

CEYLON *Today*

Call for an Asian
Economic Conference

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COL. H. W. G. WIJEYEKOON

Ceylon Pearl Fisheries

Regional Folk-lore of
Ceylon
M. RAMALINGAM

Foreign Affairs

The morning's catch



APRIL, 1958

CEYLON TODAY

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Call for an Asian Economic Conference

THE Prime Minister, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, is now in consultation with Heads of Asian States on the desirability of having early discussions on his plan for a Co-ordinated Economic Plan for Asia.

In March the Prime Minister addressed the Planning Council on the question of inviting the Bandung Powers, or in the alternative, Asian Powers, for a Conference to consider questions of inter-regional trade and co-ordinated economic planning. The Prime Minister further extended this idea when he declared open the Chinese Commodity Exhibition on Tuesday, March 18. At this function he said :—

“The idea has been developing in my mind for sometime that the time has come to pursue one of the important decisions of Bandung in greater detail in the realm of economics. It is my intention, if the countries concerned agree, to suggest the holding of an economic conference, if necessary of all the Bandung powers, perhaps the restriction at the beginning being to Asian countries, for this purpose.

We are all developing our economies, our national economies, in industries, in agriculture and so on. It strikes me that it may be desirable to consider certain common problems of planning not merely on a

national basis now but at least, as a beginning, on a regional basis. It is a very important suggestion which I am making. We are developing our industries; we are developing our agriculture for purposes of our local consumption, for purposes of export, but we are doing that in isolation from one another. Certainly I think in Asia it is very desirable to consider at least the outlines of a regional development plan.

I am only too well aware that there may be national interests that will have to be considered and naturally given full attention to; but I certainly think that it is undesirable for us to continue isolated planning without any reference to some regional plan of how each country's industries might fit into the industrial development of another without conflict, and similarly, with regard to agricultural development.

Problem of Food

EVEN if full agreement is not possible I think quite a desirable advance can be made by the holding of such a conference. If I may mention one important matter on which a discussion like that would be very useful, it is the question of food in our region. As you know most of us are rice-eating peoples in Asia. The whole problem of the production



The Prime Minister, the Hon. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, addressing the members of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

and distribution of rice to meet our minimum needs is becoming urgent and important today. I am quite sure that the general question of industrial and agricultural planning on some pattern without undue duplication or conflict amongst ourselves will be most useful to us. This question of food will provide a valuable, urgent and necessary item for discussion amongst our countries without delay.

I have discussed this matter with our planning authorities here. I have also had the opportunity of having a discussion on this subject with an expert on planning who has been with us, Professor Myrdal of Sweden

and he is in full agreement with me that such a conference would be very valuable. It will all the more, I think, have a chance of success because except in a very indirect way we will not be discussing political troubles and difficulties amongst ourselves but something which is of common interest to us all in the realm of economic development. I intend to pursue this suggestion and address the countries concerned, and if there is a sufficiently satisfactory response I will suggest the holding of such a conference at an early date, if they all agree, in our own country.

I take this opportunity, on this occasion, of mentioning this important matter,

although not directly concerned with the exhibition, but as one that is indirectly concerned with the development of trade as well as economic development of our countries.

Speaking at a later date (March 27) to the members of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce the Prime Minister further elaborated his proposal for such a conference. He said :—

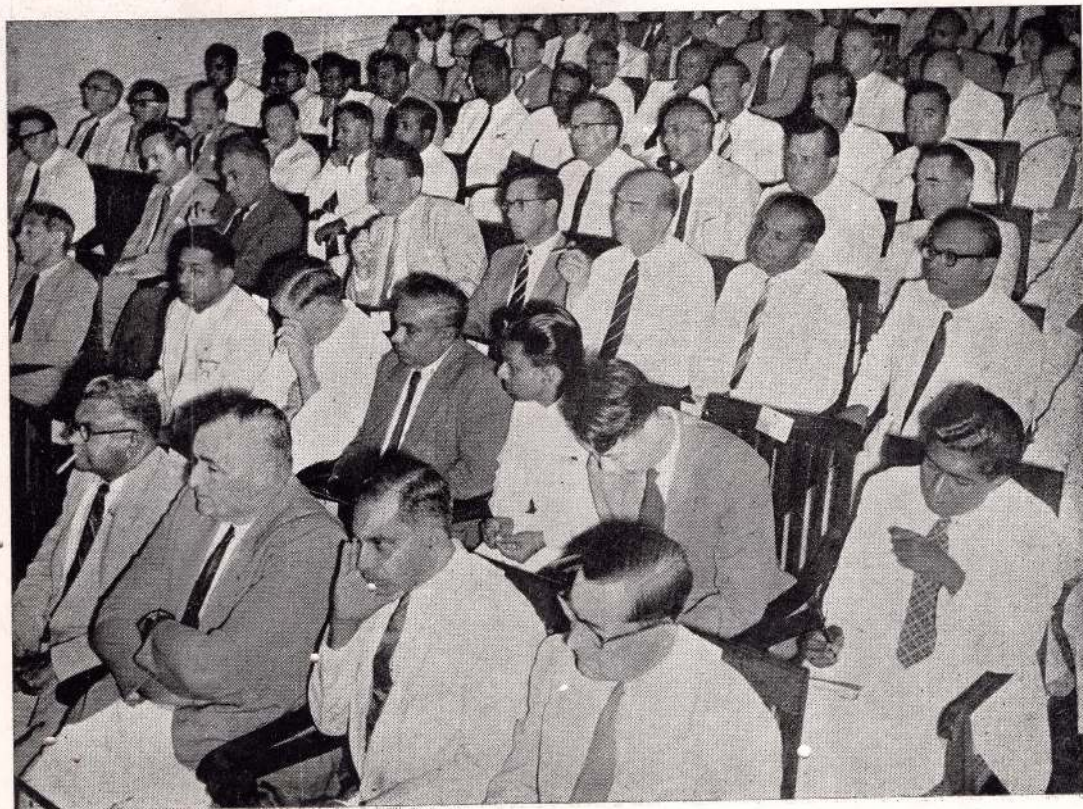
I wish to draw your attention to a matter of some importance. That is the suggestion to hold a Conference to deal with economic problems of our (Asian) countries in pursuance of certain conferences already held in the past ; the Conference of the Colombo Powers held here, followed by the Bandung Conference in 1954. As you know, it was contemplated at Bandung that another Conference should be held two years thereafter

and I believe it was suggested at that time that Cairo should be the venue. For various reasons that Conference had to be postponed, one of the chief reasons being that some of us felt that the time was not opportune to hold a Conference on the lines of Bandung again, owing to certain political trouble. But I now see that the time is most opportune to hold a Conference to deal with economic questions, not political issues, following the resolutions that had already been passed at the Colombo Powers Conference and then at Bandung.

Question of Food

THERE are many problems which we can discuss usefully at such a Conference. Take the whole question of food production. The

Members of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce listening to the P. M.'s address



whole question is of one of extreme urgency. The demand is outstripping the supply. That is a question to which we should address our attention most usefully and without undue delay. There are other bodies that deal with problems of this sort, e.g., the ECAFE. But they do so excluding the Peoples' Republic of China. I do not know how you can discuss these matters without China. And also, if I may say so, while China is excluded, some of the old Imperial powers are members of that body. Let them do what they can; I wish them well. But the question of the kind I suggest is to consider the production of food, primarily agricultural, tea, rubber, coconut. We are, no doubt, some of the most important producers in this region. We are very much in the hands of the consumers, as the Chairman very rightly mentioned. We are entirely in their hands to the extent that our entire economic life is dependent on the price trend.

Further, we are all countries which are engaged in economic development, agriculture and industry. I certainly have always felt that isolated economic planning of a country by itself is, perhaps, not likely to be

so fruitful today. I would like to see a certain amount of regional planning, particularly in the industrial sphere. As you know, it is going on. But certainly I think to consider a certain degree of regional planning, without conflicting with the needs of national planning—I think the two are not necessarily opposed to each other—without, in any way, having hostility towards any other country, where all are our friends, would be very desirable.

In passing, I would mention about the question of shipping. What are the countries in our region that have any sort of shipping today? To a very small extent, India, Japan. How much are we at the mercy of others! I do feel that a move such as the one I have in mind would be very useful. I am not expecting hundred per cent success in discussions of this sort, but I would say that a certain amount, say, twenty-five per cent of value may emerge from these discussions. However, it is my own view, and I intend to pursue it with the others concerned. If they share my views, I trust that such a Conference will materialise before the end of this year.



A 3·7 inch gun goes into action

Army Exercise "Onward"

COL. H. W. G. WIJEYEKOON

THE Ceylon Army is a small military force consisting of Regular and Volunteer Units organised and equipped to the extent that the country can afford, on conventional military lines. During the 8 years of its existence, it has had a fair degree of training and actual experience in—

- (a) Ceremonial duties.
- (b) Assisting the Civil Police in the maintenance of law and order and in quelling unlawful assembly and riots.

- (c) Performing non-military duties vital to the life of the community. It was only a few months ago that the Army, together with the Navy, saved the City of Colombo from a sewage crisis.

