

j. e. jayasuriya

education
in Ceylon
BEFORE AND AFTER
independence

EDUCATION IN CEYLON

before and after

INDEPENDENCE

1939 - 1968

J. E. Jayasuriya

Professor of Education and Head of the Department of Education
University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, Ceylon

ASSOCIATED EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHERS

10, Park Gardens, Colombo 5.

370-095493

JAY

EDUCATION IN CEYLON

INDEPENDENCE

First Edition 1969

8291 - 029

*The copyright and all rights of translation
of the book are reserved by the author.*



Printed by Rev. F. S. de Silva at the Wesley Press, Colombo 6. J. 4823-3-69.

Abbreviations

- A.R.** : Administration Report of the Director of Education.
(A.R. 1939 means the Administration Report of the Director of Education for the year 1939. Where the name of the Director of Education is relevant, the Director's name is given within brackets after the year.)
- H (HR).** : Hansard. Official Report of the Proceedings of the House of Representatives. (Dates and page/column references are given.)
- H (LC).** : Hansard. Official Report of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council.
- H (S).** : Hansard. Official Report of the Proceedings of the Senate.
- H (SC).** : Hansard. Official Report of the Proceedings of the State Council.
- S.P.** : Sessional Paper.

CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	
SECTION I—<i>The Background</i>	
CHAPTER 1 The Educational Scene in 1939	1
SECTION II—<i>The Struggle against Privilege</i>	
CHAPTER 2 The Free Education Scheme	23
CHAPTER 3 Denominational Schools and the Govern- ment	35
CHAPTER 4 Language in Education	64
CHAPTER 5 The Dynamics of Educational Change ..	83
SECTION III—<i>Other Aspects and Issues</i>	
CHAPTER 6 Curricular Diversification and Student Selection	95
CHAPTER 7 Religion in School	119
CHAPTER 8 Estate Schools	127
CHAPTER 9 Examinations	134
CHAPTER 10 Teacher Education	138
CHAPTER 11 Technical and Vocational Education ..	151
CHAPTER 12 Higher Education	159
CHAPTER 13 Adult Education	174
CHAPTER 14 Politics, Bureaucracy and Totalitarianism in Education	180
SECTION IV—<i>Epilogue</i>	
CHAPTER 15 Achievement and Failure.. ..	199
APPENDICES	
1. Commissions and Committees on Education ..	205
2. Educational Legislation	207
3. Glossary of Terms	208
INDEX	210

PREFACE

THE direction and the pace of educational development in a country are determined by a constellation of forces, individual and social, interacting on one another. This book represents an attempt to delineate these forces in the context of the recent educational history of Ceylon, especially in relation to the primary and the secondary levels of education; and, in order to add concreteness to the discussion, arguments have been stated wherever possible in the words of the chief policy makers, namely the Ministers of Education and the members of the legislature.

The year 1939 provides a convenient starting point for a review of educational developments in Ceylon immediately before and after Independence. It was the year in which the law of education was changed to take account of the new powers that had been transferred by the British government to the representatives of the people in terms of the Donoughmore Constitution of 1931. The legislation in relation to education took the form of the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939, and provides, along with the subsequent amendments to it, the substantive legal basis, notwithstanding its all too fragmentary nature, for the present educational system of Ceylon. The year 1939 has also the advantage that it does not date too far back from 1948, the year of Independence; moreover, the years 1939 to 1968 have the added attraction of providing, as numbers go, a round thirty year period, and as events go, a period of stirring change in relation to all levels of education.

Section I of the book describes the educational scene as at 1939. Section II deals with important facets of the long and arduous struggle against privilege and vested interests in education. Section III deals with certain other aspects of education or issues in education, and for considerations of space, some of them (adult education and technical education, for example) have been approached descriptively rather than critically. As it is proposed to consider the whole subject of university education at length in another publication, no more than a brief survey has been attempted here. Section IV attempts an assessment of achievement and failure in the field of education during the period under review.

In connection with the whole work, it is necessary to point out that two commitments underlie my approach to education and the assessments I make. I am deeply committed to the ideal of a system of education that guarantees a genuine equality of opportunity to all children irrespective of their ethnic origin, social and economic class, and religious or other affiliations. I am also deeply committed to the defence of the freedom of learning and thinking from the forces that seem determined to destroy this freedom by the exercise of an excessive control over the community of school and university teachers.

J. E. Jayasuriya

SECTION I

The Background

THE PROLOGUE

SECTION I

CHAPTER 1

THE EDUCATIONAL SCENE IN 1939

IN as much as the features which characterise the educational scene at a particular point of time are a product of the process of history, it is necessary to take a brief look back at a few important facets of the historical past.

The background to the school system

The British occupation of Ceylon required for its political stability and for the advancement of commercial interests a nucleus of native loyalists to be employed in the middle grades of the government service and commercial establishments. An education in English and Christianisation were considered to be the means of providing the essential intellectual and attitudinal preparation for such employment. The case for education in English and for Christianisation was compelling in its philosophy and promise of success, for it was the means of achieving not only the dominantly utilitarian objectives of British colonial policy but also the humanitarian objective, in British eyes, of civilising the native population by making it imbibe Western culture and embrace Christianity. In so far as Christianisation was concerned, the British government of the day found enthusiastic partners in the Christian missionary societies that had begun to function in Ceylon, as in the other colonies. In regard to education in English, some reservations were evident. The missionaries were sufficiently realistic to note that mass conversion was possible only through the languages of the people, firstly because of the inevitable difficulties that the masses would have in the mastery of an alien tongue, and secondly because teachers were not available in sufficient number to provide mass education in English. The greater part of the efforts of the missionaries was devoted to providing education in Sinhalese and Tamil, and making conversions to Christianity, but the missionaries also saw the advantage of establishing a few English schools for Christianising and educating in English children of the higher social classes. The educational efforts of the missionaries were encouraged and supported by the government, but the traditional Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim schools languished for want of such support. In course of time, the Protestant monopoly of government support was ended by the entry into the assisted

school system, first of all of the Roman Catholics, and later of the Buddhists and the Hindus through newly established non-traditional schools. Rivalries among Protestant denominational bodies had from the very beginning led to competitive activity among them in establishing schools through the different language media, and with the new additions to the scene of denominational education the competition was greatly accentuated. In response to local pressures, the government school system, too, expanded.

The dualities of the school system

The school system that had evolved over the years was characterised by two important dualities, the first duality being in respect of management and control, with the existence side by side of schools under the management of the government and schools under the management of denominational bodies and private individuals, and the second duality arising from the fact that the schools under all managements were divided on linguistic lines according to the extent to which English or the national languages were used as the media of instruction. These dualities encompassed inequalities in the distribution of money from the government for education, in the quality and quantity of educational facilities, and in opportunities for employment and for higher education. While there had been controversy on these matters for several decades, events came to a head during the quarter century beginning with the year 1939. As the issues involved are germane to almost the entirety of the period under review and are in that sense not peculiar to the educational scene in 1939, they are not dealt with here but discussed at length in the chapters entitled "Denominational Schools and the Government" and "Language in Education".

Classification of schools by management

From the point of view of the ownership of the schools and the measure of financial participation¹ by the government, the classification of schools was as follows:

<i>Management</i>	<i>No. of Schools</i>
Government	1,990
Buddhist	300

1. A. R. 1939. This is the source of most of the statistical data in this chapter. Other sources of data are indicated in the respective footnotes.

Hindu	102
Roman Catholic	636
Protestant	547
Muslim	—
	<hr/>
	3,575

The net cost to government of the denominational schools was as follows:

<i>Management</i>	<i>Net cost to Govt. (Rs.)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Buddhist	1,245,830	19.3
Hindu	357,221	5.5
Roman Catholic	2,623,157	40.7
Protestant	2,221,266	34.5
Muslim	—	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	6,447,474	100.0

The Christians, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, constituted 4.3 per cent. of the population, and yet obtained 75.2 per cent. of the government grant to denominational schools, while the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims constituting 95.7 per cent. of the population obtained only 24.8 per cent. of the government grant.

The government treated its own schools much less generously than it treated the assisted denominational schools. This is most clearly seen in regard to the number of pupils per teacher in vernacular schools. The total salary bill of teachers in vernacular schools, both government and assisted, was borne by the government. In government vernacular schools, the number of pupils per teacher was 43, while in assisted schools the number of pupils per teacher was 35. In the case of English schools and bilingual schools, there were fewer pupils per teacher in assisted schools than in government schools. In both assisted English schools and assisted bilingual schools, the proprietors met part of the salary bill, and the argument sometimes urged to explain the favourable teacher position in assisted schools was that the proprietors had been generous enough to employ an adequate number of teachers. This argument could not apply to vernacular schools, as the total salary bill of teachers in respect of both

government and assisted schools was met by the government. It was here that incontrovertible evidence was available regarding the favoured treatment which the government gave assisted schools to the detriment of its own schools.

In the years beginning with 1939 public attention began to be focussed more and more on these and other inequalities of the denominational system; the issue of religious instruction in denominational schools also came to the forefront, and a reform of the system had to come sooner or later.

Classification of schools by language medium

The classification of schools according to the extent to which English or one of the national languages was used as the medium of instruction was as follows:

English schools.

Bilingual schools.

Vernacular schools.

Admission to English schools was possible at the lower Kindergarten stage in the case of children who had sufficient mastery over oral English at the time of admission to be able to follow instruction in English. There was also an alternative path of entry available to children who did not have this facility. Such children could complete four years of education in the mother tongue in a bilingual school or a vernacular school, and then seek admission to an English school for a special two year course of intensive English (along with some minimum attention to other subjects), after which they would receive all their instruction in English, joining at this stage those coming up through the English medium Kindergarten. Pupils in English schools sought to complete their education by passing the Cambridge Senior or the London Matriculation examination, but in a few schools the weaker pupils attempted the local Senior School Certificate examination. All English schools were fee-levying. The total number of English schools in 1939 was 336 and the number of pupils attending them was 80,381.

Bilingual schools were generally of two types, namely English—Sinhalese or English—Tamil. Sinhalese or Tamil was the only medium of instruction for the first four or five years of school, but

thereafter English was used increasingly as a medium until about the ninth year at school when English became the medium for all subjects other than Sinhalese language and Tamil language. Generally, the pupils in bilingual schools sat for the Senior School Certificate examination (English medium) at the end of their school course. The total number of bilingual schools in 1939 was 74 and the number of pupils attending them was 18,517. It was a category of schools that was losing in popularity and dying out.

Vernacular schools provided instruction entirely in Sinhalese or Tamil. Education was gratuitous. A handful of schools provided English as an optional school subject, but a special fee was charged for it. Pupils in vernacular schools sat for the Senior School Certificate examination in Sinhalese or Tamil at the end of the school course. The total number of vernacular schools in 1939 was 4701, and the number of pupils attending them was 675,281.

The levy of school fees in English schools while vernacular schools provided free education ensured that English education would be the preserve of the economically privileged. Admission was determined largely by social selection, although accessibility also played a role in the sense that a parent with a modest amount of money would send his child to an English school if there was one within a reasonable distance of his home. If none was available he would patronise a vernacular school, whereas the more affluent parents would not find geographical location or distance a barrier. The government for its part favoured English schools as against bilingual schools and vernacular schools. The number of pupils per teacher was in the twenties for English schools, thirties for bilingual schools, and forties for vernacular schools. The net expenditure by government per pupil was Rs. 36.36 a year in respect of English schools, Rs. 25.08 a year in respect of bilingual schools, and Rs. 18.70 a year in respect of vernacular schools. The percentage of the school going population in each category of school was as follows: English schools 10.5 per cent, bilingual schools 2.6 per cent, and vernacular schools 86.9 per cent. Clearly, education in English schools was heavily subsidised by the government, and there was grave discrimination against the majority of children in the apportionment of public funds for education. The differential opportunities associated with the language medium, for higher education as well as for employ-

ment, added to the iniquity of the system. Justice and fair play to the masses demanded change, and these changes were to come more or less at a snail's pace obstructed all along the way by those who found their privileged position threatened by the changes.

Classification of schools by educational level

The classification of schools according to the level of education provided in them was as follows:

- Primary schools.
- Junior secondary schools.
- Senior secondary schools.
- Collegiate schools.

Primary schools provided a six year course of instruction, from the Kindergarten to Standard V; Junior secondary schools provided a nine or ten year course of instruction from the Kindergarten leading to the local Junior School Certificate examination; Senior secondary schools provided an eleven year or twelve year course of instruction, leading up to either the Cambridge Senior examination or the London Matriculation examination in the case of English medium schools; the local Senior School Certificate (English medium) examination in the case of bilingual schools; and the local Senior School Certificate (Sinhalese or Tamil medium) examination in the case of Sinhalese and Tamil medium schools.

Collegiate schools were all English medium schools, with separately organised primary departments, and they led up to the Cambridge Senior examination or the London Matriculation examination with facilities for the study of science subjects.

The curriculum and the products of the schools

The subjects taught in the primary school were: language, number, nature study, art, handwork, singing and dancing, physical exercises, and religion (in some schools only). The children in the top classes of the primary school were taught history and geography also. A guide to the teaching of these subjects was provided in the form of a Scheme of Studies issued by the Education Department.

At the post-primary level, the curriculum in the Sinhalese and the Tamil schools was as follows: language and literature, arithmetic, art, history, physical exercises and needlework (for girls); a few schools had provision for religion, geography, hygiene and physiology, ele-

mentary or rural science, and English. The average English school also provided the same curriculum with English as the medium of instruction. A few of the bigger English schools had provision for physics, chemistry, mathematics and additional languages (such as Sinhalese, Tamil, Pali, Latin, Greek and French).

Although the total number of schools in Ceylon in the year 1939 was about 3575, the prestigious schools of the day were about 35 in number. One of them was a government school established in 1836; most of the other schools had been established between sixty years and a hundred years previously by Christian missionary organisations. They had all been intended to provide a "superior" education through the English medium, and in their early years they were headed by British clergymen who were the products of the famous Public Schools of England. The curriculum of the British Public Schools was introduced into the "superior" schools to the maximum extent to which it was reproducible outside England. The curriculum served to inculcate Christian and English ideals in the young people who went through it, and to prepare them for employment under the British in government and commercial establishments. The event that gave this curriculum the stamp of permanence was the decision to invite the appropriate examining bodies in England to conduct in Ceylon the Cambridge Senior examination and the London Matriculation examination, and to prepare students in the prestigious Ceylon schools for them. These were the examinations popularly taken by English Public School students towards the end of their course of study at school, and they emphasised literary and academic studies focussed on the requirements considered necessary for the pursuit of university studies in Britain. The best schools in Ceylon were geared to the preparation of students for these examinations, and did achieve some results. The intellectual horizons of a limited number were undoubtedly broadened by the exotic fare, and some of those who went to Britain for university studies showed their mettle in competition with the best products of the British Public School system. Others merely acquired the veneer of a superficial acquaintance with the English language and the culture of English, but the veneer was sufficiently in demand to qualify them for middle grade employment under the British in Ceylon. The mass of schools for the most part set their sights on the curriculum of the prestigious schools, but their resources were so limited as to permit its adoption

only in a greatly adulterated form that provided no intellectual stimulation at all while being at the same time socially irrelevant. The seal was thus set on the separation of education from life, and the only saving grace was that the basic literacy which the curriculum provided was of some value. A few from among these ranks emerged as a Sinhalese educated or a Tamil educated elite, socially inferior to the English educated elite and with fewer opportunities for economic mobility, generally holding appointments as Sinhalese and Tamil teachers, or practising Eastern systems of medicine. Their mastery of the national languages and familiarity with the ethos of the nation gave them an effective capacity to alert mass opinion on public issues, and they turned out to be a powerful political force.

