

CEYLON *Today*

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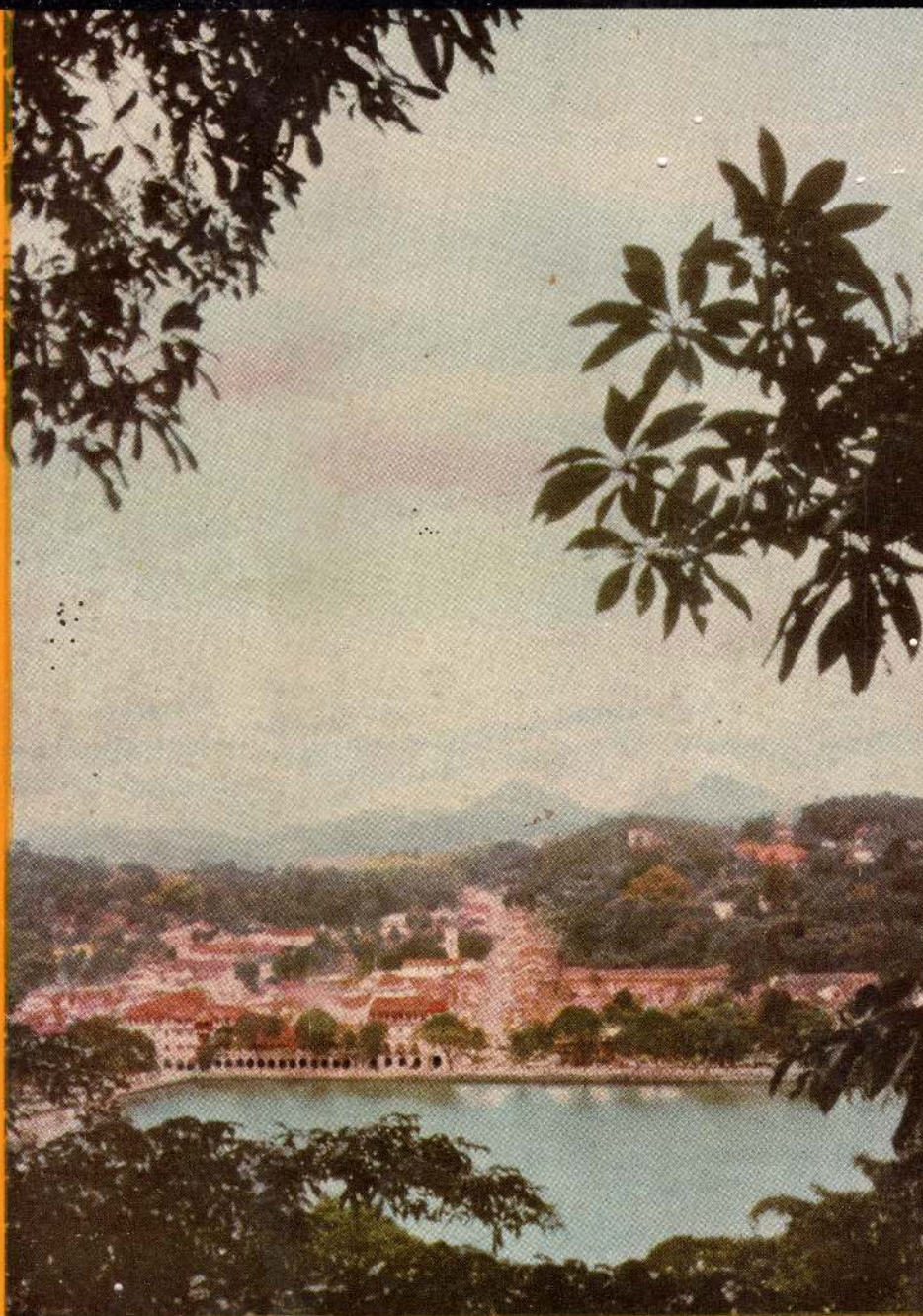
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MARCH, 1958

CEYLON TODAY

			<i>Local</i>		<i>Foreign</i>
			<i>Rs. c.</i>		
Annual Subscription inclusive of Postage			.. 7 50	..	15s.
Price per copy 0 50	..	—
Postage 0 10	..	—

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Galle Face Secretariat, Colombo 1.**

CEYLON

Today

PUBLISHED BY THE CEYLON GOVERNMENT INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

March, 1958

Vol. VII No. 3

*All editorial correspondence should be addressed
to the Assistant Information Officer, Information
Department, Senate Building, Colombo 1*

Premier's Address to the Asian-African Women's Conference

THE Prime Minister, the Hon. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, declared open the Asian-African Women's Conference held in Colombo from February 15 to 23.

The conference was attended by representatives of 17 countries in the Afro-Asian region.

The following is the full text of the Prime Minister's address :—

"I deem it a great honour that has been paid to me by the request to declare open this very important and even portentous conference of unofficial women's organizations of Asian-African countries. I believe this idea was mooted at the 1955 session of the All-India Women's Conference, and the five countries that are popularly known as the Colombo Powers—India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma and Indonesia—took upon themselves the task of summoning this conference of women's organizations of the Asian-African countries. I understand that the response to this invitation was most encouraging and I believe that as many as 17 countries are represented here from the region which I have mentioned.

"I am also very pleased that our country has been chosen as the venue for this conference and may I add my word of cordial welcome to all the visiting delegates on

behalf of the people and the Government of Ceylon to our shores. I hope that your deliberations would prove fruitful and that you will carry with you memories of our country and the contacts that no doubt you will make with so many people here that will be pleasant and so help to foster friendship between the various countries represented here today and ourselves.

"This conference, as I mentioned, represents the delegates of non-governmental representative women's organizations of the countries of Asia and Africa. The question therefore arises at the outset as to this Asian-African concept that appears to have developed in comparatively recent years. As you are aware, there was a conference at Bandung of the representatives of the Governments of many Asian-African countries—I believe 29 countries assembled at Bandung—and held interesting and important discussions. There is such a thing as an Asian-African bloc that seems to be functioning satisfactorily with mutual co-operation and collaboration over a large range of subjects at the United Nations.

"And here we have a gathering of representative women of Asian-African countries. Why Asian-African countries? I ask the question whether there are any particularly significant common factors



The Ceylon Premier and Mrs. Bandaranaike greeting one of the delegates to the Conference, at a party at "Temple Trees"

(while of course co-operating with the whole world as we wish to do and have to do) amongst these Asian-African countries. I suppose, by the way in passing, that it is Asian-African or Afro-Asian. Of course, I would like to mention that whichever juxtaposition you choose there is no intention to place either Asia behind Africa or Africa behind Asia. It is just a verbal convenience.

Common Factors

"WHAT are these common factors? They are two different continents, Countries far

flung from one another. They differ in many matters—religious, cultural, political, social and ideological. They differ perhaps from each other in many more matters than Western countries differ from each other. What are then the common factors, or are there any common factors between these countries of Asia and Africa? Obviously there are. I should imagine that the most important common factor is the circumstance that most countries of Asia and Africa have been in one way or another, directly or indirectly, under some form of foreign

influence, foreign rule, foreign dominance—call it colonialism, imperialism or what you like—and that many of these countries have in recent years regained their freedom, and that certain other countries of this region are working towards freedom—that freedom which many of us have regained within this comparatively short period of time.

“Naturally, this common circumstance must produce certain common sympathies; certain common problems; may be at a political level, or an economic level or a social level or a cultural level. Similar problems therefore must arise in all these spheres of human thought and activity amongst the various countries in this region. That I should think is the most important common factor that applies to almost all the countries in this region, the Asian-African region, which, therefore does not make it out of the ordinary for these countries to get together at various levels; governmental, non-governmental, socially, economically, culturally, and so on.

“Therefore it is quite right, I feel, that a region like this, without in any way arousing hostility to our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world, and with the sincerest desire and determination, should collaborate and co-operate with them and for certain purposes of our own. But as you are an assembly of women I do not wish to express anything in any way that might be even construed as patronizing, being a mere man, addressing an assembly of women. But with a certain amount of diffidence I wish to draw attention to one or two points regarding the fact that this is a conference of women. As you all know, in our region there had been women who in the histories of our countries have played very prominent and very decisive parts in the shaping of the destinies of our countries' freedom. But I suppose it can be said with general accuracy that the women of our region had been somewhat, may I say, backward in playing their due part in the affairs of their countries; more backward, at least in modern times, than the women in

Mrs.
Bandaranaike,
wife of the
Ceylon Premier,
welcoming
delegates to a
party



other parts of the world. That is another common factor, namely, the question of the status of women in many countries of our region. This question arises more sharply and acutely for consideration by you than it is, let us say, in many countries in the West, who have earlier fought for and won a greater degree perhaps, generally speaking, of emancipation of women and participation by women, in various spheres of national activity in their countries than women in many countries of our region.

“Another point that I wish to make is this. During the last war, a new phrase was coined. The new phrase was this. “Total War”. In earlier days people made war in a restricted way; restricted to the soldiers fighting in the field, often to mercenary soldiers performing the task on behalf of this country or the other. For the first time in the last war this very dynamic phrase was used—“Total War”. What did that mean? It meant that in the struggle that the world



Two Ministers of the Ceylon Cabinet greeting the visitors

was engaged in, all people had to be mobilized in one way or another to play their part—soldiers, civilians, old men, young men and women, old and young. All sections of the population had to take part in the common struggle. Hence the phrase “Total War”.

