthrie who was then Irrigation Engineer in-charge Central Division, and was the last white Director of Irrigation about twenty years later before he retired and left Ceylon.

Mr. Guthrie explained to me in his Office the different types of Irrigation (a) Storage and Distribution and (b) Direct Diversion, with sketches to help me in the field work which was surveying and levelling after which the planwork was done in his Office at Bandarawela. Mr. W. A. de Silva then Assistant Irrigation Engineer was put immediately in-charge of me, and I can still remember taking Mr. W. A. de Silva on my motor cycle pillion.

On first appointment we were paid Rs. 100/- per mensem and allowed a Messenger at Rs. 15/- per mensem, in addition, if I remember right I was paid Rs. 22.50 as fixed transport allowance on my Motor Cycle.

In my very first year of service I was inured the correct definition of IRRIGATION, thus : IRRIGATION means WATER, WATER means the MOSQUITO, MOSQUITO means MALARIA, MALARIA means DEATH, DEATH means HELL. So it looked as if we had joined the Irrigation Department for a passport to Hell. Of the six Mr. M. D. Fernando was later lucky enough to be taken into the Mechanical Branch of the Irrigation Department while the rest were called upon to serve most of the time in jungles far away, from even

human habitation and often face the rigours of Malaria, apart from being forced to walk several miles even to get to the site of a survey e.g. Leaving my motor cycle at Bibile Walauwa I had to walk all the way to Nilgala, crossing several streams before I reached Nilgala Anicut.

It was surveys, surveys and plans right upto 1940 when I was transferred from Colombo to Polonnaruwa and reported for duty to Mr. J. S. Turean, Construction Engineer, Parakrama Sumudra Scheme, who sent me to the Headworks to take over from Mr. S. M. Arumugam then Assistant Irrigation Engineer.

In April 1942, while I was at Matale, Mr. Guthrie who was Assistant Director came and more or less bodily lifted me and my staff dumping us at Dambulla to construct a landing strip for fighter Aircraft after which we were all moved on to Sigiriya to construct the Kibissa Aerodrome with Mr. M. C. Abraham, Irrigation Engineer in-charge of both jobs.

After handing over Kibissa Aerodrome to the R. A. F. I was engaged on Soil Surveys of the Kirindi-Oya Reservoir Scheme, Huruluwewa Construction and in charge of Kurunegala Sub Division and Kandy Sub Division in 1953.

It was at this stage that the Technical Assistants got together and inaugurated the First Association.



Girls get minks the same way minks get minks.



Macky had just returned from the Netherlands, I asked him about Amsterdam. "Wonderful" he said "only I should have been there 20 years ago." "When Amsterdam was really Amsteradm, eh?" I asked with a wink. "No" said Macky with a sigh "When Macky was really Macky."



The difference between frustration and panic ? Frustration is the first time you discover you can't do it the second time. Panic is the second time you discover you can't do it the first time.



A Survey was conducted to ascertain the reasons men get out of bed in the middle of the night. 2% to go to the toilet, 3% to raid the fridge. The other 95% get up to go home.

Hello Comrade,

DO YOU KNOW ?

that the Technical Assistants have maintained high standards in all fields of Technical work, from Investigation surveys through Construction to maintenance of Irrigation works, construction of Buildings, Roads and Bridges, and that is why the T. A. is very often described as a 'Jack of all trades and a master of many'?

that the Irrigation Technical Assistants' Service has always been known as a service with dedicated, hardworking and honest officers who could handle any type of Civil Engineering work ?

that the Irrigation Technical Assistant was the pioneer Government officer to brave the jungles infested with wild animals and malaria, in order to resurrect the ancient Irrigation Schemes that had been abandoned for centuries ? for example :—

that 40 years ago an Irrigation Technical Assistant (designated as Field Assistant those days), was the first Government Official to travel from Anuradhapura to Padaviya (55 miles) to prepare the Preliminary Investigation Report on the orders of the first Minister of Agriculture, Hon. D. S. Senanayake who later became the first Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. He travelled by bullock cart and trudged through jungle tracks infested with wild animals. Now living in retirement, his mind is still fresh with the details of that risky journey . . !

that thousands of Irrigation schemes, big and small, such as Nalanda Dam, Heen Ganga Trough cum-Bridge at Hasalaka, Rajangana Dam, Muthuaiyankaddukulam Scheme, Vakaneri Scheme, Muruthawela Scheme and thousand others, stand as monuments to the honest and dedicated work of the T. AA.?

that our service forms the Backbone of the Irrigation Department and that the progress of the T. AA. is the progress of the Department.

that, though we are some of the most overworked field officers, we also happen to be the least appreciated, that we had to fight our way very hard to win even the most legitimate demands to improve our service to the present condition.....?

that during the past decade, our union has grown in stature and won for us many benefits which were opposed (and/or sabotaged) by even these top officials in the Department who rose from our ranks...?

that the benefits won by us have been through struggles launched with such sacrifice and the dedicated leadership, and the solidarity in Our Union has been regarded with much respect by other Trade Unions in the Country...?

that during our Struggles, were 'Sacked' or 'Dismissed' several times for defying the Essential Service Order, etc., but that we stood against injustices with solidarity and clear conscience as weapons....?

that our Union office bearers have tested the jab of rifle-butts, looked into the rifle barrels held up to their faces, beaten up by stooges of politicians, and even were taken to the infamous 4th floor of Police Head Quarters for the crime of explaining the truth to you and fighting against injustice.....?

LONG LIVE THE IRRIGATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS.

LONG LIVE TRADE UNION SOLIDARITY.

M. D. ABEYWARDENA

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

It seems there were two brothers by the name of Joe and John. John was married but Joe was single. Joe the single one was the owner of an old Row Boat. It so happened that John's wife died the same day as his brother's boat sank. A few days later a kind old lady met Joe on the street and having mistaken him for John, said 'Oh! Mr. John I was very sorry to hear of your great loss. You must have felt terrible (Joe is under the impression that she is referring to the old Row Boat) and says, well I am not a bit sorry. She was a rotten old thing from the start. Her bottom was all chewed up. She smelt of old dead fish and even the first time I got on to her she made water faster than anything. I know that she had a crack in her back and a pretty hole in front that kept getting bigger everytime I used her. Four guys from the other side of the town came looking for a good time and asked if I could lend her to them. Well, naturally I warned them that she wasn't so hot but that they could get a crack at her. The result was the crazy fools all tried to get on to her at once. This was too much for her and cracked up in the middle..... The old lady fainted.

