

Ceylon - Power Guide

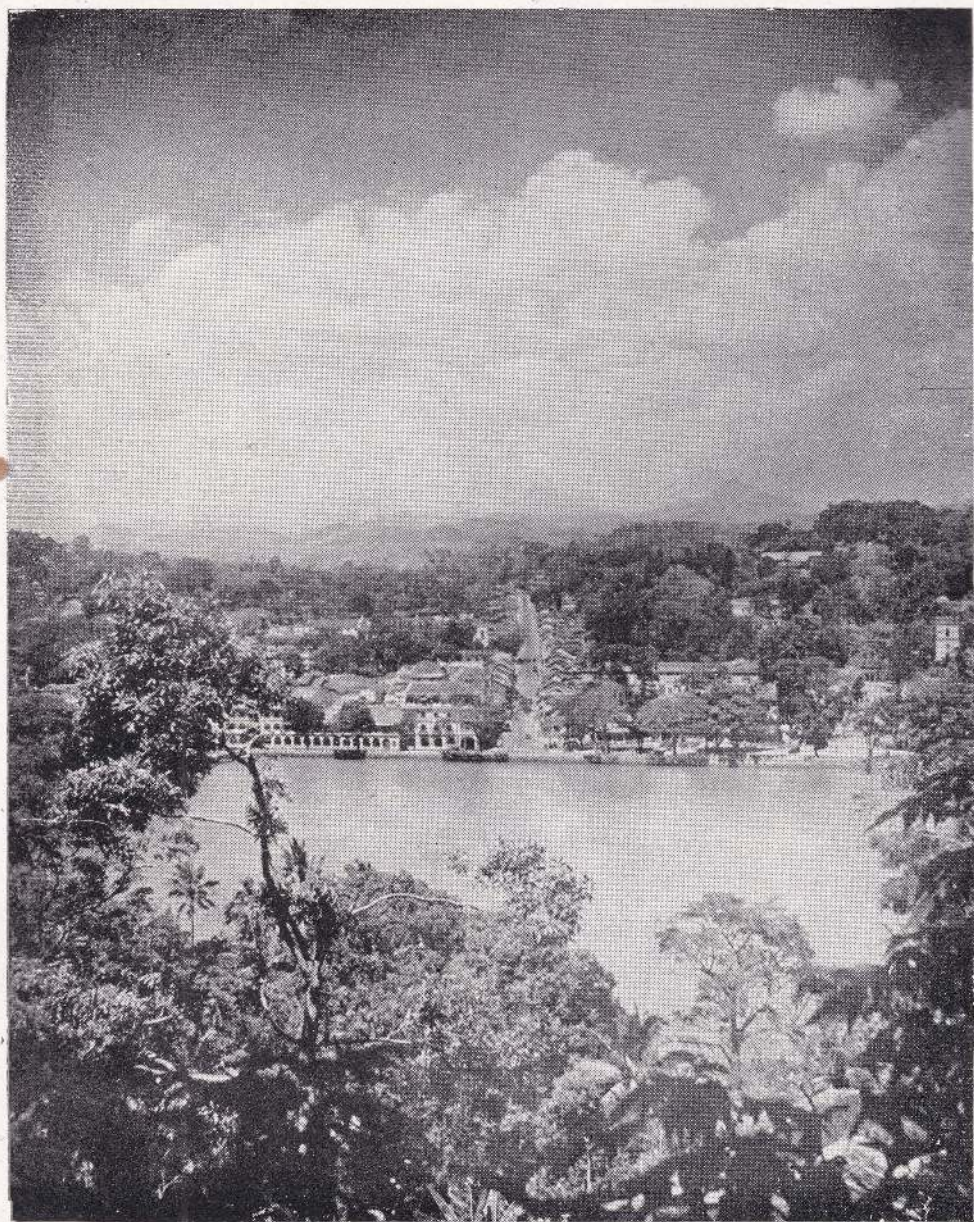
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Introducing
CEYLON

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KANDY

Through the Centuries

ANCIENT writers exaggerated the size of Ceylon. Even Ptolemy, the Greek astronomer who lived in Egypt in the second century A.D. and who published the earliest map of Ceylon we possess, made the Island as large as Sumatra or Madagascar. In A.D. 1292, Marco Polo gave it a circumference of 2,400 miles. Writers of a still earlier period apparently believed that the west coast of Ceylon extended almost as far as Africa.

The Island's extreme length from north to south is only 271 miles and its greatest width is 140 miles. It has an area of 25,332 square miles, which is nearly the same as that of Holland and Belgium together, or approximately half the area of England without Wales. In size and population the nearest parallel in India is the State of Mysore. The shape of Ceylon on the map is familiar. The Dutch thought it resembled a Westphalian ham : hence 'Ham's heel', the name of the Dutch fort in the north.

The greater part of Ceylon is lowlying and flat, but the south-central portion is a mass of mountains and hills, with a few peaks of 7,000 feet and more. The Island is relatively well-watered by many rivers and streams, a few of which are navigable in their lower reaches by small craft. The average rainfall varies from 40 inches in the north-west and the south-east to over 200 inches in the hill country.



PRINCE STREET, COLOMBO

The climate varies, without reaching extremes, from the warmth of the seaside and the plains to the temperate atmosphere in the hills. Like other countries situated in or near the equator, the seasons are not well-defined and there is no winter.

Ceylon is a country of great natural beauty. The Brahmins called it Lanka—the resplendent island. After the Sinhalese settlement it was styled Sinhala-dvipa from which is derived the current name Ceylon.

Colombo, the capital, with a population of approximately 350,000, is the only large city. It is one of the great commercial ports of the East. Trincomalee on the east coast is an important naval base. At the time it was captured by the British from the Dutch, Trincomalee was described as 'the finest and most advantageous bay in the whole of India in which a whole fleet may safely ride and remain in tranquillity, a bay which is of such importance to the English that it assures their sovereignty over the west of India and places them in a position to defend their possessions against all European powers'. Ceylon's strategic position has scarcely altered with the centuries.

Other towns include Kandy, the seat of the last Sinhalese king; Galle in the south, the principal harbour until the 'seventies of the last century; Jaffna in the north; and Anuradhapura, the ancient metropolis of the Sinhalese. These towns, as well as the important hill resorts which draw visitors from all parts of the world, are connected by a State-owned railway track of 950 miles. There are over 16,500 miles of road in the Island, of which 4,200 miles are metalled and motorable.

ARYAN SETTLERS

The early history of Ceylon reveals a continuous Indian influence. The distance between Point Calimere in southern India and Point Pedro in the north of Ceylon is only 36 miles.



RUINS AT POLONNARUWA

Yet it was this narrow sheet of water more than anything else that was responsible for Ceylon's existence as an independent country.

There is little reliable information about the earliest inhabitants of the Island. The discovery of palaeolithic stone implements buried in caves indicates that man has inhabited Ceylon for thousands of years. It is probable that a branch of the same stock which in pre-Aryan times colonized the Deccan extended its migrations to Ceylon.

The first Aryan settlers arrived in Ceylon about the year 500 B.C. The best known of them was Vijaya who was accompanied by a band of seven hundred followers. Tradition claims for Vijaya a noble lineage in Vanga (Bengal) but it is probable that he set sail from a port near Broach in the province of Bombay. It would appear however that there was a second stream of immigration from the Ganges valley which formed the substratum of the Aryan population of Ceylon.

The Sinhalese kings, beginning with Vijaya, ruled Ceylon, with few interruptions, until the arrival of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century A.D. and the Kandyan kingdom in the central part of Ceylon lasted until the Kandyan territory was ceded by the Chiefs to the British Sovereign in 1815.

During this period of over two thousand years, Ceylon was often menaced by invaders from South India, chiefly from the kingdoms of Chola and Pandya, and the greatest Sinhalese monarchs were those, like Dutugemunu (161-136 B.C.) and Parakrama Bahu the Great (A.D. 1153-86), who either successfully resisted the invader or carried the war into the enemy's camp.

Ceylon first came under the direct rule of a foreign power when the Chola king Rajendra I (A.D. 1014-44) brought the whole Island under his rule. There was also a Tamil kingdom in the north of Ceylon, with its capital at Jaffna, in the thirteenth century and later; during a part of its existence it was a tributary to the

great continental empire of Vijayanagar. In general, however, the kings of Ceylon were Sinhalese, of the Buddhist faith, and it was only as late as A.D. 1739 that the royal line of Sinhalese kings became extinct, giving rise to a new dynasty from the Nayakkars of South India.