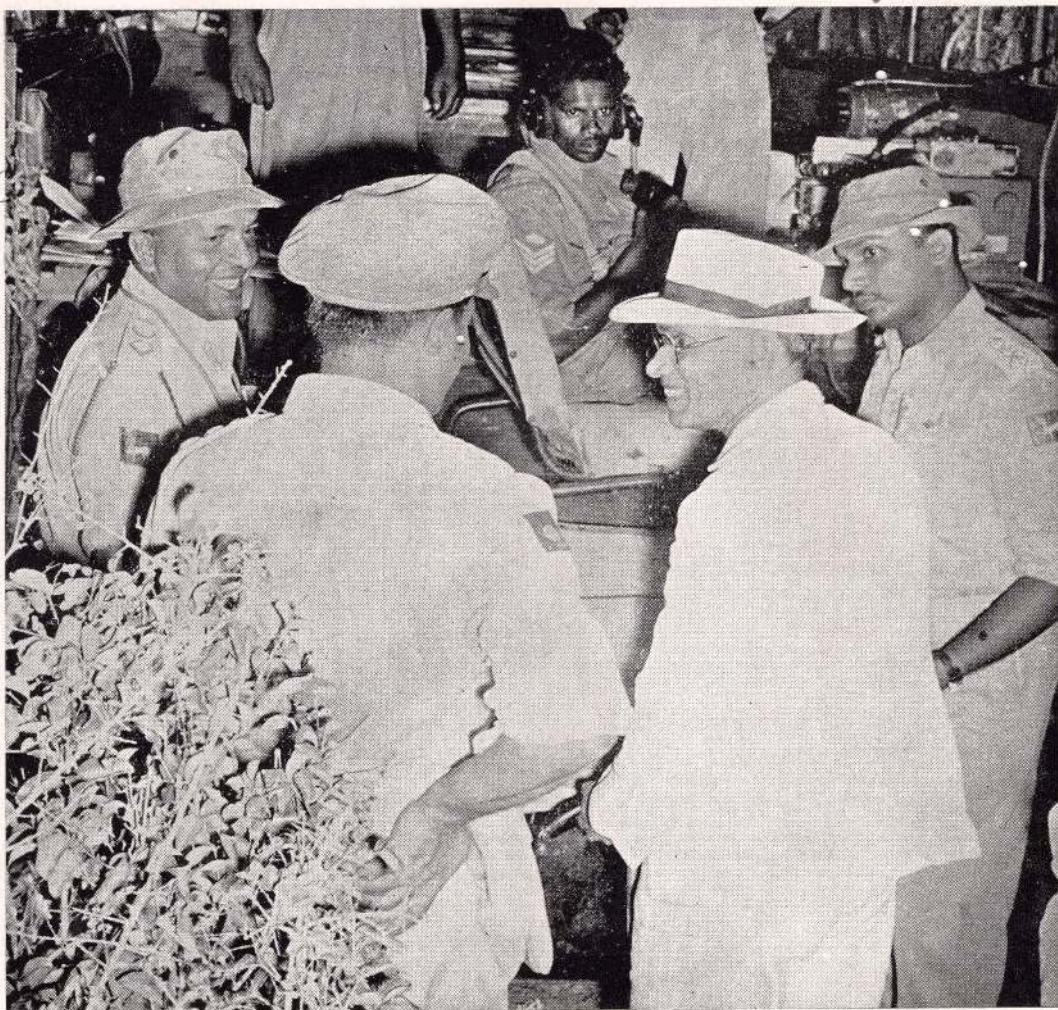
The Army has not yet had the unpleasant task of quelling armed and organised aggression, whether from within the country or from without; in other words, executing a conventional military operation. A fair



The Prime Minister leaving the Artillery Regimental Command Post

amount of theoretical instruction and some practical training in countering such threats has however been done.

The quelling of armed and organised aggression, depending on its magnitude, requires combined action by a variety of



The Prime Minister at a Battery Command Post. The Regimental Commander explains the Artillery Board

Army Units equipped with various types of weapons and equipment and trained in various types of duties. The skill of units in acting as members of one team can best be tested by a military exercise at supra-unit level.

First since 1954

ARMY Exercise ONWARD was the first Exercise at supra—unit level which the Army has carried out since 1954. In that year an Army Exercise known as Exercise TYRO

was held, but it was an Exercise on a much smaller scale involving only a Battalion Group. Exercise ONWARD involved a whole Brigade Group of the Army. From 1954 until this year, all units of the Army have been so engrossed in non-military and Internal Security duties, that no Exercises involving conventional military operations have been carried out by any unit.

In view of this background, Exercise ONWARD was designed to be both an Instructional and a Test Exercise. It was intended that all personnel participating should



Another battle "casualty"

obtain the maximum instructional value for the considerable time that had been expended on the preparation of this Exercise. The Exercise was designed to test in general the ability of a military force of this nature to move quickly from one part of Ceylon to another and to hastily arrange the defence of a given area.

The Exercise was also designed to test, in particular, the following:—

- (a) Unit and sub-unit commanders in making quick reconnaissances in the field, appreciating a sudden military situation, and giving out clear and precise orders to subordinates.

- (b) Administration in the field, such as cooking and feeding of troops, supply of petrol, ammunition and water, evacuation of casualties in respect of personnel, vehicles and equipment, and health and sanitation of troops in the field.
- (c) The ability of troops, including volunteers, to live under field conditions.

The Exercise also proved a good opportunity of examining the organisation, establishment, equipment and transport of units for local military operations, with a view to economy, wherever possible. Ceylon Army Units have been organised and equipped on the

British Army pattern and it is felt that with the experience gained in training exercises of this nature, a certain amount of reasonable streamlining can be effected.

The following units of the Army, teamed up to form a Brigade Combat Group, took part in the Exercise:—*Infantry, Artillery, Armour, Engineers, Signals, Supply & Transport, Medical, Ordnance, Electrical & Mechanical Engineers, Provost*. In addition, the RCyAF also participated, some of its planes acting as enemy aircraft and others as friendly aircraft.

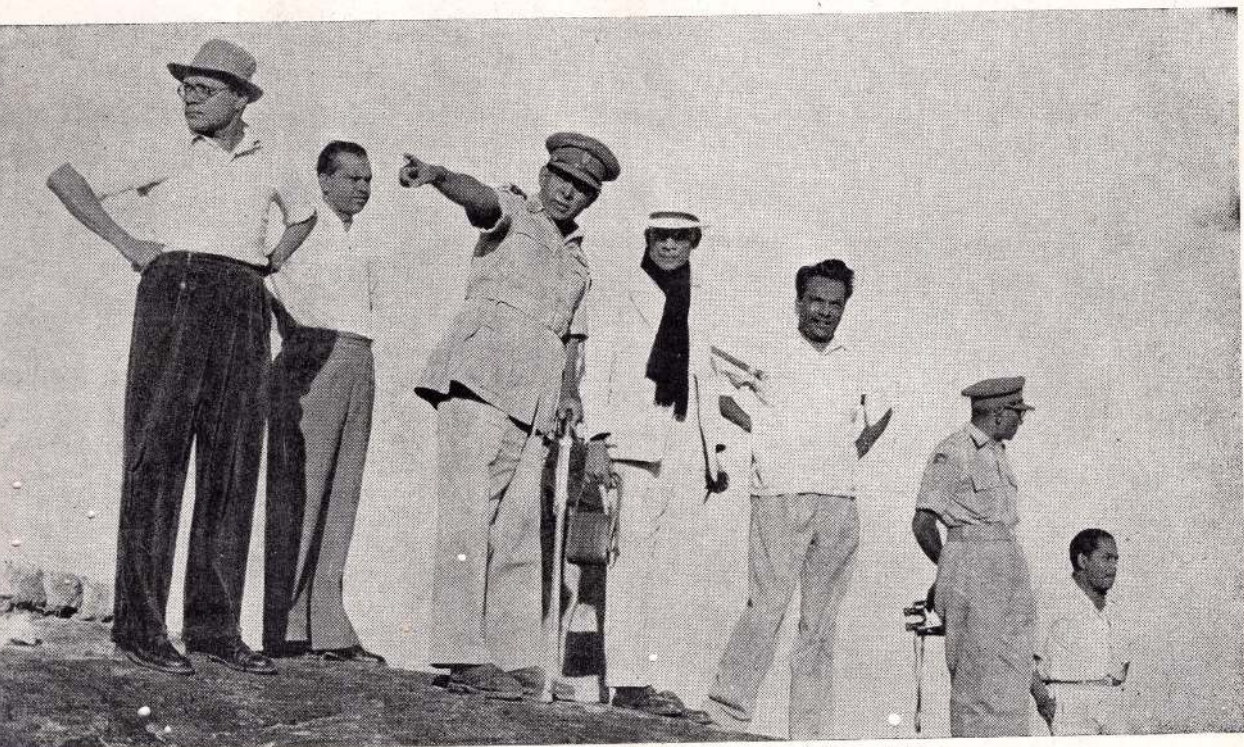
Area selected

THE area selected for the Exercise was roughly between the 124th and 132nd milestone on the main Colombo-Hambantota Road. In order to make the Exercise develop logically and in order that the actions of the

enemy and one's own troops were the natural result of a set of circumstances, the Exercise, as is usual, had to have an initial setting or opening situation. In this case, the opening situation painted to the troops participating was that of a small enemy force landing in the Hambantota area, linking up with insurgents from among the local population, and thrusting westwards towards Galle with a view to seizing its port and harbour in order to facilitate further landings of enemy forces.

In order to ensure that the purpose of the Exercise would be achieved and that the necessary lessons would be brought home to the units being exercised, the general development of the Exercise was at all times controlled by the Director of the Exercise himself acting as both the Commander of the Brigade Combat Group being exercised and the Commander of the Enemy Force. Troops representing the enemy were very strictly

The Exercise in progress





A battle "casualty" at the Regimental Aid Post

controlled and the Exercise was therefore made to develop in the way the Director wanted it to develop.

The military force moved out of Colombo at midnight on Wednesday, 5th/6th March, 1958, to a concentration area in the vicinity of the

126th milestone on the Colombo-Hambantota Road. A night move was planned on purpose in order to cause the least amount of congestion to civilian traffic along the main arterial highway. Much of the transport used was hired civilian transport. The civilian drivers were unaccustomed to military procedure and the precision, organisation and discipline that characterise a military move by road. In spite of this the move was successfully carried out. Although nearly three hundred vehicles were involved, the repair and recovery system organized by the Electrical and Mechanical Engineer Unit was good and only one vehicle failed to ultimately reach its destination.

Thursday 6th March was spent by all units in moving into and settling down in the concentration area. The Brigade's channels of communication were however kept very busy from early afternoon bringing in news of the invasion fleet far out at sea, steaming towards Ceylon.

A warning order was issued by Brigade Headquarters to all units that a defensive position would have to be occupied the next day on a hill feature astride the main road in the vicinity of the 132nd milestone.

Early next morning Friday, 7th March, a series of messages were received purporting to come from the Navy and Air Force. The Air Force had sighted the enemy invasion fleet and the Navy had been ordered out to shadow and report on it.