When the British introduced the curriculum of their Public Schools, and the Cambridge Senior and the London Matriculation examinations into Ceylon, they no doubt did so with the best of intentions and in the belief that they were conferring a choice blessing on Ceylon. Later, the British themselves were quite conscience-stricken by their appraisals of the results of the system so hopefully introduced by them. One of His Majesty's Inspectors, Mr. J. J. R. Bridge, sent from England to review the state of education in Ceylon, admitted that he was led irresistibly to the conclusion that the education system, being "based on the needs and potentialities of less than one-fifth of its pupils and seeking to deal with the remaining four-fifths in identically the same way is, as it might be expected to be, a failure and does full justice to neither element".¹ In other words, the exposure of one hundred per cent of the school going population of Ceylon to a course geared to the requirements of the Cambridge Senior and the London Matriculation examinations attempted in Britain by not more than twenty per cent of the school population there was doomed to failure. Bridge lamented the inevitable fact that the system failed "signally for the many" and succeeded "partially for most of the few", and called for a diversity that would meet the needs of the many. Some years later, the Right Honourable W. G. A. Ormsby Gore, Member of the British Parliament and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, touring the British colonial empire in the East and assessing the proud achievements of British rule in these areas, makes an agonised confession²

1. Secondary English Schools in Ceylon. S.P. XX1 of 1912. pp. 21, 23.

2. Report by the Right Honourable W.G.A. Ormsby Gore, M.P. on his visit to Malaya, Ceylon and Java during the year 1928. London, 1928. pp. 97, 98.

of the "denationalizing, de-ruralizing, and intellectually and socially cramping results of the system of education" and the tyranny of "an external and distant written examination wholly out of touch with the needs, traditions, mental gifts, and aptitudes of the people", and condemns in no uncertain terms the "anglicizing and denationalizing tendencies of academic or clerical education in the Colonial schools". All honour to Bridge and Ormsby Gore for their confession that what was intended to be Britain's priceless gift to Ceylon had turned out to be Britain's shame and Ceylon's disaster. In a sense, neither Bridge nor Ormsby Gore was saying anything quite new or profound. They were only stating the obvious, but the fact that they were from England not only clothed them with authority but also rendered them immune from the charge of extremist nationalism that was usually levelled against any Ceylonese who dared to be critical of the gifts of imperial England, and they served cumulatively to create a climate of opinion in which the diversification of education could become a live issue for discussion, though not for implementation.

Teachers and Teacher Education

The number of teachers employed in the schools in 1939 was 21,570. Considering their academic and/or professional preparation, they fell into four broad categories, namely:

- I. Teachers with a university degree with or without professional training.
- II. Teachers who had undergone a two or three year course of training in teacher training colleges; and teachers with their London Intermediate qualification in Arts or Science.
- III. Teachers who had obtained a general teaching certificate by passing an external examination; and teachers who had obtained a special teaching certificate in subjects like Art and Music.
- IV. Teachers who had passed no higher examination than the London Matriculation examination or the Cambridge Senior examination or the Senior School Certificate examination.

Only categories I and II can be considered as having had a reasonably high academic knowledge and/or professional preparation. Category III consisted of those who had originally belonged to category IV and had gained a little experience and also shown interest and ability to improve their academic knowledge to a very limited extent and also to acquire some minimum acquaintance with the principles of pedagogy. Category IV, with its minimal academic knowledge and no professional background at all, would have served no useful educational function, but for a few persons of promise and ability among them. The percentage distribution of these categories of teachers in the schools was as follows in 1939:

		<i>English schools</i>	<i>Bilingual schools</i>	<i>Vernacular schools</i>	<i>All schools</i>
Category	I.	15.5	3.3	—	2.8
	II.	31.0	40.7	30.3	30.7
	III.	24.4	38.9	53.3	47.8
	IV.	29.1	17.1	16.4	18.7
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The picture was by no means heartening, and its improvement should have been one of the foremost priorities in education.

In 1939, the following teacher training institutions existed:

English Training Colleges	1
Sinhalese and Tamil Training Schools	..	19
Rural Training Centres	2

The English Training College was a government institution and it was popularly known as the Government Training College. It was the only institution which prepared teachers for English schools, but it also had a section which prepared teachers for Sinhalese schools. The Sinhalese and the Tamil Training Schools were managed by denominational bodies. They prepared teachers for Sinhalese and Tamil schools. Ten Training Schools prepared Tamil teachers, and nine Training Schools prepared Sinhalese teachers. The Rural Training Centres had been established to prepare teachers for rural scheme schools. These centres were government institutions. Admission to all the teacher training institutions was generally on the

basis of a written examination and/or interview, and admission was open to persons who had passed the London Matriculation examination or the Cambridge Senior examination or the Senior School Certificate examination. No facilities at all existed for giving a professional training to university graduates.

Examinations

The examinations held at the school level or the school leaving level belonged to two categories, namely local and foreign. The local examinations were those conducted by the Education Department on syllabuses issued by the Department. The foreign examinations were those conducted by the Cambridge University Examinations Syndicate and the London University, based on syllabuses issued by them.

Local examinations were held in the English medium or the Sinhalese and the Tamil media. The Junior School Certificate examination was intended for students, generally of the age of 14+ or 15+, who had completed nine years of schooling. The examinations in the Sinhalese and the Tamil media had the same syllabus, while the examination in the English medium was on a different syllabus. This was the case with the Senior School Certificate examination also, which was generally taken after eleven years of schooling. A Senior Domestic Science examination was available only in the English medium for girls who had specialised in Domestic Science.

The foreign examinations at the school leaving level were (i) the London Matriculation examination and (ii) the Cambridge Senior examination. They were conducted in the English medium and were generally taken after eleven years of schooling. The London Matriculation examination was more popular than the Cambridge Senior examination. The entries in 1939 for the two examinations were 4260 and 421 respectively.

At the tertiary level, the examinations taken by students were those of the University of London. The Intermediate Examinations in Arts, Science, Science (Economics), Laws, Commerce, and Engineering were generally taken after a year's post-Matriculation studies; successful candidates sat two or three years later for the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science (Economics), Bachelor of Commerce, and Bachelor of Laws examinations. Facilities did

not exist in 1939 for taking up the Bachelor of Science (Engineering) examination in Ceylon. Ceylon students also sat for the First Examination in Medicine of the University of London which was held in Ceylon, but the rest of their course was based on local examinations leading to the Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery. The examinations at the post-graduate level were the Master of Arts and the Master of Science examinations of the University of London. Preparation for London University examinations was either by private study or by attendance at the Ceylon University College, which had been set up as an institution for the preparation of students for the post-Matriculation examinations of the University of London in Arts, Science, and Science (Economics). The Ceylon Technical College prepared candidates for the Intermediate examination in Engineering of the University of London. It also prepared candidates for the examinations of the City and Guilds Institute of London, and the London Chamber of Commerce.

Educational finance—school level

Until the year 1925, financial assistance to assisted schools from the government took the form of a grant in respect of attendance and results, but thereafter the system was changed to a salary grant. In the case of assisted vernacular schools (which were non-fee-levying, as indeed all vernacular schools were), the government met the total salary cost of the teaching staff to which the school was entitled by the attendance of its pupils; in the case of assisted English schools and assisted bilingual schools (which were all fee-levying), the government met about fifty per cent of the total salary cost of the teaching staff to which the school was entitled by the attendance of its pupils, the capacity to employ teachers with high qualifications being dependent on the resources of the management to supplement the salary grant and make up the total salary payable. In the case of government schools, all expenses were met by the government. The expenditure on education in 1939 constituted nearly 16 per cent of the total government expenditure for the year.

Technical and vocational education

The Ceylon Technical College had 1233 students on roll in 1939 and was organised in four departments of study as follows:

Engineering Department: Courses in mechanical engineering, municipal engineering, electrical engineering, structural engin-

earing, surveying and levelling, building construction, workshop practice, motor mechanism, radio communication, and a few other subjects.

Commercial Department: Courses in general commercial subjects, salesmanship, and stenography.

Art Department: Courses in drawing and painting.

Industries Department: Courses in printing, weaving, pottery and lacquer work.

The courses provided were generally at the technician level, except in engineering in which a higher level training leading part of the way to the rank of an engineer was available.

In 1939, there were 93 full-time industrial schools, of which 64 were run by the government, and 29 by various bodies, usually denominational, with assistance from the government. The total number of pupils in them was 2802. These industrial schools were generally conducted on a profit-sharing principle, and pupils received a share of the money realised from the sale of articles. The pupils for the schools were usually drawn from those who had had some general education and were interested in receiving a vocational training. The courses were of two or three years' duration. The most popular subjects were carpentry, spinning and weaving, printing and book-binding, tailoring, and metal work. Other subjects that were taught were: rattan work, leather work, pottery, coir work, basket-weaving, dress-making, embroidery, lace-making and knitting. The hours of work in certain industrial schools enabled pupils in the ordinary schools to attend the afternoon sessions. Such interest often qualified pupils for enrolment as full-time students later. The cost to the government of the industrial schools was quite high, being Rs. 43/- per pupil in 1939, and this was one of the reasons which led to the decline of the industrial school system in the next few years in spite of the great potential it had for development. In his Administration Report for 1939, the Director of Education stated that a proposal to transfer some of the industrial schools from the Education Department to the Department of Commerce and Industries was under consideration by the State Council.

Higher education—the Ceylon University College

The Ceylon University College was established in 1921 for the purpose of providing facilities for higher education to students in Ceylon by preparing them externally for the Intermediate and the Final (Bachelor's) degree examinations of the University of London. Admission to the Ceylon University College was open to all applicants who had fulfilled the Matriculation requirements of the University of London, by passing either the London Matriculation examination or the Cambridge Senior examination. In the latter case, a certain combination of subjects had to be taken to fulfil Matriculation requirements. The course for the Intermediate examination was of one year's duration, and successful candidates had to pursue a further two or three year course to obtain the Bachelor's degree. As at 1939, the Ceylon University College had the following departments of study: English; Oriental languages (Pali, Sanskrit, Sinhalese and Tamil); Western classical languages (Latin and Greek); History; Economics; Geography; Mathematics; Chemistry; Physics; Botany; and Zoology.

Adult education

The provision for adult education as at 1939 was meagre, and consisted of 22 night schools and 271 adult classes. The night schools were managed by private individuals or by denominational bodies and received a grant from the government. They were all located in urban areas and were mainly patronised by persons who wished to improve their knowledge of and qualifications in English with a view to improving their prospects of employment. The adult classes were generally in rural areas. The Director of Education, Mr. L. Mc. D. Robison, wrote about them as follows in 1939: "The courses in these classes are designed to promote the development of rural areas in which they are situated. But English continues to be the great attraction".¹ Apart from the above facilities provided with the support of the Education Department, the Agricultural Department and the Medical Department also showed interest in organising activities pertaining to their special areas. On the whole, however, very little worthy of attention was taking place in the field of adult education as at 1939.

1. A. R. 1939 (Mr. L. Mc. D. Robison.) p. A 14.

The legal basis of education

A Royal Commission under the chairmanship of the Earl of Donoughmore visited Ceylon in 1927 to report on the working of the Constitution which obtained at the time, and to make proposals for the revision of the Constitution in the light of the criticisms that were being made against it. The Donoughmore Commissioners recommended a Constitution that would "transfer to the elected representatives of the people complete control over the internal affairs of the island, subject only to provisions which will ensure that they are helped by the advice of experienced officials and to the exercise by the Governor of certain safeguarding powers".¹ The existing Executive Council and Legislative Council were to give way to a State Council, possessing both legislative and executive functions. The State Council was to divide itself into seven Executive Committees, each of which would elect its Chairman, and these Chairmen together with three officials, namely the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Legal Secretary (owing their appointments to the Colonial office in London) would form a Board of Ministers. The three officials, or Officers of State as they were called, had no voting rights in the State Council and in the Board of Ministers. The Constitution was put into effect by an Order in Council in 1931, and the first elections to the State Council were held the same year.

Education was one of the subjects entrusted to the State Council by article 32 of the Order in Council and, under article 34 (1) of the Order in Council, the State Council at its very inception entrusted this subject to the Executive Committee of Education. The Chairman of this Committee was called the Minister of Education and the first holder of this office was Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara.

The law relating to education consisted of the Education Ordinance No. 1 of 1920. By its provisions, the Director of Education (the chief executive officer for education) was responsible to the Board of Education consisting of certain officials and non-officials nominated by the Governor, with the Director of Education as the Chairman. The Ordinance had to be changed in the light of the provisions of the new Constitution which created the Executive Committee of Education and entrusted to it the responsibility for education.

1. Ceylon. Report of the Special Commission on the Constitution. Colombo, 1928. p. 149.

Clearly, the rights and functions of the Board of Education as provided in the Ordinance of 1920 were quite incompatible with the transfer of responsibility to the Executive Committee by the Donoughmore Constitution, and this situation had to be remedied by converting the Board of Education to an advisory body and assigning policy and regulation making functions to the Executive Committee. The standpoint of the Board of Education, with its predominantly Christian composition, on important issues had been reactionary. The refusal of support for Pirivena education¹, opposition to the introduction of Sinhalese as a subject in English schools on the ground that Buddhism would be taught in an indirect way² were part of the melancholy record of the Board of Education. No sooner than the Executive Committee for Education began to function, a draft Bill taking account of the new situation was prepared, and sent to the Legal Draftsman in July 1932. For seven long years an intolerable situation existed, with responsibility for education torn between the Board of Education jealous of its rights under the existing Ordinance, and the Executive Committee for Education, responsible for getting money voted for education, answerable also to the people of the country for the state of education and yet with no legal standing in the Ordinance governing education. It is a measure of the stranglehold that vested interests exercised over the body politic that this state of affairs was allowed to continue without correction in spite of all the efforts of the Minister of Education and some of his Executive Committee to set it right. The rationale underlying the opposition to the transfer of power took the following form—the composition of the Board of Education was largely representative of denominational (mainly Catholic—Christian) interests; the Executive Committee, on the other hand, being representative of the people might in cooperation with them espouse other interests. The fact that no regulation made by the Executive Committee could have validity until it had been approved by the State Council and ratified by the Governor should have been an adequate safeguard and should have allayed fears, but it did not, for there was suspicion of the State Council itself and indeed of the whole concept of popular representation. In the final analysis, the fears were of the operation of democratic processes, and though their irrationality was obvious, they were expressed by powerful vested interests which had to be placated.

1. Mr. B. H. Aluwihare. H(SC). 27 October 1938. p. 3620.

2. Mr. R. S. S. Gunewardena. H (SC). 28 October 1938. p. 3659.

When the Bill was presented in the State Council in 1938 and came up for discussion, an attempt (defeated by 33 votes to 13) was made to postpone discussion for six months, in spite of the fact that at the very beginning of the discussion the Minister made the following declaration at the request of the Executive Committee: "This Ordinance is not designed to give effect to any policy aimed against denominational schools".¹ In truth, the declaration, as also its subsequent inclusion in the Ordinance itself, was unnecessary. An analysis of the Ordinance shows that its provisions were innocuous, but certain elements had to be placated. The enjoyment of unjustified privilege exacts its own price in the form of hallucinations of catastrophe and persecution at the slightest indication of justice to the deprived. The debate on the Bill took several months and was at last passed in 1939.

The Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 has the following long title "An Ordinance to make better provision for education and to revise and consolidate the law relating to education", all the significant words in the title having been copied from the Education Ordinance of 1920. The Ordinance is divided into the following major divisions, called Parts.

- | | | |
|------|------|---|
| Part | I. | Central Authority. |
| Part | II. | Advisory Bodies and Committees, Central and Local. |
| Part | III. | Constitution, powers and duties of Urban and Rural Educational Authorities. |
| Part | IV. | Religion in schools and Managers. |
| Part | V. | Powers of Executive Committee to make Regulations. |
| Part | VI. | Estate Schools. |
| Part | VII. | General. |

The different parts of the Ordinance were to come into operation on dates to be specified by the Governor. As a matter of fact, Part III has never been proclaimed.