BUDDHISM

Buddhism appears to have been the cohesive agency of the Sinhalese kingdom, whose literature and art owe an incalculable debt to the erudition of the Buddhist priesthood and the piety of its kings. The main industry was agriculture, and the Aryan settlers inhabited for many years only the wide and well-watered plains where the cultivation of rice was easy. The greatest engineering achievements of the Sinhalese were the construction of large reservoirs, often fed by the surplus waters of rivers, some of them covering an area of several thousands of acres. Anuradhapura, the first capital, founded about 450 B.C., and Polonnaruwa, its successor, which was made the capital of Ceylon by the Cholas, probably in A.D. 1217, abound in ancient monuments bearing ample evidence of the civic virtues and enlightened conceptions of the monarchs who built and lived in them.

As Professor Geiger, the well known orientalist, has written, 'for hardly any part of the continent of India is there such an uninterrupted historical tradition as for the island of Ceylon'. The Buddhist religion, which declined in influence in India, retained its hold on the people of Ceylon and coloured every phase of their life. Her island position on the main sea routes, ancient as well as modern, has been another reason why Ceylon has not been caught up in the political network of India.

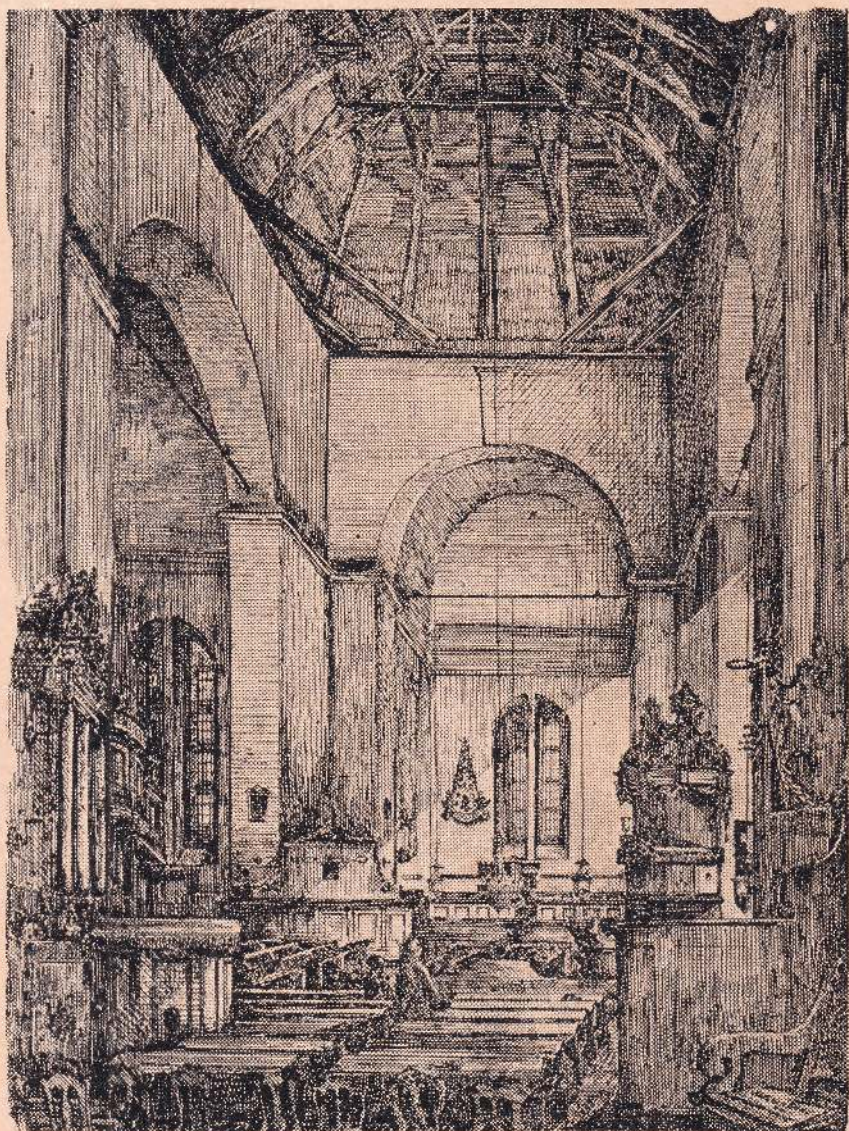
The first European power to secure a footing in Ceylon was the Portuguese. There is evidence that the Greek subjects

of the Roman Empire traded in the exports of Ceylon and large quantities of Roman copper coins of the fourth century have been excavated in many parts of the Island. But they were only merchants and had no colonial ambitions. It appeared at first that trade was the chief concern of the Portuguese who set foot on the Island, driven thither by a gale, in 1505. Already established in the south-western coast of India, they took advantage of political dissension among the Sinhalese to entrench themselves in the maritime districts of the Island.

The Portuguese ruled the coastal areas of Ceylon from 29th May 1597, on which day Philip I of Portugal was proclaimed king of Kotte, and continued to do so until they were expelled by the Dutch in 1658. The Portuguese introduced the Roman Catholic religion and made many converts. Under the Dutch the country prospered, and during their rule of the maritime districts was introduced the Roman Dutch Law which continues to be the common law of Ceylon. The breach between the British and the Dutch in 1795 led to the annexation of the Dutch settlements in the next year.

A CROWN COLONY

The newly-acquired British possessions were administered by the Governor of Madras until, in 1802, the Crown Colony system was introduced and the administration was directed from Downing Street. But there was still an independent kingdom with its capital at Kandy. Various attempts were made by the British to get the Kandyan king to agree to the terms of a treaty. The Kandyan nobles intrigued with the foreign power and one of them at least made an attempt to seize the throne. On the king's death in 1798, a Nayakkar prince, who was a relative and



INTERIOR OF DUTCH CHURCH

who was born in Ceylon—the royal Sinhalese line having become extinct in 1739—was crowned as Sri Wickrama Rajasinha.

The tussle between the Kandyan chiefs and the court continued during the eventful reign of Sri Wickrama Rajasinha, and the Governor, Sir Frederick North, was not slow to take advantage of the situation. He sent military expeditions against the Kandyans, whose king carried out a 'scorched earth policy'. The Kandyan wars did not create a good impression in England, and Governor North relinquished office in 1805 to be succeeded by Sir Thomas Maitland. The new Governor had the assistance of a man of brilliant parts, Sir Alexander Johnston, Advocate-General and later Chief Justice. Sir Alexander urged the development of agriculture and the repair and restoration of irrigation facilities. He established trial by jury and secured the abolition of slavery. He also formulated a liberal scheme of representative government, including the establishment of a Legislative Council, but his proposals in this respect did not prove acceptable to the Secretary of State.

The annexation of the kingdom of Kandy to the British Crown was effected in 1815, a consummation that was hastened by disunity among the Kandyan nobles, treachery, and the growing unpopularity of the king. After the capture of the king by the British forces, the Kandyan chiefs, claiming to act on behalf of the inhabitants, ceded the kingdom to the British.



PEOPLE OF THE TOWNS

PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGES



The People

THE Sinhalese comprise roughly two-thirds of Ceylon's population of approximately 6,700,000. They trace their descent from the earliest Aryan settlers who intermarried freely with the indigenous inhabitants. They are a mixed race, the resultant of several waves of immigration, with much Tamil blood in their veins. From very early times they have had a distinct language which was at first an Aryan dialect written in the Brahmi script. The vocabulary has been enriched with Sanskrit and Pali words, and Tamil influence is reflected not only in the vocabulary but also in the structure of the language.

The Sinhalese brought their first political institutions from India. Every village had its council (*gansabhawa*) for the administration of its affairs. The village council has survived through all the vicissitudes of twenty-four centuries and is part of the modern constitution of Ceylon. The Sinhalese also adopted the social system of the Hindus, though it suffered modification under the influence of Buddhism. The caste system has never been as rigid as it is in India, and child marriage and *purdah* are unknown.



THE BASKET MAKER

The Sinhalese can be roughly classified into two divisions ; the up-country and low-country Sinhalese. The up-country Sinhalese are loosely called Kandyans. The division has a historical basis as the majority of the Kandyans would be those whose forbears owned allegiance to the last Kandyan king. The caste system, which is partly based on occupation, may have had a racial origin. Its grip on the people is weakening and inter-caste marriages are not uncommon.

The great majority of the Sinhalese profess the Buddhist religion, although there is a considerable minority which is Christian. Missionaries of the emperor Asoka brought Buddhism to Ceylon in the reign of King Devanampiya Tissa whose rule of forty years from 247 B.C. saw the religion firmly established in the Island. As the Pali chronicle the *Dipawansa* has it : ' Mahinda, going forth with four companies to the most excellent island of Lanka, firmly established there the faith and released many people from their fetters'. Buddhism exercised a vital influence on the life and character of the people, shaping their culture and civilization and providing a focus for their national unity.