“Total Peace”

“WE have today to wage “Total Peace” in its own way, and this is more difficult perhaps than waging “Total War”. We have all in one way or another, to wage “Total Peace”. Why so? I have no intention whatsoever of making a political speech. Various representatives of countries may have different views or political ideologies. But without doing that there is something we have all to bear in mind. What is the need for

this total peace today? That is a question that I wish to answer in a few words. Today, as we all know, there are so many difficulties in the world. We are not living in one of those happy, peaceful periods of history. We are living in a period which, if it is vital and alive, which, if it contains potentialities of great advances for the human race, also possesses possibilities of untold conflict, misery, harm and destruction. I need not expand that point. It is almost a platitude that it is so.

Therefore, in this world where peace becomes so necessary, not merely desirable but becomes starkly necessary, not merely for our advance but for the bare survival of the human race, peace occupies a more overshadowing position today in the world than it ever did in the past. The waging of

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total peace becomes absolutely necessary—not merely desirable—but absolutely, necessary for our bare survival.

What do we mean by the waging of "Total Peace"? Peace—if I may repeat what I have said on other occasions and other contexts—is not purely a negative concept, of the absence of conflict or war. It is something very positive. In this positive aspect, peace means mutual understanding. Realistically we must accept the position that we cannot all agree with each other. We have never been able to agree with each other. Today particularly we cannot all agree with each other. But today it is necessary for us to understand each other, to appreciate each other's points of view, to realize our particular difficulties and the context in which these difficulties arise and thereby create peaceful feelings of friendly relations, co-operation and collaboration which are absolutely necessary for the preservation of peace in this negative aspect, i.e., the avoidance of sharp conflict.

Mutual understanding is necessary today. In order to obtain that we have to wage this total war of peace. It is no use Prime Ministers meeting from time to time, at this place or the other, discussing problems at "summit" levels or even at less rarefied levels lower down. No doubt such a course of action is necessary. But at all levels, in any way, this mutual understanding has to be strengthened and fostered.

"Now, at the level of women, I should think it is very valuable to foster this mutual understanding. It is very important indeed. Women I suppose in many ways are really—by the type of activities that they normally perform—perhaps more practical in their outlook, possess more commonsense than the generality of men. Their day-to-day function, managing their houses, cooking their meals, looking after children, and so on. I think generally that with that degree of practical approach to many problems—which perhaps we are inclined sometimes to forget in taking a more idealistic view, a

theoretical view of problems—women as a whole perhaps correctly, approach such problems with a more practical and realistic commonsense. Therefore they can serve a very valuable purpose in a whole range of subjects which, I believe, you will be discussing during the course of your conference, such as education, health, social service and welfare, and of course the status of women.

Today women claim, rightfully, equality with men in status. You should assert that claim and you should get that right even in theory. In practice you will find there are certain definite spheres of work and activity for which women perhaps are more qualified than men and there may be just a little remnant left where we men may be more qualified than women. That is a little matter of adjustment. Harmonious adjustment. But that equality of status should be claimed and obtained. There is no question about it.

Regional Problems

"THERE are many problems in our region where, in such subjects as education, health, social service and welfare, women can play a most important part in practice, which perhaps is not being played today at least in certain countries. There is just one problem, I wish to mention here, a problem, to which women should address their minds—one that is somewhat neglected and inclined to be lost sight of today, but the most important particularly for our region—the problem of population.

"I remember eight years ago when I was Minister of Health here, I had the honour of being Vice-President of the World Health Organization, and I introduced what I thought at that time was a fairly innocuous resolution that a Committee of the World Health Organization should be appointed to investigate this problem, particularly in our region and to put up a report for the consideration of the WHO.

"I was nearly torn to bits. To my horror and surprise member after member arose in his or her place there and simply said that

it was monstrous that I should ever make such a suggestion. And I, thinking, as politicians sometimes do, that discretion is the better part of valour, gracefully asked for permission to withdraw my resolution, which was equally gracefully granted.

"Now, please remember that this problem, which is becoming a serious one for the world is a far more serious one in our region. The steps that we have been taking in recent years in health matters, in education and in raising the living conditions have resulted in an enormous increase of the population. Mortality rates have gone down, and we are faced with a very big problem indeed. In our country—we are faced with a very big problem indeed. In our country—we are 25,000 square miles in extent—our population is at present nine million. It is increasing by nearly three per cent. per annum. It is one of the highest increases in the whole world, 2.8 or 2.9 per cent. per annum. And this population is increasing annually by a figure between 250,000 and 300,000 every year. Of course, you will know the position in your own countries. In the bigger countries like China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan, and so on, you will probably know that the position there is almost equally alarming.

Peoples' Rights

EVERY one has the right to live, to secure employment, and we must also create conditions for peace within our own countries and between our own countries. How can we have peace if we have many millions in our countries who just cannot live, to whom we cannot extend the mere right to live. Today, in this new era, there is a greater emphasis on the right of a person to live. I hope I am not entering upon controversial politics when I speak on a general proposition that is common to us all.

Every one has the right to live, to secure employment, to have a roof over his head, clothing, food, and to get the ordinary amenities that a human being is entitled to.

"How are we going to provide that particularly in our region, under-developed economically and socially with an increasing population that is continually outstripping our plans, economically and otherwise? How can we do it? Therefore, again I say very diffidently, this is an important problem to which the ladies can address their minds because it is a problem on which, I should think, the views of the ladies can have an important effect amongst various other national problems that a country has to deal with. It is a serious problem and you will forgive me for drawing your attention at this conference to this overshadowing problem. It is becoming overshadowing today, though it is still not realized in that very acute form by many of our countries. It is a very important problem and I am sure that if the women of the various regions of the world express their views which could be translated into action, it would make a great difference indeed to the economic position, the social position and ultimately the position of the whole world. This is a suggestion which is certainly worth the consideration of this conference.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I repeat, as I said at the beginning, that we cordially welcome you to our midst. We are a small country, a poor country. We are just a pin head as countries go in this world. But small though we be, our will to peace, our will to collaborate and co-operate with all other countries in our region and the world, to reach human understanding and thereby strengthen world peace, is not second to any country in the world, big or small.

"We hope that your conference would be helpful towards that end. Personally we are very glad to have you all amongst us. I trust that you will enjoy your stay here and I hope that your discussions will prove useful and that you will go away with pleasant memories of your short stay with us, and that the friendly bonds between all of us would strengthen so that we may all work together for human fellowship, peace and comradeship in the world.



The Prime Minister, who opened the new building, being escorted to it by the Minister of Health, Mrs. Vimala Wijeyewardene

New Extension to General Hospital, Colombo

THE five-storeyed extension to the General Hospital, Colombo, was declared open by the Prime Minister on Friday, March 21, 1958. The extension, with room for 280 beds, was built at a cost of Rs. 6 million.

The new extension has a fully equipped neuro-surgical unit for males and females. This unit is both air-conditioned and sound-proof. There are also eight air-conditioned, sound-proof cubicles for serious cases.

There are 16 beds for first-class paying patients and 6 rooms with 3 beds in each for second-class paying patients. All these wards

have attached baths. Thirty-four paying patients can thus be accommodated in the new extension.

In the non-paying wards brightly coloured curtains separate the beds from one another. There are 246 beds in the non-paying section. All the beds have special bed-rests that can be adjusted to suit the requirements of each patient.

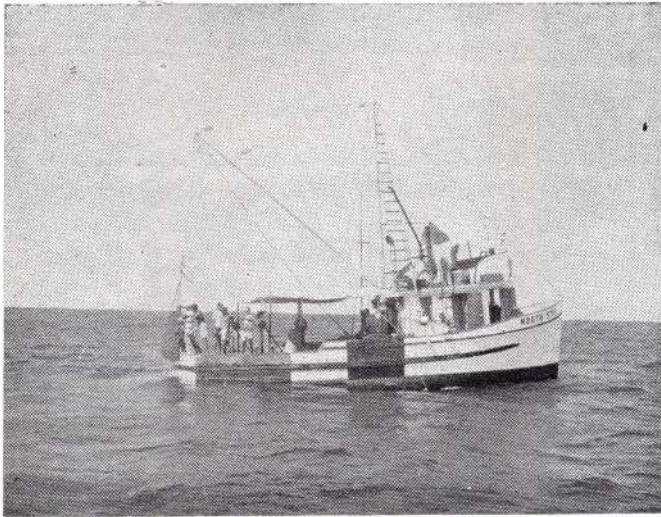
The ground floor of the new block will accommodate the entire administrative section of the General Hospital.



◀ The Premier lighting the traditional oil-lamp to declare the building open



◀ A section of the new extension



Two Canadian boats—the North Star (under Skipper Roy Pyne) and the Canadian (under Skipper Barry) are at present engaged in pearl fishing operations off Karativu, island about three hours' journey by launch from Kalpitiya. The boats set out to the pearl banks at dawn and return at dusk. The North Star is here hauling up a load of oysters

Harvest Time for Pearl Oysters

A. S. MENDIS

(Research Officer, Department of Fisheries)

NATURAL pearls have always been held in the highest estimation and have fetched enormous prices. Perhaps the most remarkable one, of which we have any authentic account, was bought by Tavernier at Catifa in Arabia, a fishery famous in the days of Pliny, for the fabulous sum of one million four hundred and thirty thousand rupees! This pearl had a pear shape and its length was over two inches.

The Ceylon pearl banks are reputed to produce some of the finest natural pearls in the world and the demand for them is to be found in the ancient writings of the Greeks, Romans, Venetians and, more recently, the Dutch, Portuguese and British. The Mahavamsa records that in 540 B.C., King Vijaya sent a gift which included pearls to King Pandu, his father-in-law and in 306 B.C., King Devanampiyatissa's ambassador took with him pearls of eight different varieties to King Asoka of India. In 161 B.C., the King's hall in the Brazen Palace was studded with pearls. The mortar in some of

the ruins at Polonnaruwa shows remains of pearl oyster shells—no doubt obtained at an ancient fishery.