Part I gives legal status to the Department of Education as the central authority for education, and provides for the discharge by the Department (through its chief executive the Director of Education

1. Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 26 October 1938. p. 3590.

and the other officers) of the provisions of the Ordinance subject to the general direction and control of the Executive Committee of Education. A conspicuous defect in this Part, as well as in the entire Ordinance, is that notwithstanding the promise in the short title "to make better provision for education", no one is charged with the responsibility for providing schools in sufficient number to meet the needs of children of school going age, save in the event of there being a proclamation in terms of Part III of the Ordinance that a specified Municipal Council or Urban Council or Village Committee should supply the educational needs of its local area. For the latter condition to take effect, Part III of the Ordinance had first to be proclaimed by the Governor and thereafter the Governor could in his discretion make a proclamation in respect of any specified Municipal Council or Urban Council or Village Committee. As Part III was never proclaimed, the situation in law was that it was no one's responsibility to provide education. Quite in contrast to the absence of a legal requirement to provide education, Part I included a section which empowered the Director, with the approval of the Executive Committee, to reduce, in the event of financial stringency, the grants to which assisted schools would have been entitled in terms of the Code of Regulations for Assisted schools. This section was in effect a sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of assisted schools. Such a potentially restrictive clause should not have found a place in an Ordinance to make better provision for education. Fortunately it has never been called into use.

Part II provides for a Board of Education to be established to give advice to the Director, and for local advisory committees to be established in different areas, both urban and rural.

Part III making provision for setting up local education authorities was never proclaimed and remained a dead letter. Perhaps, the inclusion of this Part, with no intention on the part of the Minister to have it proclaimed, was a strategical move to appease vociferous elements (led by European nominated members of the State Council) which were expressing concern at the increase in educational expenditure and the burdens on the rich consequent upon it. No doubt they breathed sighs of relief at the prospect that at some future date local authorities might bear part of the cost of education and so reduce the financial commitment on the part of the Central government.

Part IV is entitled "Religion in schools and Managers". The place of religious instruction in schools was one of the most controversial issues in the entire Ordinance. The provisions of this Part are considered in detail in the chapter entitled "Religion in Schools" in the present book and the reader is referred to it.

Part V entitled "Power of Executive Committee to make Regulations" lists the matters in respect of which the Executive Committee can make regulations. In order that a regulation could have effect it had to be approved by the State Council, ratified by the Governor, and published in the Government Gazette. It is important to note that one of the matters in respect of which the Executive Committee could make regulations was that of requiring compulsory attendance at school. The Executive Committee failed to make any regulation in this regard, and successive governments also failed to make good this omission. Regulations and by-laws made under previous Ordinances, however, remain valid in the absence of any regulation made under the present Ordinance. In relation to compulsory attendance, the by-laws made under previous Ordinances varied from area to area and some are not even traceable. In this sense, there is as yet no uniform legislation in Ceylon specifying the age limits for compulsory attendance at school. Children on estates constitute an exception. In their case, Section 30 of the present Ordinance laid down certain age limits which were later modified by Section 38 of Ordinance No. 26 of 1947.

Part VI deals with Estate schools. One chapter of the present book is devoted to Estate schools, and the reader is referred to it for a full discussion.

Part VII entitled "General" deals with a number of miscellaneous matters, such as the conditions for opening new schools, powers of school inspection, penalties for non-attendance at school, and the acquisition of private land by the government for educational purposes.

SECTION II

The Struggle against Privilege

CHAPTER 2

THE FREE EDUCATION SCHEME

THE position as at 1939 was that education in Sinhalese schools and Tamil schools, both government and assisted, was entirely free, while school fees were payable in English schools and bilingual schools, both government and assisted. In other words, the language of instruction determined whether fees were payable or not, and whether the government or the private sector provided the schools was not a material factor. The total number of free schools was 4701 with 675,281 pupils, and the number of fee levying schools was 410 with 98,898 pupils.¹ In the case of government schools, the total expenditure (less the fees collected in the English and the bilingual schools) was a charge on the government revenue. In the case of assisted vernacular schools, the entire salary bill of the teachers was met by the government, while in the case of assisted English schools the government met nearly 50% of the salary bill of the teachers, leaving it to the proprietors of the schools to meet out of school fees the balance salary as well as the money necessary for maintaining the buildings in good repair.

From the standpoint of the pupils in the schools, the situation was that if they attended English or bilingual schools, government or assisted, school fees were payable, but if they attended vernacular schools education was free. The Kannangara Committee, considering that English schools, which provided courses of study leading to the best opportunities of employment and higher education, were fee-levying and therefore patronised only by the well-to-do, recommended that in order to make equality of educational opportunity a reality, education should be made free in all schools. It also recommended that education should be free in the institutions of tertiary education as well.² In making these recommendations the Committee was no doubt influenced as much by their intrinsic appeal as measures of social justice to the masses as by the fact that in certain other parts of the world moves were afoot to make education at the school level free. The boldness of the Committee was specially to

1. A.R. 1939. p. A 11.

2. Report of the Special Committee on Education, Ceylon. S.P. XXIV of 1943. p. 77.

be commended for extending the principle of free education to its logical conclusion to embrace the entire field of education inclusive of the University.

Among the proposals placed before the State Council in 1944, three were specifically intended to implement the above recommendations. They were worded as follows¹:—

1. In assisted or state primary and post-primary schools and Training Colleges, in the state technical, agricultural and trade schools and in the University no tuition fees shall be levied.

2. The full salaries, according to prescribed scales, of teachers constituting the “eligible” staff of assisted primary and post-primary schools and Training Colleges shall be met from public funds.

3. An equipment grant shall be paid annually to assisted schools at prescribed rates provided that equipment so procured remains the property of the state and provided that no fees, other than games fees, towards the cost of providing equipment shall be charged in assisted schools from pupils therein.

Mr. H. J. Huxham, the Financial Secretary, who held office in Ceylon by virtue of an appointment made by the British government, expressed the view that the proposals of the Executive Committee involved “expenditure on a scale which this government cannot possibly afford”.² The Board of Ministers claimed that it was only placing the proposals “to promote discussion” and that financial implications were “so considerable and uncertain that the Board must retain the right to consider these implications in detail and must not be regarded as committed either in respect of the extent or the date of the implementation of any recommendation approved by the Council, which must depend on the financial position of the country from time to time”.³

The Minister of Education in urging the acceptance of the proposals pointed out that “the affluent, the rich, the influential, those that can afford to pay attend one kind of school imparting the higher

1. H. (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 838.

2. H. (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 841.

3. H. (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 840.

education which is given in a foreign tongue".¹ Although it has to be paid for, it is worth the price because the official language of the country is English and "no one without a knowledge of English can fill any high post".¹ Vernacular education, which was the only kind of education open to the poor man, led even the most gifted child no higher than to the comparatively unremunerative posts of a vernacular teacher, an ayurvedic physician or a notary. Free education at all levels was the panacea and if the scheme is accepted "we shall be able to say that we found education.....the patrimony of the rich and left it the inheritance of the poor".² A group of wealthy and prominent citizens in the country, among them four Knights Bachelor, who had submitted to the Board of Ministers a memorandum to the effect that the proposals be deferred on the ground that, if the recommendations were adopted even in principle, they "would materially affect not only our education system but also our entire social and economic organisation in the Island" received devastating treatment at the hands of the Minister in his speech.³

The idea of free education from the Kindergarten to the University had such an emotional appeal to the enfranchised masses that it became a slogan with them. For any political personality to oppose free education was to commit political suicide, and none dared to take the risk. The opposition to free education took a subtle form. Attempts were made from time to time to get adjournments and to postpone discussion, with the result that the debate lasted over an year. The most powerful political personality of the time, and the Leader of the State Council, Mr. D. S. Senanayake, not only associated himself with attempts at postponement, but was also cryptical in his support. In the concluding stages of the debate, he said, ".....it is clear that secondary education is not going to be free to every child, that it is to be free only for that limited section of the population, for those considered suitable—the 5 per cent.let no one claim free education from the Kindergarten to the University. I say that that is not true. These proposals may provide for free education upto the age of 11+, and education of certain children after that age may also be provided free, but it would be free only to a selected few.....",⁴ only to receive a few days later from the Minis-

1. Dr. C.W.W. Kannangara. H(SC). 30 May 1944. p. 847.

2. Dr. C.W.W. Kannangara. H(SC). 30 May 1944. p. 946.

3. Dr. C.W.W. Kannangara. H(SC), 30 May 1944. p. 850.

4. H(SC). 1 June 1945. col. 2811.

ter the taunt: "He is now an expert in the best Ministerial style of concealing his thoughts in his words".¹ Another line of opposition to free education was to say that the strict enforcement of free compulsory primary education was the first priority and that until it was achieved it was premature to speak of free education beyond that stage. A third line of argument was that the free education scheme would cause a delay in the extension of educational facilities to certain areas, namely the Eastern, Uva, North Western, North Central, and Sabaragamuwa provinces and parts of the Southern and the Central provinces, and that the needs of these areas should be first supplied². A fourth argument was that the rate of equipment grant proposed to be paid to assisted schools under the free education scheme was inadequate. Amendments to the effect that the grants be increased were moved by Mr. G. A. H. Wille and Mr. G. C. S. Corea, but they were defeated³. A fifth argument, urged at first to complicate issues, was later taken up enthusiastically by others of a genuine socialistic frame of mind. This was to the effect that children from poor homes would not be able to take advantage of free education unless other necessary amenities were provided. An amendment by Mr. J. R. Jayewardene that attendance at school be compelled "provided free books and necessary clothes are supplied by the state", and an amendment by Mr. W. Dahanayake that "all pupils shall be provided with a free mid day meal on a balanced diet, and in case of malnutrition all other meals shall be the concern of the state" were both passed.⁴

Two amendments seeking to allow assisted schools which so desired to continue under the scheme of receiving grants in aid while being fee-levying were defeated.⁵ The free education scheme accepted by the State Council consisted of the three recommendations listed earlier in this chapter. One of the original recommendations, however, was that unaided schools should be permitted to exist provided that they give "adequate and suitable instruction", and it was accepted⁶. They could, of course, levy fees, as they stood outside the free scheme.

1. Dr. C.W.W. Kannangara. H (SC). 5 June 1945. col. 2874.

2. An amendment to this effect moved by Mr. B.H. Aluwihare was defeated. H (SC). 6 June 1945. col. 2970.

3. H (SC). 6 June 1945. col. 2971.

4. H (SC). 6 June 1945. col. 2992.

5. H (SC). 6 June 1945. cols. 2967, 2969

6. H (SC). 6 June 1945. col. 2929.

The acceptance of the free education scheme was a great victory for the Minister, but it had to be implemented. It is the claim of the Minister¹ that he took advantage of the absence from Ceylon of Mr. D. S. Senanayake during the period July to October 1945 to get the approval of the Board of Ministers and the State Council to the necessary regulations framed under section 32 of the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939. The regulations known as the School Grants (Revised Conditions) Regulations, were approved by the Board of Ministers and placed before the State Council on 24th August 1945. The effect of the regulations was to enable the managers of assisted schools to enter the free scheme with effect from 1st October 1945, or 1st October 1946, or 1st October 1947, or 1st October 1948. As from the date on which a school entered the free scheme, it should levy no fee other than a games fee not exceeding Rs. 6/- a year from each pupil. The government for its part would meet the total salary cost of the eligible teachers of the school and pay a maintenance and equipment grant at specified rates. Assisted schools which did not come into the scheme were to receive grants in aid on the old basis until 30th September 1948, after which all aid would cease.

In a belated but estimable concern for the principle of equality of opportunity, the Secretary of State for the Colonies writing from Downing Street on 15th December 1945, when British rule in Ceylon was within sight of ending after 150 years of supremacy, was gracious enough to suggest that the principle be taken to its logical conclusion with the provision of "free books and stationery".²

The strangest of all tributes to the free education scheme was paid by one of its most inveterate opponents, Dr. W. I. Jennings, Vice Chancellor of the University of Ceylon. Writing to the Minister on 28th August 1946 within less than one year of the inauguration of the scheme, he said, "You may like to be informed that the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine has reported to me that this year's batch of new medical students is the best we have had. I would regard this as due to

No. 1. Free Education".³

1. Interview with Dr. C.W.W. Kannangara. See K.H.M. Sumathipala: *History of Education in Ceylon 1796-1965*. Colombo, 1968, p. 298.
2. Correspondence from the Secretary of State for the Colonies included in S. P. VII of 1946.
3. Dr. C.W.W. Kannangara. H (SC). 12 September 1946. col. 3587.

Dr. Jennings' conclusion had no basis in fact and an undoubted lack of reality about it, as the scheme could not bear fruit so soon. But his gesture did serve to establish peace between him and the Minister, and not long afterwards Dr. Jennings was made a Knight Bachelor by the King in recognition of his services, in connection with the framing of the Constitution of Ceylon, and in relation to education.

The moratorium given to assisted schools for entering the free education scheme was to cease after 30th September 1948 according to the School Grants (Revised Conditions) Regulations, 1945, and by 1st May of the same year schools had to communicate to the Director of Education whether they were entering the scheme or not. The new Minister of Education, Mr. E. A. Nugawela, reported to the House of Representatives on 6th July 1948 that while 203 assisted fee-levying schools had entered the free scheme since its inception and ceased to levy fees, 113 assisted schools, which were continuing to levy fees, desired an extension of the date for entering the free scheme. He supported their request as he was reviewing the rate of grant payable to schools in the free scheme for maintenance and equipment in the light of representations that had been made that the rates were insufficient. Schools which had not entered the scheme naturally desired to await his decision regarding the rate of grant before deciding whether to enter the scheme or not. He proposed to extend the deadline for entry from 1st October 1948 to 31st May 1950.

There was considerable opposition to the Minister's proposal. It was pointed out that that he was in effect proposing a concession to vested interests, and that while schools postponed a decision parents who sent their children to them had to remain in a state of suspense¹. It was also argued that a postponement was unfair by those schools which had co-operated with the government and entered the scheme². Mr. W. Dahanayake was particularly vehement in his opposition³. Drawing attention to the fact that the Minister himself had opposed⁴ in August 1945 the three year time limit which his predecessor allowed in the original regulation, Mr. Dahanayake said, ".....let there be no interference from denominational bodies

1. Dr. N. M. Perera. H (HR). 6 July 1948. col. 775.

2. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva. H (HR). 6 July 1948. col. 779; Mr. P. G. B. Keuneman. H (HR). 6 July 1948. col. 791.

3. H (HR). 6 July 1948. col. 797.

4. Mr. E. A. Nugawela. H (SC). 28 August 1945. col. 4265.

or from individuals, no matter how powerful they are and from any sort of sectional interest. . . . If I had the power, or if I had my own way, I would call in all the forces of atomic energy, Sir, to blow our system to bits, because the improvement and reform of our system has gone so far on compromises and concessions to the denominational bodies". Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam twitted the Minister for his concern for schools which had not entered the free scheme without giving his immediate attention to the problems of the schools which had entered the scheme.¹ In spite of the opposition, however, the Minister had his way and the concession was given.

The government's decision to extend the moratorium for entering the free education scheme was greatly resented by schools which had entered the scheme. In August 1949 it was brought to the notice of the House of Representatives² that in a town in which there were two rival denominational schools, the one which had entered the free education scheme incurred an annual loss of Rs. 25,000/- to Rs. 30,000/- while the other which was remaining outside the scheme suffered no such loss. In spite of this, however, the Minister proposed in April 1950³ that the moratorium which was due to end on 31st May 1950 be extended to 31st July 1950; again in July 1950⁴ that it be extended to 31st December 1950; yet again in December 1950⁵ that it be extended to 1st April 1951; and finally, an indefinite extension by the Education (Amendment) Act, No. 5 of 1951. The provisions of this Act, and the White Paper of 1950 which preceded it, merit careful study.