At the census of 1946 there were approximately 4,288,000 Buddhists, 1,326,000 Hindus, 606,000 Christians, 433,000 Muslims and 5,000 others.

Next to the Sinhalese the most numerous are Tamils. Of these over 800,000 are 'Ceylon Tamils', inhabiting the northern and eastern parts of the Island but also settled throughout the rest of Ceylon. They have been in the country almost as long as the Sinhalese and, as we have seen, they have had their own kings. They came from many parts of the mainland including Chola (an area which included the Tanjore district) and Pandya (which included the greater part of the modern Madura and Tinnevely districts). The Tamils occupied a prominent place even in the Sinhalese kingdom, especially from the seventh to

the eleventh centuries. 'They filled every office, including that of Prime Minister, and they decided the claims of competing candidates for the crown'. The Ceylon Tamils are an industrious community, very much alive to the benefits of education and, in their native setting, given to more frugal ways of life than the Sinhalese. The majority are peasants, but the Ceylon Tamils have manned the Public Services in great numbers and given to the learned professions many of their leaders. There are many Christians among them, but the majority are Hindus.

The existing differences between the Sinhalese and the Ceylon Tamils have a historical foundation which is well explained by Dr. G. C. Mendis in his *Early History of Ceylon* : 'The rise of the Tamil kingdom created problems to which Ceylon was not hitherto accustomed. In Ceylon so far Sinhalese had been the chief language and Buddhism its main religion. In the Tamil kingdom Tamil became the chief language and Hinduism its main religion. Before long a distinction arose also in economic conditions. The Tamil kingdom arose in the Dry Zone and the Tamils followed the methods of cultivation suitable to this area. The Sinhalese, on the other hand, gradually abandoning the Dry Zone, began to occupy the Wet Zone, which was more productive and suitable also for the cultivation of products other than rice. These differences created a gulf between the two peoples, and they are partly responsible for the present divisions between the Sinhalese and the Tamils'.

At the 1946 Census, there were roughly 370,000 Ceylon Moors. The word 'Moor' was introduced by the Portuguese, who doubtless borrowed it from the Spaniards who described the Moroccans as Moors. Muslims are first heard of in Ceylon in the early eighth century and when the famous traveller Ibn Batuta visited Ceylon in the fourteenth century, Colombo was in the hands of a Muslim 'wazir and ruler of the sea' called Jalasti

who had a garrison of Abyssinians. The larger number of the Ceylon Moors are agriculturists, especially in the Eastern Province, but many are engaged in trade. They are all Muslims and the women-folk of the well-to-do classes and town-dwellers observe strict *pardah*. It is probable that the Moors are descendants of Arab traders who intermarried with the Muslims of South India and Ceylon.

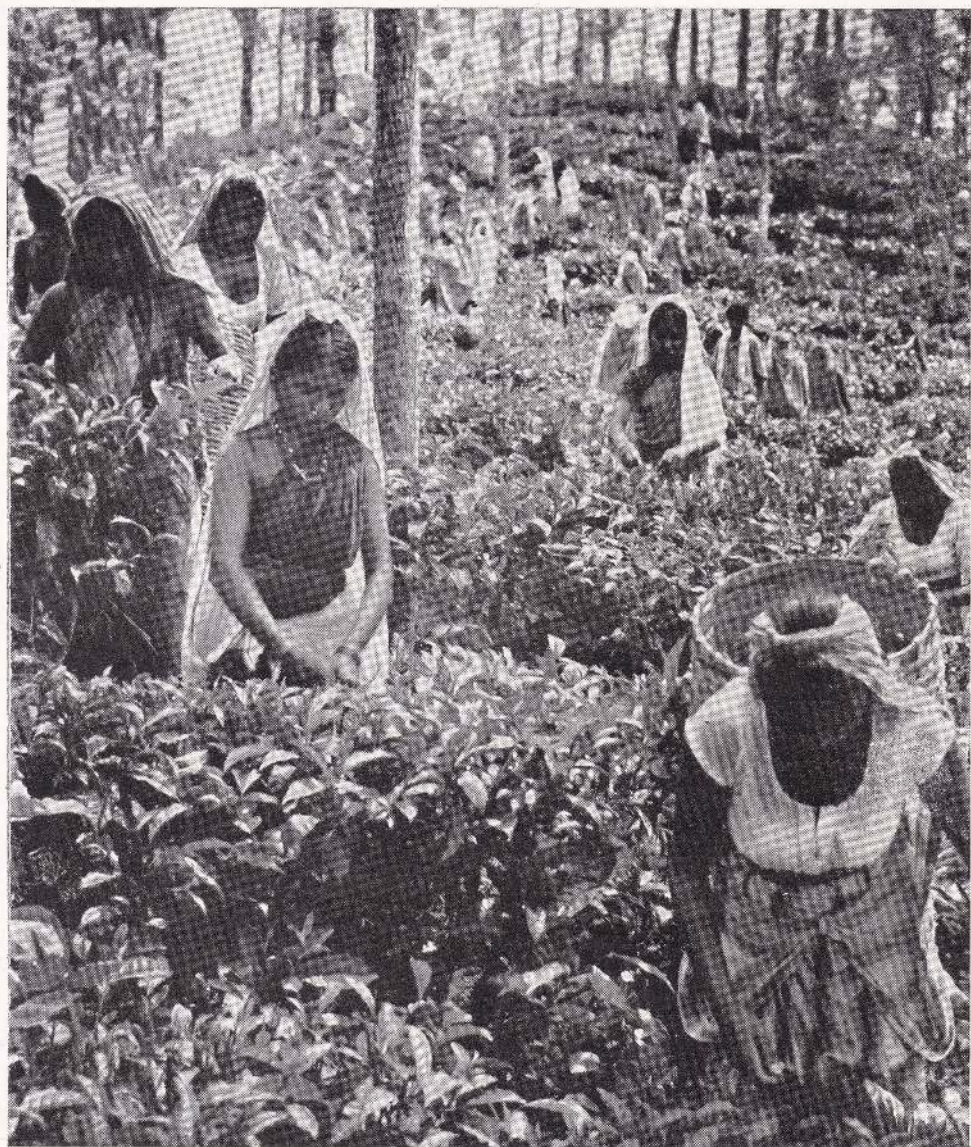
Another small Ceylonese community, which till recently enjoyed a large share of the plums of the professional and public life of the country, is the Burgher. Most of them are descendants of those who served under the Dutch East India Company. There have been and are many brilliant men in this small community which numbers less than 40,000. They continue to make a full contribution to the life of Ceylon though the rapid spread of higher education among all communities has affected the privileged position they once held.

The Malays of Ceylon, numbering about 20,000, are also Muslims by religion. They are descended from soldiers of the Malay regiments employed by the Dutch and the British.

The small British community does not add up to more than 6,000. There is a diminishing number of Government servants among them. The majority of male Europeans are merchants, planters and assistants in the European-owned stores. They hold a dominant position in the commercial life of the Island, with British capital controlling the majority of the large plantations, banks, export and import houses and engineering workshops.

THE INDIAN COMMUNITY

Roughly one-eighth of the population of Ceylon is described as Indian. The large majority are labourers in tea and rubber estates. These come chiefly from the Madura, Pudukkottai, Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Salem, Coimbatore, Tinnevely, and



TEA PLUCKERS

Ramnad districts. They are Tamils who profess Hinduism. A numerically important section of Ceylon Indians are the Malayalis. They come from the Malabar coast—from Travancore, Cochin and British Malabar—and are engaged in skilled labour in factories and workshops, as domestic servants, small traders and toddy-tappers.

A substantial part of the trade of Ceylon is in the hands of Indians. The financiers and contractors include many Nattukottai Chettiars from Pudukottai State and Ramnad district. The cloth business is handled by Memons from Kathiawar and the trade in the fine articles of clothing, such as silk and brocades, is largely in the hands of Sindi merchants. A small number of Gujeratis from Bombay Province are to be found doing business in Ceylon. The Borahs, who also come from western India, are mainly large importers and exporters of foodstuffs. The Barathas from South India are usually small shopkeepers and coal-yard workers while the Nadars are petty traders. The so-called Coast Moors are Muslim traders from the Malabar and Coromandel coasts. There is a small Parsi community but neither its numbers nor business interests show any signs of expansion. A small number of Baluchis are itinerant money-lenders.

Unlike the European immigrants to Great Britain or the United States, the Indians have not been assimilated in what is commonly described as the Ceylonese population, although there are today many thousands of Indians whose permanent home is Ceylon. The best evidence of assimilation is the existence of intermarriage. Intermarriage between Indian Tamils, the majority of whom are Hindus, and Sinhalese, the majority of whom are Buddhists, is rare. But intermarriage between Hindu Indian Tamils and Hindu Ceylon Tamils is not less rare, despite the ties of language, race and religion. A second powerful factor

which makes the Indians a community apart is the feeling common to a large number that India is, and must remain, their permanent home.