Most of the Ceylon pearl oyster banks or "paars" (meaning rock or any form of hard bottom) are in depths of from five to ten fathoms. Oysters are also found in shallower depths but in very limited areas which are liable to be quickly silted up. The banks stretch for about fifty miles in length and have a maximum width of twenty miles opposite Aripu. The southern banks extend as far as Chilaw. Our pearl oyster beds have been a source of revenue from time immemorial but the Ceylon pearl oyster fisheries have been characterised by their irregularity and uncertainty.

Only sixty-one fisheries have taken place during the last two hundred and eighty years, and this year's fishery is being held after a long lapse of thirty-two years. Twenty million rupees were derived from the thirty-nine fisheries held since 1800. From 1905 the pearl banks were leased to the Ceylon



Fisheries Department officials and men, who are engaged in the pearl fishery, are living under canvas on the lonely island of Karativu. Life is hard for them but they have provided themselves with electric lights, a refrigerator, water filters, and so on. Their meals usually comprise rice with dry fish and dhal

Company of Pearl Fisheries (a British Company) for the annual rent of three hundred and ten thousand rupees. After the fishery of 1907 the supply of oysters failed and the company went bankrupt, compelling the termination of the lease in 1912.

The irregular nature of the fisheries and the probable cause of the blank years when no fisheries could be held has been attributed by marine biologists to the following reasons :—(1) Sand which silts up the oyster beds, (2) predacious fish and other enemies which attack the oysters, (3) overcrowding of the beds by the oysters themselves, thereby retarding their growth, (4) overfishing, and (5) disease.

The banks or "paars" are widely separated from each other. They are accordingly subject to very different physical and biological conditions so that the sudden disappearance or the continued absence of pearl oyster in different localities and at different times may be due to very different causes. It must therefore be emphasized that we are dealing with

a great variety of natural influences some of which are probably still unknown.

Wrath of the Gods

WHEN no fisheries could be held after 1907, immediately after the foreign company gave up the lease, local opinion of the time made the suggestion that it was due to the "wrath of the gods" for allowing a foreign commercial company to exploit the pearl banks.

A quotation from the records of the Legislative Council for 1925 will illustrate another view : "The company paid no attention whatever to the pearl banks. They tried to get as much as possible out of them and scraped the spat (young oyster) and subsequently sold out".

The allegation was also made in the local press that the grounds were denuded and ruined by Sir Robert Horton for the purpose of swelling the revenue of Ceylon during his administration. These criticisms, however, seem to be unfair, as records go to prove that in subsequent years compact beds of mature oysters were found, unfortunately too late in the season to be fished.

The formation of pearls and their presence in the oyster had been a mystery till the early nineteenth century. Ancient writers had given various views as to their mode of formation. One such view was that during heavy rain the oysters ascended to the surface of the ocean, opened their shells, took in drops of fresh water and that these drops consolidated as pearls. Pliny and other classical writers held the view that the oysters ascended to the surface in the night, drops of dew entered the gaping oyster at dawn and these drops were transformed into pearls which reflected the first rays of the sun. Others have advocated the view that pearls are the result of lightning. Today we know for certain that pearls are formed around small particles which irritate the oyster causing it to secrete the pearly material encasing the particles. However, the formation of pearls does not start till the oyster

is about three years old and a suitable nucleus is present inside it. Particles which act as nuclei for pearl formation are numerous. They may be small sand grains, small pieces of shell, the oyster's own ova or excreta and dead larvae of fish tapeworms or other parasites.

To Dr. Kelaart in 1857 belongs the honour of having first connected the formation of pearls in the Ceylon oyster with the presence of vermean parasites. The commonest type of nucleus for pearl formation in the Ceylon pearl oyster is the dead larva of a certain species of tapeworm. The life history of this tapeworm could be divided into several stages. The adult tapeworm is found in Sharks and Skates. The eggs hatch out in the open sea and the embryos die unless they can enter the flesh of a pearl oyster where they remain encapsuled. When the infected oysters are eaten by a group of fishes termed the file fishes, the cysts change into larvae inside the fish. The file fishes in turn fall prey to sharks and skates where they are transformed into tapeworms. If the oysters with the cysts are not eaten by the file fishes within a certain time, the cysts die and these dead cysts stimulate the oyster to secrete the pearly material around the cysts.

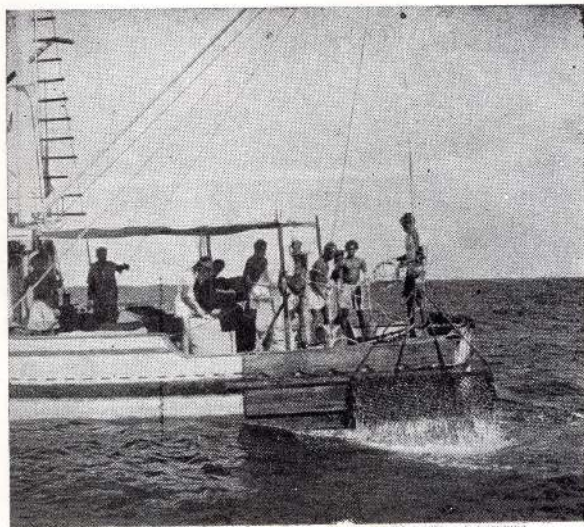
It is not out of place at this stage to make a short reference to cultured pearls. Pearl culture is carried out extensively in Japan and China. In order to culture the pearls, oysters are picked up from the ocean bed and then introduced into wire cages. These cages are hung from rafts which float in the sea. When the oysters are mature they are removed from the cages, an artificial nucleus introduced into the flesh of the oyster which are then placed back in the cage where they are kept for periods varying from one to three years. At the end of this period the oysters are taken out and examined for pearls. The commonly used nuclei are the perfectly round beads made from the shells of fresh water mussels. These nuclei are of various sizes resulting in pearl of the required dimensions. However, these

cultured pearls have only a very thin layer of pearly material and could be distinguished from the natural ones without much difficulty and are relatively quite cheap.

Not evenly distributed

DUE to the irregular nature of the natural fisheries, inspections of the banks are carried out almost every year during the months of October and November. These inspections, if they reveal that sufficient oysters are present in quantity and maturity, pave the way for a fishery which is held in the period between February and April, the season of calm weather. It is not possible to fish the entire area at a fishery because the oysters are not evenly distributed. The inspections show the areas where they are concentrated and where they could be fished. Inspections were carried out in 1955 and 1957, resulting in the fishery which is now in progress. The inspection of 1955 was done with the aid of divers and dredges working from Government fishing trawlers.

The North Star lowering a dredge into the sea. Two dredges, working on either side of the boat, bring up about 15,000 pearl oysters in one hour. In the old days, when pearl divers were employed, each diver was able to bring up only about 400 oysters in one whole day



The 1957 survey, however, did not employ divers and depended solely on the dredge. The dredge was so successful at this inspection that in this year's fishery several dredges are being used which are worked off two small fishing vessels donated to the Department of Fisheries by Canada under the Colombo Plan. These two boats are skippered by Canadians. The dredge consists of an iron frame, 6 feet by 1 foot to scrape the oysters from the beds, and a bag made of iron mesh permanently attached to the frame to receive the oysters that are dislodged. Two dredges can be operated from each vessel at the same time. The dredge is dragged along the sea bed for about fifteen minutes and hauled up by winches in the vessel. When fishing is good a dredge can bring up as many as 5,000 oysters.

Opinion, however, seems to differ as to the advantages and disadvantages of the dredge over the divers. Among the advantages are: (1) The rapidity with which the dredges bring up the oysters, and (2) The relative cheapness of this mode of operation. The chief objection to the use of the dredge seems to be its inability to operate on uneven ground, the pearl banks being not consistently even, but having rocks or growths of

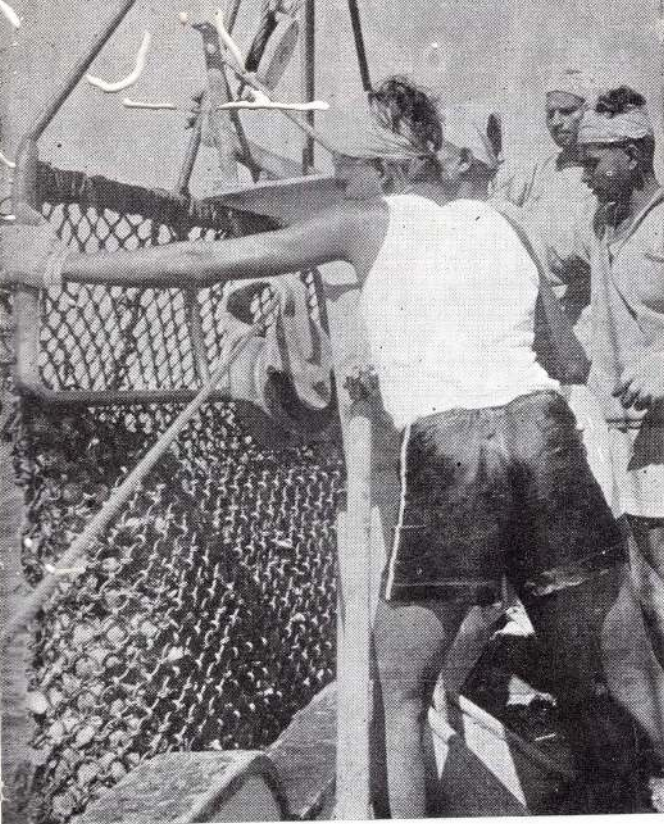
Fisheries Department officers in Colombo inspecting samples for pearls



An auctioneer invites bids for the oysters, bag by bag. The first bag went under the hammer for Rs. 475. The Government has more than realised the money spent on this year's fishery

coral and other organisms. This year's fishery which hopes to bring in some seven to nine million mature oysters, will be a small one and will take place on reasonably even ground. Depending on the success of this year's fishery it is proposed to organize a bigger fishery in 1959.