Enemy Planes

THE first appearance of enemy planes took place about 8 a.m. They were reconnaissance planes, reconnoitring the landing areas and the main coast road. They appeared during the important moment when the Brigade Commander was giving out his orders to his Unit Commanders for the occupation of the defensive position. The "brains" of the Brigade Combat Group assembled in one

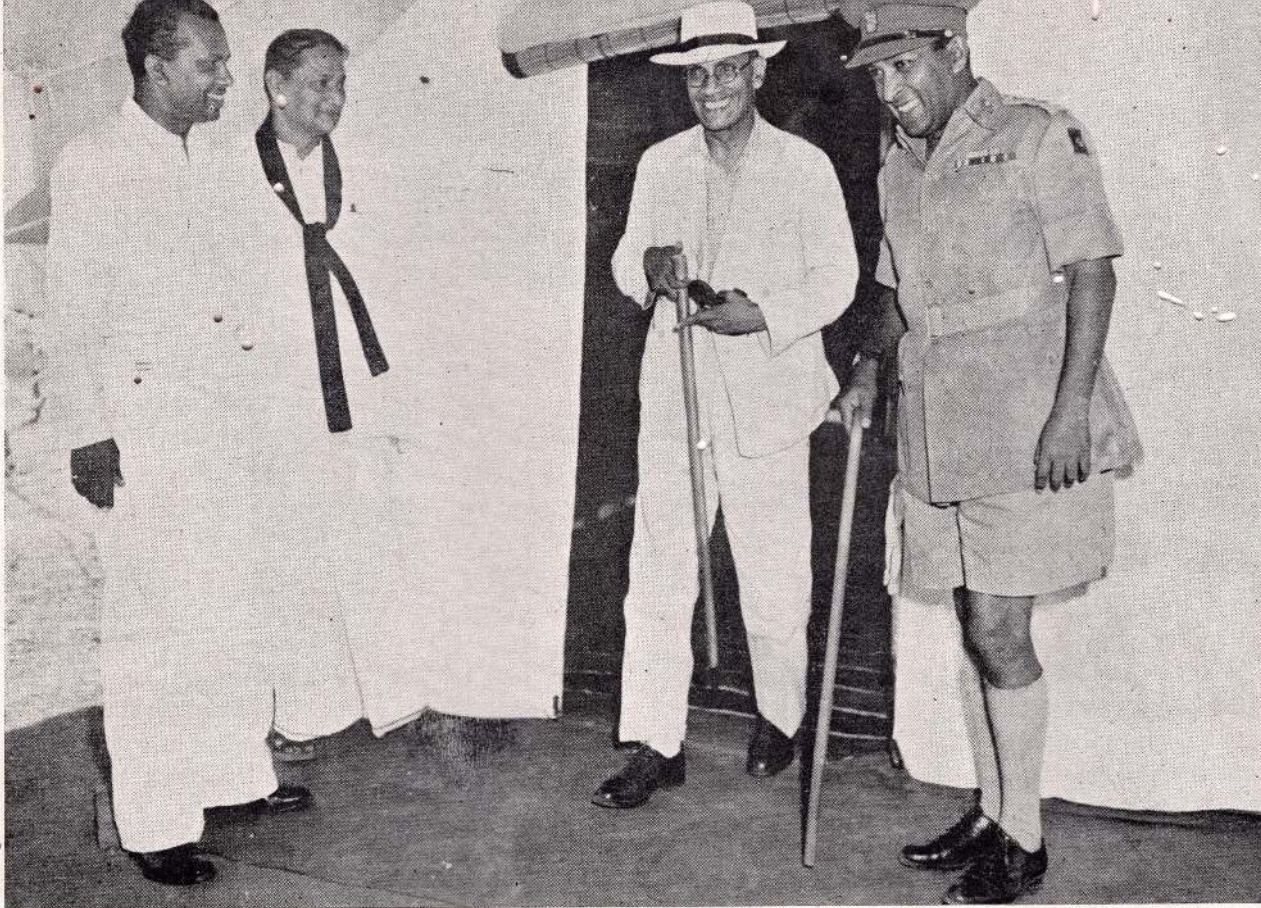
place, at this moment, had to practise concealment from air observation to prevent being spotted.

The whole day was spent by units in deploying themselves into their allotted areas to the best tactical advantage, and in improving these areas. It was also interesting to watch the gist of the Brigade Commander's Orders passing down the various levels of command till it ultimately reached the private soldier. The defensive position had to be ready by 6 p.m., the expected time of landing by the enemy.

The occupation of the defensive position proceeded in an atmosphere of tension created by intermittent reports purporting to come from the Navy and Air Force busy shadowing the enemy force steaming towards the shores of Ceylon. The progress of the occupation was made more difficult by the appearance of enemy planes over the defensive position, ground strafing and bombing all groups of personnel and vehicles whose bad concealment happened to make them good targets for such attack. Bombing was actually carried out with paper containers containing saw dust. This added a touch of realism and those who caught a packet of saw dust were thus graphically made to realise their fate if this had been an actual operation.

Messages came streaming in at dusk describing the enemy landing at Hambantota and the race by the enemy forward elements to capture the bridge at Ambalantota intact. From now onwards the enemy were represented by a separate body of troops previously rehearsed for this part. The Recce Squadron of the Armoured Corps which had been deployed in the vicinity of the landing area now gained practice in fighting a withdrawal action back to the Bridge. Being a reconnaissance unit, much stress was laid on the unit's capability of continuously passing back to Brigade Headquarters information about enemy movement on its wireless.

The enemy reached the Bridge at 12 midnight 7th/8th March. The Bridge which had



The Prime Minister leaving the Army tent he occupied on the night of the exercises. On his left is the Army Commander, Brigadier A. M. Muttukumar

been prepared for demolition by the Field Engineer Squadron was blown up as soon as the Recce Squadron passed through. All demolitions on the Exercise were simulated by exploding a charge of guncotton buried in the ground in the vicinity of the structure to be demolished. The Engineers, however, had to make the necessary calculations about the quantity of explosives required, where the charges should be positioned and other necessary Engineer data and these calculations had to be handed over to the Umpires. In this case, the Umpires determined that only a partial demolition of the Bridge had been effected which would impose an 8 to 10 hour delay on the enemy advance.

The enemy resumed their advance at 10 a.m. on Saturday, 8th March, with the Recce

Squadron ahead of it, shadowing it, fighting it without getting too involved and imposing in every manner possible, the maximum delay. Messages kept coming in on the wireless from the Recce Squadron to Brigade Headquarters giving the latest information of enemy movements.

The outskirts of the defensive position were reached by the enemy by 4.30 p.m. that evening. The Recce Squadron thereupon withdrew into Reserve to temporarily rest and refit. They had been fighting the enemy continuously from dusk the evening before.

"Enemy" Moves

THE enemy now commenced trying to locate the details of the defence positions of the

three Infantry Battalions in the forward area and trying to figure out the fire plans of the Artillery supporting these three Battalions. This they did by trying to draw the fire of the defenders, by establishing Observation Posts, by sending out patrols, by air observation, by capturing prisoners, and by various other means. It was clear that they were collecting information in order to plan a big attack on the defensive position the next day. Patrol activity continued on both sides the whole night long, each side trying to gain as much information as possible about its opponent's dispositions and intentions.

Early next morning Sunday 9th March, enemy aircraft bombed the forward positions of 2nd (Volunteer) Battalion, The Ceylon Light Infantry. This was followed by an Artillery concentration on the same positions, followed immediately after by an Infantry attack. The Umpires declared the position overrun. Wireless ether and telephone lines were humming with messages and orders throughout the Brigade defensive position. Brigade Headquarters ordered 1st Battalion, The Ceylon Light Infantry to counterattack the enemy who had overrun the 2nd (Volunteer) Battalion The Ceylon Light Infantry forward position. This was done and the Umpires assessed that the counterattack was successful. More attacks were launched by the enemy on various parts of the defended position to further practice the defenders in command, control, inter communication and defensive fire. The Exercise terminated at about 8.30 a.m. that morning, and the bulk of the troops including all the volunteers were back in their permanent stations—Colombo and Diyatalawa, by night-time.

The Exercise as far as the Army was concerned was a big success. The aim of the Exercise was achieved, all lessons that it was

designed to bring out materialised, and the general instructional value to Junior and Senior Leaders and the private soldier participating, was immense. Reports from Umpires, Observers and Directing Staff on various aspects of the Exercise are now being analysed and studied. Defects and problems are already coming to light and there is no doubt that this Exercise will have some repercussions in due course on the present organisation, establishment, equipment, transport, training and administration of the Army in the field.

A number of visitors including foreign Service Attaches visited the Exercise area and followed the Exercise. The Prime Minister himself was present from 5 p.m. on Saturday 8th, till the end of the Exercise on Sunday 9th, sleeping under canvas on Saturday night in the tented camp of the Directing Staff.

As for the residents of the area, from all available reports, they thoroughly enjoyed the 4-day Army Exercise. The Army Public Relations Branch arranged for batches of school children from neighbouring schools to be taken round the Brigade defensive position. The armoured cars and the artillery guns really caught the children's fancy and the wireless communication made them gape in wonder. The older folk were much impressed by the organisation, method and precision in all the military activity they saw around them, whether it was an Infantry Battalion out in front, living next to Mother Earth in spartan surroundings, or the tented camp of the Control and Directing Staff in the rear, with its electric lights, its showers and other implements of human comfort. Floods, drought, failure of crops and the hard life of the Dry Zone were temporarily forgotten, at least as a result of the mental diversion caused by the Army residing for 4 days in their midst.



"Vallam" (boat), with divers, being towed to the diving grounds

Ceylon Pearl Fisheries

IN the March issue of Ceylon Today we published an illustrated article on the recent Pearl Fishery off the Ceylon coast. As the subject is of considerable interest to our overseas readers we reproduce here excerpts from a book which is not easy to come by. The selections are from "Notes on Ceylon and its Affairs" by James Steuart. (London, 1862.)

The Pearl fisheries in the Gulf of Mannar have always been regarded with great interest by the natives of southern India and of Ceylon. They have been held on banks lying off Tuticorin, in the territory of the Government of India, as well as on those near the shores of Ceylon from Chilaw to Mannar; but of late years the most productive Ceylon

fisheries have taken place on the Aripo banks, between Koodremalle and Mannar, from eight to twelve miles off shore, in from four to nine fathoms water.

The great uncertainty which attends all that relates to Pearl fisheries increases the interest taken in them by the natives of the East, who delight in games of chance and speculation. There is not only the uncertainty as to the years in which they may take place, but when they do take place they last only a few weeks. They are as exciting to Indians as fairs, horse-races, and regattas are to Europeans; and much immorality attends them. But the revenue obtained from them is as great temptation to the Government as the gambling speculations

are to the people, and experience has shown that casual revenue is as injurious to the former as gambling speculations are to the latter. After fisheries have been successfully held for several, nearly consecutive, years, the banks cease to be productive; and there have been very long intervals in which the disappointment has been very great, and not a little perplexing to the successors of those Governors of Ceylon, who, having had several successful Pearl fisheries, have caused the annual public expenditure to be increased, relying on the continuance of revenue from this most uncertain source.

* * *

The Pearl fishermen of Ceylon entertain a traditional idea that pearl oysters descend with rain. This impression may be attributed to the well-ascertained fact, that in some parts of the East the spawn of fish has been drawn up and suspended in vapour until brought down by the rain, and such may have happened to the spat of pearl oysters. In the earliest stage of their existence they have been seen floating in immense quantities, as is the case with the spawn of other fish. While they are in this floating state they become attached to each other in clusters by means of their byssus; also to sea-weed, floating timber, buoys, cables, and even to the bottoms of boats when at anchor; and sometimes, after a strong wind has blown on the coast, large quantities are driven to the sea beach with the sea-weed and other floating substances to which they have adhered. Sometimes they are drifted by the force of the land wind, or carried by currents, to sink in a greater depth of water than divers can venture to explore. Some are devoured by other fish; and some, when from the ossification of their shells they have acquired sufficient gravity, settle down upon ground unsuited for the production of pearl. It is, therefore, when they settle down upon, or subsequently find their way to, banks similar

to those on which fisheries have been successfully held, that they produce pearl of sufficient value to be sought for. These favoured places appear to be sandy spaces interspersed with small spots of madrepor, to which the pearl oysters attach themselves and thrive. The depth of water over them varies from 4 to 9 fathoms; but the best fisheries have been in from 6 to 8 fathoms. Oysters, too young to contain pearl, have frequently been found on an extensive bank, which lies about six leagues from the land, in from 8 to 13 fathoms water; but the limited period that divers can remain under water would not admit of successful fishing in the latter depth, although some of the most expert have brought up such oysters as they found within their immediate grasp on reaching the bottom, and very small oysters have come up sticking to the tallow on the seaman's sounding lead.