Politically, Ceylon's 'Indian problem' began with the grant of adult franchise by the Donoughmore Constitution. The question arose whether those Indian labourers who did not have an abiding interest in the Island, who regarded India as their permanent home and who comprised a more or less floating population, should possess the vote. The then Governor of Ceylon wrote in a dispatch to the Secretary of State: 'In the interests of our future good relations with the Government and people of India, it seems to me of the highest importance that this question should be faced and, if possible, settled before it becomes acute'.

The grievance of Ceylon politicians was that the condition laid down by the Order in Council for proving domicile and 'permanent interest' had not been strictly observed in the registration of Indian immigrants as voters, and that large numbers of names of unqualified persons had been admitted to the register. The Indians, for their part, emphasised the difficulties experienced by uneducated Indian labourers in getting their names on to the register. At the General Election of 1946, six seats were won by the Ceylon Indian Congress and the Indian vote undoubtedly influenced the result of at least an equal number of other contests in the plantation districts.

At the request of the Government of Ceylon, the Government of India agreed to an 'exploratory' conference to secure a satisfactory basis for formal negotiations on all problems of common interest which required adjustment. The conference was held in New Delhi in November 1940, but it concluded without anything substantial being achieved. Once again, in August 1941, the method of conference was tried, this time with more fruitful results. A delegation came to Ceylon under the leadership of

Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, who was assisted by two unofficial colleagues, Sir Mirza Ismail and Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, a former Advocate-General of Madras. Agreed conclusions were reached after a fortnight's deliberations. Considerable opposition to the agreement manifested itself in India and the intensification of the war in Asia left the whole question in abeyance.

Both India and Ceylon are now free countries and negotiations for a satisfactory solution of the problems involved were recently resumed at the highest level. Mr. D. S. Senanayake, the Ceylon Prime Minister, visited Pandit Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, in December, 1947 but complete agreement was not reached, as was disclosed in an exchange of letters. The new legislation which has been enacted in Ceylon dealing with citizenship and immigration will be supplemented by a special Act relating to the status of Indians in Ceylon.



THE PRIME MINISTERS OF INDIA AND CEYLON



COCONUT TREES

Economic Resources

THE greatest exertions of the Government at the present time are directed to the task of increasing the area under food crops, especially rice. There was doubtless a period in her history when Ceylon produced sufficient food for her needs. The many civil wars and invasions, however, disorganized the Island's intricate irrigation system and created conditions favourable to the spread of malaria. At present two-thirds of the Island's area are undeveloped while more than half its normal food requirements are imported.

About a million acres are cultivated with paddy. The other main crops are coconuts, tea and rubber. The last three account for over 90 per cent. of the export trade of Ceylon. The Island stands next to India as a producer of tea. The majority of the tea estates are worked under joint-stock management and are owned by British capital, but there are no less than 54,000 small holdings.

As a rubber producer Ceylon comes third, after Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. The area planted with rubber is 605,000 acres. The proportion of planted rubber owned by British capital is about 45 per cent. There are some 140,000 acres owned by 90,000 small holders.



RUBBER TAPPER

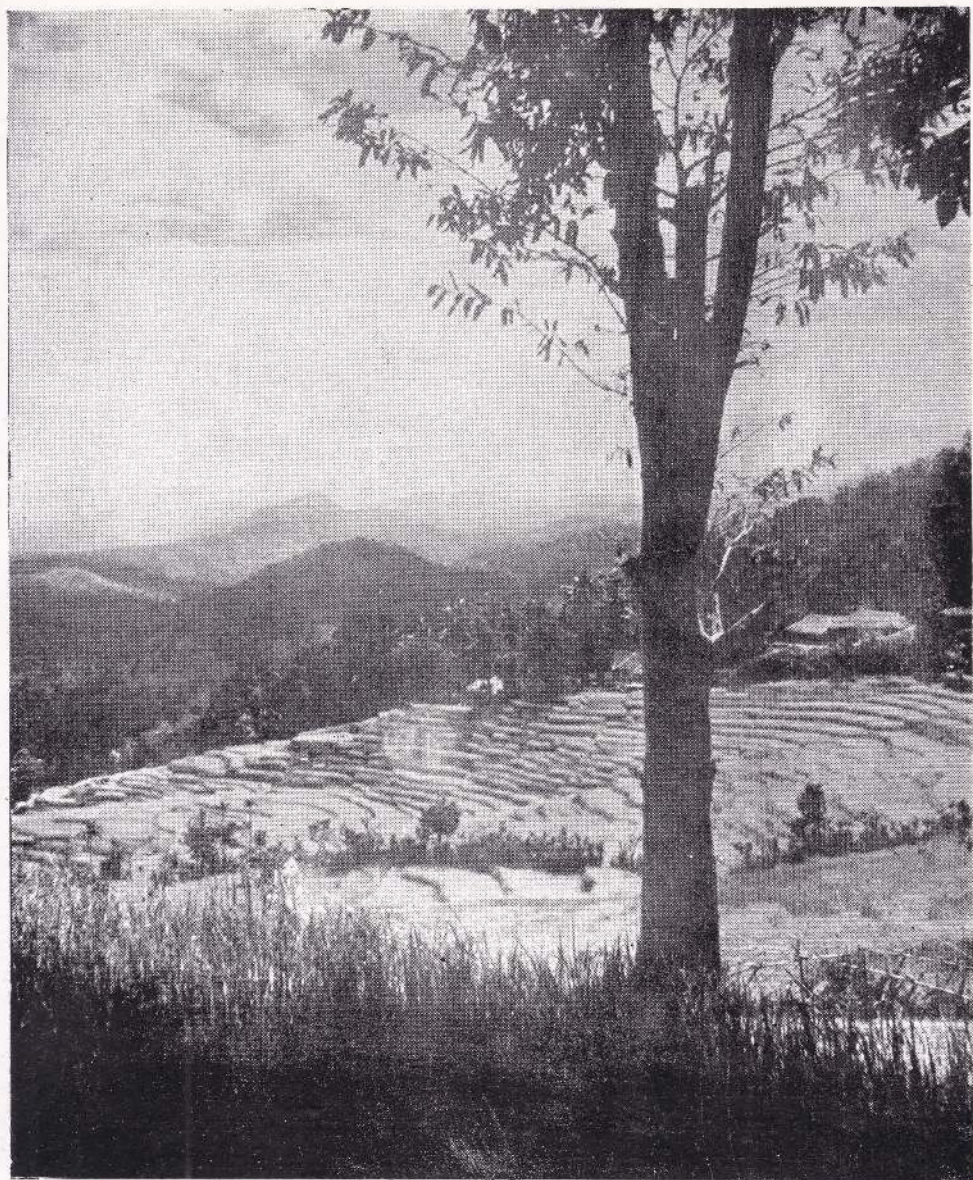
Ceylon's best customer has always been the United Kingdom. In 1947 she exported goods to the value of Rs. 305 millions to Great Britain, while she bought from her goods to the value of Rs. 153 millions. In the same year Ceylon sold to India goods to the value of Rs. 34 millions, while importing goods from India to the value of Rs. 126 millions.

The Island's industrial resources have not been fully exploited. A hydro-electric scheme is under construction and plans are well advanced for other major industrial projects. Graphite is exported in large quantities and coconut oil and desiccated coconut have been manufactured according to the demands of the foreign market.

There can be no doubt about the economic progress of the country, from the evidence of facts and figures. In 1811 Ceylon's exports were valued at Rs. 2 millions. In 1946 they reached Rs. 716 millions.

In ancient times food production was the main form of agriculture followed in Ceylon. Although there were occasional famines, due to dislocation of irrigation facilities or neglect of crops as a result of invasions and civil war, the Island was more or less self-sufficient in its food supply. The king had the supreme disposal of land but he was not above the law. Title to land based on royal grants and long possession could not be disturbed. The land in the village was often held in shares and worked under a family system. To a considerable extent the village was both self-supporting and self-governing. When a colonial system was introduced the old conditions suffered a gradual process of disintegration.

The new conditions undoubtedly brought great prosperity to the country. The thriving coffee, tea and rubber industries brought wealth, increased employment, and enriched the public coffers. Communications were improved and large sums of



A PADDY FIELD

money were available for education and the social services. But the balance of the rural economy was altered. The coffee boom earlier in the nineteenth century led to a stampede for land. Indiscriminate alienation resulted not only in the clearing of vast forests but also in the absorption of whole villages. No margin was left for normal village expansion and no pasture for village cattle. Referring to these changes, Sir Emerson Tennant, who was Colonial Secretary at a later period, wrote: 'The Governor and the Council, the military, the judges, the clergy, and one-half of the Civil Servants penetrated the hills and became purchasers of Crown lands. Bidding was suppressed during sales and the land was purchased by speculators'.