Fear has been raised in certain quarters that the use of the dredge will damage the beds by scraping the young oysters along with the mature ones. The surveys have indicated that there are an estimated two hundred million oysters in our banks. Of this quantity only seven to nine million oysters inhabiting an area of three square miles are to be fished this year. When dredging it is impossible to cover the entire area without skipping some spots which will always have sufficient stock for re-colonization. It might be mentioned that Prof. Herdman in his valuable reports of 1907 in making his recommendations to the colonial government after an exhaustive examination of the banks did advocate the use of the dredge. The dredge alone without divers has been used in the pearl oyster beds off Margarita Island in



About 20 minutes after the dredge is lowered, it is hauled up by means of winches. Here, a net full of oysters comes up

the Caribbean Sea since the middle of the last century. There has been no damage to the beds off this Island. Canada and U. S. A. on their east coasts use the dredge for scallops without harmful effects. Now that the use of the dredge has been so successfully demonstrated in the fishery of 1958, it is most unlikely that divers will ever be employed again at a Ceylon pearl oyster fishery.

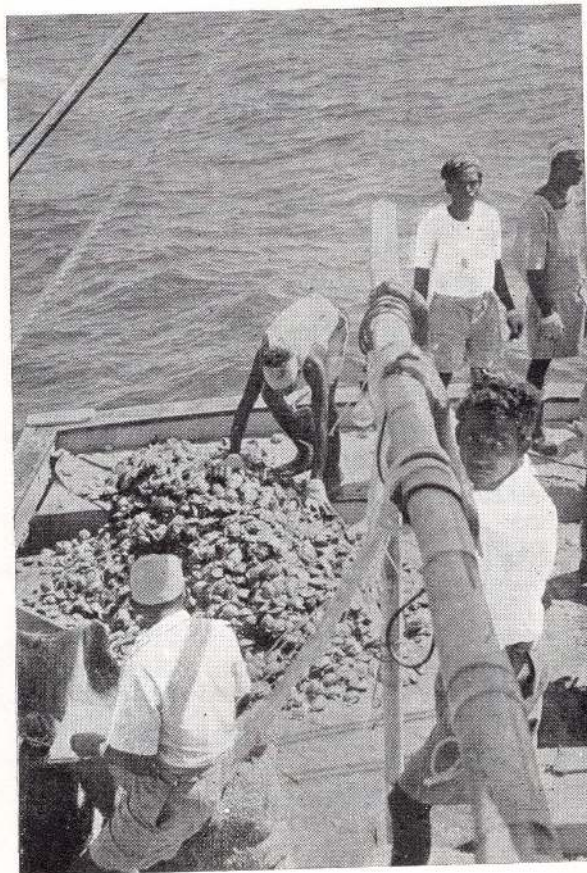
Only fifteen officials and the two Canadian boats are engaged in the fishery this year. This is quite a contrast to the earlier fisheries when thousands of divers and boats were employed. A small camp to accommodate the officials has been established at Karaduwa Island off Kalpitiya. The two vessels when not engaged in dredging are anchored off this Island near the camp. The vessel with their crew and scientific staff set out daily, except on Sundays, at 6 a.m. for the banks which are reached in about an hour and a quarter.

Dredging operations commence immediately on arrival at the oyster beds, which are marked by buoys that remain there till the end of the fishery. The mature oysters coming up in the dredge are placed in coir bags, sealed when full and placed in the ship's hold. The ships return to base by about 6 p.m. and the oysters are transported to Colombo where they are temporarily stored in the cold rooms of the Mutwal Fisheries Factory. These bags are sold at auction sales held daily at the factory and also at outstations.

Amazing Rapidity

IN former years the news that a pearl fishery was to take place in the Gulf of Mannar spread throughout India and elsewhere with

Oysters being sorted on deck



amazing rapidity. On the appointed day, 20,000 to 50,000 gathered in what was usually an uninhabited desert—a bare sandy coast with jungle extending for miles inland. These special fishery villages in the north-western provinces sprung up at various spots particularly in the Mannar District, the last one being at Marichchukkadaï which served the fisheries ~~on~~ 1905 to 1907 and 1925. An enormous amount of preparation was necessary prior to these fisheries. Strong and comfortable barracks were first constructed to shelter the soldiers who did the policing of the village. The "kottus" which stored the oysters and served as auction sheds were situated at least 250 yards from the nearest habitation. This was not only for security reasons but to reduce the stench from decomposing oysters to a minimum. A kachcheri, treasury vaults (to store the money obtained by the sale of oysters), jeweller's quarters, small hotels and eating houses and sheds for various trades were all provided. This village became a hive of activity for about two months in the year when the fisheries were held and was then deserted for the rest of the year. Today the village at Marichchukkadaï has been over-run by jungle and the ruins serve only to bring back memories of previous fisheries.

At these old fishery villages records of disease breaking out in epidemic proportions were not uncommon. Smallpox and typhoid had broken out with a vengeance on several occasions. At the 1828 fishery camp cholera broke out and the loss of human life was apallingly heavy. The fishery of 1858 commenced full of gaiety and hope but its termination was saddened by sickness due to cholera. When the steam ships were returning to Colombo after the curtailed fishery, the journey taking twenty-four hours, anyone who had sea-sickness thought he had cholera and a few died through sheer fright. The death roll would have been greater if the journey had lasted another twenty-four hours.



After the sorting, the oysters are shovelled into gunny bags, tied and sealed before the bags are transported by launch to Kalpitiya

The former fisheries employed large numbers of divers not only from Ceylon but also from India and even countries around the Arabian sea. The Sinhalese and Tamil divers could remain under water for about sixty seconds and dive up to a depth of eight fathoms. The Arab remains under water for eighty seconds and dives up to a depth of thirteen fathoms. These divers start on their profession early in life and the long period spent in the water together with the exacting nature of their duties leave a distinctive stamp on their physique. They are invariably small-made with bulging bloodshot eyes and appear sickly and it is indeed surprising that they are able to perform their duties so well. Each boat usually carries five divers and five

attendants or "munducks". When the divers are ready, they plunge into the sea and swim to their respective stones which the "munducks" have hung over the side of the boat.

Picturesque Sight

BEFORE each dive the diver draws a deep breath, presses his nostrils between the fingers (Arab divers use clips made of horn) and sinks down aided by the sinking stone which weighs about thirty pounds. On reaching the ground he abandons the stone (which is hauled up by the "munduck"), throws himself on his belly and appears to cling to the ground while he is plucking the oysters. Each diver could collect up to five hundred oysters per day. To enable divers to come in from distant places, the decision to hold a fishery had to be advertised well in advance. Among the boats used were a few from Colombo and Jaffna and a great many from South India. The Colombo boats were invariably small barges used for transporting goods from ship to shore. The arrival of these various boats at the village was always a picturesque sight. The boats and divers were registered as they arrived since only a specified number was allowed to fish at a particular fishery.

Each fishing day commenced with the firing of a gun a short while after midnight, when the boats with the divers were prepared for towing to the banks. The banks were reached in the early hours of the morning and the diving operations started after sunrise at the firing of a gun. Similarly, fishing for the day would terminate in the evening at the firing of a gun. Immediately the boats reached the

village the police boarded them to see that no oysters were hidden in the boats. The oysters collected by each boat were divided into three lots, one lot was given to the divers and the other two taken to the Government "kottus" for auctioning.

A Shark Charmer to keep sharks away was present at every inspection and fishery and was on the government pay roll. In addition he collected for himself one oyster daily from each diver. This appointment was held by succeeding members of a family residing in Mannar. Once a shark charmer was requested to exhibit his ability to assemble some sharks round one of the boats, but he got away with it by saying that it would be improper for him to trifle with the mystical charm entrusted to his family. On another occasion when a shark appeared near a buoy which marked an oyster bed, the charmer said that he summoned the shark to the banks to impress the English gentlemen present at the time. In addition to the Shark charmer there were priests belonging to the various religious faiths present at the fishery. These priests called upon the gods for their blessings for a successful fishery and the safe return of the divers each day.

No blessings or charms are being officially solicited this year but there is little doubt that individuals and traders will be making their personal prayers for a rich harvest of pearls. There is every possibility that the fishery of 1958 will provide many valuable pearls (as the inspection revealed) and there is even a chance that a lucky person might stumble upon a pearl of great price, which might rival the famous one purchased by Tavernier during the time of Pliny.



The Ceylon Minister of Finance, Mr. Stanley de Zoysa, and the leader of the Soviet delegation ; Mr. P. A. Maletin signing the economic aid agreement in Colombo, on February 25

Three Russo-Ceylon Agreements

IN accordance with the Agreement reached in September, 1956, in Moscow between the Government Delegations of the U. S. S. R. and Ceylon and on the invitation of Ceylon, a Soviet Economic Delegation headed by Mr. P. A. Maletin, Deputy Chairman of the State Committee of the U. S. S. R. Council of Ministers for Foreign Economic Relations, visited Ceylon recently. The delegation included experts in different fields of industry and agriculture as well as representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Trade.

The Soviet Economic Delegation carried out negotiations with the Government of Ceylon for the establishment of economic and technical co-operation between the two countries.

The negotiations were initiated by the Prime Minister, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Stanley de Zoysa; the Minister of Industries and Fisheries, Mr. P. H. William de Silva, the Minister of Agriculture and Food, Mr. D. P. R. Gunawardana; the Minister of Lands and Land Development, Mr. C. P. de Silva; the Minister of Local Government, Mr. Jayaweera Kuruppu; the Minister of Education, Mr. W. Dahanayake; and the Minister of Health, Mrs. Vimala Wijewardane, conducted the negotiations on subjects concerning their respective Ministries.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of External Affairs, Mr. T. R. Subasinghe; the Permanent Secretary of the

Ministry of Finance, Mr. S. F. Amerasinghe ; the Deputy Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. H. E. Peries ; Mr. G. S. Peiris, Counsellor, Foreign Relations, Ministry of External Affairs ; and the Senior Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Mr. Raju Coomaraswamy ; and other officials conducted the day-to-day negotiations.