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බැඳී බැම්මට හරස් වෙලා වතුර	පිරෙනවා
පිරුණු වැවේ සසල වතුර අප	සනසනවා
සුළං කැරලි වැවෙහි නටා සිසිල	ගෙනෙනවා
බහින ඉරේ පැහැය උරා වැව	දිලිසෙනවා

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ඇරුණු දෙරිත් වතුර මිදී ඇලෙහි	ගලනවා
ඉවුරේ නැගුණු පත් පදුරක් සමග	හැපෙනවා
හැපුණු ගමන් තුරුල් වෙලා රහස්	කියනවා
රහස් අසා සිනාවෙමින් අතත්	වනනවා

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කතර ගෙවා කුඹුරක් දෑක එයට	පනිනවා
වතුර ඇදෙනු දකින ගොයම් තුටින්	නටනවා
නටන අතර ලග කැරලෙහි පිටට	ගහනවා
වැදෙන හඬින් සංගීතය ඉබේ	නැගෙනවා

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ගොයම අතර වතුර සෙමින් සෙමෙන්	ඇදෙනවා
නියර වෙතට ගොස් ආපසු ගොයමට	එනවා
වක්කඩයක් දෑකුණ කලට පහළ	බලනවා
පහළ ගොයම ගීත ගයා මග	සරසනවා

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කට කොනකින් නැගුණු සිනාවෙන්	ඔපවෙනවා
ඇඹුල රුගෙන ගැමි සුවතිය සෙමින්	ඇදෙනවා
කරලක් දෑක නතර වෙලා එදෙස	බලනවා
නියර වතල පිණිසොදු ඇගෙ දෙසා	සිහිනවා

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අත සෝද ගන්නට ඇය වෙලට	නැමෙනවා
වතුර වහා ඇතේ මුහුණ බිමෙහි	අඳිනවා
රූපය දෑක ඇතේ මුහුණ සිනා	පුරනවා
ඇඳී සිත්තම සිනා මවා එබේ	බලනවා

කරල් පැසි කරන්නෙත් ගෙදරට	යනවා
ගෙයි මුල්ලක නැගුණු අටුව විසේත්	පිරෙනවා
පිරුණු අටුව පියන වසා නිසසල	වෙනවා
පුංචි පුතුගෙ අත් පොතී එකිනෙකට	වැදෙනවා

පාසැල් ගොස් එන දරුවට බඩගිනි	එනවා
ගෙදර ලිපේ ලිගලේ මත බතක්	ඉදෙනවා
පාසලේදී කිව් කවියක් සිටියට	එනවා
පිරුණු වැවේ සසල වතුර අප	සනසනවා

Personal Glimpses

D. I. E. and I. E. dropped in unexpectedly to inspect the Anicut scheme, the Survey of which was done a couple of months earlier. The T. A. - was picked up at his quarters and all three proceeded to the site. They were going to the site to discuss the proposals but only the T. A. knew what he was carrying :—

Two blank drawing papers rolled up - for he had not done the survey plans :

The bosses were discussing the proposals while walking upto the site which had to be reached by crossing a foot-bridge made of a single log (edanda) put across the stream that was flowing full due to previous days rains.

Carefully, the bosses crossed the 'edanda' and now it was my Comrade's turn. He knew what was in store for him when his 'plans' were shown. Half way on the 'edanda' he slipped and fell into the stream. With the bosses shouting on the bank, my friend was struggling and making an attempt to go after the roll of 'plans' that was being carried away down the stream shouting - "Sir, the plans, the plans....." "D. I. E. shouted back, "Never mind the plans, you come up", - and solved the problem of my friend.

M. D. A.

He likes to play prominence wherever he went. He was called "Go" for obvious reasons, and was well known for not being scared of English grammer and for refusing to prononnce 'f'.

The year was 1958 and the place - Giritale Irrigation Club.

"You know Prank, today I am late because I went pissing with I. E."

"Where ? In the tank ?

"Yes, why ?

"Then the tank will spill tonight !

Everybody started rolling in laughter and G O was non-plussed and angry, for he did not know why

Fuming, he gulped down the drink, pulled out his shoes and pointing it at them -

"Why you b..... b..... lapping, I'll hit you with my ZOO !

M. D. A.

The Other Ball Point

As Editor, I had to explain why, the Newsletter was long overdue, I lamely put the blame on my son saying,

"Every time I pull out my ball point, my son grabs it"

The President asked

"What happened to the other ball point"

"Every time I pull that out my wife grabs it", I quipped.

Editor.

பதக்கமெங்கள் வெள்ளி விழா

ஆயிரத்துத் தொளாயிரத்து ஐம்பத்து மூன்றினில்
அறுபதோடு ஆரம்பித்து எழுபத்தி எட்டினில்
அறுநூறும் தாண்டிவருட மிருபத்தி ஐந்தினில்
அங்கத்தவர் நாமெல்லாம் சங்கத்தூண் களன்றோ.

நீர்ப்பாசன தொழில் நுட்ப உதவியாளர் நாங்கள்
நீர்ப்பாய்ச்சி தொழில்செய்யும் விவசாயி நீங்கள்
நீர்நிலைகள் தேடித்தேடி அலைவதுவே எங்கள்
நிலையான தொழிலாகி தடுப்போம் பலநதிகள்

நீர்ப்பாசன மின்சார நெடுஞ்சாலை யமைச்சில்
நீர்ப்பாசன மின்றேல் மின்சாரம் போச்சே!
நெடுஞ்சாலை யோரத்தில் வாய்க்காலா யாச்சே!
நிலையாதேநா மின்றேல் நெடிதாயின் வமைச்சே!