The prosperity of the agricultural industries which exported their products left very little land in the so-called Wet Zone to meet the demands of a rapidly expanding population. The rate of increase of the population may be gauged by the fact that under British rule it has increased from about a million to nearly seven millions. There are still vast tracts of undeveloped land but these are mainly in the malaria-infested Dry Zone.

Since the inauguration of the State Council in 1931 much attention has been paid to the development of the Dry Zone. Vast irrigation projects have been undertaken. Colonization schemes are being pushed ahead with a view to settling landless villagers and encouraging middle-class agriculturists. The war emphasized the weakness of an economy whereunder half the normal food supply is imported from foreign countries.

The Ceylonese have generally preferred Government Service, the professions and agricultural pursuits to trade. This seems to have been the case even in early times when the ports of Galle and Mantota (Mannar) were the centres of a large entrepot trade. The Ceylon Banking Commission, which was presided over by the well known Indian banker Sir Sorabji Pochkhanawala, wrote :



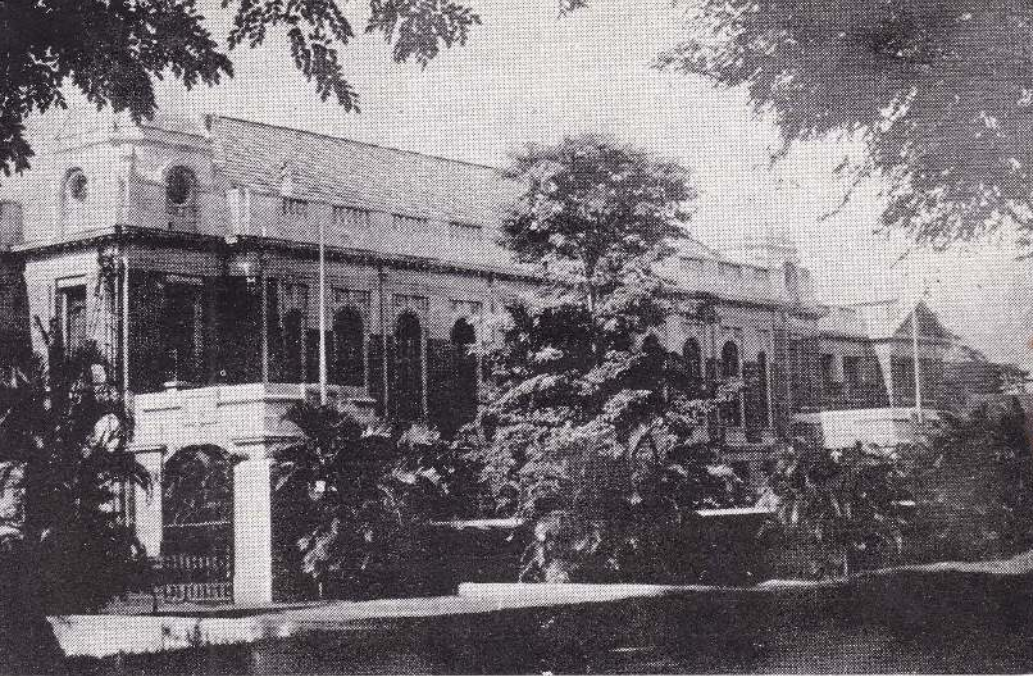
TRANSPLANTING PADDY

' It is no exaggeration to state that 80 per cent. of the Ceylonese population holds land and is dependent partly or wholly on income from the produce of the land for their maintenance. . . The history of Ceylon records the exploitation of its commerce by the Portuguese, the Dutch, the British and the Indians for over three hundred years. Even at present its entire trade is being run by foreigners, with foreign capital, foreign labour and foreign brains. The non-Ceylonese element has kept a strong hold on the business, trade and industries of the country and few opportunities have been allowed to the average Ceylonese to engage in trade and industries either by Government or by business firms'.

There is some reason to think that the Ceylonese have at length realized the weakness of such an economic system and are trying to correct it.



GIRL TRAINEES AT AGRICULTURE SCHOOL



ROYAL COLLEGE, COLOMBO

VILLAGE SCHOOL



Education & Social Services

*U*NDER the ancient kings of Ceylon the Buddhist priesthood was responsible for education. It conducted colleges for higher education and the king 'established a school in every village and charged the priests who superintended the same to take nothing from the learners, promising that they should be rewarded for their trouble himself'. With the decline of the monarchy the system was undermined and the standard of literacy deteriorated. The European powers which gained control of the maritime provinces, from the sixteenth century onwards, opened schools; but they were primarily concerned with making converts. The Portuguese established Roman Catholic schools; and when the Dutch came on the scene, they organized a system of parish schools which laid emphasis on the spread of Protestant Christianity. Their example was not lost on the British who were 'determined that education which is offered should be essentially Christian in character, and accordingly enacted as a fundamental rule to be followed in all schools that one hour should be devoted to Christian instruction'. There were also other Christian missions at work. The Baptists started their schools in 1812, the Wesleyans in 1814, the American Mission in 1816 and the Church Missionary Society in 1818.

Yielding to pressure the Government adopted an impartial attitude to all denominations and supported with meagre grants such schools as were approved by it. Much later the Buddhists and Hindus formed their own educational societies and founded schools wherever there was a demand for them. The Government grant was paid to all assisted schools which fulfilled certain requirements laid down in the education code.

With a foreign power in control of the country the most profitable form of education was one which gave first place to a knowledge of the language of the ruling race. More stress was thus laid on English schools than on education for the masses. Parents regarded English education as an investment, and the younger generation was led to believe that it offered the means of escape from rural life and from manual labour which youth had begun to regard as degrading. Thus there came into being a minority which was cut off from the mass of people and purely English education had a denationalizing influence. The language of the country and its history and traditions were neglected, and those who were supposed to be educated were often unable to speak or write correctly their mother-tongue. Their home language was English, they said their prayers in a foreign tongue, and their children were deprived of the opportunity of knowing any other.

The gulf between the English-educated minority and the masses is still wide, notwithstanding the existence of an adult franchise. The drift of the educated and wealthier sections of the community from the country to the towns has led to absentee ownership of land and a dearth of leadership where it is most needed; at least 85 per cent. of the Island's population live in rural areas.

The Legislature has recently adopted a revolutionary scheme of free education from the kindergarten to the university. The mother-tongue is the medium of instruction up to the fifth standard with English as a compulsory second language. When the scheme is in full operation no school which receives any grant from the Government will be allowed to charge fees.

The standard of literacy in Ceylon is probably the highest in Asia after Japan. There are over 800,000 children out of a total population of seven million in over 6,000 schools. The Government expenditure on education has risen from Rs. 900,000 in 1901 to above Rs. 90 millions. The denominational schools, Christian, Buddhist and Hindu, have borne a large share of the responsibility for elementary and secondary education. The University grants degrees in science, mathematics, languages, history and medicine.

Conditions have arisen which create the problem of the educated unemployed. This can be solved by a bold and imaginative policy directed towards the provision of facilities for training in industry and commerce and the creation of opportunities for the younger generation to find new work and adopt new careers.

The high standards of the Public Services and the professions reflect well on the work of the colleges and schools in Ceylon. The leadership in politics, in cultural movements, in social services and commercial enterprise is supplied by the educated minority, as would be expected. Above all, public health has made quite remarkable progress not only in the elimination of such infectious diseases as small-pox, cholera and bubonic plague, but in the preventive measures based on a proper appreciation of the fundamental principles of nutrition and sanitation.