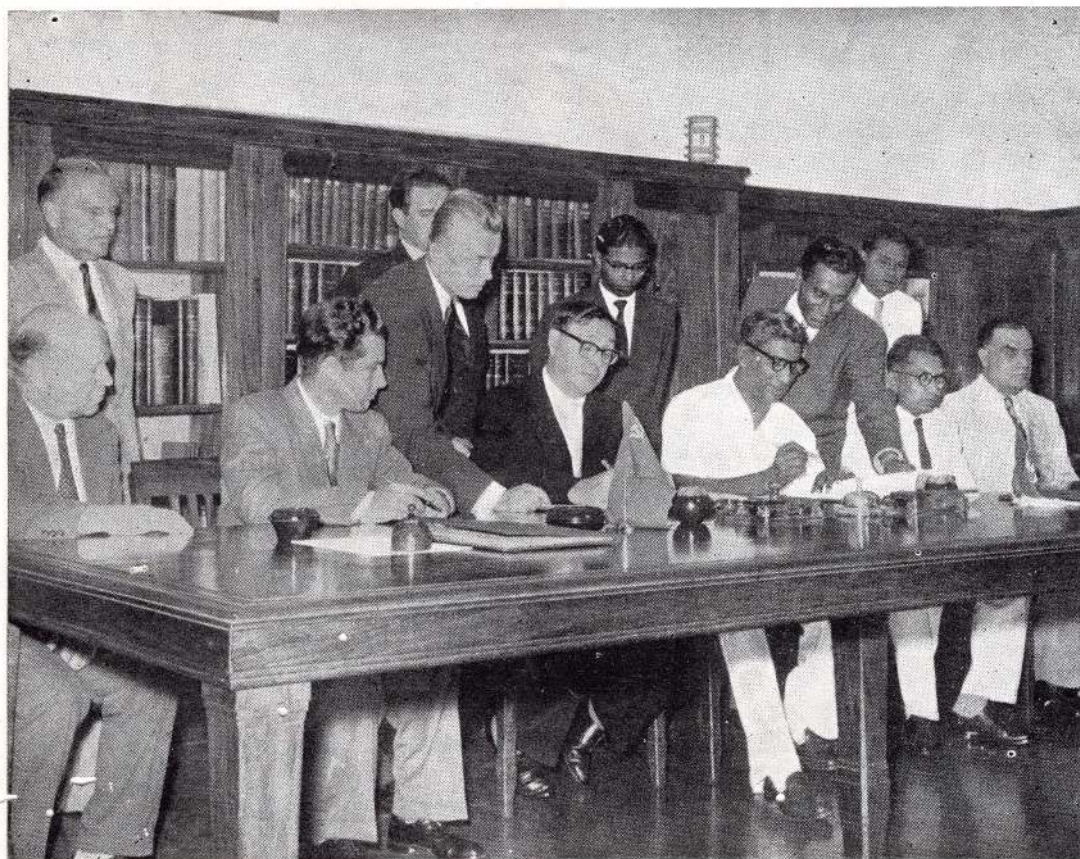
During their stay in Ceylon, the Soviet Delegation also had talks with His Excellency the Governor-General, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke.

In the course of the negotiations, which took place in a spirit of sincere friendship and mutual understanding, the parties exchanged views on a number of problems relating to

Ceylon's economic development. Soviet specialists visited the main agricultural and industrial regions and had discussions with Ceylon specialists in different fields of the economy.

The negotiations were successfully concluded by the signing of an Agreement on February 25, 1958, between the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Government of Ceylon on Economic and Technical Co-operation. The Agreement was signed on behalf of the Government of Ceylon by the Minister of Finance Mr. Stanley de Zoysa, and on behalf of the Government of the U. S. S. R., by the Deputy Chairman of the State Committee of the

The Minister of Commerce and Trade, Mr. R. G. Senanayake (seated third from right) and the leader of the Soviet economic delegation, Mr. P. A. Maletin (seated third from left), signing a Trade Agreement between Ceylon and the U. S. S. R. in Colombo on February 8



U. S. S. R. Council of Ministers for Foreign Economic Relations, Mr. P. A. Maletin.

The signing ceremony which took place in the Prime Minister's office, was attended by the Prime Minister, other Ministers and officials of the Government of Ceylon and on the Soviet side by the U. S. S. R. Ambassador to Ceylon, Mr. V. G. Yakovlev and Members of the Soviet delegation and the U. S. S. R. Embassy Staff.

The Agreement

THE Agreement is guided by the common intention of further promoting friendly relations and developing economic and technical co-operation on a basis of equality, mutual benefit and non-interference in the internal affairs of each country. The Agreement provides for co-operation, in the implementation of Ceylon's economic development programme; in carrying out investigations and preparation of designs for irrigation and hydro-power projects in the Malwatu Oya, Kelani Ganga and Kalu Ganga Basins; in the sugar cane plantation project at Kantalai and in the cotton cultivation project in the Hambantota District; in the preparation of designs and establishment of a metallurgical works, factory for motor car tyres and tubes, flour milling plant and grain elevator, plant for building materials and prefabricated units and some other projects; in mining of peat at Mutturajawela; in carrying out joint research work and technical co-operation for the development of fisheries as well as in equipping "Science teaching laboratories" for junior secondary schools. Technical assistance will also be rendered in the restoration of some irrigation works damaged by floods.

The Parties have agreed by exchange of letters that the Soviet Union will provide facilities for training Ceylon students at the establishments of higher learning in some fields of industry and agriculture as well as for the exchange of specialists in the field of planning.

To make payments for the preparation of designs by the Soviet organization, supply of equipment, machinery and materials from the U. S. S. R. as well as other kinds of technical assistance, the Government of the U. S. S. R. has agreed to extend a long-term credit to the Government of Ceylon to the amount of 120,000,000 roubles (Rs. 152 million approximately) at 2.5 per cent. interest per annum to be repaid during a period of 12 years. The prices to be paid for any materials and equipment provided by the U. S. S. R. will be determined on the basis of world market prices. The repayment will be by deliveries of Ceylon goods and/or in Pounds Sterling and other convertible currencies to be agreed upon from time to time by the two parties.

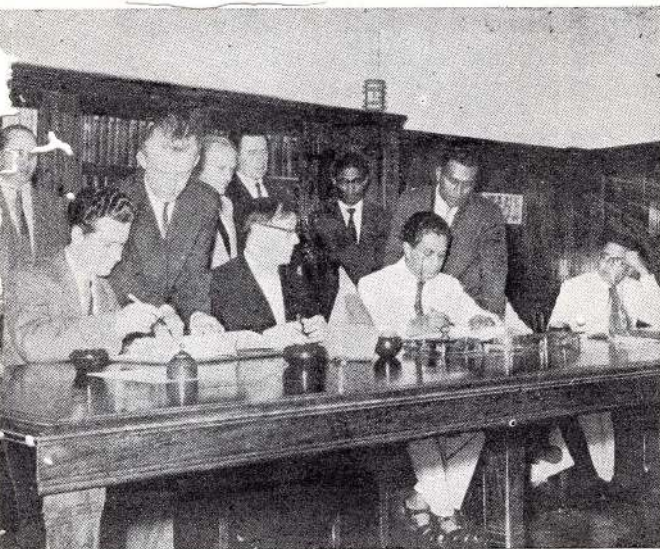
The execution and working of the projects in terms of this Agreement will be undertaken by the Ceylon Government Authorities.

The implementation of this Agreement will help considerably in the planned development of an independent national economy in Ceylon and provide fuller employment to the people.

The Soviet Delegation left Ceylon on February 27, 1958.

At the conclusion of the signing ceremony of the Agreement, the Ceylon Premier said—

"I am very pleased on this occasion that the discussions that had taken place between the trade delegation sent by the Government of the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mr. Maletin and ourselves have been successfully concluded. The Trade and Payments Agreements were signed a little time ago and, today, the Economic Aid Agreement has been signed. Under these Agreements Ceylon will derive many advantages both in trade as well as in the economic development of the country, and the Agreements will also be of mutual benefit to both countries. I greatly appreciate the patience and goodwill



The Minister of Finance, Mr. Stanley de Zoysa, and the leader of the Soviet economic delegation, Mr. P. A. Maletin, signing the Payments Agreement between Ceylon and the U. S. S. R. on February 8

with which Mr. Maletin and his delegation have conducted these negotiations and enabled them to be brought to a successful conclusion.

"They have spent a long time in Ceylon and, even if they have felt the heat of our climate, I am perfectly sure that they would also have realized the warmth and cordiality of our country towards their own. Their work here has further helped to strengthen and foster the cordial and friendly relations that exist between our two countries.