காடுகள் மேடுகள் காலமெல்லாம் திரிந்தே
கானகத்து விலங்குகள் காட்சியெல்லாம் சிலிர்த்தே
கண்டுவிட்ட குளங்ளை கணக்கிட்டே உயர்த்தி
களிகொள்ள விவசாயிக் குதவியாளர் நாங்கள்

கங்கை காவிரி கால்வாய்கள் தேடிவந்து
கற்கரை நற்கரை தனியார்கள் நாடிவந்து
கண்ணாடி கைக்கொண்டு மேடுள்ளம் தேடித்தந்து
கலங்கரை விளக்காகி அணைகட்டும் தொழில்நுட்பர்

நீர்நிலையைப் பெருக்கி நல்லணையை நிறுத்தி
நிலமெல்லாம் செருக்கி நன்றிரைப் பாய்ச்சி
நிலையாகச் சுருக்கி நிலஅளவைக் குறுக்கி
நிறுத்திட்டால், குறுக்கே விவசாயிகள் செருக்கில்!

பசிவந்தால் பத்தும் பறந்திடும் மனிதருக்கு
புசியென்றால் நித்தம் விளைந்திட பயிர்களுக்கு
கசிந்திடுமா புத்தம் புதிய நிலம் வளம்பெறவே!
நசிந்திடுவர் செத்து மடிந்திடுவர்நம் சேவையின்றேல்

இந்நிலையில் நாமும் நம் தொழிலும் பொலிந்திருக்க
இருபத்தினான் குமணியும் சேவையில் செறிந்திருக்க
கருநெல்லின் பதர்போலே கண்டவரை தெரிந்தெடுத்து
களங்கமாய் எம்மவரை கூசாமல் சிலர்தெறிப்பர்,

கட்டியே உயர்த்தி நன்றிரைப் பெருக்கி
கால்வாய்கள் வழியாகி தண்ணீரை செலுத்தியும்
காணாதே என்பர் களங்கமுள்ள விவசாயி
கண்டித்தால் வந்திடுவர் அரிவாள்மண் வெட்டியோடு

போதாத குறைக்கு அரசியல் வாதிகளும்
போதாதே யென்றுசொல்லி பகடக்கா யாக்கிடவும்
திதாக சொல்லியென்றும் தெருமக்கள் வாக்கெடுக்க
திராதே யென்றுமெங்கள் சிரழிவே பொருக்கலையே!

திணைக்கள் சுற்று நிருபம் கிறுங்காத கைவிலங்கு
திமரென்று சோதனையோ டதிகாரர் நச்சரிப்பு
தித்திக்கும் இந்நிலையில் மந்திரிமார் எச்சரிப்பு
திடமாக நின்றிட்டால் தந்தியினில் இடமாற்றம்

இன்னுமின்னும் வேதனைகள் இல்லையென்றே இல்லையடா
முன்னும்பின்னும் காலடியில் சுற்றுகின்ற விவசாயி
பின்னுகின்ற கதைகளை கருத்துடனே விளக்கியடா
மென்னுகின்ற வசைமொழி வந்திடாமல் பேணனுமே!

இத்தனைக்கும் எங்களுக்கோ இருந்ததில்லை இனியவாழ்வு
இல்லையென்றால் எங்களதும் கங்கமுமே இந்நாட்டில்
தொல்லையில்லை தொழில்நுட்பர் தொலைந்திருப்பர்
இவ்வளவில்
தொழிற்பசியால் அலைந்திருப்பர் களம்வேறு தேடியே!

பணிவாக வார்த்தைகள்திரு சில்வாகுண சேகராவுக்கு
பதினான்கு ஆண்டுகள் பல நற்பனிகள் செய்தவர்க்கு
பலமாக்க திணைக்களத்தின் முதுகெலும்பாய் எங்களையே
பலதையும் நம்நலன்கருதி நம்முடனே உழைத்தவர்க்கு

பலமுறைகள் பலத்துடனே வேலைநிறுத்தம் செப்திருந்தும்
பலதடவை அரசாங்கம் பல வாராய் தடுத்திருந்தும்
படித்ததில்லை சரித்திரத்தில் பலதோல்வி கண்டதில்லை
பதக்கமெங்கள் வெள்ளிவிழா தொழில்நுட்பர் ஒற்று
மைக்கே!

நானுமோர் தொழில்நுட்பன்
நாலேந்து வரிசமைத்தேன்

நாமெல்லாம் வெள்ளிவிழா
நாடெல்லாம் கொண்டாடிடவே!

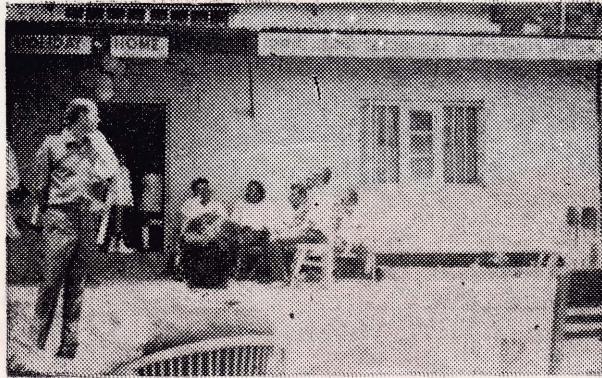
நானிங்கு கம்பனல்ல
நாடுபுகழ் கவிஞனல்ல

நானாக தமிழ் கொடுத்தேன்
நண்பன் நவரத்தினசிங்கம் நான்.