Age of Maturity

SMALL pearls, or, as they are called, seed pearls, are sometimes found in oysters of four years old; but it is not prudent to hold a fishery before the fish has completed its sixth year. Seven years are considered by the fishermen to be the maximum age attained by the oysters, and the nearer they approach to that age the more valuable are their pearls. In the course of the seventh year the pearls increase in size so much as to double their value; and the temptation to benefit to the fullest extent by such increased value, has sometimes induced the postponement of a fishery until the oysters have died and the pearls have been lost.

It is believed that one hundred and fifty pearls—mostly small ones—have been found in one oyster. At the fishery of 1828, I counted sixty-seven taken from one of the oysters I obtained with those collected as my official privilege; but the greater number of oysters contain no pearl.

Pearls are supposed to be produced by some minute foreign particles getting in between the shells of the fish and exciting the secretion of the pearly matter which lines them. It is said to be the practice in some places to puncture the shells for the purpose of promoting such secretion. When pearls are cut into two parts they are seen to be formed in layers resembling those of an onion. They are found in all parts of the fish, and some are formed on the inner surface of the shells; these, being imperfect on the part next to the shells, are reserved for setting in gold. They are various colours, some being black, while others are tinged a beautiful pink; but none are esteemed so highly as those of the prevailing silvery white, for the production of which the oysters from the Aripo banks are famous.

The immense quantities of pearl oyster-shells on the western sea shore of Ceylon are evidently the remains of very extensive fisheries in former ages. They are esteemed the best material for converting into that fine chunam which receives the beautiful polish so much admired in eastern buildings; but, being too thin for the general uses to which mother of pearl is applied in Europe, they have not hitherto been esteemed worthy of exportation.

In the records left by the Dutch in Ceylon mention is made of Pearl fisheries having been held by the Kandyan Monarchs on banks off Chilaw, and that they occasioned misunderstanding between the Dutch Governors and those Princes. But the Chilaw banks have not been productive for many years.

* * * * *

The Boats used

THE boats employed at Pearl fisheries are from six to ten tons burden. Many of them are used in the coasting trade when and where the monsoon is favourable for such small craft; some are common fishing boats,

while others are the licensed boats used for conveying merchandise to and from shipping in such ports as Colombo; and when a pearl fishery is to take place, such as can be spared from their ordinary work are fitted out for the occasion, and the boatmen proceed in them with similar feelings to those which animate English watermen when proceeding to regattas. As these boats have no projecting keels they do not succeed in sailing very "close to the wind;" and therefore when the wind becomes contrary, or they are overtaken by calm, they depend on their paddles or oars. With favourable wind they sail well, and have a beautiful appearance when returning from the fishing ground with a bright sun shining on their white sails.

Each boat is manned by a crew consisting of a Tindal, or master; a Sambarnotee, or representative of the boat-owner; a Today, or water baler; ten divers, and ten Munducks, or rowers, who also attend on the divers when they are in the sea, and pull them and the oysters they have collected up from the bottom. A Government Peon is generally sent in each boat to prevent the boatmen helping themselves to pearls, as three-fourths of the oysters belong to the Government as its share in the fishery.

The number of boats employed varies from 50 to 300, according to the extent of the bank and the quantity of oysters estimated to be upon it. They are assembled by advertisement from the coast of Hindustan, as well as Ceylon. When more arrive than are required, the Tindals of all that are properly equipped draw lots for employment. In olden times the duty of inspecting and licensing the boats devolved on the Master Attendant, and he was remunerated by a fixed fee on each licence; but when this fee became collected as revenue to the State, the reward of the Master Attendant became restricted to the privilege of collecting ten oysters daily from each fishing boat, in common with the Commandant of the troops and

other persons specially employed at the fisheries; but this objectionable mode of remunerating Government employees was replaced in 1835 by an equivalent allowance from the Treasury.

The general assemblage at the fishery takes place about two miles to the southward of the "Doric", at a very small village called Silawatorre, which is the Tamil name of a fish market.

The fisheries are held in March, as soon as the north-east monsoon moderates into land and sea breezes, attended with intervals of calm. But samples of the oysters have previously been taken up, and the particulars respecting the quantity, and estimated value of the pearls found in 1,000 oysters, have been notified to the public.

Start of the Event

WHEN the fishing ground has been marked off with buoys bearing flags, and the weather is propitious, a signal gun is fired about midnight for the boats to leave the shore and sail for the banks, to which they are led by the Adapanaars or headmen of the fishery. The chief of these Tamil officers carries a light at the mast-head of his boat as a guide to the fishermen; and he shapes his course for the Government guard-vessel at anchor near to the fishing ground, on board of which a good light is displayed. If the land wind blows strong, the boats reach their destination before daylight, cast anchor, and wait for sunrise. About half an hour after the sun is up a gun is fired, and the ensign hoisted to the mast-head of the Government vessel as the signal for diving to commence, and the Adapanaars lead the way to the spot to be fished.

The presence of the shark charmer on the banks while the divers are at work is found indispensable. This impostor is paid by Government for his attendance, and there are but very few divers who do not also fee him in some way, generally by giving him

some of their share of oysters; for whether they be Hindus, Mohamedans, or Parawa Christians, they all have confidence in his incantations. But it is the noise and the confusion of the multitude assembled, and the splashing of the water by the divers plunging into the sea, that alarm and deter the voracious and cowardly sharks from attacking the divers at Pearl fisheries. They do not hesitate to attack individuals when diving alone. One poor man lost both his arms in Colombo Roads, when diving for the recovery of some property dropped overboard from a ship while delivering her cargo. Some years ago the shark charmer on the Aripo banks was requested to exhibit his power over the fish by assembling some near to the guard-vessel, but he declined to do so, saying, that it would be improper to trifle with the mystical charm entrusted to his family for the purpose of keeping sharks away and not for collecting them together on the pearl banks. On a subsequent occasion, when preparations were being made for a fishery, a shark was seen on the bank, and on the charmer being blamed for neglecting his duty, he promptly declared that as his power over the fish had been doubted by the gentleman, he had permitted this one to appear to prove his influence over it.

Previous to the divers commencing their morning's work, many of them are seen to be engaged, for a brief interval, in serious meditation or acts of devotion. They then divest themselves of their clothes, except a very small piece as a semblance of decency, and five from each boat plunge into the sea and swim to their respective sinking stones, which the boatmen—or, as they are called, munducks, when attending on the divers—have previously hung over the sides of their boats in readiness, three stones on one side and two on the other. Each sinking stone is suspended by a double rope, while the net into which the diver collects the oysters is slung to a single one, in order that he may not mistake one rope for the other when he is under water. The bight, or double part, of

the double cord to which the sinking stone is suspended, is thrown over a stick projecting from the side of the boat within convenient reach of the diver while he is at the surface of the water, for the purpose of enabling him to adjust the height of the stone by lowering or raising it for his foot to rest upon. Before going down he places his right foot upon the stone, and receives its double cord between his toes. He then places his left foot on the lower rim of the hoop to which the net is laced, and presses both hoop and net between his legs, so as to lessen the resistance of the water as he descends. When thus prepared, and assured by the attendant munducks that the cords are clear for being thrown into the sea as he descends, he draws a full breath, presses his nostrils between the thumb and forefinger of his left hand, raises his body to give force to his descent, slips his hold of the bight of the double cord, which instantly flies

from over the projecting stick, and descends as rapidly as stone will sink him to the bottom.

Divers' Movements

ON reaching the ground he instantly abandons the sinking-stone, and it is hauled up by his munducks and suspended to the projecting stick in readiness for his next descent. In order to collect the oysters he appears to throw himself on his face and cling to the ground. Some stout men require to have weights in belts round their bodies to enable them to remain at the bottom and creep over considerable space, which, when the oysters are thinly scattered, is sometimes necessary to the extent of eight or ten fathoms. When the diver wishes to ascend, he jerks the cord of the net, which, being held by his watchful attendants in the boat, is

Divers coming up with clusters of oysters



instantly felt by them, and they immediately commence hauling up the net as fast as they are able. When the diver has strayed from the spot immediately under the boat for the purpose of collecting the oysters into his net, he has to take care that they do not fall out of it while it is trailing on the bottom of the sea until it becomes directly under the boat; he, therefore, waits until the net is clear of the ground, and then pulls himself up its cord hand over hand, his impetus upwards being accelerated by the net as it is rapidly hauled up by his attendants, he is soon enabled to forsake its cord and bound head and shoulders out of the water. On reaching the surface he swims to his sinking stone, and by the time the net is emptied of its contents, and his attendants are ready, he is prepared to dive again. This work is repeated by five divers until they are relieved by the other five who have remained in the boat, in order to form the necessary alternate rests during the day's work. From this it will be seen that there are two divers to each stone, and that one of the two is constantly diving during the six hours allowed for fishing. When at their regular work they seldom remain under water more than a minute—the more usual time being from fifty-three to fifty-seven seconds—but when requested or paid to remain under water as long as they are able, I have known them to be immersed from eighty-four to eighty-seven seconds. They are warned of the time to ascend by a singing noise in their ears and by a sensation similar to hiccough. Sometimes they bleed slightly at the nose and at the ears, but not sufficiently to injure them. When oysters are plentiful, a diver can collect from three to four thousand for his day's work. So strong is the desire of most divers to take up great quantities of oysters that they are too often regardless of their quality, and it is found extremely difficult to restrain them within the prescribed limits of the fishing ground, when near to its margin there are younger oysters to be obtained in larger quantities. This primitive mode of diving for pearl

oysters is not likely to be superseded by the diving bell or the diving dress. These modern inventions have been used on the Ceylon Pearl banks—the former as early as 1826, and the latter in 1836—for the purpose of ascertaining the nature and condition of the oyster beds; but for the practical purpose of collecting oysters it is evident that one native diver, with his sinking stone and net, would collect and send up more oysters in a day than all the men that could be employed in a diving bell, while all the oysters they could collect would not pay the cost of the labour of English divers.