A progressive policy of medical and public health organisation has paid good dividends. There has been an appreciable drop



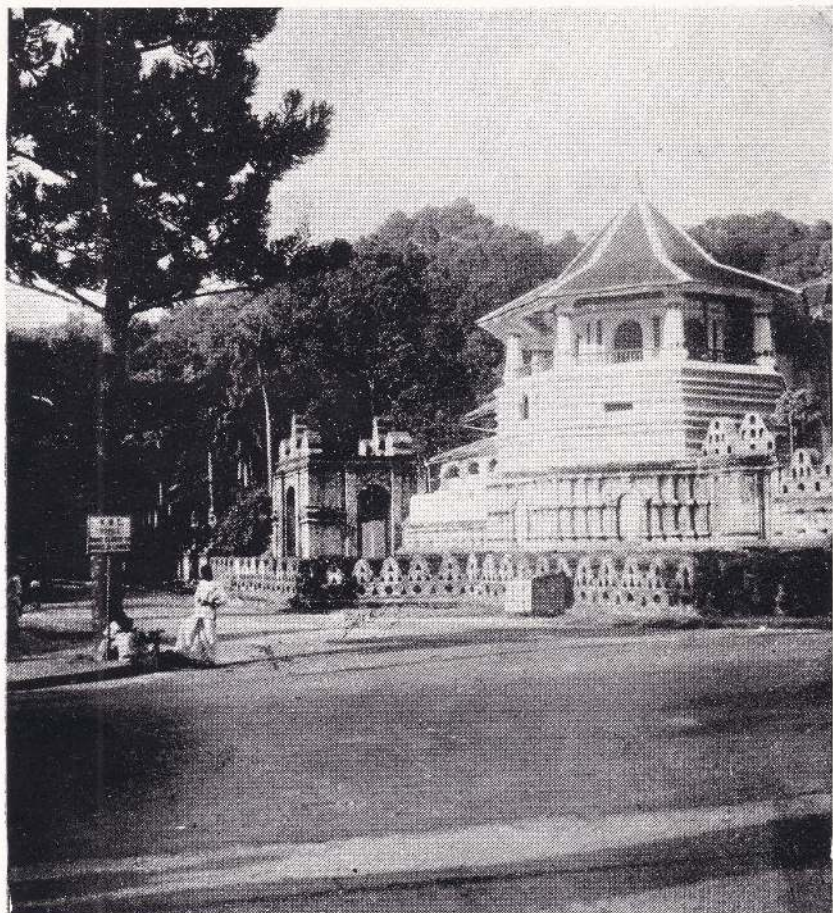
THE CRAFTSMAN

in infant mortality and the battle against malaria is going well on all fronts. Ceylon has 189 Government General Hospitals and a dozen or more special institutions. There is, however, a shortage of doctors and nurses to staff the new hospitals.

Special attention is being paid by the Government to the development of social services. Wages Boards fix minimum wages and hours of work for trades within their purview. The Government has voted considerable sums for poor relief. A Combined Scheme of health and unemployment insurance and a national provident fund are being taken up.



A WING OF ST. THOMAS' COLLEGE, MOUNT LAVINIA



KANDY TEMPLE

Rebirth of Freedom

*I*N the Sinhalese kingdom each village council sent its delegate to the district council (the *rata sabha*); above the village council and the district council were the supreme council of the Ministers of State and the king, who was also the head of the judiciary and alone had the power of life and death.

The foreign powers who gained control of Ceylon did not seek to build on the foundations of the past, and until very recent times even the village council was little more than a name. Much could not be expected while the Island was governed by the Dutch East India Company and the British East India Company. The benevolent despotism of a Crown Colony administration was introduced in 1802, but there were many complaints of misrule, and the British Government sent out a Royal Commission in 1829. This body, which is known as the Colebrook Commission, made a series of very important recommendations, including the abolition of caste distinctions in the civil administration, the admission of Ceylonese to the Civil Service, the extension of education and the encouragement of a free press. The most important practical measures which resulted from the investigations of the Commission were the establishment of an Executive

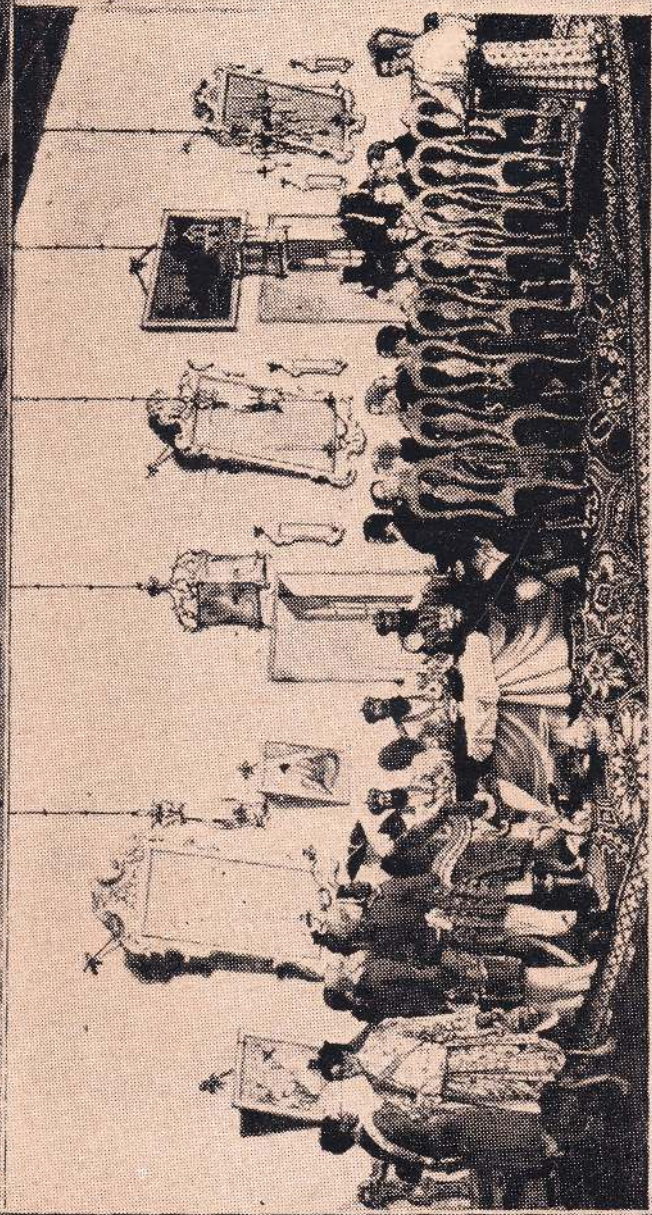
Council to control the acts of the Governor, and a Legislative Council to ensure free discussion of public questions and the enactment of laws. The Commissioners added: 'The peculiar circumstances of Ceylon, both physical and moral, seem to point it out to the British Government as the fittest spot in our Eastern Dominions in which to plant the germ of European civilization, whence we may not unreasonably hope that it will spread to the whole of those vast territories'.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

It is a strange fact that, notwithstanding the above declaration, the Constitution granted in 1833 remained unchanged for nearly eighty years although the country had made great progress in the interval. The reason is that the politically-conscious minority was composed mainly of European settlers and, broadly speaking, their interests were well looked after by a Government whose principal officers belonged to the same race and class. There was a continuous demand for a substantial reform of the Constitution, and in 1910, for the first time, the principle of election was conceded in a somewhat niggardly spirit. Provision was made for the election of one Ceylonese to represent those 'educated on European lines', two members for 7,500 Europeans and one member for the Burghers numbering about 25,000. The other members of the Legislature were nominated by the Governor.

During and after the first world war, representations were made to the British Government for a further extension of self-government and various instalments of constitutional reform were granted within a comparatively short period. The principle of territorial representation was introduced, though at the start the electorate did not consist of more than six per cent. of the population.

But it soon became obvious that the Crown Colony system, whereunder the Governor was a benevolent despot, could not



W. H. Miller, del. & sculp. N. Y. & London.
 THE DUTCH EMBASSY TO THE KANDYAN COURT.

THE DUTCH EMBASSY TO THE KANDYAN COURT.
 BY J. VAN NELLEDE, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS IN INDIA.
 LONDON: GEORGE BARNARD, 1847.

A DUTCH EMBASSY TO THE KANDYAN COURT

function with an elected majority. A Commission was accordingly sent out in November 1927, presided over by the Earl of Donoughmore. The Commission's proposals for a new Constitution were revolutionary in many respects. They recommended an adult franchise, the abolition of communal representation, and government by seven Executive Committees. The committees were to be elected by the State Council from among their members, and the chairmen of the committees, together with the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Legal Secretary, the three officers appointed by the Secretary of State, were to form a Board of Ministers.

The seven Ministries were grouped as follows: Home Affairs, Agriculture and Lands, Communications and Works, Health, Labour and Industry, Local Administration, Education. The Ministers had no collective responsibility except as a finance committee.

The General Election of 1931, the first experiment in adult franchise in an eastern country, made a promising beginning and saw the introduction of the Donoughmore Constitution.

The weaknesses of the new form of government became apparent despite a very real transfer of power. Without collective responsibility it was often difficult to discover where responsibility lay, and in the absence of a party system, based on live political issues, the formulation of a Government policy was almost impossible. It would not, however, be correct to conclude that the State Council and the Board of Ministers could not or did not undertake and carry out work of national importance. Nor can it be said that the Constitution did not confer a real measure of responsible government.