The Nugawela-Howes⁶ era, which dawned in 1950, was characterized, as the preceding paragraph would have indicated, by repeated concessions to the assisted denominational schools. The Education (Amendment) Act No. 5 of 1951 was its crowning achievement, and it was unparalleled in its bounty to the denominational school system. Schools could enter the free education scheme or opt out of it at any time in the future, subject to the concurrence of the Director of Education. This, however, was a minor concession, but the largesse

1. H (HR). 6 July 1948. col. 802.

2. Mr. C. Suntharalingam. H (HR). 10 August 1949. col. 1961.

3. Mr. E. A. Nugawela. H (HR). 4 April 1950. col. 2096.

4. Mr. E. A. Nugawela. H (HR). 28 July 1950. col. 1081.

5. Mr. E. A. Nugawela. H (HR). 7 December 1950. col. 818.

6. Dr. H. W. Howes became Director of Education with effect from 19 December 1949.

lay in the new equipment grants that were announced for schools entering the free scheme. Hitherto, a uniform grant of Rs. 5/- a year was payable in respect of each unit of average attendance in Standards or Grades VI to VIII. A maximum of Rs. 30/- became payable under the new Act, if certain conditions were satisfied. In the case of Standards or Grades above the eighth, the maximum of Rs. 15/- hitherto payable per year for each unit of average attendance was replaced by a new maximum of Rs. 85. None would cavil at this generosity, if it were not accompanied by the moves, detailed below, to strangle the free education scheme at its very roots.

The White Paper of 1950¹ aimed a number of well directed blows against the principle of free education. According to a Member of Parliament, Mr. W. A. de Silva, who had inside information about the working of the Education Department having acted in the capacity of Director of Education only sixteen months earlier, the "known fathers" of the White Paper were Mr. D. S. Senanayake (Prime Minister), the Permanent Secretary to the Minister of Education, and Dr. H. W. Howes (Director of Education)². As Leader of the State Council, Mr. D. S. Senanayake had expressed³ a cryptical viewpoint about free education. Quite unmistakably, that was the thinking underlying the White Paper of 1950 of which he was one of the accredited fathers. The Minister of Education was ready to admit⁴ that 85 per cent of the children especially in rural areas stop their education at the fifth Standard, and yet the White Paper envisaged a selection test at the age of 11+. On the results of this test, 75 per cent, presumably of the 15 per cent who wanted to proceed with their education, were to be admitted to a free junior secondary education while the rest could receive a free education in post-primary practical classes or a fee-paying education in assisted schools. Then, at the age of 14+, those in the junior secondary school came up against a further hurdle, the fitness test, on the results of which some will be offered places in senior secondary schools for free education, while others will be offered places in vocational schools for free education, and any of the latter category not satisfied with the allocation to vocational schools were at liberty to pay fees and pursue academic

1. Government Proposals for Educational Reform in Ceylon. Parliamentary Series No. 2. Colombo, 1950.

2. Mr. W. A. de Silva. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 304.

3. See page 25.

4. Mr. E. A. Nugawela. H (HR). 27 September 1950. col. 473.

studies in private schools or assisted schools. The net effect of the proposed selection, on the generous assumption of a 1:1 allocation between secondary schools and vocational schools, would have been to reduce the percentage receiving free education beyond the age of 14 years to not more than 5 per cent in line with the views expressed in 1945 by Mr. Senanayake. He had said quite categorically: "...let no one claim that they confer free education from the Kindergarten to the University"¹, and when the White Paper had in it the sentence "The policy of government in relation to free education remains unchanged", it implied no more than an endorsement of the Prime Minister's policy of restricting free education beyond the primary stage to a handful of selected pupils.

When the White Paper was discussed in the Parliament, it became clear that the trend of opinion was against the proposed selection at 11+, and the government decided to leave it out of the draft Bill. But many measures directed against the concept of free education in the form in which it had been sold to the masses, namely 'free education from the Kindergarten to the University' were contained in the Bill and the accompanying regulations. Pupils not certified at the eighth standard stage (age 14+) as being fit for secondary education could as their first alternative proceed to a senior class on payment of fees; if they did not do so, they could voluntarily take advantage of a "scheme of continued education with a practical bias" that would be provided for them. The details of the scheme were not announced anywhere, and it was clear that the government had not given careful thought to it. The upper limit for compulsory education which had been fixed at 16 years by the 1947 Ordinance was reduced to 14 years. Assisted schools providing free education had been permitted, by the 1945 regulations, to charge a games fee not exceeding Rs. 6/- per year per pupil. This ceiling was removed, and any fee could be charged as long as the Director approved the amount, having regard to the facilities and services provided. The liberal grants for maintenance and equipment proposed to be paid to the better equipped assisted English schools required so much money that very little was likely to remain for improving the standard of the mass of schools or for establishing new ones. Most harmful of all was the disclaiming of the responsibility on the part of the government to provide adequate facilities for the education of child-

1. H (SC). 1 June 1945. col. 2811.

ren even of the compulsory age range. This was achieved with great ingenuity by three amendments to the 1947 Ordinance. By the 1947 Ordinance, if an assisted school had no facilities for providing instruction through a particular language medium, it could refuse admission to a child who sought instruction through that medium. Immediately there was such a refusal it became the responsibility of the government to provide educational facilities. So, the power to refuse admission was removed by the draft Bill. A regulation made it obligatory for a school to provide instruction in a particular language if there were at least 25 pupils in all the classes entitled to ask for instruction in that language. If there were less, instruction to a Tamil pupil could be given in Sinhalese and instruction to a Sinhalese pupil in Tamil, if the parent agreed. By another section of the draft Bill, exemption for compulsory attendance could be claimed by a parent on a certificate issued by the Director that the Director is unable to procure the admission of the child into a school. The Minister completed the picture by asserting that the schools which children should attend would be nominated by him "whether they are of the same denomination as the child's parents or not, or whether the medium of instruction is the mother tongue of the child or not"¹. Finally, the section in the 1947 Ordinance which made grants payable by the government to new denominational schools only in respect of pupils of the same religion as the management was repealed, and a regulation was proposed that grant could be claimed in respect of the attendance at a new school by a pupil of an unlike denomination, if there was no school of the child's denomination within a specified distance of the said school. By this witches' brew of new sections in the Bill and of new regulations, the government neatly divested itself of the responsibility to provide education, and made it as attractive as possible for religious denominations to fill the void created by the government. Mr. Dahanayake's description of the Bill as "an unmitigated piece of class legislation"² was indeed very mild when the full import of the Bill is considered. In spite of the opposition to it, it was passed on 13th September 1951 by 48 votes to 25, and became law as the Education (Amendment) Act, No. 5 of 1951, undermining the very basis of free education in so far as education at the school level was concerned. The practical consequences of the Act and regulations accompanying it have not

1. Mr. E. A. Nugawela. H (HR). 12 December 1950. col. 972.

2. H (HR). 12 December 1950. col. 995.

been as damaging in some respects as they might have been expected to be, but this was because the provisions were not enforced in purposive fashion, the one person who would have had the resolve to ensure implementation having been removed from the political scene by his death. The dark hint which the White Paper carried about higher education did not come to fruition for the same reason. It had this statement: "Scholarships and bursaries will be provided by government at the University and other government institutions for higher education to a specified number in each subject, determined previously by the needs of national development"¹. Read in conjunction with Mr. Senanayake's categorical assertion ".....let no one claim that they confer free education from the Kindergarten to the University",² the statement in the White Paper was a clear indication that higher education would be free only for a limited number and not for all who are selected for admission.

While the legislation of 1951 constituted a threat to free education at the school level, and while the Ceylon University Ordinance No. 20 of 1942 had a proviso for the levy of fees (a proviso that was not put into effect after the principle of free education was accepted in 1945, but which continued to remain in the Ordinance), nothing of note took place during the years 1951 to 1965 to give the impression that free education had not come to stay. In August 1966, however, the Minister of Education, Mr. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolle, presented the Higher Education Bill in which there was a proviso giving universities the power "to demand and receive such fees as may from time be prescribed by Regulation". There was also a proviso giving the National Council of Higher Education power to regulate "the fees to be charged for courses of study". During the Standing Committee stage of the Bill, Dr. N. M. Perera moved that these provisos be deleted but the government insisted on retaining them. A division by name was taken on one of these motions, and among those who voted for the retention of the proviso were the Prime Minister (Mr. Dudley Senanayake) himself, the Minister of Education, and three other Ministers. Almost at the very end of the Standing Committee stage Dr. N. M. Perera moved the addition of the following clause: "Nothing in this Act shall authorise or be deemed to authorise the charging or levying of fees for any course of study in any higher

1. Government Proposals for Educational Reform in Ceylon. Parliamentary Series, No. 2. Colombo, 1950. p.16.
2. See page 25.

educational institute under this Act", but this motion too was defeated by the government. The future of free education is clearly in the balance, and the government appears to be steadily working itself up to a position from which it could at some convenient point of time limit, by administrative measures if not by legislative measures, the operation of the scheme of free education.

CHAPTER 3

DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS AND THE GOVERNMENT

Brief history of the denominational school system up to 1939

THE scheme of assistance by the government to denominational schools began in 1843 when schools belonging to certain Protestant Christian denominations were given such assistance. During the first thirty years of the scheme, Protestant Christian denominations were the chief beneficiaries. The Roman Catholics, the Buddhists, the Hindus, and the Muslims also gradually entered the scheme, and in course of time the Roman Catholics, along with the Protestants came to occupy a position of dominance in the scheme.

The role of the denominational schools in education came into sharp focus when, about the year 1900, the question of making education compulsory was being considered. The number of secular government schools at that time was 498; the number of Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim grant-in-aid schools was only 211 although the adherents of these religions constituted 90.14 per cent of the population; the Christians constituted only 9.74 per cent of the population but had 1117 grant-in-aid schools.¹ To insist on compulsory attendance without increasing the two former categories of schools many times, a prospect that was quite unachievable, would be to insist on compulsory Christianisation. The introduction of a conscience clause was mooted, and while it could have partially answered the problems of the non-Christian population, the solution which the non-Christians saw was in the direction of a rapid expansion of the government school system or of their own denominational schools. Strong broadsides at the denominational school system were fired by two Christian groups, the American Mission and the Wesleyan Synod, which urged in their answers to a questionnaire issued by the Wace Commission of 1905² that the denominational school system should be abolished and that education should be made compulsory on the basis of a system of secular government schools. But other Christian groups—most of all the Church of England, small in its numbers in

1. The Ceylon Blue Book for 1900. pp. R1-20; Report on the Census of Ceylon, 1901. Vol. 1, p. 88.
2. Report of the Commission on Elementary Education in Ceylon. S.P. XVII of 1905.

Ceylon but powerful at the Colonial office in London, and the Roman Catholics—strongly supported the denominational system, and the Wace Commission recommended its continuance subject to the introduction of a conscience clause. The Town Schools Ordinance of 1906 and the Rural Schools Ordinance of 1907 provided in identical terms a conscience clause, not in the form recommended by the Wace Commission but in a greatly enervated form. Both Ordinances dealt with schools providing vernacular education; in so far as English schools were concerned, the denominational system continued without any kind of a conscience clause. In 1912, Mr. J. J. R. Bridge made the following comment about denominational schools in his report: "The desire of different denominations to have their own schools is natural and it is inevitable, but nevertheless the competition is highly detrimental to efficiency and entirely prejudicial to economy, and as such cannot be recognized by the State"¹. No notice was, however, taken of this point of view, and the denominational system continued to grow in strength. The Education Ordinance No. 1 of 1920 brought all assisted schools, irrespective of language medium, within its scope. The conscience clause of the 1906 and 1907 Ordinances was included in it and became applicable to both English and vernacular schools. During the years 1920 to 1938, the basis of grants for denominational schools became increasingly liberal, and there was a rapid increase in the number of denominational schools, undisturbed by the fact that there was criticism of the denominational system expressed both in the legislative bodies and outside by the spokesmen of the Buddhists and the Hindus from time to time; and also by a distinguished foreign educator, Professor W. H. Kilpatrick of the United States, who in his speech to the members of the Macrae Commission, which sat during the years 1926 to 1929, observed that the denominational school system tended to divide the population of Ceylon into permanent groups with the attendant dangers of such division². The Commission itself was for the continuation of the denominational system, but with a conscience clause so worded as to require the written consent of the parent before religious instruction was given. No legislative action was taken, however, to introduce this change.

1. Secondary English Schools in Ceylon. S.P. XXI of 1912. p. 17.

2. Report of the Commission to Inquire into and Report upon the Present System of Education in Ceylon. S.P. XXVII of 1929. p. 6.

Denominational schools and the Education Ordinance of 1939

The first serious confrontation between supporters and opponents of denominationalism was the debate in the State Council on the draft Education Ordinance of 1939. The unconscionable delay of seven years in the preparation of legislation to transfer power from the Board of Education, with a preponderance of denominational interests, to the Executive Committee for Education, which was representative of the people, has already been mentioned.¹ When the draft Ordinance did finally come up for debate, an attempt², defeated by 33 votes to 13, was made to postpone discussion for 'six months' (a parliamentary phrase for indefinite postponement), in spite of the fact that at the very beginning of the debate, the Minister of Education, Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara, made the following declaration, at the request of his Executive Committee, to allay the fears of denominational bodies: "This Ordinance is not designed to give effect to any policy against denominational schools"³. Mr. Kannangara was, of course, well known for his uncompromising opposition to denominational schools, but there was nothing in the Ordinance itself to forebode danger to denominational schools, except that certain rule making powers were being belatedly transferred from that guardian angel of denominational interests, the Board of Education, to the Executive Committee for Education set up in terms of the provisions of the Donoughmore Constitution of 1931. The enjoyment of unjustified privilege exacts its own price in the form of hallucinations of catastrophe and persecution at the slightest indication of a modicum of justice to the deprived. The history of education in Ceylon bears this out. The Education Ordinance No. 1 of 1920 was interpreted as a death blow to denominational interests, and petitions were submitted on behalf of missionary schools expressing apprehension that their "management will be ousted".⁴ Nothing of the sort took place, and not only did the old buoyancy of these interests soon manifest itself, but they also became firmly committed to the defence of the Ordinance and to resist attempts to change it. The opposition from denominational interests to the Ordinance of 1939 centred firstly on the abolition of the rule making powers of the Board of Education in which denominational interests

1. See pages 16, 17.

2. H (SC). 27 October 1938. p. 3619.

3. H (SC). 26 October 1938. p. 3590.

4. Dr. H. M. Fernando. H (LC). 10 December 1919. p. 483.

were entrenched; secondly on the provision in the Ordinance to make denominational schools observe a conscience clause formulated in a positive form on the lines of the recommendations of the Wace and the Macrae Commissions; and finally on the proposal to provide religious instruction in government schools. Sensing that the Executive Committee for Education, constituted out of persons elected to the State Council on the popular franchise, may one day pass legislation to deprive denominational schools of the privileges they have so far enjoyed, denominational interests urged that the following clause be inserted in the Ordinance: "This Ordinance is not designed to give effect to any policy aimed against denominational schools". This proposal was opposed by several members of the State Council, one of whom argued as follows: "The reason which impelled Hon. Members to demand the introduction of a new Education Bill was to economize by amalgamating schools in various areas and by eliminating redundant schools. That is the only reasonable and radical way of economizing. This proviso if accepted will be the death knell of that movement"¹. The Minister who had earlier cited the case of Nawalapitiya, a small town in which there were four English schools managed by the Roman Catholics, the Hindus, the Buddhists and the Church of England while in so many other towns not a single English school existed, now cited the example of a small town, Wadduwa, which had seven assisted schools and one government school within a radius of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and argued² that in the interests of educational efficiency a perpetual immunity could not be assured to denominational schools, as would be the case if the suggested clause were entrenched by inclusion in the Ordinance. Strongly opposing the clause, he argued that his oral assurance conveyed his intention of not doing anything to affect adversely the generality of denominational schools, but the inclusion of the suggested clause in the Ordinance would bar action even against a single school, however compelling the educational reasons for such action. Spokesmen for Christian denominational interests were insistent that the clause, inserted during the Standing Committee stage in spite of the Minister's opposition, should remain, and one of them, the nominated Burgher member Mr. G. A. H. Wille, held out the threat: "I trust that the proviso will not be removed...because I doubt whether

1. Dr. N. M. Perera. H (SC). 29 September 1939. p. 2150.

2. Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 29 September 1939. p. 2160.

even the Secretary of State will pass this Ordinance"¹, thereby making no secret of the fact that the final battle line of the Christian denominations lay along Whitehall and Downing Street, where ultimate victory could in any event be assured. To go that far in this case was, however, unnecessary as the clause was accepted on a division, 27 voting for it and 26 against.