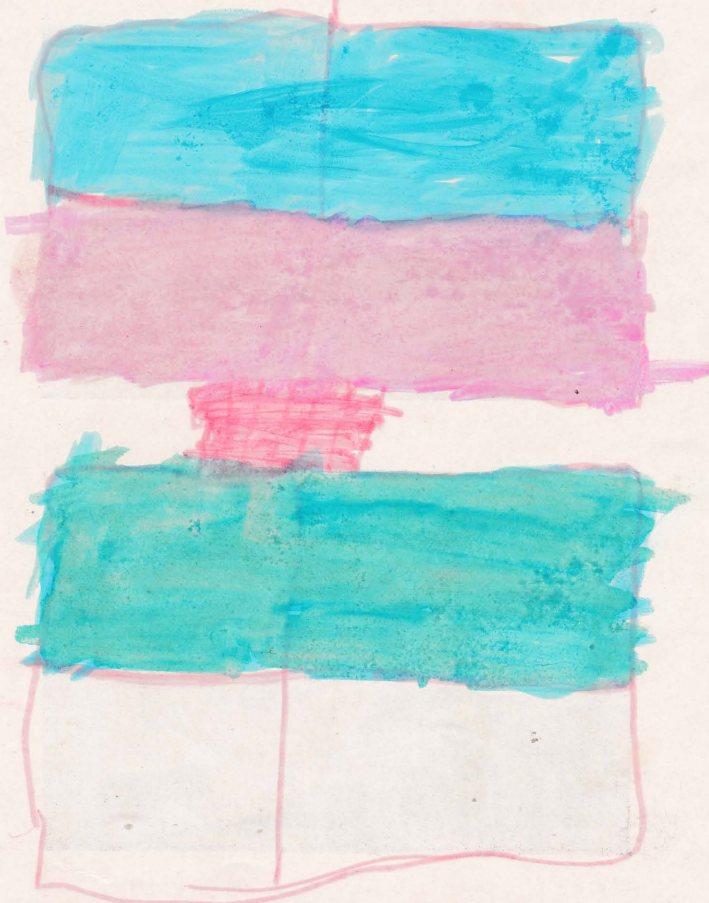


OPENING OF AMBEWELA HOLIDAY HOME





OPENING BY AMERICAN HOLIDAY HORN



THE PERIOD 1968 - 1972

G. S. HEMARATNE

In 1968, with the growing up in age our Union changed its concept of being a 'club' to a Trade Union. During its infancy the Union was mostly negotiating at Departmental level to ensure reasonable conditions of employment and all the Trade Unionism was restricted to matters arising from those of the members. Trade Union consciousness and the change of attitude arose mostly due to the repressive Government in Power and the sky rocketing cost of living which was daily burdening the members. In common all the middle class sector and poor classes were feeling the pinch. Along with other Technical Officers and allied services an Island wide struggle was launched which culminated in a General Strike which went on for almost a month. The strike resulted in the Government appointing a Salaries Commission and an increase in the salary as an allowance being granted as an interim measure.

It was our members who were in the forefront during the struggle especially in the outstations. During the strike we did not succumb to various pressures and intimidation from politicians and others. The Departmental hierarchy too tried to scare us by serving quit notices on the probationers and later very subtly by cornering us to accept their terms of settlement, to benefit only us, and call off the strike. We point blankly refused this. The lessons learned from the struggle were numerous and stood in good stead in a similar struggle called later and will be of good use in the future too.

In 1970, with the change of government an integration of Departments and services in our Ministry was forced upon us as Government policy. Our contention was the manner in which the different services were to be fitted in, and there was lot of scepticism about this move. After dialogue at different levels a reasonable solution was arrived at. Besides the fitting in of services we had deeper problems in our service for which the Department had no solution at all and it was only the T.C.E.O., the new organisation, that could help us.

The largest problem was the one of the Irrigation Learners, recruited by the previous Government, but which did not provide for their employment once they completed their training. Out of 225 Learners 55 completed the Final Examination. The Department after lot of cajoling and coaxing accepted the fact that some 40 odd vacancies were there in the cadre. The other benefits which were handed to the members in the T.C.E.O. were :-

- (a) Merit promotion from Gr. III to Gr. II
- (b) Merit promotions for work supervisors to Gr. III of Technical Officers Cadre.
- (c) Increase of Engineering Grade promotion from 20% to 25% — This was at a time when the Director of Irrigation was seriously contemplating not to promote T.AA. to the Engineering Grade any more.

- (d) Waving off of the Efficiency Bar examination which the Department too was feeling not worth having. Many a T.A. was unable to get promoted to the Higher Grade because of this obstacle. Subsequently the Department too scrapped this E.B. Exam.
- (e) Reducing the period of service from 10 years to 3 years to gain promotion to Grade II on completing the Senior Examination.
- (f) Prospects of serving in their home stations or closer home — this benefited a lot of members in the Department the stations were widely scattered all over the Island.

Leaving aside the benefits I had mentioned above, there was no forcing any of the members to the T. C. E. O. They were given ample time to consider for themselves to choose and give their option. Still for all these were come members who wanted to be in both. We stepped in and thwarted that type of uncertainty. What befell the T. C. E. O. subsequently is anyway now history.

Then in 1971 our country experienced an uprising of youth which no other country have ever had. They wanted to change the social, political and economical pattern of the country. Whether our sympathies were with them or not was the immediate problem. Our contention was the manner in which the youth of country was desecrated and the unwarranted harrasment launched by the guardians of law on the youth of the country on the whole. We strongly condemned this actions of the Government for which our Union activities were kept in surveillance and we were harangued by the Special Investigations Unit of the Police for hours. Some of our members too were taken into custody on suspicion of being involved in insurgency activities and released afterwards.

We intensified our efforts to educate the membership on the relationship between Trade Unionism and politics. There were some members who misconstrued our intentions. Our politics was not akin to the politics as known to the country, in the sense the politics of the U. N. P., S. L. F. P., L. S. S. P., or C. P. or any other Party for that matter. Our politics is that of the wage earner — the struggle of the peasant and worker for existence.

Though there was no major break through in our pursuits, there was a cumulative effect especially in the formation of a Technical Officers Federation and in getting the Government to implement a Unified Cadre for Technical Officers in the Government Sector with an unified salary structure. The Unified Technical Officers' Service which was implemented by the last Government has yet to bear the fruits. No benefits are served to us on a platter, by experience we know that we have to struggle for them.

I thank the present committee for inviting me to give a write up of the activities of the Union during my tenure of office as Hony. Secretary for its 25th year Souvenir. I sincerely wish that the I. T. A. U. will militantly pursue in its activities in the Trade Union field without complacently watching the moves to still Trade Union activities by a repressive Government however powerful it may be.

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ITAU STRIKES

The membership of the I. T. A. U. which celebrates its 25th Anniversary in July 1978 has never exceeded 700. Before 1970 it was less than 500. The Union is therefore comparatively small. It is not often that a small Union particularly one without affiliation to and the backing of a political party, consistently engages in militant struggle for the betterment of its members as well as for the protection of workers' rights in general. The I T. A. U. is one such. Perhaps its birth in 1953, the year of the Hartal has influenced its future action.

At the beginning it was conservative. During the first decade, activities were confined to traditional methods of representation to bureaucrats and Ministers. Annual dinners at which Departmental and Ministry bosses were wined and dined, no doubt with the expectation that they would soften towards the pressing problems confronting the members, were a regular feature. Ten years of this conciliatory attitude could not solve even the most routine problems such as effecting promotions and granting increments in time, making annual transfers or allocating quarters on an agreed basis in consultation with the Union.