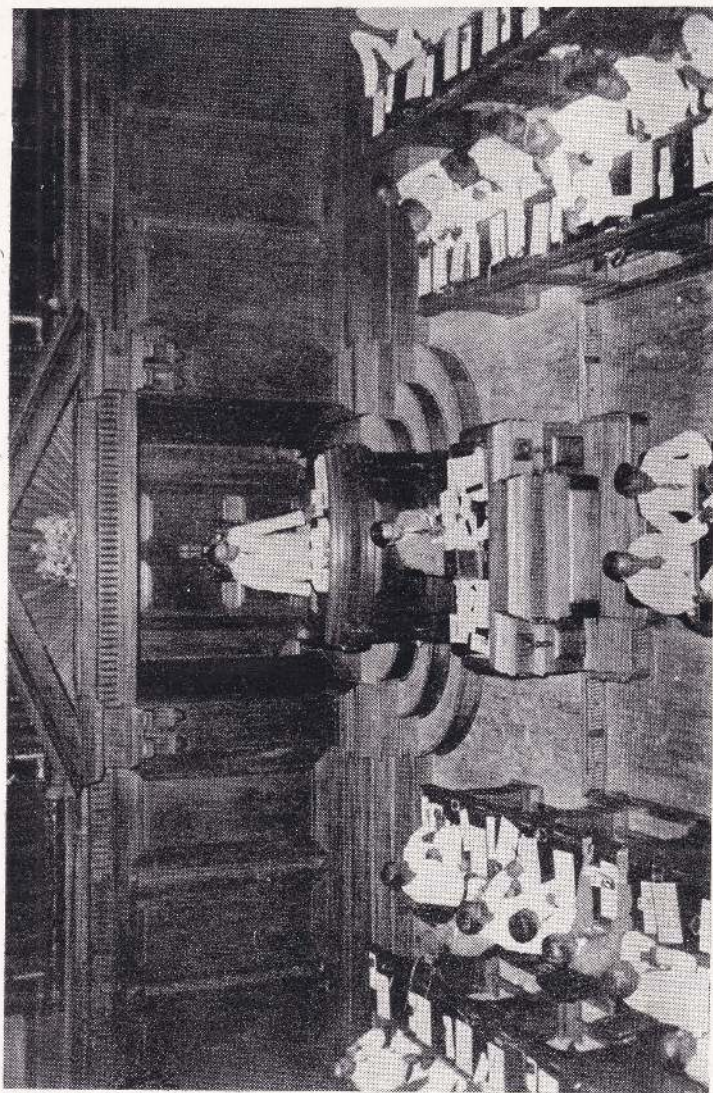
With experience of its working, the Ministers sought to change the Constitution so that it might conform more closely to the British parliamentary type. When Sir Andrew Caldecott was

appointed Governor in October 1937, the Secretary of State instructed him to examine the constitutional position carefully after he had had time to acquaint himself with the views of all shades of opinion in the Island. The new Governor, an administrator of great ability, wrote his dispatch in June 1938 recommending 'a cabinet of the normal type', the elimination of the system of Executive Committees and the retention of territorial representation. The outbreak of war held up further action, but on 26th May 1943 His Majesty's Government issued a Declaration, the first article of which said: 'The post-war re-examination of the reform of the Ceylon Constitution, to which His Majesty's Government stands pledged, will be directed towards the grant to Ceylon by Order of His Majesty in Council of full responsible government in all matters of civil administration'.

A CABINET SYSTEM

The Secretary of State requested the Ministers to frame a Constitution which would be examined by a Commission or Conference. In September 1944, His Majesty's Government announced the appointment of a Commission with Lord Soulbury, a former Cabinet Minister, as Chairman, and including Sir Frederick Rees, Sir Fredrick Burrows (afterwards Governor of Bengal) and Mr. Trafford Smith of the Colonial Office as Secretary. The Commission visited Ceylon from December 1944 to April 1945 and its *Report* was published on 9th October 1945. The Leader of the Ceylon State Council, Mr. D. S. Senanayake, was invited to London for consultations by the Secretary of State who also had before him various representations made by minority leaders.

On 31st October, His Majesty's Government published its decisions. It had reached the conclusion that a Constitution on the general lines proposed by the Soulbury Commission (which also conformed in broad outline, save as regards the Second



THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN SESSION

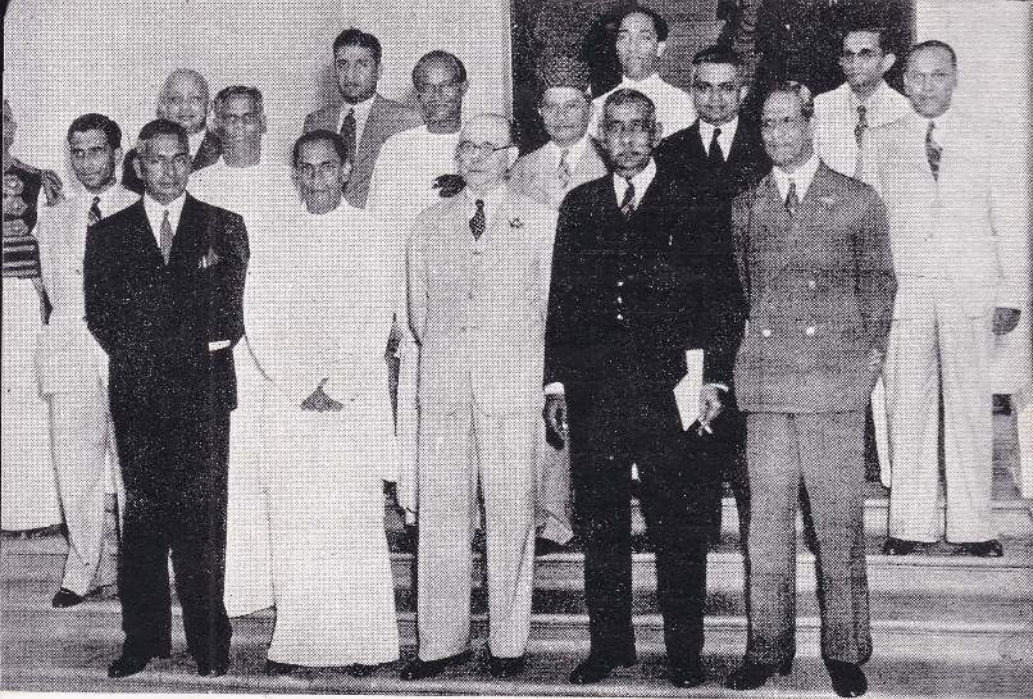
Chamber, to the constitutional scheme put forward by the Ceylon Ministers themselves) would prove a workable basis for constitutional progress in Ceylon. The scheme provided for a bicameral Parliament: a First Chamber of 95 members elected on a territorial franchise and six nominated by the Governor; and a Second Chamber, to be called the Senate, of 30 members, 15 to be elected by the members of the First Chamber and 15 to be nominated by the Governor in his discretion. With a view to safeguarding minority interests, the Governor was empowered to 'reserve' certain specified classes of Bills.

On 9th November 1945, the Ceylon State Council accepted a resolution in favour of the British Government's White Paper by an overwhelming majority.

CABINET GOVERNMENT

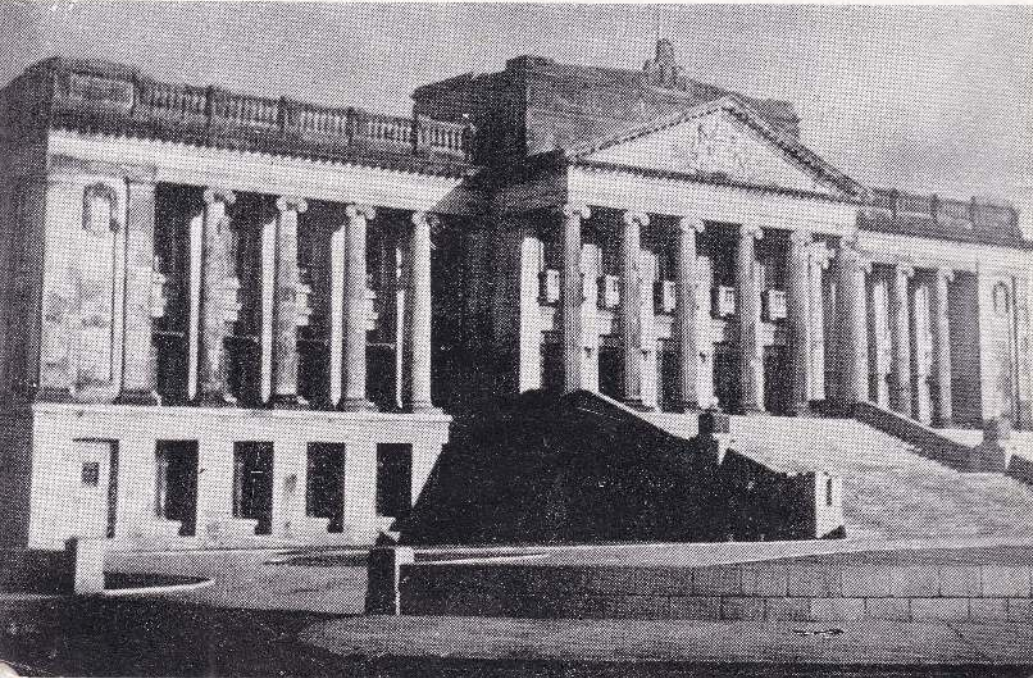
A new Constitution was enacted by Order in Council on May 15, 1946 and elections for the House of Representatives were held in August-September 1947. But on June 18, 1947 an announcement of momentous importance was made in the British Parliament by the Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. He said that, when the elections were over and a new Government had been formed, steps would be taken to confer upon Ceylon "fully responsible status within the British Commonwealth of Nations".