His Excellency Mr. P. A. Maletin, Leader of the Soviet Delegation, said—

"The U. S. S. R. delegation have come through the invitation of the Ceylon Government and to carry on negotiations on economic and technical co-operation between the two countries. The sending of this delegation by the U. S. S. R. Government and the cordial welcome on the part of the Government of Ceylon is an expression of mutual understanding between the two Governments

to further strengthen and consolidate friendly relations to mutual benefit of both countries. The Agreement signed today is a comprehensive one. It provides for various projects both in Agriculture and Industry. The Agreement provides for the technical co-operation in such projects as irrigation schemes, hydro-power development, and expansion of some agricultural crops. The Agreement also provides for the construction of industrial projects such as setting up of metallurgical works, factory for motor car tyres and tubes, flour-milling plant, and a factory for pre-fabricated units for housing construction. We shall be very happy if this work undertaken will be successful and further strengthen the attempts of the Ceylon people to achieve the economic independence of the country. I would like to emphasize that this form of economic co-operation is mutually advantageous to both peoples. As I have already mentioned, Your Excellency, the Soviet Union will render assistance to Ceylon in the field of supplies of equipment, technical assistance and advice, and the Government of Ceylon will undertake the effective development of those schemes and organize the construction of them. All this will promote the training of personnel, engineers and construction workers; it will help to build up the construction organizations in the country and maintain the State's sector of the economy. It is very important for the development of the country's economy, as it is being pursued by Your Excellency. I am quite sure that I have expressed the opinion of all the members of the delegation that we shall do our best to render assistance by our people, technicians and by our equipment, and I am also convinced that this assistance will further the development of your country and provide employment and better standards of living for your people.

"For all the hospitality and cordiality which was accorded to us by your officials, Ministers and all the people who were engaged with the work

of the delegation, I would like to express my gratitude to all of them and say that we have got quite acquainted with the economy of your country and with various places in your country. As far as the warm climate of the country is concerned, I would like to state the very warm welcome that was accorded to us by your Ministers and officials of your Ministries and also by other people and I would like to express my gratitude to them. We shall always remember our stay in Ceylon and it will go into the best pages of our personal life. I shall convey to my Government the kind words that you said to our delegation. I hope that in the future, we shall have the opportunity to welcome you in the U. S. S. R. and we are sure that you will be accorded a very warm welcome."

Trade and Payments Agreement

EARLIER, on February 8, 1958, Ceylon signed with the U. S. S. R. a trade and payments agreement. This agreement will remain valid for a period of one year and shall be automatically renewed unless either party gives notice to terminate them.

It was agreed that the Trade Agreement would be operated in conformity with the policy of Ceylonisation pursued by the Ceylon Government.

The list of goods of Ceylonese origin to be exported to the U. S. S. R. contains tea, rubber, coconut oil, copra, desiccated coconuts, coconut fibre, coir and coir products, citronella oil, spices and some other items. The list of goods to be exported from the U. S. S. R. to Ceylon contains petroleum products, rolled iron and steel products, chemicals and chemical fertilizers, cement,

sawn timber, cellulose, cotton textiles, machinery and equipment of various types and other commodities.

The above lists in no way restrict the trade in other goods to be carried out between the two countries.

On behalf of the Ceylon Government, the Trade Agreement was signed by Mr. R. G. Senarayake, Minister of Commerce and Trade, and the Payments Agreement by Mr. Stanley de Zoysa, Minister of Finance. On behalf of the Government of the U. S. S. R. the Trade and Payments Agreements were signed by Mr. P. A. Maletin, Leader of the Soviet Economic Delegation, and Mr. F. I. Mikhaltchenko, the Commercial Counsellor of the U. S. S. R. Embassy in Ceylon.

The ceremony of signing was attended on behalf of the Ceylonese side by Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs, Mr. S. F. Amerasinghe, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Finance, Mr. W. J. A. Van Langenberg, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce and Trade, Sir Arthur Ranasinghe, Governor of the Central Bank, and officers of the Ministries of Finance and Commerce and Trade.

On the Soviet Side Mr. V. G. Yakovlev, U. S. S. R. Ambassador in Ceylon, Mr. B. S. Gordiev, Mr. K. V. Broughes, members of the Soviet Economic Delegation and members of the U. S. S. R. Embassy Staff, attended the ceremony.

The Delegation carried out negotiations with the Ministry of Commerce and Trade in regard to the conclusion of a Trade Agreement and with the Ministry of Finance in regard to the conclusion of a Payments Agreement.



His Excellency Mr. R. S. S. Gunewardene, till recently Ambassador of Ceylon in the U. S. A., after signing the Transfer Authorization for the Gift of 10,000 tons of wheat flour offered by the United States Government for Flood Relief in Ceylon. On the Ambassador's right is Dr. G. A. Fitz Gerald, Deputy Director for Operations, ICA, and on his left is Mr. Donald Kennedy, the State Department's Ceylon Desk Officer

American Aid to Ceylon

THE Government of Ceylon and the Government of the United States of America signed, on February 7, 1958, the first six-project agreements under the 1958 Ceylon-American Economic and Technical Co-operation Program. These agreements call for the provision of the services of American technicians, training opportunities abroad for Ceylonese officials and technicians and for a grant by the United States of \$819,000 (Rs. 3,893,440) for commodities and contract services required for these projects. This grant is additional to the approximately

Rs. 61,880,000 previously provided under the program since June, 1956.

Present at the signing were the Honourable Stanley de Zoysa, Minister of Finance; the Honourable Maxwell H. Gluck, American Ambassador in Ceylon; Mr. James P. Grant, Director of the United States Operations Mission to Ceylon; Mr. S. F. Amerasinghe, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Finance; and Mr. Raju Coomaraswamy, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Finance.

The agreements provide for aid in the following fields :—

(1) *Hydro-Electric Power Surveys and Training*

The U. S. will assist the Government of Ceylon to accelerate work on the Seven Virgins Project on the Maskeliya Oya which has an estimated 160,000 kilowatts and the Kaltota Scheme on the Walawe Ganga which has an estimated installed capacity of 50,000 kilowatts plus a high priority irrigation potential estimated at 40,000 acre of land.

The Rs. 2,288,000 granted under this project agreement will pay for drilling equipment and for a contract with an American engineering firm which will (a) make an economic and technical review and study of the two schemes, advise on their economic and engineering feasibility and recommend such additional investigations as may be required for proper designs for construction ; and (b) using the Seven Virgins scheme as the initial pilot project, train Ceylonese technical and operations personnel in all aspects of geological investigations required for design of the project so that the Ceylonese staff will thereafter be capable of carrying out investigations on various other hydro-electric power sites selected for future development.

(2) *Malaria Eradication*

The Ministry of Health has begun a five-year campaign to eradicate malaria from the Island with the aid of insecticides already purchased and equipment being purchased from the Rs. 1,850,400 made available by the U. S. last June. The Rs. 685,400 granted by the U. S. under the project agreement signed today will be used for the purchase of additional drugs and insecticides required for the program. The entire five-year program is expected to cost Rs. 18 million and the major portion of the costs will be borne by the Government of Ceylon from its own funds.

(3) *Mahaweli Ganga Water Resources Planning*

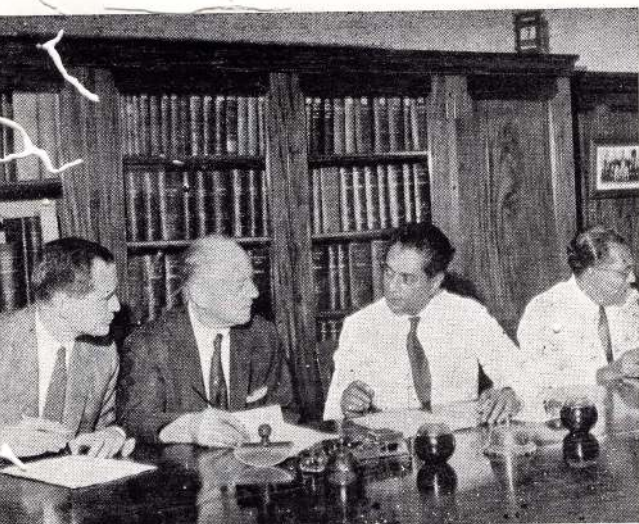
This agreement calls for the services of a team of about seven American experts to be made available by the U. S. to assist the Government of Ceylon to undertake an economic and engineering survey and prepare a long-range plan covering all aspects of development of the Mahaweli Ganga basin. The U. S. also agrees to grant Rs. 48,000 for the purchase of equipment and supplies.

The Mahaweli Ganga has the largest river basin in Ceylon in area, and is the third largest in water resources with a total average annual discharge of approximately 4.5 million acre feet of water. It produces approximately 33 per cent. of the total usable water in the entire Dry Zone of the Island, but is one of the least developed of the river basins of the country. With full utilization and control of its waters, it is estimated that approximately 250,000 to 300,000 acres of presently un-developed land could be brought under irrigation. Flood protection could be given to many communities and to large acres of low-lying agricultural land, and over 200,000 kilowatts of power could be produced at reasonable cost.

U. S. assistance will be provided over a period of three years during which time reports and recommendations will be made on various major aspects of the development of the Mahaweli Ganga. The reports will include designs sufficient to determine approximate quantities and costs and indicate optimum capacities and elevations of dams, reservoirs and irrigation systems and will show all general desirable layout features.

(4) *Agricultural Extension, Research and Education*

This agreement calls for continuing support to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's program to improve agricultural production and raise the level of living in Ceylon's rural population through the provision of advisory



The U. S. Ambassador in Ceylon, Mr. Maxwell Gluck, and the Minister of Finance, signing this year's aid agreement providing for the services of American technicians, trading opportunities abroad for Ceylonese, and for a grant by the U. S. of nearly four million rupees. This grant is in addition to the Rs. 62 million already provided under the Ceylon-American Economic and Technical Co-operation Programme. The current agreement was signed in Colombo on February 7

services in selected fields of applied agricultural research and demonstration and through providing on-the-job and foreign training of Ceylonese agricultural technicians. Four U. S. technicians are currently on the job in Ceylon and two additional are contemplated under this year's project. Six officials of the Ministry are expected to go abroad this year under the project. The U. S. also agrees to grant Rs. 476,000 for the purchase of equipment and supplies which is in addition to the Rs. 833,000 made available previously for the same purpose.

(5) *Science Education*

The signing of this agreement marks the beginning of U. S. assistance to the Ministry of Education's efforts to introduce the teaching of general science into the junior secondary and senior secondary schools in

Ceylon. The program calls for the creation within about five years of 175 science teaching units at the junior secondary level and 75 at the senior secondary level. One of the necessary first steps is the training of teachers for this purpose.