In the early 1960s perhaps through association with other public service trade unions particularly those of technical services in other departments, and a younger leadership a complete change took place. No more wine and dinners for the bosses. Either give what is reasonably due or the Union will obtain it through struggle and sacrifice.

1 9 6 2

The first strike in which the Union participated was in 1961 or 1962. It was in defence of the principle that Armed Forces should not be used to replace workers on strike. The SLFP government of the day deployed the Armed Forces in the Port of Colombo when Unions of Port Workers were on strike. The Union called a one day Protest Strike along with a number of other public service trade unions. The consent of members was obtained through a referendum.

In all sectors the strike was successful and was a clear demonstration to the Government that the working class as a whole was prepared to defend its rights. Further action on the demand for withdrawal of the Armed Forces from the Port could not be pursued due to the attempted coup de tat by some officers from the Armed Forces and Police.

The high level of participation by ITAU members was to be a significant feature of future strikes even though members were scattered in small numbers all over the Island.

1 9 6 5

The next strike was confined to the ITAU and was scheduled to take place in September 1965. The decision to strike was unanimously ratified at the 12th AGM held on 13/05/1965. The main demands were -

- (1) A cadre ratio of 5:3:1 between Grade II, Grade I and Spl. Grade.
- (2) A transfer scheme and Board with Union representation.
- (3) Stationing of Key Union officials in Colombo.

Three (03) months notice of strike action was given by a memorandum addressed to the Minister on 03/06/1965. The Director of Irrigation, the Permanent Secretary and the Junior Minister had discussions with the Union but their promises were not fulfilled. Preparations for the strike went on apace. The membership responded very well but part of the Leadership was not quite ready. So at a Special General Meeting held on 29/8/65 it was decided to postpone action for two (02) weeks. The momentum was broken and the Executive committee which was empowered to call out the strike decided against it even though none of the demands had been granted. Finally a one day token strike was held on 24/12/1965 as a protest against the long delay. The only result from this strike was a discussion with the Minister where he agreed to submit a Cabinet Paper on the Cadre Ratio demand.

1 9 6 7

This issue remained the central problem through 1966 and early 1967. The authorities, perhaps aware of the Union's inability to organise any kind of effective direct action, not only did not find a solution but created further issues by transferring a key official of the Union to Mahiyangana and introducing an interview as a basis of selection for promotion to the Engineering Grade. Hitherto, these promotions were made on seniority and merit assessed on each officer's record of service. A "work to rule" campaign was planned but dropped as impractical in view of the nature of duties and distribution of members.

By June 1967 dissatisfaction was so great that 351 out of 369 members, i.e. 95% voted for strike in a referendum. Notice of the strike to commence on 01/08/1967 was given in early July. By the time the 14th AGM was held on 01/08/1967 the membership had increased to 554 with the enrolment of the new batch of Learners. Nearly 80% were present at the AGM to ratify the strike decision. The demands were —

- (1) Cadre of T.A.A. in Grade II, Grade I and Spl. Grade to be determined on the ratio of 5:3:1
- (2) Promotion to Engineering Grade to be strictly on seniority and merit assessed on each officer's record of service i.e. without an interview.

On 19/07/1967 the Minister met a Union deputation and informed that :-

- (a) The cadre ratio issue would be referred to the committee which reported on the Unified Engineering service and consisted mainly of professional engineering and scientific personnel.
- (b) The number of posts in the Special Grade was increased from 11 to 28.

(c) Promotions to the Engineering Grade would be according to earlier practice.

The Executive Committee rejected these proposals and informed the Minister that the decision to strike could not be changed unless the cadre ratio demand was granted in toto. In response to a letter addressed to the Prime Minister on 28/07/67 a conference was held at Temple Trees on 31/07/67. After a long discussion, the Prime Minister gave a personal assurance that a satisfactory solution would be found on the basis of the recommendations of the Committee. On this assurance the strike was called off. The Committee's report was issued expeditiously and recommended that :-

(a) the number of posts on Special Grade be increased from 11 to 50

(b) the demand for a 5:3:1 Cadre Ratio be referred to a Salaries Commission.

This increase in Special Grade posts and the additional 60 posts in Grade I created by the appointment of 180 new T.A.A. to Grade II effectively solved the problem of promotions for several years.

1 9 6 8

In the meantime, a rapidly rising cost of living resulted in agitation from all sections for a general increase in salaries. Although, the appointment of a Salaries Commission was promised in the Budget Speech in July, it became a reality only in November after many months of agitation and after notice of strike had been served on the Government. Trade Unions representing the Clerical and Allied Grades in the Public Service demanded an increase of Rs. 40/- a month, while the ITAU contributed to the Government Technical Officers' Trade Union Federation demand for an increase of 25% or Rs. 75/- whichever was more. A common demand for withdrawal of all victimisation imposed for legitimate Trade Union activity was added.

A joint front was set up. Propaganda meetings were held everywhere in the country from the end of 1967.

The Government adopted a repressive attitude, banning demonstrations, etc. Late in 1968 employees in the Postal and Local Government Sectors also campaigned separately for these demands. In the absence of any positive response, the Government was notified that the General Strike would commence on 28/11/68. The Prime Minister conferred with the Clerical and Technical Joint Front on 20th November and later with Postal Front as well as a delegation representing three Federations of workers Unions separately. But, as nothing more than a promise of implementing what the Salaries Commission would recommend was forthcoming, the strike took place as scheduled.

It was a complete success 467 out of 495 ITAU members participated, i.e. about 95%. In the Clerical Unions it was about 60%, while in the Postal Front 75% joined the strike. The poorest response was from the Technical Officers' Federation, with only 13 out of about 50 Unions responding. Even though most of the Essential Services such as transport and health were unaffected, normal day to day government activity in all parts of the country were affected. The Government

was truly anti-working class and undemocratic. The Armed Services were used to deny the fundamental liberties of picketting, demonstrating and even meeting. The Radio and Press were utilised to broadcast and publicise false propaganda and threats. When these attempts to demoralise strikers were unsuccessful, the Essential Services Order under the Public Security Act was invoked on 30/11/68. But, before the full impact of the strike could bring the Government to the negotiating table, it succeeded in persuading the leaders of the Postal Front to call off their strike, without the knowledge of the members. Despite the collapse of the Postal Front, thousands of workers represented by three (03) Federations joined the strike on 1.12.68. The strike continued for 24 days but the government refused to negotiate. Finally, the Parliamentary Opposition intervened and obtained an assurance on "no victimisation". The strike was called off, thereafter. The large majority of ITAU members stood united to the end. The interim report of the Salaries Commission granted an all round salary increase of about 10%.