Suitable Weather

THE weather best suited for pearl fishing is when the land wind dies away soon after sunrise, and the succeeding calm is followed by a sea breeze soon after noon. During the hours of diving the work is kept up with great spirit and eagerness by all parties interested or engaged in the fishery, and the scene is one which affords much pleasure to visitors. But as the continual plunging of so many divers disturbs the water, it is seldom that they can be seen at the bottom. For this purpose it is better to visit the banks during the preparatory inspection, when there are seldom more than twenty divers employed, and their operations may then generally be seen during the period of their immersion. Their nets are often found to contain much that is interesting to those who take pleasure in investigating the wonderful works of the Creator in the recesses of the sea.

When the time approaches for diving to cease for the day the ensign is lowered from the mast-head of the guard-vessel, and the murmuring of thousands of voices is instantly broken by a general call for renewed exertion for the short interval before the work is stopped. At this preparatory signal the Adapanaars' boats move off the fishing ground, and the Government

boats prepare to enforce obedience to the succeeding signal for sailing to the shore. After the ensign has been lowered from fifteen to thirty minutes, according to the success of the divers and the prospect of a continuous sea breeze, a gun is fired as a signal for diving to cease, and for the boats to make sail for the land, when instantly the multitude of divers and boatmen burst forth in louder and more continuous clamour. Some boats' crews who have been fortunate are anxious to push off for the shore, and commence hoisting their sails without delay ; while others who are not contented with their loads continue fishing until driven from the banks by the Government boats' crews, and not unfrequently subject themselves to punishment for their obduracy. When all the boats are under weigh and steering for the shore on one of those lovely days so common in March, the delicate whiteness of their primitively formed sails has a peculiarly pleasing effect, and the scene is so beautiful that it never fails to call forth the admiration of all who witness it. As they approach the shore they are welcomed by thousands of persons anxious to learn the success that has attended their adventure. The boats are taken near to their respective cottoos, or spaces fenced off near to the sea shore, and the oysters are conveyed without delay from the boats to within these enclosures, where the contents of each boat is divided by its crew into four heaps as nearly equal as possible. The Government officer, or the renter, if there be one, then selects three heaps, and the fourth is removed by the fishermen as their remuneration, and it is divided by them and the owner of the boat according to their respective shares.

Sometimes the sea breeze is not sufficiently strong to run the boats to the shore before they are overtaken by calm or met by a land wind. In the former case, the boatmen lower their sails, and take to their oars, or paddles, and merrily ply them to their cheerful choruses ; and in the latter instance,

if the land wind be too fresh to row against, they keep up their sails, and endeavour to reach the shore as near to the fishmarket as they can. Sometimes they are carried several miles to leeward before they reach the shore, and then they track their boats with a tow-line along the strand. Although this tedious operation is very fatiguing after their hard work on the banks, they persevere cheerfully until they reach their respective cottoos. When this detention happens to many of the boats, the fishing is suspended for a day in order to refresh the crews and when the fishing is continued for many days without any other intermission than Sundays, it is sometimes necessary to give the people a day's rest ; but when the fishery continues late into April, its operations on the banks are liable to be suspended for several days by strong S.W. winds and high sea, which sometimes continue so long as to put an end to the fishery for the season.

* * * * *

Washing of Oysters

IT is not until fishing has ceased for the season, that the washing of the oysters and the collection of their pearl becomes general ; but from the commencement of the fishery, the speculators with small means, and others whose necessities or curiosity do not admit of delay, wash their oysters and seek out the pearl at a great loss while the fish is too fresh for the small pearl to be distinguished. The general process of washing the oysters and collecting the pearl is conducted in a vary careful manner. The putrid oysters are put into ballams—which are canoes, each made of one piece of timber from twenty to thirty feet long—and sea water is poured upon them until the ballams are about three-fourths filled, when as many men as can conveniently arrange themselves on each side squat down, and wash and examine every shell. Those shells which have pearls adhering to them are set apart for the pearls

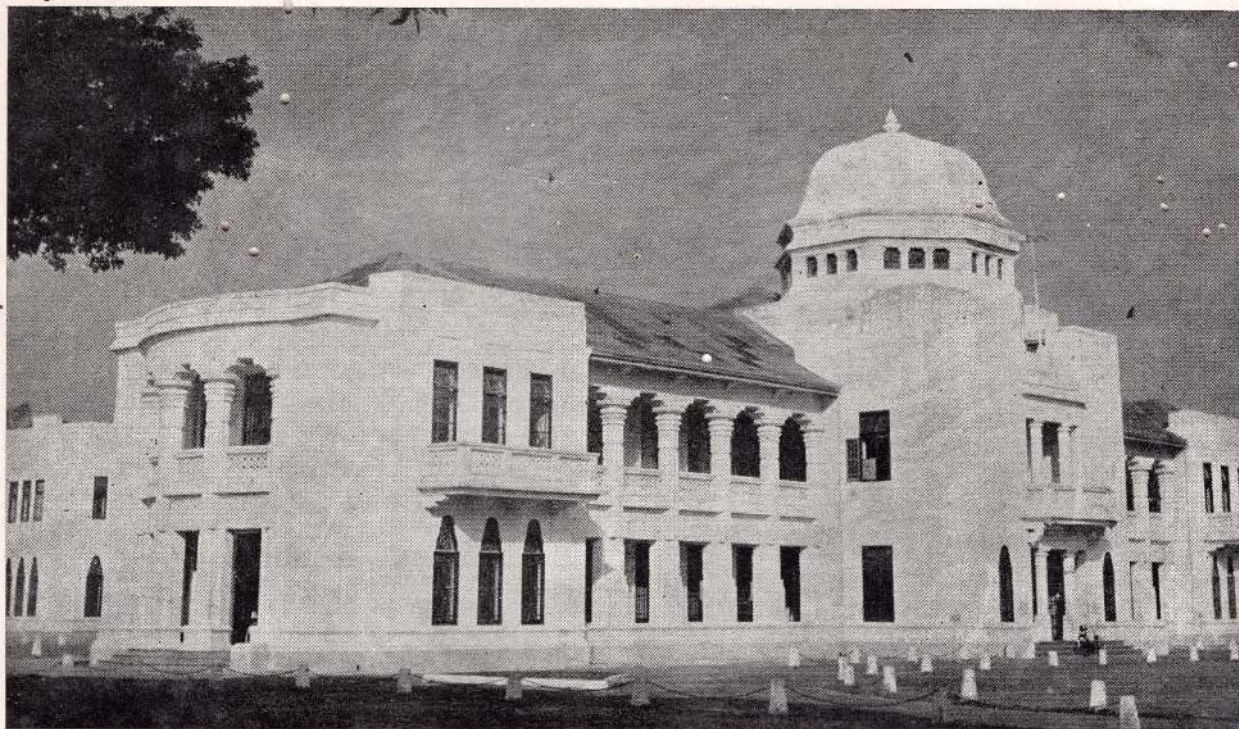
to be cut off, and those free from pearl are cast into heaps outside the cottoos. The filthy water is then carefully baled out, and more sea water poured in, until by this continued process nothing appears to be left in the ballams but sand and pearls. The whole of these remains is then spread upon white cloth, and exposed to the sun. When thoroughly dry, women are employed to sift it and collect the pearls, and when they have finished, it is subjected to the keener scrutiny of children, whose young eyes detect the smallest seed pearl. The whole process is vigilantly superintended, and as the pearl is collected, it is deposited in safety by the superintendent. Dishonest coolies have been known to swallow pearls in haste in order to avoid detection, and women to conceal them in their clothes and in their hair.

After all the pearls are collected they are sized, classed, weighed, and valued. The method of ascertaining their size is by passing them through a succession of brass colanders. The colander intended to retain the largest pearls has twenty perforated holes, all of the same size; and the pearls that do not pass through them, after being well shaken, are called of the 20th basket. The succeeding colander has 30 holes of a lesser size; and others, in succession, have 50, 80, 100, 200, 400, 600, 800, and 1,000 holes. Those pearls which pass through the last colander are called "masie;" and, being too small to string, are said to be made into

delicate paste for the wealthy natives to masticate with their betel leaves and arecanuts, as some men use tobacco. When the pearls have all been sized by passing through the colanders, each size is carefully divided into classes according to shape and colour, and each class is weighed and valued according to its quality.

Although the demand for pearls in Europe has declined, they continue to be much prized in the East; and after a Ceylon fishery the produce is very soon disposed of for the China and other eastern markets.

It will be seen that the pearl oysters of the Gulf of Mannar are not fished up at all seasons, nor whenever it may please the divers to fish them, as is the case with those larger pearl oysters found in the Persian Gulf and some other places,—the thick shells of which are so valuable for manufacturing purposes in Europe. The success of the Ceylon Pearl fisheries has hitherto depended on a combination of causes in many respects peculiar to the Gulf of Mannar, and not always within human control. In all probability such will continue to be the case, notwithstanding the increasing knowledge of the habits and structure of the fish. But by vigilant attention to the working of Nature, and by not fishing up the oysters before they have attained to maturity, nor by suffering them to remain on the banks until their pearl is lost, considerable casual revenue will no doubt be obtained.



The Jaffna town hall

Regional Folk-lore of Ceylon

M. RAMALINGAM

THE folk-lore of the people of Jaffna, in North Ceylon, is very old. The folk-lore of India is, in the main, indigenous to India, and no scholar in the world has proved its borrowing from another land, East or West. The Jaffnese have many strains in common with the Indians; their folk-lore is no exception. Their customs, manners, language, faith, are the common factors but the upbringing and environments of the Jaffnese contribute to a cultural distinction.

Whether or not the people in their entirety came from India one cannot say. Whether this part of Ceylon was part of the South Madura (the Ten Maturai of the classics) that was under the sway of the Pandyan King, or whether it was one with India on

the Lemuria Continent of the geologists, history cannot affirm. But one can say with some certainty that the folk-lore of Jaffna is not all imported from India. Much of it is of local mint. Within living memory the people of Jaffna have again and again shown that their mind and tongue could be alert to the occasion.

Here is the lament of a modern girl. A damsel of the district, in a lonely hut and all alone, charged with the care of cooking for her aunt, two uncles, and a grandfather, who have all gone out to the paddy fields. It is forenoon. Her aunt will soon return to fetch rice and butter-milk for the hungry males. But the maiden has not made headway with the pounding of the paddy as yet. An orphan's

note is often piteous. And she strikes it not on a lyre or a lute, but on the listener's hearts :

1. காயாப் புழுங்கலோடும்
கப்பியோடும் மாய்கிறேனே,
எனக் கெழுந்த சூரியனே,
எனக் கொருவன் வாரானே!

With parboiled paddy undried and
grain in coarse grits,
I am wearing myself to death.
O sun who has risen for my sake,
won't a man come for me !