That the denominational system was not so angelic as to deserve immunity even in other respects was clear from a letter cited in the State Council as having been sent by the Methodist Church in Ceylon to a teacher in a Methodist school. The teacher, a Methodist who had married a non-Christian had been informed of a rule of the Church as employer "that marriage with a non-Christian on the part of a Christian teacher is regarded by the Synod as equivalent to resignation", and discontinued from service.²

From the Ordinance of 1939 up to the 1944/45 debate on Education: Reform of System

The denominational issue did not engender much heat during this period, but it came up from time to time in a relatively mild way both in the State Council and outside. The Auditor General had in his annual report drawn attention to "proven cases of forced levies on teachers' salaries by the managers each month",³ and also highlighted abuses by school managers and proprietors in the disbursement of school fees received from pupils and grants received from the government. With a view to correcting the latter abuse, the Minister of Education sought to use the powers granted to his Executive Committee under section 32 of the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 to lay down⁴ in precise terms the areas of expenditure for which the funds concerned could be used. With this end in view, he proposed certain amendments to the Code of Regulations for Assisted English Schools. The amendments were never passed because of dilatory tactics used in the State Council by certain members, among whom were several managers and principals.

It was indeed the constant complaint of the Minister during the period following the Education Ordinance of 1939 that although

1. Mr. G. A. H. Wille. H (SC). 29 September 1939. p. 2153.

2. Dr. N. M. Perera. H (SC). 29 January 1939. p. 2177.

3. Quoted by Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 21 February 1940. p. 442.

4. Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 21 February 1940. p. 436.

denominational interests entrenched in the Board of Education had been rendered ineffectual by the transfer of executive power from the Board to the Executive Committee for Education, the presence of a number of school managers and principals of denominational schools in the State Council, and a few of them in the Executive Committee itself, hindered effective action on his part as his proposals were meticulously examined from the viewpoint of how they would affect the rights and privileges of school managers and principals rather than their educational utility¹. Certain Ministers and, above all, the Speaker of the State Council were managers of denominational schools. In their capacity as managers of denominational schools, they had no doubt to look after denominational interests. They received government grants in respect of the schools they managed. The propriety of their holding membership in the State Council while drawing grants from the government was strongly questioned by the Minister. Article 9 (D) of the Ceylon (State Council) Order in Council, 1931 had the following proviso: "no person shall be capable of being elected or appointed as a member or of sitting or voting in the Council as an elected or nominated member who (a) directly or indirectly, himself or by any other person whatsoever in trust for him or for his use or benefit or on his account, holds or enjoins, in the whole or in part, any contract or agreement or commission made or entered with or accepted by any person for or on account of the public service". Quoting this proviso, the Minister argued² that it was nothing but right that members of the State Council should give up the management of schools, but his appeal to them fell on deaf ears. This issue was revived again in 1944 when Dr. A. P. de Zoysa, a member of the Executive Committee for Education, moved the following motion: "This council is of opinion that it is desirable that the members of the Executive Committee of Education should not be managers or teachers in assisted schools".³ He stressed the anomaly of a situation in which the Director of Education had to follow the policy and rules determined by the members of the Executive Committee over some of whom the Director exercised supervision in their capacity as managers or principals of schools. A few members took an even stronger view of the question than the mover, and Mr. W. Dahanayake moved the following amendment: "This

1. Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 21 February 1940. p. 438.

2. Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 28 August 1940. p. 1877.

3. Dr. A. P. de Zoysa. H (SC). 15 November 1944. p. 2472.

Council is of opinion that it is desirable that Members of the State Council should not be managers of assisted schools".¹ The amendment was defeated by 8 votes for and 28 against, but the original motion was passed by 19 votes to 14. School managers and principals, however, ignored the resolution and remained in the Executive Committee for Education instead of transferring to one of the other Executive Committees.

One issue of a different sort that was settled during this period is of more than ordinary interest. Attention had been drawn during the 1938 debate to the humiliation to which Buddhist children in Christian schools had been subjected.² In one school, as a punishment for absence from attendance at school on Vesak day, the most important day of the year to Buddhists, a Buddhist student had been made to put on a dunce's cap. Although Vesak day was a public holiday, Christian schools were not observing it as a school holiday. In 1944 the Minister moved an amendment to the Code of Regulations for English schools to the effect that "all public holidays should be observed as holidays by every school", but the climate of hostility to a modicum of justice to the rights of the Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim populations (the holidays of the Christians were already school holidays) was such that the Minister's amendment was pressed to a division and passed by 10 votes for and 6 against.³ The amendment was later extended to include assisted vernacular and bilingual schools.

The denominational issue in the 1944/45 debate on Education: Reform of System

Among the recommendations of the Executive Committee for Education, one pertained to the continuance of denominational schools. It was as follows: "The system of state schools and denominational schools shall continue subject, in the case of new denominational schools, to the conditions that:

(a) to be recognized, a denominational school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under 8 years of age;

1. Mr. W. Dahanayake. H (SC). 15 November 1944. p. 2475.

2. Dr. W. A. de Silva. H (SC). 26 October 1938. p. 3594.

3. Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 10 August 1944. p. 1542.

(b) having been recognized and registered for grant, such a school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body if it is to continue to receive assistance from public funds;

(c) if it is within 2 miles of an already existing state school, children of an 'unlike' denomination shall not be taken into account for assessing grant;

(d) if it is within 2 miles of a state school established later, children of an 'unlike' denomination shall continue to be reckoned for assessing grant."¹

In placing this recommendation before the State Council, the Minister, Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara, made it abundantly clear that he did not agree with it. He adduced the following arguments against the denominational system.

1. It was not possible to have a properly co-ordinated system of education if two parties, the government and the denominational bodies, took responsibility for education. For example, denominational schools will be a threat to the success of central schools as they will not close down their post-primary classes to enable the children to attend central schools.²

2. Proselytisation took place in certain Christian denominational schools. The Christian denominations sometimes conducted schools in which not more than one per cent, or two per cent of the students were Christians³.

3. Christian teachers in denominational schools had been dismissed for marriage with non-Christians.⁴

4. Senior assistant teachers in denominational schools were not appointed to fill vacancies for headships. Priests were appointed instead.⁵

-
1. Report of the Special Committee on Education, Ceylon. S.P. XXIV of 1943. p. 34.
 2. H (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 851; 2 June 1944. p. 926.
 3. H (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 854; 2 June 1944, p. 928.
 4. H (SC). 30 May 1944 p. 851.
 5. H (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 852.

5. Teachers with political affiliations different from those of the managers of denominational schools were often transferred.¹

6. Certain managers of denominational schools had been caught in the act of not paying the full salaries of teachers.²

7. Duly certified and audited statements of annual accounts submitted by certain managers were found to be false and inaccurate³.

He also answered in advance an argument which he anticipated would be adduced; namely, that denominational schools had rendered a great service in the past and deserved protection for this reason. The argument was in fact urged,⁴ but the Minister had already disposed of it with the devastating statement: "..... where duty demands that justice shall be done, not by managers of schools or by institutions, but by the people of this country, where the nation calls for justice, that kind of shibboleth of gratitude should not stand in the way of our taking proper action".⁵

State Councillors who supported the Minister's stand on the denominational issue generally reiterated the arguments he had used. Among the new points urged was an explanation that the real reason why certain Christian denominations conducted schools in which out of 150 children not more than 3 children were Christians was that employment could be provided in them for Christian teachers.⁶ Mr. V. Nalliah made the interesting point that the dual system was especially unworkable and a barrier to compulsory education, when the state system was feeble in comparison with the dominant position enjoyed by the denominational system of the Christian minority. Its result was to force the majority religionists (Hindus, in the constituency he represented) to patronise Christian schools or to be without an education. The argument of the protagonists of the denominational schools that state education was an infringement of personal freedom was not tenable in that context. He also pointed out that enthusiasts about denominational schools often had in mind a few very good schools and did not think of "the potty little schools

1. H (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 852.

2. H (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 853.

3. H (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 854.

4. Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam. H (SC). 11 July 1944. p. 1158.

5. Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara. 2 June 1944. p. 924.

6. Mr. Simon Abeywickreme. H (SC). 2 June 1944. p. 928.

that one finds in the villages".¹ The "unnecessary and wasteful competition" arising from the dual system was emphasised by Mr. U. B. Wanninayake². Mr. W. Dahanayake was strongly for the abolition of the dual system and asked ".....how can you have a system of denominationalism side by side with your aspirations for a united Ceylon?"³

Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike argued⁴ that the Christian denominational system had served two purposes, namely an "imperial purpose" from the point of view of the government, and "the purpose of giving education to the benighted heathen, and, at the same time, showing them the light of better things" from the point of view of the missionary bodies. The nationalist system of *pirivena* education was "deliberately suppressed as a further step in the imperial policy" that was being pursued by the British government at that time. Both purposes had now disappeared. The system had filled a void and done some good to education. Its present claims for continuance were that it had long traditions and provided education of a high standard. It did not, however, meet the needs of the day. To buttress this argument he quoted a report of the National Union of Teachers in England which stated that the divided responsibility of the dual system of state education and denominational education "has retarded educational progress and is inconsistent with proper economy and efficiency". The Association of Directors and Secretaries was quoted as having said that "unless the denominational system is brought to an end it will prove an increasingly serious obstacle to the refashioning of the educational structure". In relation to the situation in Ceylon, Mr. Bandaranaike posed the question: "Why should the state be called upon to give assistance to a denominational system whose chief *raison d'être* is the fact that a religious atmosphere is necessary, if that religious atmosphere is going to be imposed upon children of other denominations?" While he hoped that the denominational system with its "enormous waste" would eventually disappear, he was for restricting its scope, and he moved to amend the first recommendation to read as follows: "The system of state schools and denominational schools shall continue provided that, in the case of denominational schools, only children of that

1. H (SC). 14 July 1944. pp. 1260-1262.

2. H (SC). 26 June 1945. col. 63.

3. H (SC). 24 November 1944. p. 2714.

4. H (SC). 14 July 1944. pp. 1233-1237.

denomination attending it will be taken into account for assessing grant".¹ He also urged the adoption of a new recommendation: "Steps shall be taken to establish state primary and secondary schools, wherever necessary, in order to afford a reasonable opportunity for all children of school-going age to receive education", pointing out that a multiplicity of schools existed in certain areas and none in others.

In Mr. J. R. Jayewardene's view, economies had to be exercised in surplus areas by closing down certain schools and amalgamating others in order to provide an adequate number of schools in deficit areas, and this was "not possible unless you take the entire control of education into your hands"². As an added argument, he quoted figures to show that out of 150,000 students in Christian schools about 100,000 were non-Christians so that in effect "the state is giving money to Christian denominations to teach Buddhist children in a Christian atmosphere".³ He opposed the use of state funds to support denominational schools, but had no objection to the existence of denominational schools without aid from the state. The following amended motion: "The system of public education shall be a state system"⁴ was moved by him.

The chief defenders of the denominational school system were Mr. G. A. H. Wille and Mr. G. C. S. Corea. They argued⁵ that education without religion was of no value and that education must be conducted in a religious atmosphere. State education was quite unacceptable to them, and they urged the unrestricted continuance of the denominational school system. To abolish it was an interference with individual freedom. Mr. Corea conceded that there could have been "stray cases of conversion" and irregularities in the treatment of teachers, but in his opinion they were not widespread. He suggested that abuses in the system could be rectified by appropriate rules and regulations, and reminded the Minister of his declaration of 1938 that effect would not be given "to any policy against denominational schools". The original recommendations and the amendments came up for voting on 5th June 1945. Mr. Bandara-

1. H (SC). 13 July 1944. p. 1227.

2. H (SC). 24 January 1945. col. 490.

3. H (SC). 24 January 1945. col. 492.

4. H (SC) 24 January 1945. col. 485.

5. Mr. G. A. H. Wille. H (SC). 21 November 1944. pp. 2611, 2612. Mr. G. C. Corea H (SC). 24 January 1945. cols. 500, 506, 508.

naike's amendment¹ that grants should be payable to denominational schools only in respect of pupils of the same religion as the management was defeated by 15 votes to 29. Mr. Jayewardene's amendment that the system of public education should be a state system was also defeated². Certain other amendments, too, were rejected. The recommendation that was finally accepted included three amendments contributed by Mr. A. Ratnayake, and one amendment contributed by Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya and took the following form:

"The system of state schools and denominational schools shall continue in respect of the existing schools provided however it shall be the duty hereafter of the state exclusively to establish schools of all types where necessary.

Provided further that—

(1) Denominational schools shall be subject to the following among other conditions:—

(a) to be recognized, the school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under 8 years of age.

(b) to be registered for grant the school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under 8 years of age.

(c) to continue to receive assistance from public funds the school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body, who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under 8 years of age."³

The denominational issue in the Education Ordinance of 1947:

A Bill to give effect to the decisions of June 1945 took very long in the making, and as before the delay was imputed to the Legal Secretary, this time one Mr. J. H. B. Nihill who, as a State Coun-

1. H (SC). 5 June 1945. col. 2919.

2. H (SC). 5 June 1945. col. 2907.

3. H (SC). 5 June 1945. col. 2923.

cillor quipped later, had shown masterly inactivity quite in keeping with his name.¹ The observations of the Financial Secretary (Sir O. E. Goonetilleke) on the Bill were as follows: "The Bill is intended to implement the decisions of the State Council concerning the scheme of free education and seeks power to make regulations for this purpose".² No section or sub-section in the Bill said anything about free education, but many followed the example of the Financial Secretary and called it the Free Education Bill. The masses themselves gulped the idea down, and as events turned out this was to the great discomfiture of the opponents of the Bill, who were labelled opponents of free education and held up to ridicule by those who organised mass support for the Bill. No less a person than Mr. D. S. Senanayake, the Leader of the State Council, tried to move an adjournment even as the Minister of Education moved the first reading on 23rd January 1947, but Mr. Speaker held that the question had to be put and so the first reading went through.³ When the Minister moved the second reading on 20th February 1947 a postponement was moved and carried by 19 votes to 17. Finally, it was on 16th March 1947 that discussion on the Bill started. Some of the controversial sections in the Bill related to the place of religion and the provision of religious instruction, and they are dealt with elsewhere in this book. Only the provisions regarding the position of denominational schools are discussed here. The recommendation accepted by the State Council had a part which read "...it shall be the duty hereafter of the State exclusively to establish schools of all types where necessary". In order to give effect to this recommendation, it was sought to empower the Executive Committee, by section 7 sub-section 1 (b) of the draft Bill, to make regulations for "the prohibition of the registration of schools after a prescribed date for the purpose of receiving grants from state funds". In fact, the Minister could not have done anything less to implement the decision of the State Council; he could in truth have done more and sought power to make regulations for altogether prohibiting the establishment of schools and justified his action in terms of the State Council decision. But not even his moderation was to save him from the onslaughts of denominationalism in education. The perfectly legitimate and modest power sought was hotly contested. On 28th February 1947, the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Ceylon sent a memo-

1. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. H (SC). 15 May 1947. col. 1607.