At the General Election, Mr. D. S. Senanayake, who had played the principal part in securing self-government for the country, led the United National Party which gained 42 out of the 95 seats to which members could be elected. The score of the three Marxist parties was as follows: 10 seats won by the Lanka Sama Samaj Party led by Dr. N. M. Perera; 5 seats won by the Communist Party led by Mr. Pieter Keuneman; and 5 seats won by the Bolshevik-Leninist Party led by Dr. Colvin



THE FIRST CABINET

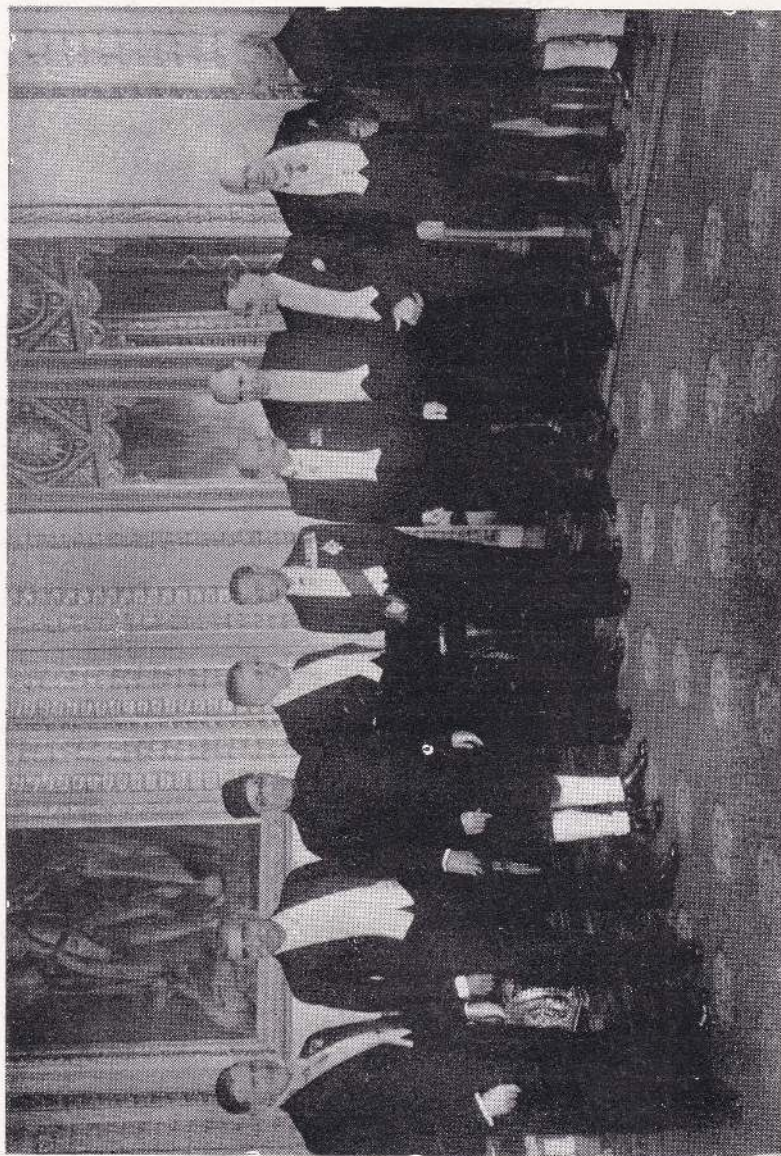
PARLIAMENT HOUSE



R. de Silva. The Ceylon Tamil Congress, led by Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam gained 7 seats. The Ceylon Indian Congress won 6 seats. The Labour Party gained a single seat while 19 Independents were also elected. Six "Appointed" members were nominated by the Governor-General to represent minorities which were unrepresented by elected members.

When Parliament met on October 14, 1947, the Prime Minister had already formed his Cabinet consisting of the following: Mr. D. S. Senanayake, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and External Affairs; Mr. S. W. R. Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Health and Local Government and Leader of the House; Colonel J. L. Kotalawala, Minister of Transport and Works; Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, Minister of Home Affairs and Rural Development; Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, Minister of Finance; Dr. L. A. Rajapakse, Minister of Justice; Mr. George E. de Silva, Minister of Industries and Fisheries; Mr. C. Suntharalingam, Minister of Commerce and Trade; Mr. T. B. Jayah, Minister of Labour and Social Services; Mr. E. A. Nugawela, Minister of Education; Mr. A. Ratnayake, Minister of Food and Co-operative Undertakings; Mr. Dudley Senanayake, Minister of Agriculture and Lands; Mr. C. Sittampalam, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications and Mr. R. S. S. Gunewardene, Minister without Portfolio and Government Whip. Sir Oliver Goonetilleke and Dr. L. A. Rajapakse were nominated to the Senate which was composed as provided by the Constitution.

Mr. George E. de Silva and Mr. R. S. S. Gunewardene forfeited their seats in Parliament as a result of election petitions and later in the year Sir Oliver Goonetilleke was appointed High Commissioner for Ceylon in London. Their places in the Cabinet were filled by the appointment of Mr. E. A. P. Wijeyeratna (Minister of Home Affairs and Rural Development), Mr. G. G. Ponnam-



THE COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE
THE CEYLON PRIME MINISTER IS SECOND FROM THE LEFT

balam (Minister of Industries and Fisheries) and Mr. A. E. Goonesinha (Minister without Portfolio). Mr. C. Suntharalingam, Minister of Commerce and Trade, resigned in December, 1948 and the vacancy was filled by the appointment of Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya.

The inclusion of Mr. Ponnambalam, leader of the Tamil Congress, in the Cabinet was of considerable political significance. Moreover, it deprived the Opposition of an accomplished parliamentarian and an appreciable number of votes.

THE NEW DOMINION

In November, 1947, the British Parliament passed the Ceylon Independence Act and agreements were made between His Majesty's Government and the Ceylon Government on defence, external affairs and the public services. The Act came into force on February 4th, 1948 and Ceylon became a Dominion of the British Commonwealth. Sir Henry Moore, the Governor, took his oaths of allegiance and office as Governor-General on the same day.

Amid great public rejoicing, on February 10th, the first Dominion Parliament of Ceylon was opened by His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester who was accompanied by the Duchess. The ceremony was performed in a specially built Assembly Hall and after it was over the Prime Minister unfurled the Lion Flag.

The Prime Minister attended the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers held in London in October 1948, the first occasion on which the Prime Ministers of India, Pakistan and Ceylon participated in such a conference.

Ceylon is in many ways a fortunate country. It has an ancient civilisation and an uninterrupted historical tradition. The ruins of its great cities, notably Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, speak eloquently of a past culture. Its chronicle, the Mahawamsa, bears

witness to the deeds of enlightened rulers and wise teachers. Its ancient temples and literature emphasise the influence of the Buddhist religion on the lives of the people. It is an island blessed with a fertile soil, a pleasant climate, magnificent scenery and a position on the sea and air routes of the world which increasingly brings it closer to the peoples of other lands. For a hundred and fifty years Ceylon has enjoyed peace and its inhabitants have gained their freedom without violence. In welcoming Ceylon as a new member, 'fully grown to nationhood', of the British Commonwealth of Nations, His Majesty King George VI said in his message delivered by his brother the Duke of Gloucester on February 10th, 1948: "I know that my people in Ceylon are ready to make a full and rich contribution to this association of free peoples and I am confident that you will carry your new responsibilities ably to this end. My good wishes go out to you on this great day and I pray that Ceylon will enjoy peace and prosperity in full measure. May God bless you all and guide your country through the years that lie ahead".—*So let it be.*