This program should enable Ceylonese children upon reaching adulthood to participate more effectively in Ceylon's development progress which involve the use of scientific, agricultural, health and industrial techniques.

The Rs. 286,000 granted by the U. S. will purchase equipment and supplies for the program. In addition, the U. S. will provide (a) one or more specialists to assist in the training of science teachers to staff the teacher training colleges, and (b) training opportunities abroad for teacher trainers, supervisory personnel and technicians engaged in the project.

(6) *Highway Development*

Highway construction equipment purchased from the Rs. 4,422,000 made available by the U. S. in 1957 has already begun to arrive in Ceylon and will soon be put to work including the construction of a new highway in the Dry Zone between Alutnuwara and Padiyatalawa. The construction of this road will be a pilot project on which Ceylonese technicians can be trained in the operation and maintenance of the modern equipment being furnished by the U. S.

The U. S. is currently providing technical specialists in highway engineering and equipment operations and maintenance, and specialists in highway construction and design are expected to arrive shortly. The U. S. is also furnishing training opportunities abroad for Ceylonese highway officials.

The agreement calls for the continuation of such U. S. technical assistance and for a grant of Rs. 119,000 to purchase additional equipment for the highway materials testing

laboratory being established by the Ministry of Transport and Works.

Flood Gift from America

ON February 25, 1958, a gift of over 66 million pounds of foodstuffs for relief and rehabilitation of flood victims in Ceylon was offered to the Prime Minister, the Honourable S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, by the American Ambassador, Mr. Maxwell H. Gluck. The gift, valued in Ceylon at more than Rs. 15,000,000, consists of at least 33,000,000 pounds of rice with the balance to be in the form of wheat flour or rice.

This offer is in addition to previous gifts for flood relief totalling 11,000 tons of wheat flour from the United States Government which are now en route to Ceylon.

In conveying the offer, the American Ambassador said—

"The people of the United States feel sympathy for the people of Ceylon in their period of distress as a result of the floods of last December. The United States Navy Mercy Mission, with its helicopters, was able to be of assistance during the emergency period immediately after the disastrous rains, when much of Ceylon was under flood waters and thousands of villages were isolated or destroyed. Now that Ceylon is faced with the

immense, but less dramatic need for restoring and rehabilitating the facilities damaged by the flood, including tens of thousands of homes, many miles of highways and railroads, and more than a thousand irrigation tanks or reservoirs, I wish to convey the willingness of the Government and people of the United States of America, through this offer of assistance, to ease the tasks confronting the Government and people of Ceylon. The possibility of additional assistance for rehabilitation in response to the requests of your Government for foodstuffs and equipment is under consideration by the Government of the United States."

The Prime Minister, the Honourable S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, said in reply—

"I have very great pleasure, on behalf of the people and Government of Ceylon, to accept the very kind offer of assistance which you, Mr. Ambassador, have made to us on behalf of the Government of the United States, by your letter dated 25th February, 1958."

I wish to, once again, assure you of the deep appreciation of our people for the assistance, in various forms, that was rendered by your Government to us in connection with the recent grave flood disaster and shall be glad if you will convey this expression of appreciation and thanks to your Government."



Mr. Y. Yogasundram, Charge d'Affaires ad interim for Ceylon in Canada with the Ambassador for France and Mrs. Francis Lacoste (left) and the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa Jan R. Jordaan, at the reception on February 4

Tribute to Ceylon on Independence Day

"CEYLON'S prestige has grown tremendously since she attained independence", declared a member of the United States House of Representatives, the Hon. Adam C. Powell (Jr.), in the course of a tribute he paid to Ceylon in the House on February 4, Ceylon's Independence Day.

The following is the text of Mr. Powell's speech :—

"Mr. Speaker, in recognition of the 10th anniversary of the independence of Ceylon, February 4, 1958, I wish to send warm greetings to the people of Ceylon, His Excellency

S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Member of Parliament, Prime Minister, and His Excellency R. S. S. Gunawardene, Ambassador of Ceylon.

"The period from the end of the Second World War to February, 1948, when the people of Ceylon achieved their free status, was one of tension and uncertainty. Colonialism left Ceylon with many problems which war-scarred Europe never had. The problem of underdevelopment, over-population, poverty, and a low standard of living. Ceylon realized only too well that political freedom would be dead sea fruit unless this



▲ A section of the guests on the lawns of the High Commissioner's residence during the reception. Mr. Menzies is slightly right of the middle of the picture



▲ Mr. H. O. Wijegoonawardena, Acting High Commissioner for Ceylon in Australia, welcoming the Rt. Hon'ble R. G. Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia, and Dame Pattie Menzies at the reception held in Canberra to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Ceylon Independence

freedom was used to achieve as speedily as possible economic emancipation as well.

"While Ceylon's prestige abroad has grown tremendously since she attained independence, her internal development has not lagged far behind. In her agriculture and industry alike, in her health and social services, Ceylon has made spectacular advances to which they can look back with legitimate pride and satisfaction.

"Ten years ago when Ceylon gained her freedom, there were some who had lingering doubts about the reality of their independence. By now, these doubts have been fully dispelled. Ceylon's independence received the seal of international recognition when she took her rightful place in the United Nations. Ceylon was the scene of the historic meeting of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers out of which emerged the now famous Colombo Plan which has contributed so much to the economic development of southern Asia, and which is so splendid an example of international co-operation between countries of widely differing levels of economic development. The tremendous importance of the Asian-African Conference at Bandung has begun to dawn on the world's consciousness.

Ceylon played an important part in translating the dreams of Afro-Asian co-operation into reality. The notable contributions made by Ceylon at the Bandung Conference has received world-wide acclaim.

"Although the United States supports the ideals of democracy everywhere, there is still a need for better understanding by Americans of the dire problems facing the recently freed peoples of Asia. These people are exhibiting the same concern for freedom and voluntary individual action that we do, and if in strengthening their free political and economic institutions, they succeed, they will further the cause of freedom in the world, which is our greatest cause.

"I salute Ceylon on this momentous occasion of Independence Day and pray for her continued peace, prosperity, and progress."

In Australia

ABOUT 500 guests, including the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. R. G. Menzies, celebrated Ceylon's Independence Day at a reception given by the Acting High Commissioner for Ceylon in Australia, Mr. H. O. Wijegoonawardena.

Heads of Australian Government departments, Canberra businessmen and academic leaders of the Australian National University including Professor Marcus Oliphant, Australia's eminent nuclear physicist, mingled with members of the diplomatic community on the lawns of the High Commissioner's residence.

Mr. Wijegoonawardena made a nationwide broadcast over the Australian Broadcasting Commission network during the evening.

He referred to the rejoicings taking place in Ceylon to mark the completion of the first decade of regained Ceylonese independence.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives in Australia, Mr. J. McLeay, represented Australia at these junctions.

Mr. Wijegoonawardena said—

"Some of you may be asking yourselves the question why we Ceylonese should attach such importance to a mere decade of regained independence.

"Such an inquiry is certainly understandable, particularly when we know that a decade is a mere ripple in the stream of history, specially of a people whose philosophy of life dates back to 2,500 years.

"Yet, though in terms of time it seems insignificant, and even perhaps a split second in eternity, the 10 years that close today have a special bearing and significance.

"To understand this it is essential to acquaint oneself with those traditions to which Ceylonese have been heirs.

"There are two important traditions particularly which, I consider, are legitimate to take into account.

"One is the tradition that Ceylon, placed as she is on that special point on the globe, has always been a meeting place of the East and the West, though she is essentially an Eastern country. The other is the tradition of tolerance to which she is heir because of the deep impact that the philosophy of Buddhism made on the vast majority of her people.

"The significance of the combination of these two, is self-evident and, in the context of the present-day world, essentially practical and cogent.

"While being on the Eastern hemisphere, we understand those who live on the other half of the globe or whose ways of life and thought are associated with that half while ingrained in the very being of the people is that democratic outlook of 'live and let live'.

"We are a small nation. We have no axe to grind. But we have this outlook on life. Now that, because of a process of historical evolution, we have the opportunity to make this outlook once again, a living reality, true to the genius of the people, we seek to do so with humbleness of heart and genuine sincerity.

"Thus the ten years that have passed have marked the reassertion of this outlook.

"It is a human outlook based on the unity of humanity—it is also an essentially practical one. One, it would also seem, that needs to be fostered for the good of all mankind for at no stage in the history of the existence of human life upon this planet was there, I feel, a greater need for this outlook on life".

A Pioneer of Sinhalese Journalism

HILAIRE JANSZ

IN his lecture on "The Newspaper" fifty-six years ago Thomas de Sampayo said that the vernacular papers (as they were called in his day) were conducted with an intelligence and appreciation of public questions which were highly commendable and promising for the community.

It was stated in an earlier article in this series that the first Sinhalese newspaper was the *Lakminipahana*, published in 1862. But according to an eminent authority on Oriental literature, the former State Councillor and Minister, W. A. de Silva, a journal called the *Lakopakaraya* was started at Galle before that date, followed by the *Lakrivikirana*. He described the *Lakminipahana* as being intended for Buddhist propaganda. Contemporary sectarian papers were the Protestant Christian *Satyalankara* and the Roman Catholic *Nanartha Pradipaya*.

A New Spirit

IN the early eighties of the last century the Buddhist Theosophical Society started the *Sarasavisandaresa*, and its first Editor, Pandit Weragama Bandara, to quote W. A. de Silva, "brought a new spirit into Sinhalese writing. He introduced a fine style, elegant and popular, which created a new era in Sinhalese prose composition".