1 9 7 2

With the change of government in 1970, the Territorial Civil Engineering Service was set up from 1.2.1971, amalgamating the territorial units of the Irrigation and Highways Department, the Local Government works service and Sections of the Water Supply and Drainage Department. A natural consequence of this amalgamation was the proposal by the Minister to form a Technical Officers' Service. After several months of discussions between the Unions and the Ministry a satisfactory Minute was drawn up and submitted for approval by the Cabinet in January 1972. However the Minister was unable to obtain Cabinet approval. Anticipating these problems, a resolution endorsing Strike Action received overwhelming approval from 450 members present at the 18th AGM held in 1971. Numerous representations made during the first few months of 1971 brought no result. Even a formal interview with the Minister was not granted. Hence, a Referendum held in May 1972 again ratified strike action. A joint Front was formed with seven (07) other Unions involved and notice of strike was given in June. The demand was :—

“ Implementation of the Technical Officers' and Works Supervisors' Minutes formulated by the Minister in consultation with the Unions.”

The Cabinet referred the demand to the Salaries Commission which recommended a Cadre Ratio of 1:3:12 instead of 1:3:5 and other adverse changes. The Minister as well as the Unions rejected this. It was then referred to a Committee consisting of Secretaries of 3 Ministries. Last minute negotiations with the Minister were not fruitful.

The strike commenced on 01/08/1972. About 1700 members of 08 Unions formed into a Joint Front participated. The Essential Services Order was invoked after 21 days. But, it was successfully resisted and the strike continued until it was called off after negotiations with the Prime Minister on 07/09/72 i.e. after 42 days. Subsequent to a conference with the Prime Minister at Temple Trees on 27/10/72, a Committee appointed by her issued its report in about 6 months. Although the ratio of 1:3:5 was not granted the number of posts recommended have been calculated on this basis and ensured promotions for all those who qualify during the next few years.

This was by far the longest ITUA strike: It was also the first to take place after Sri Lanka became a Republic on 22/05/1972.

1 9 7 7

The last strike by the ITAU was on 11. 5. 77- It was a protest strike in support of the demand for a Unified Structure of Salaries, grading and promotions for all middle level Technical and Scientific Officers in the Public Service. The strike was launched by the Public Service Technical Officers' Trade Union Federation. In the ITAU 245 out of 645 members participated. The overall response from federated Unions too was not very satisfactory as only 11 out of 39 took part in the Strike.

As a result of a continuous campaign over several years by the 2 Federations representing technical and scientific officers, the Minister of Public Administration appointed a Committee of technical personnel including 2 nominees of the Federations in June 1976 to report on this issue. This Committee issued a favourable report in March 1977. After the strike, the Cabinet approved the recommendations of the Committee in the form of a Minute and sanctioned its implementation effective from 01/05/1977,

NISSANKA DE SILVA

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Shortly after Malik brought his bride to their new home he found that Paulie had hung a motto over their bed. It read "I need thee every hour". The next day he hung up one of his own which read "God give me strength".

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A tourist in search of lodgings inquired from old man cuddled up with a young thing "How far is your old cock Inn".

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Having received a return from a bachelor executive who claimed a dependent Son, an income tax inspector sent the form back with a note saying, "This must be a stenographic error". Back came the report with an added notation, You are telling me!

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They were designing an Art Gallery at Victoria Park "Daughter" said the suspicious father, "that young man who's been walking you through the park, strikes me as being exceeding upolished".

Well, she answered coyly "he is a little rough around the hedges."

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A PAGE FROM THE DIARY OF A TA

ERIC PETHIYAGODA

In 1953 another two officers and I were instructed to do a river survey at Nadumodera which was 25 miles into the Jungle from Allai scheme, which was then considered the Siberia of the Department. One of the officers had already arrived at Nadumodera and was living in a small hut on the bank of the river. The officer and I arrived about a week later, on New years day in pouring rain, late in the night. It is not easy to imagine the utter sense of misery and loneliness that descended upon all of us as we had no space even to sleep, leave alone finding dry clothes or a piece of dry floor. But you just could not keep three good Technical Assistants down and our spirits became buoyant again as the level of several bottles went down. One went out in the dark a few paces away from the hut and came rushing back saying that he was stung by a snake, and fell into a coma. My other friend and I were so worried about this condition that the two of us and a local survey labourer crossed the river which was in heavy flood by boat and sought out a snake expert among the Muslim tobacco cultivators who were resident there. One of them knew of such a person about 2 miles away along the bank. We did not have a torch and in inky darkness we slowly followed a foot path in grass taller than we were. We had gone about a mile when the leader, the tobacco grower and the next, the local survey labourer, shouted 'elephant' and started running back, like lightning. With our hearts in our mouths the two of us walked the balance mile, found the snake specialist and persuaded him with promise of reward, threats to cause him bodily injury and burn his hut down and actual physical propulsion, to come back to our camp with us. Our friend was still in a coma and muttering incoherently. The snake bite specialist then asked for some kohomba leaves. We sent another labourer about a mile away and got some. He then prepared a decoction muttered some incantations to it in a strange tongue and gave some of it to the patient who he said will recover in an hour's time. I think this was the longest hour we ever spent. By the end of the hour the patient was visibly worse and we asked the doctor the reason for this. He called up the labourer who had gone for the kohomba leaves and asked him with which hand he had plucked the leaves. The labourer thought for a while and said "with my right hand." 'I thought so' said the doctor you should have plucked them with your left hand'. We threw the doctor out of the camp and fed the patient with ghee. Next day we prepared a sort of palangin, took him to Allai thence by jeep to Trincomalee and sent him in the night mail to Colombo. I am glad to assure you that he recovered fully except for a glazed look in the eyes, which some say is due to something entirely different from a snake bite!