2. H (SC). 23 January 1947. col. 290.

3. H (SC). 23 January 1947. col. 290.

randum¹ to the Minister and members of the State Council in which they said: "We wish to make it clear that we cannot on any account accept the position that would be created if the Minister of Education were empowered to prohibit the registration of schools after a prescribed date for the purpose of receiving grants from state funds, i.e. if the Minister be allowed to prohibit the opening of assisted denominational schools". A six month deferment of discussion of the Bill was proposed² and seconded. Various diversionary arguments were also used. The Bill was only an amending Bill to amend the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 to give effect to the 1945 decisions of the State Council. An amending Bill was not good enough, it was said. A comprehensive Ordinance should be prepared. Such a far reaching set of rules and regulations should not be brought during the closing stages of the life of the State Council, it was said.³ Mr. A. Ratnayake came out in strong support of the Bill. He said, ".....this opposition is the historic opposition at all times by what are called vested interests.....This is the opposition of the classes against the struggle of the masses.....The denominational schools represented vested interests.....opposition really comes from the principals and managers of the big denominational schools....."⁴ Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam, opposing the Bill, exulted that the United National Party was "so delightfully divided into two camps".⁵ He was the last speaker on the second day of the debate, when he made this comment, and he could not have been referring to the trends of the two days of debate, for only Mr. Ratnayake had supported the Bill while eight, including Mr. D. S. Senanayake, the Leader of the State Council, had opposed the Bill. Perhaps Mr. Ponnambalam had in mind the sharp division of 5th June 1945 when the amendment ".... it shall be the duty of the state exclusively to establish schools of all types where necessary" was passed by 24 votes to 18 with the members of the United National Party almost evenly divided⁶. In any case, Mr. Ponnambalam's exultation was premature; his hint was well taken, and on this issue the United National Party closed up its ranks in miraculous fashion as will be clear from the events that followed.

1. Ceylon Daily News: 1 March 1947. Cited by K. H. M. Sumathipala: History of Education in Ceylon from 1796—1965. Colombo, 1968. p. 308.
2. Mr. P. de S. Kularatne. H (SC). 6 March 1947. col. 1147.
3. Mr. E. E. Spencer. H (SC). 6 March 1947. col. 1142.
4. H (SC). 7 March 1947. cols. 1171, 1172.
5. H (SC). 7 March 1947. col. 1232.
6. H (SC). 5 June 1947. col. 2918.

After 7th March the State Council was in recess until 15th May and these two months were characterised by feverish activity. Three national leaders, Dr. E. W. Adikaram, Dr. G. P. Malalasekera and Mr. A. Mivanapalana, formed themselves along with others into a "Central Free Education Defence Committee" and carried on an island wide campaign¹ to make sure that the Bills would not be shelved. Wherever they went they commanded mass support for the Bill. Those who were for postponing the Bill realized that the public would not brook any delay in passing the Bill. What they lacked in numbers and public acclaim, however, they made up by their subtlety. A master plan unravelled itself when the State Council met after the recess. The first scene in the drama was enacted when Mr. P. de S. Kularatne withdrew² his proposal for deferment, as soon as proceedings for the day commenced. The next speaker, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, after some criticism of the leaders of the public campaign, gave an assurance that the Bill "must be passed; and it will be passed", throwing out at the same time a gentle hint that some amendments of the sections which denominational bodies considered objectionable might be moved at the Standing Committee stage. Speaking, next Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya, who had in June 1945 moved the amendment which sought to prevent the establishment of new denominational schools in the future (this amendment was passed by the State Council, and the attempt to incorporate it into legislation triggered off the present controversy), hinted that "reasonable concessions" might be possible at the Standing Committee stage, and expressed his satisfaction that those who opposed the Bill "have veered round to that point of view"⁴. Mr. W. Dahanayake sensed what was going on and expressed his fears that the Bill "will be sabotaged at the Standing Committee stage"⁵. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, who had shown himself to be an uncompromising opponent of denominationalism in the 1944-1945 debate, was a mixture of sweetness and invective. "In the Committee stage, of course, we may try to amend certain clauses", he said; later, some venom was shown: "We read in the papers reports of speeches of men like Father Peter Pillai in the course of which they stated 'Victory is in sight'."⁶

1. See K. H. M. Sumathipala. *History of Education in Ceylon from 1796—1965* (Colombo, 1968) for an account of the campaign.

2. H (SC), 15 May 1947. col. 1599

3. H (SC). 15 May 1947. cols. 1611-1615.

4. H (SC). 15 May 1947. col. 1620.

5. H (SC). 15 May 1947. col. 1635.

6. H (SC). 15 May 1947. cols. 1642, 1648.

Mr. V. Nalliah quoted derisively the remainder of what the Rev. Father had said: "The enemy had been routed on all fronts", and went on to say that the grave danger that the Bill would be postponed was averted by "the politically conscious section of the Buddhist clergy", and the political awareness and awakening among the masses¹. Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe described the retreat of the opponents as only a "strategic retreat"². He was right, as indeed Rev. Father Peter Pillai was right in what he was alleged to have said, and among those who later contributed to his triumph with their votes were the two estimable gentlemen who were so derisive of his paean of victory.

When the Standing Committee met on 23rd May, 1947, Mr. D. S. Senanayake moved that the words "the prohibition of the registration of schools, after a prescribed date, for the purpose of receiving grants from state funds", which would have given the Executive Committee the necessary power to make regulations excluding new denominational schools from becoming entitled to grants, be deleted and replaced by the words "the registration of schools after July 1st, 1947, subject to the conditions that in the case of any denominational school any grants from state funds shall be payable only in respect of pupils whose parents profess the religion of the proprietor of the school", thereby limiting to this framework the regulation making power of the Executive Committee and ensuring that new denominational schools could be opened and aided to the extent of the pupils of the same denomination as the management³. The Standing Committee accepted this amendment by 19 votes to 2, Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara and Mr. Dahanayake being the dissentients. The recommendation of the Standing Committee came up before the State Council on 27th May and was accepted⁴ by 43 votes to 3, the three who opposed being Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara, Mr. W. Dahanayake and Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe, Rev. Father Peter Pillai's claim of victory was more than vindicated. It was a sad day for Dr. Kannangara, and the bitterest cut of all was that Mr. A. Ratnayake, who had long been his trusted lieutenant in the crusade for a state system, also cast his vote in furtherance of denominational interests. Mr. Ponnambalam's hint had been well taken, the United National Party had closed its ranks, Dr. Kannangara being the odd man out,

1. H (SC). 15 May 1947. col. 1665.

2. H (SC) 15 May 1947. col. 1661.

3. Minutes of the meeting of Standing Committee A held on 23 May 1947.

4. H (SC). 27 May 1947. col. 2811.



denominational interests were appeased, and all was set for the elections to the first Parliament of Ceylon. Dr. Kannangara lost his seat, the party emerged victorious, and it was only a matter of time before denominationalism gained more victories.

Era of prosperity for denominationalism 1948—1959

The moratorium given to denominational schools for entering the free education scheme was to cease on 1st October 1948, but repeated extensions of time were given; upto 31st May 1950 first, upto 31st July 1950 next, upto 31st December 1950 next, upto 1st April 1951 next, and finally an indefinite extension by the Education (Amendment) Act 1951, which, in many respects, heralded an era of unparalleled glory for denominationalism. By this Act, denominational schools were allowed to enter the scheme or opt out of it at any time with the concurrence of the Director of Education. The equipment and maintenance grants payable to denominational schools were increased manifold over the original rates. Schemes proposed for the selection of pupils at 11+ (abandoned later), and at 14+ provided that pupils unselected for secondary academic education could join denominational schools as fee paying pupils. Denominational schools, not necessarily of the same religious denomination as the child, could be nominated by the Director for compulsory attendance by a child. The restriction placed on new denominational schools that grants from the government could be claimed only in respect of pupils who belonged to the same religious denomination as the management was also relaxed by making grants payable if no government school or school of the same religious denomination as the child existed within a specified radius of the school attended by him. This regulation was most peculiarly worded. A Hindu child could choose not to attend the Hindu school next door to him but attend a new Christian school ten miles away. As long as no Hindu or government school existed within 2 miles of the Christian school if the child were over 8 years of age (or 1 mile, if he were under 8 years), the Christian school could claim grant in respect of the child. What mattered were the distances between schools; the distance of a school from the child's home was irrelevant. Nearly all these concessions were made during the Nugawela-Howes era of abject subservience to denominationalism in education. Mr. E. A. Nugawela confessed that as a back bencher in the last State Council he was "one of the few who thought schools should be nationalized",

but that had been in his "less regenerate days".¹ As Minister, he became a great believer in the denominational system and offered them "a new dispensation". As for Dr. Howes, his appointment as Director of Education was so much of a controversial issue that, in the Parliament, suspension of Standing Orders was moved to discuss it.²

Obligations to the denominational schools had all along been regarded as the first charge on the financial resources of the Ministry. Denominational schools enjoyed a more favourable teacher quota than government schools, and in 1948 the Minister admitted that, while 2000 government schools were understaffed, not a single assisted school was understaffed.³ Increased equipment grants had been authorised by the Cabinet in May 1948 for payment to denominational vernacular and bilingual schools, in advance of an amendment to the Code of Regulations which received parliamentary sanction only in August 1949⁴. Government loans to denominational schools for putting up workshops for practical education and for buying furniture and equipment were mooted in August, 1949; one year later, it was admitted that 4000 government schools needed replacement.⁵ Not satisfied with the favoured treatment being given to assisted denominational schools, the Education (Amendment) Act No. 5 of 1951 authorised liberal increases in the grants to assisted schools, and at the same time strove to economise on the government sector by a series of administrative measures designed basically to undermine the free education scheme by throttling the government sector in education. The sudden death of Mr. D. S. Senanayake, the Prime Minister, took away from the scene one of the "fathers" of the White Paper, and certainly the one man who would have had the drive and the singleness of purpose to see the Nugawela-Howes scheme implemented. Without him, the scheme was rendered ineffectual, and educational expenditure continued to mount. During the decennium 1947 to 1956, the expenditure of the government on its own schools increased by 86.7 per cent, while the expenditure of the government on assisted schools increased by 274.3 per cent. The increase in the

1. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 272.

2. Mr. C. Suntharalingam, H (HR). 2 August 1949. col. 1083.

3. Mr. E. A. Nugawela. H (HR). 10 August 1948. col. 1045.

4. Mr. E. A. Nugawela. H (HR). 20 August 1949. col. 182.

5. Mr. E. A. Nugawela. H (HR). 9 August 1950. col. 2127.

number of pupils on roll during the same period was, however, 74.5 per cent in respect of government schools, and 59.6 per cent in respect of assisted schools.¹

While the assisted schools enjoyed this era of unparalleled prosperity, they were not immune from criticism. Mr. V. Kumaraswamy made this comment in July 1948: "I would like to see a Commission appointed to investigate the heartless, soul-less, and indiscriminate method of transferring teachers adopted by private managers of schools. If the teacher does not satisfy the manager, if the teacher does not offer "poojah" to the manager, if the teacher does not hand over to the manager part of his salary, the poor man is driven from pillar to post. In Jaffna even today some of the managers of schools continue to wreak vengeance on those teachers who took an active part in the General Election".² Mr. W. Dahanayake alleged in 1950 that "a portion of the grant is pocketed" by certain managers³. Mr. D. B. R. Gunawardene alleged in 1951 that managers of certain assisted schools are guilty of malpractices, such as demanding "a special payment to the building fund" when children come for admission.⁴ It was alleged by Mr. V. Veerasingam in August 1954 that the Director of Education had failed to protect teachers against arbitrary dismissal by managers of assisted schools.⁵

The criticism made in the Parliament was, however, mild compared with the case that was made against denominational schools from public platforms during the sittings of the Buddhist Committee of Enquiry and after. The Buddhist Committee of Enquiry was constituted in 1954 in accordance with a resolution adopted at the Annual Conference of the All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress held in December 1953. This resolution urged the setting up of a Committee "to enquire into the present state of Buddhism in Ceylon and to report on the conditions necessary to improve and strengthen the position of Buddhism, and the means whereby those conditions may be fulfilled". The Committee consisted of fourteen members, half of whom were Buddhist Bhikkus (monks) of piety and distinction and the remaining half Buddhist laymen who had gained eminence in

1. A.R. 1947. pp. A32, 34; A.R. 1956. pp. A40, 58.

2. H (HR). 23 July 1948. col. 1337.

3. H (HR). 10 August 1950. col. 2210.

4. H (HR). 14 February 1951. col. 1359.

5. H (HR). 13 August 1954. col. 1638.

various walks of life. The Committee held sittings in a large number of towns throughout the country and heard evidence for nearly one year. At these sittings a great deal was said about the denominational system and the activities of Dr. H. W. Howes, who was a Roman Catholic. The Report¹ of the Committee was issued in 1956, and at a formal ceremony held to mark the publication of the report, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike gave an assurance that if the party led by him were to come to power at the general elections which were round the corner, the implementation of the recommendations would receive his closest attention. In relation to education, the report laid bare many acts of discrimination against the Buddhists conducted not only in the distant past but in the immediate present, and levelled an accusing finger at Dr. Howes. One of the allegations was that in the up-grading of schools, 205 Christian schools had been upgraded as against 55 Buddhist schools; moreover, the teaching posts carrying high salaries consequent to the up-grading were 473 in number for Christian schools and only 155 for Buddhist schools. These and other statistical figures that were quoted in the report received wide publicity and mass opinion accepted them at more than their worth. But more than the alleged discrimination against the Buddhists, the factor which completely disturbed the complacency of even the most open minded among the Buddhists was the unimpeachable evidence that despite the conscience clause in the law of education, proselytisation was a stark reality. In the case of Roman Catholic schools, there were tell-tale figures of Buddhist children being baptised in specified schools. In the case of the Protestant Christian schools, there was a recent publication *The Responsibility of the Christian School* (1955)², being a report of the Conference of the Christian Teachers' Guild of Ceylon held in August 1954. This report was sincere in its purpose, commendable for its honesty and laid down in quite unambiguous language that obedience to God required the Christian teacher to engage in every form of indirect evangelism permitted by the letter of the law, and that no human law could absolve the Christian teacher from seeking ways to commend his Saviour to others. Protestant schools inevitably employed teachers of the same religious persuasion and to that extent the staff was required to deploy its combined resources of strength and ingenuity for the indirect evangelism of non-Christian children attending school. In the measure to which this ideal inspired the teachers, the non-Christian child ran

1. *The Betrayal of Buddhism*. Colombo, 1956.

2. G. B. Jackson (Ed.): *The Responsibility of the Christian School*. Colombo, 1955.

the peril of losing his own religion. These facts regarding the position of the Buddhist children in the Christian school received wide publicity throughout the country in discussions of the Buddhist Committee Report, and served to consolidate the opposition to the denominational school system. Other arguments against the denominational school system urged in the Report were the competition and the waste involved in the system and these, too, received wide publicity.

Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's party gained power at the general elections of 1956, and he became the Prime Minister. Soon afterwards, the government was involved in a bitter controversy over the issue of declaring Sinhalese as the official language, and in that context the reluctance to get involved in a further controversy on religious issues in connection with the abolition of denominationalism in education could be understood. Moreover, Mr. W. Dahanayake, the Minister of Education, had begun to see great virtues in the denominational system against which he had breathed fire and thunder for so many years of his political life. The persistent demands on the part of the Buddhist spokesmen for the take over by the government of denominational schools were parried with consummate skill by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education, but the public mind could not be set at ease.