2. தோயாத் தயிரோடும்
மத்தொடும் மாய்கிறேனே ;
எனக் கெழுந்த சூரியனே
எனக் கொருவன் வாரானே !

With uncurdled milk and churning-
staff
I am wearing myself to death.
O sun, who has risen for my sake,
won't a man come for me !

This is a prayer to the Sun. Was she worshipping the Sun ? No. She has only transferred the Moon cult of the virgins of the Tamil land to a Sun cult.

For ages past girls needing husbands have worshipped the Moon. No sooner husbands swam into their ken than they gave up the Moon, and worshipped their husbands. The Moon cult was a symbolic worship, not nature worship. Love is warm when the Moon is on, so is a woman when her mate is found.

Akin to this custom, perhaps a remnant of it, is the one of a lady bent with years who goes out to catch the first glimpse of the moon on the night third from the New Moon. When she sees it, she calls out to her children and grandchildren keeping her gaze all the while fixed fast on the phase, and kisses

them one by one. The way she fumbles to grip the first child square by the shoulders shows she is careful to set her eyes next on the face of the child only. The switching of her look from the moon to the face of the child is not without its psychic gain. The first child is indeed the luckiest. In this, as in most rituals, sons and grandsons come in for preference.

The Folk-Song

THE folk-lore of Jaffna has notable examples for all its constituent fields, viz : the fairy tale, the merry tale, the animal tale, the local legend, the proverb, riddles, the folk-songs, superstition, plant lore, animal lore, charms, myth, and the rest.

The folk-song is the pleasantest of all. Its varieties are as many as its themes are varied. The dancing song, the weaving song, the song of the water-carrying women, the cradle song, the paddy pounding song, the work-song, the sowing song, the reaping song, the drinking song, the funeral song, are some of them.

I shall give a few examples here. Paddy-pounding is essentially a work of women. One woman begins a lyric. The other replies in the same tenor. The theme of the lyric may be love, may be a comment on the suitors. Here is a comment on the dress. One wears a saree dipped in the Jaffna dye in the wont of the well-to-do in the days when the Chayroot (*oddenlandia umbellata*) was much in vogue.

வட்ட வட்டத் திட்டையிலே
வரகரிசி திட்டையிலே,
ஆர் கொடுத்த சாயச் சோமன்
ஆலவட்டம் போடுதடி?

Friend, who gave you that dyed dress of yours, that is circling fan-wise while you are polishing the millet rice in the shallow mortar which is round.

The wearer of the dyed dress retorts :

ஆருங் கொடுக்கவில்லை ;
அவிசாரி யாடவில்லை ;
கை யெரியப் பாடுபட்டுக்
கட்டினேன்டி சாயச் சோமன்.

No one gave it me. Nor did I wallow in
wanton life.

With smarting hands worked I hard,
and donned that dyed dress.

In the days when local trade flourished,
diving for chank in the waters and digging
for chayroot in the soils of Jaffna were com-
mon occupations. Sarees of women and
vetties of men coloured in the chayroot crush
were popular in Malaya, and were hence
exported from Jaffna.

In almost all Eastern towns the crows are
a nuisance. They have no respect for age,
or for sex. We hear of a crow baring the
breast of Sita, the ill-fated queen of Ayodhya.
We know of crows carrying away the nosegay
of girls, the necklace of a gay woman. A
village girl's priceless possession is her paddy
she has put out in a pounder to husk or on
a mat to dry.

தாயாருமில்லை நான்
தனியே மசித்த நெல்லு
அள்ளுகிறாய், காகம், உனக்கு
ஆகுமென்றால் கொண்டோடு.

Mother mine is nowhere about. The
grains I husked with a lone hand you
are sweeping away, O Crow. If you
deem it meet, take it then.

A love song of the Tamil land has no
parallel. It is more than 2,000 years old even
on the classical model of Tholkappiar. Here
is one from the lips of the people.

It is time for the survivors of the war to
reach their homes. A young husband had
timed his return, for warfare had its seasons
in the days of old. With the oncoming of
the rains he was to be home. The first fall

of the seasonal shower puts his longing wife
in expectation. Even moments and seconds
seem years to her. No longer will she wait
without a sight of her lord. She gives vent
to this feeling in the following lines.

கடலே ஓவியாதே
கற் கிணறே பொங்காதே
நிலவே எறியாதே—என்
நீலகண்டன் வருமளவும்.

O Sea, cease to sound ;
O Rocky-well, fail to swell ;
O light of moon, stay thy shine ;
till my blue-throated returns.

In her anxiety to let the season slip away
she bids the starry heavens and the earthly
elements obey her so that the first signs—the
setting in of the rains—may yet linger on
giving her the hope that the promised day is
still on. The allusion of " blue-throated " is to
Siva whose throat turned blue by swallow-
ing the poison meant for others. Just as Siva
was immune to death so would her husband
be.

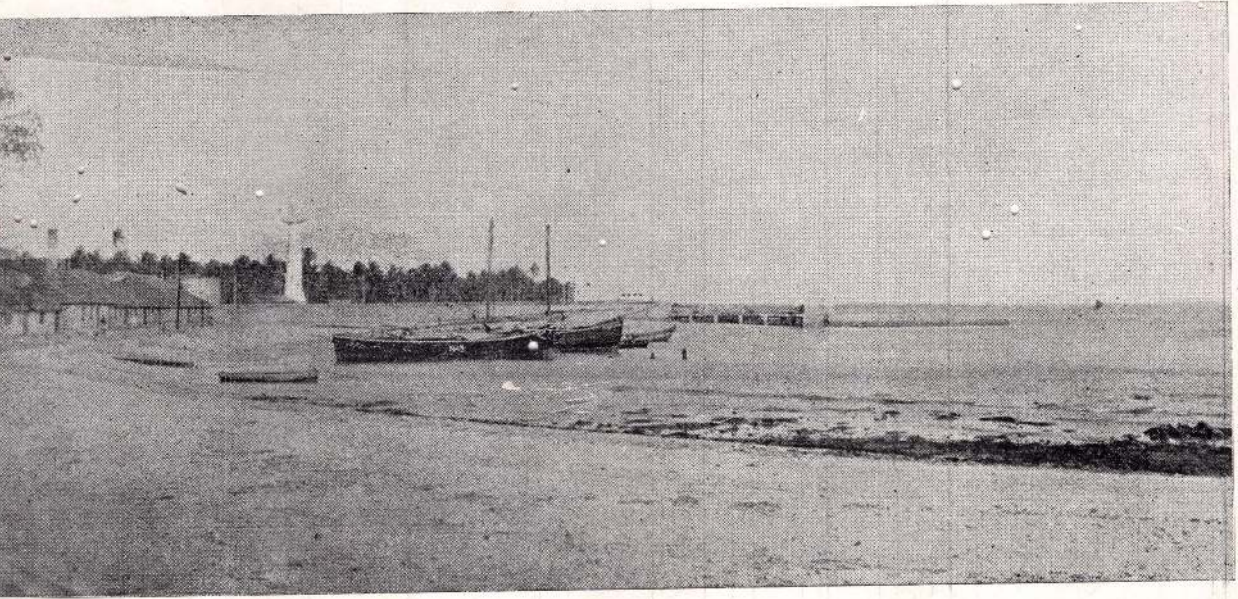
Funeral Songs

THE funeral songs of the Tamils have a ring
of their own. A widow, in the olden days,
was ostracized from society. She was kept out
of the auspicious ceremonies like house-
warming and wedding. She dare not wear
coloured clothes, jewels of any kind, hair
locks and the like which beautify women.
Here is a dirge of such a woman who has
just lost her husband.

1. கறுப்பும் சிவப்பும்—எனக்குக்
கலந்துடுக்கக் கை நோரும் ;
மன்னாருக் கச்சு இப்போ
மடித்துடுக்க நாளாச்சே.

To wear in change the black and red
my hands would weary.

The day is now on for me to drape in
folds the long cloth of Mannar.



Kankesanthurai—a sea port town in the Jaffna peninsula

2. பட்டும் பணிதிகளும்—நான்
பல தினுசாய்ப் பூண்டிடுவேன்;
பட்டைக் கழற்றி வைத்தேன்—இப்போ
பாடகத்தை வாங்கி வைத்தேன்.

Silks and jewels would I vary in wear.
Silks I have doffed. The anklets I am
casting off now.

3. ஆண்ட நகை கழற்றி—நானும்
ஆபரணச் செப்பி விட்டேன்.

I took the long-used ornaments off me,
and put them in their caskets.

The spirit of her husband has gone down
to the abode of the dead, the Indian Hades,
under the southern gloom. The widow yearns
to enter it herself, hot on the heels of her
husband's soul.

4. ஓடியல்லோ வந்திடுவேன்—உங்கள்
ஒழுங்கை தெரியாது;
யாய்ந்தல்லோ வந்திடுவேன்—உங்கள்
படலை தெரியாது.

I would come running to you,
but I know not your lane.
I would come galloping to you,
but I know not your gate.

Cradle Song

ONE of the oldest sub-types of folk-songs is
the cradle song. The baby-boy who is lulled
is often likened to the best of heroes his
mother has heard of. For centuries the
imagination of women was caught by the
valiant men of the Indian epics, Mahabha-
rata and Ramayana.

1. ஐந்து தலை நாகம்
அடை கிடக்குந் தாழையிலே
அஞ்சாமல் பூ வெடுக்கும்
அருச்சுனனார் உங்கள் ஐயா.

Your father is that aweless Arjuna
who picks flowers in the wild pine
wherein lies brooding the five-headed
cobra.

The sentiment here is valour. By extolling the father the child is extolled. As the father so the child. The father is a veritable Arjuna, the king of archers.

2. முத்தளப்பான் செட்டி,
முடி சமைப்பான் ஆசாரி;
பட்டு விற்பான் டட்டாணி,
அணிகள் செய்வான் தட்டானும்.

Pearls the chetty measures out;
Crown the sculptor carves;
Silks the pedlar sells;
Ornaments the jeweller makes.

3. ஆசாரி பூசை செய்ய—உனக்கு
ஆசைப் பால் ஊட்டியதார்?
பூசாரி பூசை செய்ய—உனக்குப்
பூசைப் பால் தந்தவரார்?

While His Holiness does divine service
who fed you with ambrosia?
While the priest does divine service
who fed you with consecrated milk?

4. ஆரடித்து நீரழுதிர்
அழுத கண்ணில் நீர் ததும்ப?
பேரை உரைத்தாக்கால்,
பெரு விலங்கு பூட்டிடுவேன்.

Who beat you to sob and your tearing
eyes to brim?
Him if you name, fetters firm will I set.