'Am I the first man to ask you to make love to him?' inquired the handsome young man. 'Yes' replied the beautiful girl 'All the others did without asking.'

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A UNION MEETS A PRIME MINISTER

M. D. ABYAWARDANA

Very few Trade Unions have had the opportunity of airing their grievances to the highest authority in our country. This has been especially so when the Unions concerned are poised for a struggle. The Unions that have struggled to get their genuine grievances redressed have learnt that it has been a very difficult task to penetrate the stone wall of "Bungling Bureaucracy" to reach the leaders so that their grievances could be explained. Very often the country's leaders are misinformed or not informed at all until frustration sets in and the workers are desperate. When the situation deteriorates and the workers walk out on to the street in sheer disgust, the BBs succeed in poisoning the minds of the country's leaders and paving the way for waste of millions of rupees of public funds instead of spending a few hundreds to solve the problems. Governments have come and gone but the BBs continue their games. This will continue as long as BBs are assigned to do the "thinking on behalf of the politicians".

The year was 1967. The then Prime Minister Hon. Dudley Senanayake had launched a "Food-Drive" with a sincere belief that achieving self-sufficiency in food was not a difficult task. He was going round the country meeting farmers in their fields, discussing their problems and encouraging them with incentives. Addressing a meeting of engineers at the Irrigation Department Auditorium he said, "It is useless talking about Acre-feet and cusecs if those Acre-feet and cusecs do not reach the farmer cultivating at the end of the channel...".

While all those were happening, the officers whose duties included "... taking those Acre-feet and cusecs... to the farmer... at the end of the channel" were getting ready to launch a Trade Union struggle to win some of the most reasonable demands a Trade Union had ever forwarded to the authorities. Their promotional prospects had remained stagnant and meagre for a long period although their ranks were growing. The authorities in the Department and in the Ministry were doing everything in their power to suppress and sabotage our attempts to win the legitimate dues. The Irrigation Technical Assistants had come to the end of the tether and with a 100% backing from an enthusiastic membership, the I.T.A.U fixed up the strike for 1st August.

The Prime Minister was at the Golf Club at Nuwara-Eliya when he heard from a friend of one of our members that Irrigation Technical Assistants were coming out on strike in three days time. He immediately disturbed his game of Golf to ring up his secretary in Colombo, and instructed him to arrange a discussion with the I.T.A.U. on the issues involved for the following day 30th July at 3.00 p.m.

I.T.A.U, delegation led by the President Comrade Eric Pethiyagoda with Hon. Secretary Comrade Nissanka de Silva as Chief Spokesman and accompanied by Comrades Macky Hassen Asst. Secretary, Camillus Pieris Vice President, A. K. B. Rajaguru Treasurer, M. D. Abeywardana Asst. Treasurer and A. K. Hettige entered

the Conference Room of the "Temple Trees" at 3.00 p.m. where the Hon. Prime Minister was already seated at the head of the table with Hon. C. P. de Silva Minister, Permanent Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Director of Irrigation, D. D. (Planning), A. D. G. (Administration) and D. E. (Treasury) on his left, with P. M.'s Private Secretary seated at the end of the table. After preliminary greetings etc. the P. M. asked, "Gentlemen, what are your grievances".

With the happy omen of receiving a "SUCCESS" Greetings card all the way from Comrade Galketiya in London just before the delegation left his for Temple Trees, comrade Nissanka started explaining official oppression and harassment meted out to the members of a service and the reasonableness of the demands for better promotional prospects. Though performing important duties connected with agricultural development, he said our members were being subjected to harassment as they were scattered all over the country. A hard hitting batsman as a school boy cricketer, he set out to build a mammoth total of facts on our behalf with meticulous care and grace, stressing on the conditions under which our members worked, meagre opportunities for Promotions, the official barriers placed against us etc., in spite of the fact that progress of the Department was the progress of work handled by our members. He dealt in detail with the relentless and patient efforts made by the Union to obtain redress, and callous disregard shown by the authorities.

To reinforce the case for our demands, comrade Nissanka read out extracts from Salaries Commission Reports of developed countries such as U. K. (Priestly commission), of Australia, of U. S. A., and West Germany, where the Technician's experience was equally recognised and rewarded as administrators or professionals. He posed the irony of a country struggling to develop, suppressing and diffusing the enthusiasm of an important category of Technical workers!

For two hours comrade Nissanka batted on (during which the Prime Minister lit his pipe four times) while listening with intent, how a Trade Union Official strung up the facts gracefully on behalf of the entire membership. The Prime Minister was also fascinated (according to his Private Secretary who intimated to us later) by the clock work precision of presenting the references. For eg. when comrade Nissanka made reference to a reply received from D. I., up came the relevant file from the comrade seated behind, he would read out and comrade on his right would collect the file. When he made reference to Priestly Commission, up came a copy of the Report with the relevant page open, and he would read out and pass on.

When our spokesman completed presenting our case, the Prime Minister turned to the officials seated on his left and asked "yes gentlemen, what have you got to say?". Twisting in their chairs for two hours under the onslaught of stubborn facts presented by the union spokesman the officials started mumbling and explaining incoherently, creating a sorry spectacle!

This was so far the finest hour of the Irrigation Technical Assistants' Union and that of her spokesman Comrade Nissanka de Silva.

Understanding the plight of the officials, the Prime Minister interrupted them and addressed the Unions delegation "I understand and agree with you that you have a genuine grievance. But to grant redress, I need the advice of a Competent body for which I need time". "Sir, on behalf of our members, we thank you for your kindness", said Comrade Nissanka, "but our members have not given us a mandate to accept Committees or Commissions. They will be coming out on Strike the day-after tomorrow, and stay out until the demands are granted. Any decision to the contrary will have to be taken by the membership."

The discussion that ensued was pointing to a compromise and having come to highest authority in the Country, the Union had to come down and meet halfway. The delegation asked for a 10 minute break, and in a sitting room in "Temple Trees" they decided to postpone the strike.