The take-over of denominational schools

After the death in September 1959 of the Prime Minister, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Mr. W. Dahanayake, the Minister of Education, became Prime Minister but continued to hold the Education portfolio as well. He dissolved the Parliament a few months later, and called for a general election. During his election campaign, he brought the issue of denominational schools to the forefront of his campaign and, in his capacity as the Prime Minister as well as the Minister of Education, he issued a message¹ to the nation asking the people to save their schools by returning his party into power. He argued that other parties were either for the complete take over of schools by the government or for the restriction of government aid to pupils of the same denomination as the management. The first alternative would bring about the immediate destruction of the schools, while the second would lead to their slow death. He argued that all religious groups would be adversely affected. If grants were paid only in respect of pupils of the same religion as the manage-

1. Lankadipa. 9 February 1960.

ment, the schools that would be immediately affected are the Christian schools. These schools had large numbers of non-Christian children attending them, and because no grants would be paid in respect of such children, the facilities of these schools would in course of time be denied to Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim children. He appealed to the people of all religions to rally round his party to save their schools. Very few swallowed his arguments, and not only was the party led by him decisively defeated at the polls but he himself lost his seat. What he did succeed in doing was, however, to make the future of denominational schools a key issue in the election, and the forces unleashed in the process were to prove disastrous to the very cause he espoused. The general election of March 1960 was followed by another general election in June 1960, and the future of denominational schools took on an even greater significance as an issue in the latter election than in the former. The party led by Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike came into power in June 1960 and during the next few months a fierce controversy raged over the precise nature of the legislation that should be enacted to settle the denominational question. The Sinhalese language newspapers played a key role in bringing about a confrontation between opposing parties. Among the religious dignitaries who asked for the take over of denominational schools by the government were the Venerable Madihe Pannaseeha Thero¹, Venerable Walagedera Somalokatissa Thero², and the Venerable Professor Kotahena Pannakitti Thero³; among those strongly opposed to the take over were the Right Rev. Fr. Edmund Pieris,⁴ Rev. Fr. Philip Dissanayake,⁵ and Rev. Fr. Leo Nanayakkara⁶. Three prominent educationists for the take over were Messrs L. H. Mettananda,⁷ T. U. de Silva⁸ and M. W. Karunananda⁹; somehow the educationists opposed to the take over do not appear to have used the medium of the press to air their views. A strong contingent of Members of Parliament were for the take over, and among them were Mr. Badiuddin Mahmud¹⁰ (the Minister of Education), Mr. V. T. G.

-
1. Dinamina 15 February 1960, 3 October 1960, 10 October 1960.
 2. Dinamina 12 September 1960.
 3. Lankadipa 7 December 1960.
 4. Dinamina 24 October 1960.
 5. Dinamina 18 February 1960, 7 March 1960, 3 October 1960.
 6. Dinamina 27 October 1960.
 7. Dinamina 26 February 1960, Lankadipa 7 September 1960.
 8. Dinamina 23 August 1960.
 9. Dinamina 1 December 1960.
 10. Dinamina 10 October 1960.

Karunaratne¹ (the Parliamentary Secretary), Dr. N. M. Perera,² Mr. T. B. M. Herath³, Mr. J. D. Weerasekera⁴, Mrs. Vivienne Gunawardena,⁵ and Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne⁶; Parliamentarians opposed to the take over seemed somehow to eschew the press. In any case, as far the controversy in the columns of the Sinhalese newspapers was concerned, public opinion was strongly for the take over of denominational schools by the government.

The arguments urged for the abolition of the dual system of government and denominational schools were as follows:

1. Preferential treatment was given by the government to denominational schools in that (a) governmental expenditure per pupil in a denominational school was higher than governmental expenditure per pupil in a government school (b) denominational schools enjoyed a more favourable teacher quota than government schools (c) equipment grants were given on a liberal scale to denominational schools while government schools were not entitled to fixed grants and received a little aid from time to time.

2. Even among denominational schools, those belonging to the Christian religious denominations were in a privileged position in comparison with those belonging to the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims, as the former had enjoyed a great deal of patronage under British rule.

3. Thousands of Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim children attending Christian schools were denied a religious education.

4. Denominationalism had led to a competitive school system the whole of which was supported by the government. In certain areas, there was over-provision of facilities, and in certain other areas under-provision. In a certain town, for example, 4 different schools used the services of 16 graduate teachers and 16 science laboratories to teach science to 20 pupils at the University entrance level.

1. Dinamina 1 December 1960.

2. Dinamina 3 December 1960.

3. Dinamina 18 August 1960.

4. Dinamina 3 October 1960.

5. Dinamina 1 December 1960.

6. Dinamina 1 December 1960.

5. A rationalisation of the school system was not possible with a multiplicity of bodies in control of the schools.

6. The segregation by religion that took place in a large number of schools was not conducive to national unity.

7. There was exploitation of teachers by the managements of certain schools.

8. Proselytisation was taking place in certain schools, and the conscience clause was subverted in one form or another.

The arguments urged for the retention of the dual system were as follows:

1. Certain religious denominations considered it important that their children should be educated in a religious atmosphere, and this was possible only under the denominational system.

2. There was danger of totalitarianism under a system of government schools.

3. Parental freedom of choice of schools for children would be restricted if all schools were government schools.

4. A competitive school system would promote excellence.

5. Denominational schools had an ethos which could not easily arise in a government school.

In October 1960, the Minister of Education introduced in the House of Representatives a Bill¹ which provided for (i) the appointment of the Director of Education as the manager of every assisted school, other than a school which the proprietor has elected to administer as an unaided school, (ii) the right of the proprietor of an assisted school, which is a Grade I or Grade II school and the Manager of which is the Director, to request the Director to take a poll for the purpose of determining whether the school should be administered as an unaided school with the right to levy fees, and, if 75 per cent of those entitled to vote were in favour, to call upon the Director to divest himself of the management. In introducing the Bill, the Minister argued that in the interests of a good education for all

1. Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (Special Provisions) Bill, 1960.

children, it has become necessary for the government to take over all assisted schools, subject to two exceptions. The first exception was that the management of any Grade I or Grade II assisted school could elect to make the school an unaided non-fee-levying school. The second exception was that any Grade I or Grade II assisted school could request the Director of Education to take a poll for the purpose of determining whether the school should be an unaided fee-levying school. The Bill presented by the Minister provided "for certain transitional arrangements prior to giving full effect to the policy of the government that all assisted schools should be taken over" subject to the exceptions indicated above. The 'transitional' arrangement envisaged was to appoint the Director of Education as the manager of every assisted school in the island. The Minister regarded this step as "also an administrative measure to facilitate the survey of the educational needs and facilities of the country in order to make the next Bill as comprehensive as it should be".¹ Strong support for the Bill came from Mr. P. G. B. Keuneman who presented statistical data² to show how the majority was being discriminated against in favour of a privileged minority. 1257 Buddhist schools received Rs. 20 million as a grant from the government, while 735 Christian schools received Rs. 28 million as a grant from the government; a pupil in a Buddhist or Hindu school cost the government Rs. 64, while a pupil in a Roman Catholic school cost the government Rs. 118; 86 per cent of the graduate teachers were in denominational schools, while 14 per cent were in government schools. These were about the most glaring of the discriminatory practices pointed out by him. Mr. W. Dahanayake, the chief spokesman against the Bill, in addition to urging the usual arguments against the take over also pointed out that the contemplated legislation went far beyond what had been set out in the election manifestoes of the parties sponsoring or supporting the Bill³. In concluding the debate, the Minister pointed out that in September 1960 the Archbishop of Colombo had issued a circular asking parish priests to inform Principals of Roman Catholic schools "not to release any information" about their schools to officials of the Education Department, and that one of the objects of the Bill was to forestall this kind of obstruction⁴. The Bill was passed by a

1. Mr. Badiuddin Mahmud. H (HR). 24 October 1960. col. 1595.

2. H (HR). 25 October 1960. cols. 1793, 1795, 1796.

3. H (HR). 24 October 1960. cols. 1649, 1651, 1655.

4. Mr. Badiuddin Mahmud. H (HR). 27 October 1960. col. 2213.

large majority and became law on 17th November 1960 as the Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (Special Provisions) Act, No. 5 of 1960.

The Director of Education was to take physical charge of all assisted schools with effect from 1st January 1961, but in a large number of areas the Roman Catholic population occupied the schools under the management of the Roman Catholic Church and prevented the representatives of the Director of Education from entering them. On 2nd January 1961, Mr. C. P. de Silva, the Acting Chairman of the Cabinet, issued a statement¹ in the following terms: "Some proprietors have during the past few days intensified the occupation of schools which by the Assisted Schools Act came under the management of the Director of Education on December 1, 1960.... The government proposes to summon Parliament immediately and introduce legislation whereby all school premises and buildings will be taken over completely and the ownership thereof vested in the government without compensation. It may be that such legislation will be made applicable not only to schools which are now occupied but also to such schools as have opted to go private and belonging to the same proprietors". The resistance of the Roman Catholics did not, however, hold out for very long. It is not known whether their retreat was caused by the fear that if they continued to resist they might lose the schools which were to be exempt from the provisions of the Act. It has, however, been stated that "the government was saved from the grave situation it had on its hands by the personal intervention of Nehru with the leader of the Catholic hierarchy in India"². The Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives at the time is said to have made a statement to this effect in an interview with the B.B.C. in London. Whether on Nehru's intervention or not, His Eminence Cardinal Valerian Gracias did visit Ceylon for discussions with the Catholic hierarchy in Ceylon and with the government. The Catholic Messenger of 21st January 1961 carried a communiqué issued on behalf of the Roman Catholic clergy of Ceylon by the Right Rev. Thomas Cooray, Archbishop of Colombo, which conveyed the following message to the laity: "With the visit of His Eminence, the Bishops have been able to give the matter further consideration and prayer, and both his Eminence the Cardinal and the Bishops now think that the time has come for the laity to desist from any further action which may seem to prevent the schools from functioning. It is

1. Ceylon Daily News. 2 January 1961.

2. E. F. C. Ludowyk: *The Modern History of Ceylon*. London, 1966. p. 260.

because of the faith that his Eminence the Cardinal and the Bishops have decided to place in the government that they are appealing to the Faithful to withdraw their 'occupation' in order to enable the schools to function in a normal manner".¹

The Bill that was presented in the House of Representatives did not seek to interfere in any way with schools that were entitled to become private in terms of the earlier Bill. In the Minister's words, the Bill provided for three things: "Firstly, there is provision to enable property to be vested in the Crown, without compensation, for the purpose of conducting and maintaining schools. Secondly, there is provision in this Bill, where any loss or damage has been caused to school property or premises or to articles, to empower the Director to make good such loss or repair such damage, or to prepare an estimate of the cost of making good such loss or repairing such damage. The cost of making good such loss or repairing such damage, or such estimated cost, as the case may be will be recovered from the person who was the proprietor of such school on an ex parte application in that behalf to the Court. Thirdly, there is provision in respect of dismissed teachers".² The provision in respect of teachers who had been dismissed by Roman Catholic schools for favouring the legislation of November 1960 was that their appointments should be restored. The same quarters which opposed the legislation of November 1960 opposed this Bill, too, but it was passed by a majority vote and became law in March 1961 as the Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (Supplementary Provisions) Act No. 8 of 1961. The combined effect of the two Assisted Schools and Training Colleges Acts was to vest in the government the management and the property of (1) all assisted Training Colleges (2) all assisted schools except those which elected to be non-fee-levying private schools. The number of schools which elected to be private non-fee-levying schools was 48, and they, along with 15 schools which had become private fee-levying schools under Act No. 5 of 1951, constituted the private schools of the future. The remaining schools of the former assisted school system, numbering about 2750³, all became Director managed schools, pending their becoming government schools in a matter of weeks and months.

1. Quoted by Mr. K. M. P. Rajaratna. H (HR). 26 January 1961. col. 682.

2. Mr. Badiuddin Mahmud. H (HR). 24 January 1961. col. 404.

3. A.R. 1960. p. A119.

The majority of members of the Jayasuriya Commission was against the continuance of private schools "whether fee-levying and supported by fees which are often unconscionably high or non-fee-levying and supported by hidden levies, euphemistically called donations". They considered private schools to be "completely incongruous in a national system of education in as much as they are restrictive in their admissions and are not open to all the children who live in an area". They also pointed out that schools "which became private in 1960 will moreover be pockets of religious separatism and will constitute a possible source of danger to the life of the nation". It was also stated that private schools would disturb the smooth functioning of the scheme of zoning proposed by the Commission. By 15 votes to 14, the Commission recommended that all private schools should be taken over by the government and "integrated into the system and structure of education" recommended by the Commission.¹ No decision regarding this recommendation was, however, taken by the government of the day.

It was widely believed that the United National Party led by Mr. Dudley Senanayake made certain promises to the Roman Catholics regarding a new deal for denominational schools in order to win their support at the general election of March 1965. In a letter dated 8th July 1967 to His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Cooray, Archbishop of Colombo, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Minister of State, conveyed the following assurance: "...I have been requested by the Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Hon'ble Minister of Education to inform you that in the new National Education Bill, it is proposed to give the Minister of Education the power to enact regulations to control and levy fees. It is proposed under these regulations to permit Private Schools to levy fees, at the same time protecting the interests of pupils who have entered school since the previous government took over the schools by way of Scholarships, etc". In other words, schools which had become non-fee-levying by the Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (Special Provision) Act No. 5 of 1960 were to be allowed to levy fees from future entrants, while the government was to subsidise the education of those who were already in the schools. Specific provisos to this effect were, however, not contained in the General and Technical Education Bill tabled by the Minister of Education in November 1967. In a letter to the Prime Minister dated 2nd

1. Final Report of the National Education Commission, 1961. S.P. XVII of 1962. pp. 139-141.

December 1967, His Eminence the Cardinal made a request that the Bill be amended to make possible the above concessions, and pointed out that "if no redress is granted even at this late stage we shall be compelled to take certain steps regarding our schools and other matters that we would not otherwise have contemplated".¹ This threat may be one of the factors which made the Minister decide to allow the Bill to lapse.

1. Times of Ceylon. 30 January 1968.

CHAPTER 4

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

The decisions of 1943-45

The English language held a position of pre-eminence in the educational and administrative set up of the country, and the languages of the people, Sinhalese and Tamil, occupied an insignificant place. Only 7% of the population was, however, literate in English.

On 22nd June 1943, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene gave notice in the State Council of the following motion:—

“That with the object of making Sinhalese the official Language of Ceylon within a reasonable number of years this Council is of opinion—

- (a) That Sinhalese should be made the medium of instruction in all schools;
- (b) That Sinhalese should be made a compulsory subject in all public examinations;
- (c) That legislation should be introduced to permit the business of the State Council to be conducted in Sinhalese also;
- (d) That a Commission should be appointed to choose for translation and to translate important books of other languages into Sinhalese;
- (e) That a Commission should be appointed to report on steps that need to be taken to effect the transition from English into Sinhalese.”¹

The motion did not come up for discussion until May 1944. In moving it, Mr. Jayewardene pointed out that “this country is always in danger of being governed by a small coterie who go through these English schools, whereas the vast majority who go through Sinhalese and Tamil schools must always be in the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water”.² At the very outset of the debate, Mr. Jayewardene expressed his willingness to add the words “and

1. H (SC). 22 June 1943. p. 1024.

2. H (SC). 24 May 1944. p. 747.

Tamil” after the word “Sinhalese” wherever it occurred.¹ An amendment to this effect, moved by Mr. V. Nalliah, was passed by 29 votes to 92; among those who voted against the amendment were Messrs. B. H. Aluwihare, A. Ratnayake, Dudley Senanayake and U. B. Wanninayake, their argument being that national unity could be forged only on the anvil of a single language. Mr. Dudley Senanayake was quite forthright in his view: “It is very essential that there should be only one official language. And, I ask, what could that language be other than Sinhalese?”³

Meanwhile, the report of the Kannangara Committee had been published in November 1943. It listed four major defects in the system of education obtaining in Ceylon. Of them, the first and the third relate to the language issue.