It is the way of women to rock infants in their laps whereas men take them on their shoulders, and walk to and fro patting them with their hands. Even today when simplicity has been much robbed, these manners continue. These ideas are thrown out in the following song:—

அத்தை மடிமேலும்
அம்மான்மார் தோள்மேலும்
வைத்து முத்தாட்டும்
மரகதமே கண்வளராய்.

Sleep, emerald, sleep, you who were
caressed in the laps of your aunts
and on the shoulders of your uncles.

Obviously the infant was the only one for many aunts and uncles.

The childless are believed to be carrying curses of the gods, stars, snakes, animals, birds, and men. To propitiate them many penances and ceremonies are performed, often at great expense. Yet when the child arrives, it is said to be the gift of a god.

1. சிற்றடிக வில்லையென்று
சிந்தை கலங்கையிலே,
தம்பி நீர், சிவபெருமான்
தந்த செல்வம்.

When for want of little feet I was sick
of heart, little son, you became the
fortune sent by Siva.

2. பிள்ளை யில்லையென்று
பெருத் தபக புரிகையிலே,
தம்பி நீர், பெருமானார்
தந்த செல்வம்.

When for want of a child I was hard put
to austerities. O little son, you were the
riches rewarded by the Lord.

3. பச்சை இலுப்பை வெட்டிப்
பால் வடியத் தொட்டில் கட்டி,
தொட்டிலின் கால் பொன்னாலே,
தொடு கயிறோ முத்தாலே.

A live olive was felled, and a cot made
while the sap was still dripping. The
legs of the cot have an inlay of gold; its
handling cords of pearls.

Folk-Drama

THE folk-drama was common in Jaffna about 25 years ago. After harvesting the diversion of the people was chiefly in drama. The themes were chosen from the myths, the episodes in the Mahabharata and Ramayana. The stage was an amphitheatre so that people

sitting round it could all see. Women had sides allocated to them exclusively. The floor of the stage was of wooden planks or level ground with no roof. The dresses were bright and inexpensive, but very heavy.

The folk dances were of many types. To wipe out sickness, to bring rain down, to make food crops grow, to sacrifice fowl and goat in temples, to exorcize devils to drive out evil spirits from the possessed, there were varieties of dances. The dance-song and hand-clapping were accompaniments.

In Jaffna, as in other countries, bird lore is intimately linked with augury. Cries of the small crow bring welcome news—the coming home of a nearkin. The croaking cries of the larger kind foreshadows evil—mishap, illness, death.

The nocturnal birds commonly portend disaster. The owl's hoot is very ominous, fore-shows death. Directly its cries reach ear, men and women set out to chase it away. When the bird having death shrieks for its keynote, சாக்குருவி (the hooting owl?), flies across the roof of a house the inmates are in a panic. Elders advise them to expose the roof by removing a few tiles, or to kill a fowl in expiation. If they were vegetarians they cut up an ash pumpkin smeared with turmeric.

Pigeons are not domesticated, because when they fly off for good the wealth of the family is supposed to go to the bottom. So they are tended in the temples. The peacock suffers the same fate, but for another reason—it is the bird of Subrahmanya, son of Siva with perennial youth. God Skanda *alias* Subrahmanya, it is said, had turned a demon king into a peacock and was using it as his vehicle, hence he was suspecting foulplay any moment.

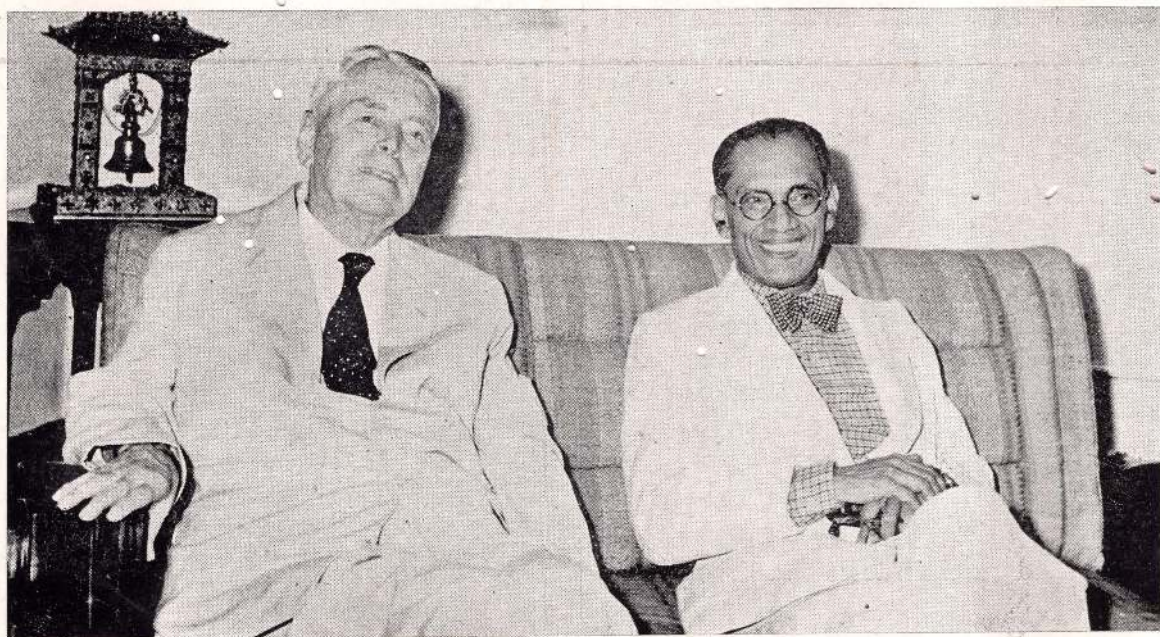
The cock is also a bird of God Subrahmanya, but it has earned little reverence of recent years. Of animal lore, cow, cat, elephant, assume sanctity. The life of a cat is equated with the lives of nine Brahmins; so if you kill one cat you are said to have killed nine Brahmins.

Mineral Lore

MINERAL lore is of particular significance to Jaffna. There is a tradition that a cobra carries in its hood a precious stone. Nainativu (Nagadvipa of the Buddhists), an island off Jaffna, abounds in cobras. A fane is found there for Nagammal, the guardian goddess of cobras.

On the west coast of Nainativu gems shooting rays of light—little suns, as it were—are said to be seen during the dark nights. The cobras spit them out while they are out prey hunting. The way to take them is to cover them with cow dung unseen. One may even go up a tree, cow dung in hand, and wait for an opportunity. So far no dare-devil has succeeded. All the same the stone exists. One such stone is the crest-jewel of the Goddess Meenakshi Amman of Madura.

The guardian goddess of Nainativu extends her sway over the entire Jaffna peninsula. The childless, over whom hangs the curse of snakes, pay annual homage to her. If a cobra strays into their homes they trap it alive unhurt, often in an earthen pot, and take it with them to the fane along with the attendant materials of worship. The faith has had its reward. It may be seen in the names of the offspring, Nagabhushani, Nagammal, Nageswari, Nagalingam, Nagaratnam.



The Prime Ministers of New Zealand and Ceylon during their discussions at Mr. Bandaranaike's residence at Rosmead Place

Foreign Affairs

THE Government of Australia has offered Ceylon Rs. 1 million worth of flour for flood rehabilitation. This offer was conveyed to the Prime Minister, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, by the Australian High Commissioner in Ceylon, Mr. A. J. Eastman, who returned to the Island recently.

The Prime Minister, accepting the gift, asked Mr. Eastman to convey his thanks to the Australian Government.

The flour will be shipped to Ceylon at the earliest possible opportunity. The funds realised from the sale of the flour will be used for specific and important rehabilitation projects to be agreed upon between the Australian Government and the Government of Ceylon.

The question of long-term flour credit to Ceylon is also under consideration by the Australian Government.

Earlier the Australian Government had given Ceylon Rs. 1 lakh worth of drugs for emergency use during the floods.

Gift from U. N. Secretariat

A cheque for \$3,200 contributed till 18th February by members of United Nations Secretariat to assist in flood relief in Ceylon was

presented to Mr. R. S. S. Gunawardena, Permanent Representative of Ceylon to the UN, in a ceremony at UN Headquarters.

The cheque was presented by Mr. Andrew W. Gordier, Executive Assistant to the Secretary, General, who has headed the Secretariat appeal committee. It will go into the National Flood Relief Fund of the Government of Ceylon.

It represents the contribution made so far at UN Headquarters. The appeal is continuing at the headquarters of the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) in Bangkok, and a supplementary cheque will be received from there.

In handing over the cheque, Mr. Gordier said that the initiative for the appeal was taken by the UN staff "as evidence of the concern of members of the Secretariat for the sufferings of your people and country".

Mr. Gunawardena said he was greatly moved "by this gesture of goodwill, friendship and sympathy". "It would serve", he added, "as a constant reminder to the people of the world that UN staff members feel deeply for humanity and for the sufferings of their fellowmen, and are prepared to make sacrifices for that same objective."

Lenin Peace Prize Winner

AT an impressive ceremony at the Colombo Town Hall on March 8th the much coveted Lenin Peace Prize was presented to Ven. U. Saranankara Thero, a Secretary of the Ceylon Peace Council, by Mr. Nikolai Tikhanov, President of the Soviet Peace Council and himself a winner of this prize.

The prize was awarded to Saranankara Thero on January 1st this year for his having offered to join the Japanese demonstrators, who wanted to proceed to Christmas Islands as a protest against the test explosion of hydrogen bombs there.

Making the presentation Mr. Tikhanov said that Ven. Saranankara's name was known beyond the borders of Ceylon and was respected highly in Russia.

Referring to international affairs, Mr. Tikhanov said that the Soviet Government proposed the summit talks in the hope that it could contribute a good deal towards easing world tension.

Mr. D. N. Pritt, Q.C., another Lenin Peace Prize winner, said that it was one of the most stirring and warm presentations he had seen. Two other occasions were in Moscow and Paris.

Mr. Pritt said that the Ven. Saranankara richly deserved the prize for his services in the cause of peace.

Ven. Saranankara said: "I decided that if I could sacrifice my life in Christmas Islands as a protest against the experimenting of nuclear weapons I could open the eyes of the world to the grim horrors of nuclear war. Even if I failed to

The Prime Minister, the Hon. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, declaring open the Commodity Exhibition organised by the People's Republic of China. The venue of the Exhibition was Victoria Park, Colombo. His Excellency the Ambassador for China is also in the picture



stop the use and experimenting of such weapons I felt I could help the cause of peace."

Among those present were Mr. M. W. H. de Silva, Minister of Justice, Mr. Vladimir Yakovlev, Russian Ambassador, Mr. Chang Tsan Ming, Chinese Ambassador, Mr. Wilmot Perera, and the teacher of Ven. Saranankara, Ven. Kiriwattuduwe Pragnasara, Principal of Vidyalankara Pirivena, who presided.