One of those who took an active part in making this paper a success was the famous Anagarika Dharmapala. A frequent contributor of readable paragraphs to the *Sandaresa* was a young man of Kandy named H. S. Perera, private clerk to the District Judge in that town, who later became Justice Lawrie. With a flair for journalism, H. S. Perera assisted Lawrie in compiling his valuable

Gazeteer of the Central Province, containing articles of historical and archaeological interest.

The *Sandaresa* invited young Perera to become its Managing Editor and asked him on what terms he would accept the post. He replied: "Find a room for me and give me just enough money for my meals". He accepted the post, took over the editing and management of the paper and fixed his own salary at thirty rupees a month. Devoting all his talents and energy to his work, he gave new life to Sinhalese journalism. He never published mere translations; he re-wrote all the news and presented it in his own style. He appealed direct to the reader in every paragraph, special article and leader. It has been said of him that he led public opinion as nobody ever did before.

Ant-hill Fear

IN those days mudaliyars, minor headmen and all Government officers were supposed to belong to sacrosanct classes and no one, writing in Sinhalese, would dare to criticise them or to mention them disrespectfully by name. H. S. Perera began showing up these demigods as mere human beings, as frail and vulnerable as ordinary mortals. He urged the public to get rid of their "fear of the ant-hill". The timid man, he said, was afraid to approach an ant-hill lest it harboured a deadly snake. The phrase "ant-hill fear" (*humbar baya*) became popular throughout the land, and H. S. Perera helped people to overcome it by analysing the doings and misdoings of officials and fearlessly criticising or ridiculing them.

This criticism, which was never irresponsible or vicious, but always vigorous and

founded on the Editor's personal investigation of facts supplied by trained correspondents, had a stimulating effect. Villagers particularly began to be conscious of their rights and were no longer awed by arrogant officials. When the higher authorities came under the editorial lash, it caused some alarm among them. The Government was advised to ignore H. S. Perera's criticism and his pertinent inquiries as to why grievances were not redressed, addressed to the men at the top.

Sedition ?

BUT H. S. Perera and his paper could not be easily ignored. So those who saw what they called a new danger to the Island's peace and prosperity sought the support of one of the English newspapers in Colombo, which demanded that a tendency towards the creation of a seditious "native" Press should be sternly suppressed. Undeterred by these threats H. S. Perera got in touch with journalists and public men in England and was able to get questions asked in Parliament about administrative abuses in Ceylon.

To quote W. A. de Silva on the good work done by this pioneer of Sinhalese journalism : "The hitherto suppressed public opinion found a ready means of expression. The sacrosanct idols were broken down one by one He created a newspaper and embodied in it his ideas, his principles, his

outlook and his aspirations. He was able to break the fetters of his people and before he died he sensed the arrival of freedom and saw its dawn".

"Dinamina"

IN the last few years of his life, H. S. Perera wanted to carry his mission further and founded the *Dinamina*, which has grown enormously in influence during the last fifty years. He was the sole proprietor, editor and manager of this paper when it started. He had no capital and his health was poor. He knew his life was short, but he worked tirelessly and zealously, caring nothing for material gain and only eager to serve his country well. It must have been the new spirit created by this great Sinhalese journalist that inspired others who came after him to continue the good work and make the free Press a power in the land.

Not very long after H. S. Perera's death, the *Dinamina* became the property of D. R. Wijewardene, who later founded the *Ceylon Daily News* and gave new life to the *Ceylon Observer*. He did much to change the character and to increase the influence of the Sinhalese Press in moulding public opinion. The success of his enterprise encouraged healthy rivalry and the Sinhalese-speaking masses are now well served by a number of newspapers which, one hopes, have not forgotten the ideals and principles of that courageous pioneer H. S. Perera.



The Chinese Ambassador in Ceylon, Mr. Chang Tsan-Ming (left), conveying to the Ceylon Premier the Chinese Government's offer of a loan of Rs. 50 million for flood rehabilitation work

Foreign Affairs

THE Government of the Peoples' Republic of China has offered Ceylon a loan of Rs. 50 million for flood rehabilitation work. The offer was conveyed, on behalf of the Chinese Government, by Mr. Chang Tsan-Ming, Chinese Ambassador in Ceylon, to the Prime Minister, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, on Monday, March 3, 1958.

Mr. Bandaranaike announced that he had accepted the loan which would be paid to Ceylon in four annual instalments of Rs. 12½ million with interest at the rate of 2½ per cent. per annum. The loan, he said, would be repayable in 10 years.

The Prime Minister expressed his deep appreciation of the splendid manner in which China had come to Ceylon's assistance in her hour of need. He asked the Ambassador to convey these sentiments to the Prime Minister and people of China.

Foreign Capital Welcomed

THE National Planning Council's Committee on Industrialisation, appointed to report on "Incentives to Private Enterprise", has recommended that foreign private capital should be welcomed, particularly as it brings with it technical "know-how" not available in Ceylon at present.

The Committee has recommended that foreign capital—

- (a) should generally be for productive purposes,
- (b) should be generally permitted in collaboration with local enterprise (such collaboration to be dispensed with only if local enterprise is not forthcoming) or if the enterprise undertakes the manufacture of products for export under a trade name of wide usage, and
- (c) should lead to a progressive domestic manufacture eliminating ultimately all imports to the most practical extent.

The Committee's report was tabled at the meeting of the National Planning Council at which the Prime Minister presided.

The Committee has suggested that a White Paper be published at the earliest opportunity clarifying the attitude of the Government. This, it stated, was desirable not only from the point of view of foreign interests but also of local investors who wished to negotiate with foreigners for the setting up of new projects here. The Committee has recommended that a condition of granting permission to foreign enterprises to operate in

Ceylon, whether in the public or the private sector, should be the provision for training Ceylonese to assume major responsibilities in the enterprise. Referring to protection and the customs tariff, the Committee states—

"Some protection to local industry at the moment is being given through the operation of the Industrial Products Act, and the Customs duties have been raised with the protective end in view. However, very little rational attempt seems to have been made to assess the need for and the consequences of protection. The Sub-Committee strongly feels, therefore, that somewhat on the Indian model a permanent Tariff Commission should be set up. This Tariff Commission may consist of a chairman and a secretary with a staff to work on a full-time basis. The commission should review applications of the various industries or undertakings for tariff protection.

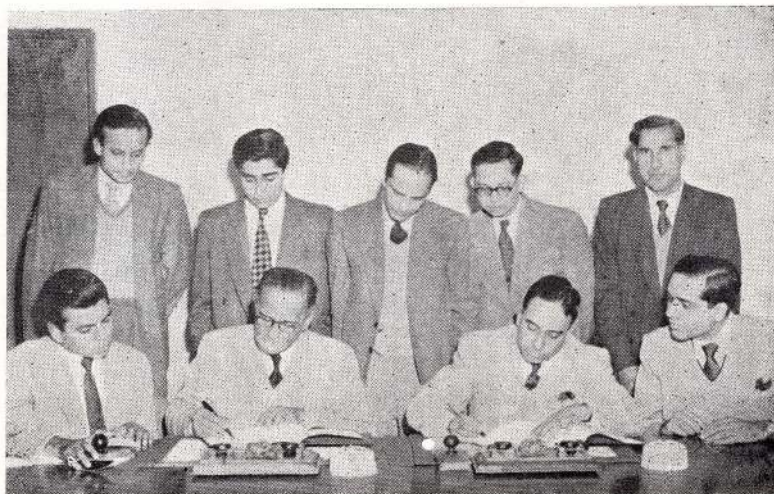
"The commission may be empowered to look into the question, not only of tariffs, but also of subsidies to enterprises."

Committee to Consider Development of Trincomalee Harbour

THE Prime Minister has stated that he proposes to appoint a Committee for the development of Trincomalee Harbour. This

A Trade Agreement between the Government of India and Ceylon was signed at Udyog Bhavan, in New Delhi on January 13

Photo shows Shri S. Ranganathan, Secretary of the Commerce and Industry Ministry and H. E. Sir Richard Aluwihare, High Commissioner for Ceylon in India signing the agreement on behalf of their respective Governments



Committee will consist of representatives of the Prime Minister, the three Defence Forces, the Ministries of Transport and Works, Commerce and Trade, Industries and Fisheries, Home Affairs, Labour, Housing and Social Services, Health, Lands and Land Development, and Treasury officials, with the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs as Chairman. The Prime Minister will settle the terms of reference of this Committee.

Local Sugar from June Next Year

THE Sugar Factory, for which Government has entered into a contract with Messrs Skoda/Technoport of Prague, Czechoslovakia, is expected to go into production of white sugar from June next year. The raw material (sugar cane) will be supplied to the factory by the Department of Agriculture.

At first, 1,200 tons of cane will be crushed per day.

This capacity will be extended later to 1,700 tons per day. Eventual production will work out to 20,000 tons of sugar per annum. Ceylon at present consumes over 131,000 tons of sugar annually. The import cost the Ministry of Agriculture and Food about Rs. 105 million.

The contract for the construction of the factory was signed at the Department of Industries on January 16. The Chairman of the Kantalai Sugar Corporation, Mr.



A Ceylonese girl, Rajamany Sinnappu, and Australian fellow-student, Marianne Silogy, after their graduation in medicine at the University of Melbourne

N. S. Perera, and the Acting Director of Industries, Mr. E. C. S. Paul, signed on behalf of the Government, while Mr. Vladimir Turer signed on behalf of the contractors.

The entire cost of the sugar project, which includes a factory and a housing scheme, will be Rs. 21,500,000. The contract price for the factory alone is Rs. 16,500,000.

We regret that owing to the illness of Mr. Lyn de Fonseka we are unable to publish the popular feature "Books about Ceylon" in this issue. This will be resumed as soon as Mr. de Fonseka is in a position to send us his contributions.

EDITOR.

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