In explaining their decision to the Prime Minister, Comrade Nissanka said, "Sir, as we mentioned earlier, our members have not given us a mandate to accept anything other than our demands and they will be out on strike until the demands are granted. But, since we understand that your efforts to solve our problems are sincere, we will recommend to our members to postpone the strike by one month. These are not the only grievances our members have. They are being victimised and harassed by those Departmental officials seated on your left. Departmental examinations are being made more and more difficult, increments and promotions are delayed Scholarships are denied. But we will not discuss those now. In postponing the strike now, we cannot avoid our members being out on Strike for a couple of days until our messages reach them, They will be reporting for duty 3 days later on 4th August". At this point, the minister, Permanent Secretary and D. I. suggested that they could send out the message (of postponing the strike) through Radio Ceylon and the Departmental Radio Links. To the sheer amusement of the Prime Minister and the Minister, Comrade Nissanka quipped, "That's of no use Sir, our members will not believe the Radio Ceylon, or your Ministry officials. They will call off the strike only on a Union communique informing that the strike is postponed, signed by the President and Secretary of I. T. A. U. and personally delivered by our own messengers. Under these circumstances, you can show your magnanimity only by allowing our members to apply for leave on their return to cover up their absence"

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Unpublished Letter

The Hon. Prime Minister,
Colombo.

Honoured Madam,

THE SITUATION IN OUR COUNTRY

Please forgive us for this letter but we would be doing ourselves as well as you an injustice if we continued to pretend that all is well and keep silent.

We thank you for the statement made a few days ago but feel sad that it does not contain :-

- (a) A clear analysis, without prejudice whatever even by those whom the young revolutionaries wanted to do away with, of the economic, political, social and other reasons that resulted in a section of the people of this country who could not have been thugs, crooks or criminals, to act in the way they did.*
- (b) What economic, political, social and other steps the Government expects to take to prevent a recurrence of this type of activity.*

We were already aware, from various sources such as the Newspapers and Broadcasting Corporations, both local and foreign, of many of the facts contained in the statement such as the underground preperations, collection of of weapons, the actual hostilities, the numbers in custody, contributions to Funds etc.

We fathers who find it difficult to feed three or four children, do appreciate the problem of providing for 14,000 young men and women.

We are deeply concerned with some of the matters revealed by you, viz.

- (a) the fact that you were not informed of the reports prepared by Mr. J. Attygalle in 1969 till the end of April, 1971. If you were apprised of that valuable information, we have no doubt that you would have been able to prevent the catastrophe which will be like a cancer in our Society. We urge you, to look deeper into this matter and ascertain who is responsible for this lapse and why it occurred.*
- (b) the fact that the Cabinet considered legislation which the Cabinet itself thought would have tampered with the fundamental liberty of the subject. We are very grateful for this decision. We think, may be, it is not the law that is inadequate but its minions. Indeed the intelligence Service has proved itself most unintelligent. We request you to have this aspect too investigated. One very important fact that is evident is the virulence of the hatred of the Police in the eyes of these people. What we deal in (c) below will have only aggravated this situation. Reforms in the Police Service, to make personnel at all levels more acceptable to and respected by the people are very, very necessary.*

(c) that Police and other security personnel have been brutal. While fully appreciating the circumstances, it is our frank and sincere view that no person entrusted with the sacred duty of protecting people should be BRUTAL even to the person who attempted to murder him. Killing a person in self-defence is a different matter. Brutality is bestial in a Buddhist land. We cannot condone it even by a single letter. For if we do, what can be expected from ordinary unemployed, underemployed and frustrated youth? In this we are deeply distressed by the words "so called atrocities" "so called charges of excesses". Such words even when considered side by side with the statement that these acts would not be condoned, leaves just that much of doubt that you doubt if any such acts were committed. We wish to state that we ourselves are aware of several such acts but are unable to place them before you until the witnesses feel more safe.

We do hope that our impression on this matter is wrong. We humbly ask for an assurance that every act of brutality by the Police and Security men will be duly dealt with. Otherwise all the condemnation of American atrocities in Vietnam and British arms sales to South Africa would be meaningless and empty words.

As for the Trade Unions, we say in all honesty, that the Govt. would be deluding itself if "support" is measured in terms of contributions to the various funds. We know that many, many rank and file members of various Unions did not like to contribute because they could not afford it but would not protest or prevent deductions when their leaders decided for fear of been suspected and victimised. When our Union objected to certain decisions of the Technical Officers' Trade Union Federation we were gently told that we would be liable to victimisation if we did not toe the line! We did not toe the line in keeping with our conscience. We cannot be hypocrites and we told that Federation leader that we will suffer any victimisation if that is the lot of those who are true and sincere to themselves.

Today we are called U. N. P. Stooges, Bala Tampoe Stooges and all manner of stooges by people who for many years have preached that armed revolution is the path to power. Such people are comfortably ensconced as leaders. If we too were foolish enough to allow our youthful exuberance to be guided by the "wisdom" of the followers of "isms" the consequences would have been disastrous.

We have been critical of some actions of the Government. Why? Because it is our right, nay our duty, to let you know what we truly feel. Our feelings of discontent are shared by many more people in this country than some would like to admit. We can truthfully say that the Govt. we voted into power with so much hope in May 1970 is now intensely disliked. We think it is our duty to let you know this before it is too late. It is very easy and does not need any courage to applaud the Government as many so called Trade Union leaders are doing today. But we know the consequences of hypocrisy!

Please do not think that we want to throw hand bombs at anyone. Neither do we like to see brother shoot brother with American, British or Russian guns. For honoured Madam, this is the land we were born in, where our forefathers tilled the soil

and raised the crops to feed us. This is the land where our mothers and grandmothers before them, gave birth to us and bred us. This is the land where all of them are buried and where we ourselves will be buried when we die. Never again must the soil of this land be reddened with the blood of our brothers. It is futile to expect to forget or forgiveness from the fathers of 1200 families where flowers have flickered out.

Those who have gone have gone. Post-Mortems on those who have perished are purposeless. But, if we have learnt that after 22 years of so-called Freedom, there is really something wrong with either the system of ruling that has been our legacy or the leaders or the led, then atleast there is hope for our sons and daughters. That hope can be harnessed if we are prepared to change what is wrong. Most of all it is true understanding that is lacking. It is not easy, but we think it can be done in far less than 22 years.

As for ourselves we are always willing to co-operate if we are consulted and if we can be confident that we are not being exploited for the benefit of a few.

Yours faithfully,

The Irrigation Technical Assistants' Union.

Hony. Secretary,

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