Greece Appoints Ambassador for Ceylon

CONSEQUENT upon the decision of the Royal Government of Greece and the Government of Ceylon to establish diplomatic relations between Greece and Ceylon, the Royal Government of Greece has, with the concurrence of the Government of Ceylon, decided to appoint His Excellency Mr. Nicholas H. Vassiliou, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for Greece in New Delhi, concurrently as their first Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Ceylon.

Rumania's Minister in Ceylon

THE Government of the Rumanian People's Republic has, with the concurrence of the Government of Ceylon, decided to appoint His Excellency Mr. Nicolae Cioroiu, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Rumanian People's Republic in New Delhi, concurrently as their first Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Ceylon.

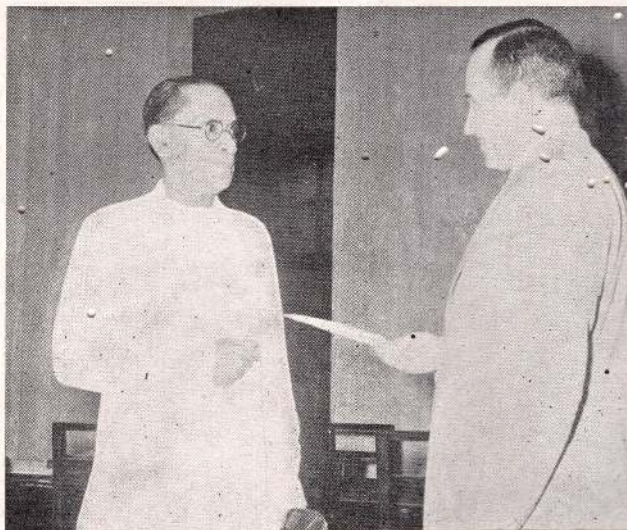
Minister for Philippines in Ceylon

THE Government of the Philippines has, with the concurrence of the Government of Ceylon, decided to appoint His Excellency Dr. Melquidez J. Gamboa, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary for the Philippines in New Delhi, concurrently as their first Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Ceylon.

Ceylon Recognises the United Arab Republic

THE Government of Ceylon has recognised the United Arab Republic and has informed the authorities concerned accordingly. The following messages have been sent by the Prime Minister to His Excellency Gamal Abdel Nasser, President of the United Arab Republic and to His Excellency Shukri el Kuwatly, President of Syria respectively :—

"I wish to extend to Your Excellency on behalf of the people and the Government of Ceylon my warm congratulations on your election as President of the United Arab Republic. The formation of this Republic will promote the cause of Arab unity and thereby also strengthen the cause of world peace."

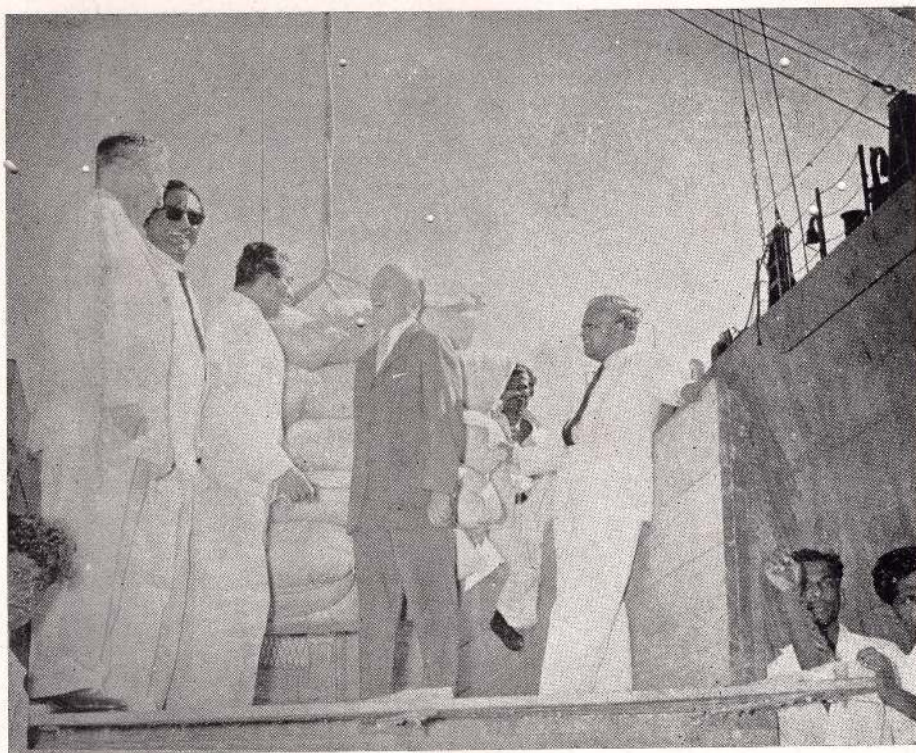


▲ The Charge d'Affair's of the United Arab Republic with the Prime Minister soon after he paid a courtesy call at the P. M.'s office

▼ Hon. C. P. de Silva, Leader of the House of Representatives (officiating for the Prime Minister) receives the Hon. Walter Nash, the New Zealand Prime Minister on his arrival at Katunayake Airport, during his recent goodwill visit



"I wish to extend to Your Excellency on behalf of the people and the Government of Ceylon my warm congratulations on the formation of the United Arab Republic which will promote the cause of world peace."



His Excellency Mr. Maxwell H. Gluck, U. S. Ambassador in Ceylon (in dark suit) presenting to the Minister of Finance, Hon. Stanley De Zoysa, the first consignment of flour gifted by the U. S. Government for flood relief and rehabilitation

High Commissioner for Ceylon in Malaya

THE Government of Ceylon has, with the concurrence of the Government of the Federation of Malaya, decided to appoint Mr. D. C. R. Gunawardana as Ceylon's first High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur.

Mr. Gunawardana, B.A. (London), Bar-at-Law, is 57 years old. He was a member of the Ceylon Civil Service from 1924 until last month when he retired as Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Cultural Affairs. He was Permanent Secretary from 1952.

Ceylon Legation at The Hague

THE Government of Ceylon has with the concurrence of the Government of the Netherlands, decided to set up a separate Legation at The Hague headed by a Charge d'Affaires en pied.

It has also been decided to appoint Mr. J. H. O. Paulusz, former Government Archivist, as Ceylon's first Charge d'Affaires en pied at The Hague.

Ambassador for Ceylon in China

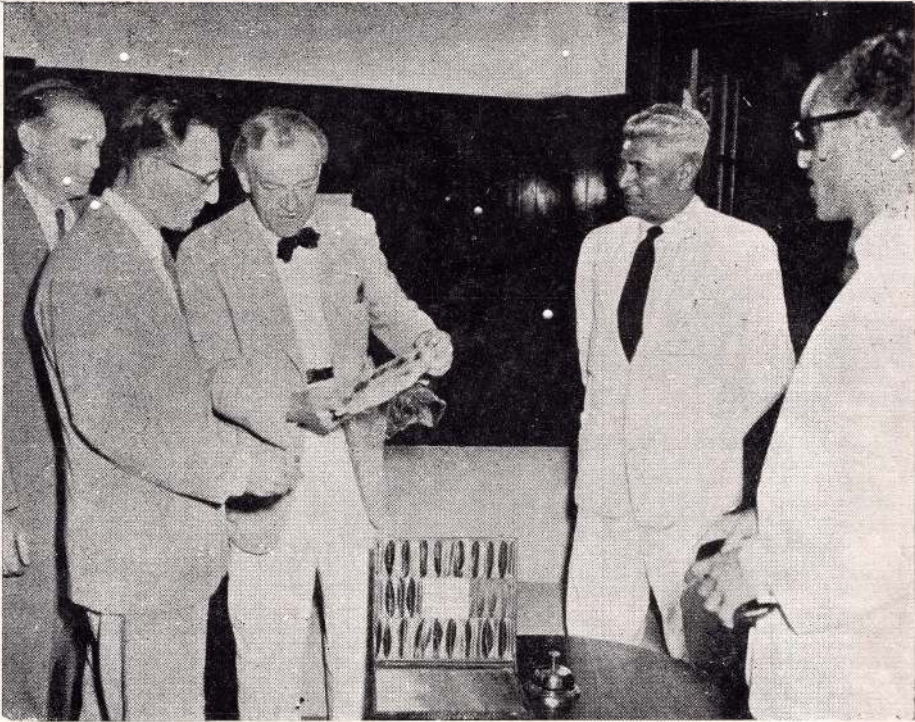
THE Government of Ceylon has, with the concurrence of the Government of the People's Republic of China, decided to appoint Mr. William Gopallawa, M.B.E., former Commissioner, Colombo Municipal Council, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for Ceylon in Peking, in succession to Mr. Wilmot A. Perera.

Spanish Ambassador to Ceylon

THE Government of Spain has, with the concurrence of the Government of Ceylon, decided to appoint His Excellency Count de Artaza, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for Spain in New Delhi, concurrently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Ceylon, in succession to His Excellency Senor Manuel Galan.

U. S. Gift of Flour

THE first consignment of flour gifted by the Government of the United States for flood relief



Senator Sarath Wijesinghe, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, presented on behalf of the Prime Minister a silver tray to the Photographic Survey Corporation of Toronto in appreciation of services rendered by Members of the Corporation's Staff who served as Crew of the Corporation's Canso-Amphibian Aircraft which was employed on Relief Operations during the floods of December, 1957

and rehabilitation was handed over to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Stanley de Zoysa, by the American Ambassador, Mr. Maxwell H. Gluck, at the Delft Quay, Colombo Harbour, on April 11.

The proceeds from the sale of the gift of American flour will be used by the Ceylon Government for flood relief work.

At a brief ceremony at the Delft Quay the Ambassador, Mr. Gluck said he was very happy to hand over the gift of flour from the Government and the people of the United States to the Government and people of Ceylon.

He said that in addition to the flour, they are also supplying rice, agricultural equipment, equipment for irrigation, and road building machinery. He hoped that these gifts would help improve the standard of living in Ceylon.

The Minister of Finance Mr. Stanley Zoysa said that on behalf of the Government and people of Ceylon he had great pleasure in accepting the

first shipment of ten thousand tons of flour. He recalled that America was among the first countries to come to the aid of Ceylon during the disastrous floods. He further recalled that helicopters sent by the U.S. Government on mercy mission had carried food and clothing to the flood victims. He thanked the Government and the people of the United States for these and many other acts of friendship.

The Minister said that the friendship between the two countries was strengthening and this friendship would grow and continue to grow. Ceylon, he said could only offer the goodwill of the Government and the people and with this goodwill he hoped the two countries could work together for the thing that the people wanted most in the world, namely, peace.

The first consignment consisted of 10,400,000 pounds. The balance of the first shipment of 20,000,000 pounds is expected to reach Colombo shortly.

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