“(a) The first major defect is the existence of two types of education according to the medium of instruction used. The great majority of our pupils are taught in “vernacular” schools where Sinhalese or Tamil is the medium of instruction. With a few exceptions, the rest are taught in “English” schools where English is the medium of instruction.

The objections to this system are—

(1) English has become a badge of social superiority, thus dividing the population into two more or less watertight social compartments, the English-educated and the vernacular-educated.

(2) Sinhalese or Tamil, the “natural” medium for Sinhalese or Tamil people respectively, and the best medium through which they can effectively contribute to the world of literature and art, has not been developed.

(3) The third major defect is the absence of equality of opportunity, the development of our educational system having resulted in two types of schools — one attended mainly by those who can afford to pay fees, and the other attended by those whose means do not permit them to do so.”⁴

1. H (SC). 24 May 1944. p. 746.

2. H (SC). 25 November 1944. p. 816.

3. H (SC). 24 May 1944. p. 769.

4. Report of the Special Committee on Education. S.P. XXIV of 1943. p. 138.

This is a quotation from the summary of the report. The body of the Report elaborated on (1) above pointing out that education through the English medium, available for payment, promises the best material prospects in that—

(a) a knowledge of English is required for all the better paid posts;

(b) English being the language of government and of all important commercial establishments, knowledge of English provides the path to affluence;

(c) A knowledge of English is required for higher studies.

Moreover, English schools have better buildings, and are better equipped and better staffed than other schools. The Report regrets the fact that English has become a medium of instruction in Ceylon schools and given rise to a privileged group. It goes on to assert that the mother tongue is the natural medium of instruction, and that there is no reason “why English should be retained as a medium of instruction at any stage in the educational process” except for those, notably the Burgher community, for whom English is the mother tongue. While “the ideal should be the mother-tongue medium at all stages of education”, the Committee is of opinion that the change should be phased over a number of years and recommends that the medium of instruction in the primary school should be the mother tongue.¹

On the basis of the observations made in the Kannangara Committee Report, the Executive Committee for Education placed the following recommendations, relating to language, before the State Council in May 1944:

“1. The medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the mother tongue.

2. The medium of instruction in the lower department of the post-primary school may be either the mother tongue or bilingual.

3. The medium of instruction in the higher department of the post-primary school may be English, Sinhalese or Tamil or bilingual”.²

1. Ibid., p. 47.

2. H (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 838.

In introducing these recommendations, Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara, the Minister of Education, made the following comment: ".....we have two classes of society in this country divided by English education. The affluent, the rich, the influential, those that can afford to pay, attend one kind of school imparting the higher education which is given in a foreign tongue. They have to pay for it! Why? Because the official language of this country is English, because no one without a knowledge of English can fill any high post".¹ What was the prospect for the poor who had to attend schools providing education in the mother tongue? In general, they had to be satisfied with being "hewers of wood and drawers of water", while a handful of the most gifted of them could aspire to be vernacular teachers. Mr. W. Dahanayake said, "Knock out English from the pedestal it occupies today, and place thereon our Sinhalese and Tamil languages and we shall soon be a free race"² and urging "the Burgher nominated member and his community to join with us even at this stage and adopt either the Sinhalese or the Tamil way of living and the Sinhalese or the Tamil language as their mother tongue", he moved the following amendment: "The medium of instruction in all schools shall be Sinhalese or Tamil with English as a compulsory second language".³ Mr. J. R. Jayewardene was not prepared to have English as a compulsory second language but wanted English to be optional. His amendment was as follows: "The mother tongue shall be made the medium of instruction in all schools, with English as an optional language". He said, ".....our educational structure is divided into two types of educational institutions; some institutions giving instruction through the mother tongue, and the other institutions giving instruction through English. This particular defect has created, to my mind, two different nations; one nation learning Sinhalese and Tamil and speaking in Sinhalese and Tamil, and the other speaking and learning English. I think this has been one of the worst features of British rule introduced into this country. We find 95 per cent of our pupils in the schools learning their mother tongue but completely unequipped to take part in the government of the country because the government of the country is conducted in English. We find 5 per cent of our schools teaching English; and those who go through those schools are completely denationalized, are out of touch with the people, are ignorant of their history and their customs....

1. H (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 847.

2. H (SC). 21 May 1944. pp. 2615, 2618.

3. H (SC). 23 January 1945. col. 423.

if we make English a compulsory subject it may be that after a time we may revert to the bad old system and that Sinhalese and Tamil in Ceylon may not be of economic value and will therefore gradually disappear".¹ The amendments by Mr. Dahanayake and Mr. Jayewardene were defeated, and in so far as the medium of instruction was concerned the decision, based on the recommendations of the Executive Committee, was that (i) in the primary school the medium shall be English, (ii) in the lower department of the post-primary school the medium may be either the mother tongue or bilingual, (iii) in the higher department of the post-primary school the medium may be English, Sinhalese or Tamil.

In rejecting Mr. Jayewardene's amendment in so far as it related to the medium of instruction in classes above the primary level, the State Council was rescinding part (a) of its earlier decision of May 1944, based on an amended version of Mr. Jayewardene's motion of 22nd June 1943. In the form in which the motion was accepted, it read as follows: "That with the object of making Sinhalese and Tamil the official languages of Ceylon within a reasonable number of years this Council is of opinion—

(a) That Sinhalese and Tamil should be made the medium of instruction in all schools;

(b) That Sinhalese and Tamil should be made compulsory subjects in all public examinations;

(c) That legislation should be introduced to permit the business of the State Council to be conducted in Sinhalese and Tamil also;

(d) That a Commission should be appointed to choose for translation and to translate important books of other languages into Sinhalese and Tamil.

(e) That a Commission should be appointed to report on all steps that need to be taken to effect the transition from English into Sinhalese and Tamil."

There was an incontrovertible and compelling logic underlying this resolution, but the State Council chose to negative it by its decision of 1945 to modify part (a) and to allow Sinhalese and Tamil children educated through these media in the primary classes to receive

1. H (SC). 24 January 1945. cols. 485, 486.

their post-primary education through the medium of English. This proviso, in conjunction with the great illusion of "compulsory English for all school children" decided upon in 1945, in opposition again to Mr. Jayewardene's penetrating insight, not only threw the entire language situation into a welter of confusion from which there has been no escape to this day, but it also prevented the establishment of a democratic system of education by making large sectors of education the monopoly of the socially and economically privileged strata which alone were able to give their children the necessary proficiency in English. A close analysis is required of the educational and social implications of these twin branches of language policy, namely the promise of compulsory English for all school children, and the option given to certain schools to use English as the medium of instruction in the post-primary classes for Sinhalese and Tamil children in spite of their having been educated through the Sinhalese and Tamil media in the primary school.

Compulsory English—fact or fiction ?

Compulsory English for all children in and above Standard III is one of the greatest deceptions perpetrated on the people of this country. It is a deception for two important reasons. In the first place, about 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the schools have never had a single English teacher in them. In some areas, even as recently as 1967, about 40 per cent of the schools did not have an English teacher.¹ In 1957, as many as 1728 schools out of a total of 2727 schools did not have an English teacher.² In June 1967, the Minister of Education confessed that there was a shortage of 2600 English teachers.³ In spite of this glaring shortage of teachers and lack of facilities for the teaching of English, the education authorities speak glibly of "compulsory English for all" and, arising therefrom, "equality of educational opportunity" throughout the length and breadth of the country. Secondly, the calibre of the staff recruited to teach English was sub-standard, and continues to be so. In 1948, the Director of Education wrote about them in the following terms: "...the English assistants are inexperienced, not adequately qualified and 'birds of passage' always. The high cost involved precludes the appointment of persons holding higher qualifications than the Senior

1. Mr. K. Y. M. Wijeratne Banda. H (HR). 1 September 1957, col. 2574.

2. Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English in Ceylon Schools. S.P. V of 1960. p. 19.

3. Mr. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolle. H (HR). 17 June 1967. col. 619.

School Certificate (English). The 'English' of primary schools today can, by no means, be regarded as a course of preparation for a change over to the English medium, for those children who will pass on to the post-primary classes of an English school".¹ That there has been no improvement at all in the situation is clear from a confession made by the Minister of Education that although 17,000 teachers have been appointed to teach English not even 1,700 among them are able to teach English satisfactorily². What more evidence than the Minister's own words is needed to prove that the English teaching programme in the vast majority of schools is a grand deception? Little wonder that out of about 138,000 students who had sat for the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) Examination in 1965 only about 48,000 had offered English, and that of them only 5130 were successful.³ In the matter of acquiring a knowledge of English, discrimination against the mass of students arises from the fact that only a small number of schools have good facilities for the study of English, and also from the fact that, when the actual quality of teaching in so many schools is poor, children's knowledge of English largely becomes a function of the extent to which they are exposed to English in the home environment. From every angle, therefore, it is the child from a relatively prosperous home who is able to shine in English.

If English were unimportant, it would not matter if a good knowledge of English was the preserve of a small and select minority. But the truth is that English has occupied and still does occupy a position of pre-eminence in Ceylon in so far as educational and employment opportunities are concerned. The State Council resolution of 1944 regarding the relative place of English and the national languages in the educational and public life of the country was logical in conception and comprehensive in scope. It was never implemented as a totality. As a concession to vested interests, the State Council approved various deviations beginning from the year 1945; both the State Council and the Parliament attempted to implement the language proposals hesitantly and in piecemeal fashion phasing the changes over an unconscionably long period, punctuated by months or years of inactivity. Students receiving education through the national languages came up against two kinds of frus-

1. A.R. 1948. (Mr. W. A. de Silva). p. A19.

2. Mr. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolle. H (HR). 16 September 1965. col. 3400.

3. A.R. 1965-66. pp. A163-189.

trations—one of finding that for education beyond a certain level English was a requirement but that they were ill equipped for it on account of the deception that has been practised on them by the government, and the other of finding that proficiency in English was a requirement, express or implied, for most worth-while appointments in spite of the lip service that was being paid to the national languages. The first of these is intimately connected with the policy followed by successive Ministers of Education in issuing instructions regarding the use, compulsory or optional, of the various media at different levels, and is discussed at length elsewhere.¹ The second of the two frustrations is largely a consequence of the worship of English as a result of a mentality surviving to this day by the unthinking force of inertia, long after it should have been dead and buried. To be sure, Members of Parliament have not been lacking in sensitivity to the realities of this problem, but their words have not been effectively translated into action, largely because of the strength of vested interests dedicated to the perpetuation of the status quo with all the advantages that go with it. In the 1950 debate on the proposals for educational reform, Mr. Wilmot A. Perera pointed out that the language in which the country is administered had a definite bearing on the medium of instruction in schools and that until that question was settled whatever plans are drawn up would end in nothing². Mr. W. A. de Silva, opposing the proposal that the study of English should be compulsory in schools, argued that the government, “led by those having vested interests in English education”, was desiring to continue the system where English was the language of the state. He pointed out that according to the census of 1946 less than one and a half per cent of the population of Ceylon was not Sinhalese or Tamil speaking.³ Mr. V. Nalliah pointed out that there was a rush of pupils from schools where the post-primary medium was Sinhalese or Tamil to those which use English. He said: “Everybody wants English Schools. So far as an appointment in government is concerned, the only key to it is to know English”.⁴ Two years later, in 1952, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike pointed out that there was a “demand for English because still, to get the smallest job, knowledge of English is necessary”.⁵ In 1953, Mr. C. Sunthara-

1. See pages 74-79, 82.

2. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 293.

3. H (HR). 26 September 1950. cols. 306, 307.

4. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 342.

5. H (HR). 18 August 1952. col. 3735.

lingam challenged the Minister to say whether a single Senior School Certificate (Sinhalese or Tamil) holder could "aspire to enter any of the learned professions such as law or engineering".¹ The Minister, Mr. M. D. Banda, conceded the point and said, "We have to remedy that,"² but although Ministers have come and gone the situation in 1969 is not very different from what it was in 1953. In 1955, when it was announced that as from 1962 the examination for the clerical service would be conducted in only Sinhalese and Tamil, Mr. L. L. Hunter protested that it would be an act of discrimination against the Burghers³. Another Burgher Member of Parliament dismissing Mr. Hunter's objections summarily said: "It is true that that may be discrimination against a few people, but there has been tremendous discrimination going on for years and years against thousands of people who, because they did not know English, were not able to sit for the clerical service examination".⁴ As a matter of fact, this examination (and nearly every other examination for recruitment to the public services) is now being conducted through all three media—English, Sinhalese and Tamil. The continuance of the English medium, for the benefit not only of the Burghers but also of those Sinhalese and Tamils from a relatively rich socio-economic background conducive to the acquisition of a good knowledge of English, has by and large resulted in a diminution of attention to the production of books in the national languages. If the English medium were not available to the children of the privileged and vocal sections of the population, these sections would have played an active role in stimulating the production of reading material in the national languages to meet the needs of their children. It must also be admitted that the fact that recruitment examinations are held in all three media carries with it no guarantee of equal opportunities in the process of selection. Almost invariably the final selection is by an interview, and at that stage social class as revealed by the knowledge of English displayed tends to be the determining factor in the selection or rejection of candidates. There would be absolute fair play only if the interview is conducted solely through Sinhalese or Tamil, and the board of interview is forbidden to probe into the candidate's proficiency in English.

1. H (HR). 26 August 1953. col. 1639.

2. H (HR). 26 August 1953. col. 1659.

3. H (HR). 3 February 1955. col. 2037.

4. Mr. P. G. B. Keuneman. H (HR). 3 February 1955. col. 2041.

The language options and their effects

The consequences of the option given in 1945 had their parallels in the consequences of subsequent options. For this reason, it would be appropriate to note the various options given at different times at different levels, and their withdrawal, before considering the consequences of the options. In relation to children whose mother tongue was Sinhalese or Tamil, the options and withdrawals may be summarised as follows:

1. As from October 1945 the primary school medium became Sinhalese or Tamil with no option of an English medium. In post-primary classes the medium could be a national language or English at the option of the school, and where a school desired to use English, it meant that students whose primary education had been in a national language had to switch over to the English medium. This was the situation through the years 1944 to 1953.

2. A notification was issued in December 1951 that in the case of students whose primary education had been in a national language medium, the same medium should be used (a) in Standard VI as from 1st January 1953 (b) in Standard VII as from 1st January 1954 and (c) in Standard VIII as from 1st January 1955. This meant that the option which existed from 1946 to use English as the medium in these Standards for pupils whose primary school medium was a national language was removed, but the English medium option continued for the pre-S.S.C. class (Standard IX) and above, and no declaration was made as to whether this option would ever cease.

3. By a directive dated 18 November 1953 the policy set out in the preceding paragraph was varied in respect of Standard VII and Standard VIII in regard to Science and Mathematics, the optional use of the English medium being permitted in Standard VII for the year 1954 only, and in Standard VIII for the year 1955 only.

4. In January 1955, a directive was issued to the effect that in the pre-S.S.C. class from January 1956 and in the S.S.C. class from January 1957 a national language should be used as the medium for pupils whose previous education was in that medium, except for Science, Mathematics and Western languages which could be taught in English at the option of the school. No date for the withdrawal of this option was indicated. Where a school decided to avail itself of this option, it meant that students who had studied all their sub-

jects including Science and Mathematics in Standards VI to VIII in a national language would have to switch over to English in the pre-S.S.C. and S.S.C. classes for these subjects.

5. In December 1956, a directive was issued to the effect that in the pre-H.S.C. class (Standard XI) from January 1958 and in the H.S.C. class (Standard XII) from January 1959, a national language should be used for pupils whose previous education had been in it, except for Science, Mathematics and Western languages which could be taught in English at the option of the school. No deadline for the withdrawal of the option in regard to Science and Mathematics was indicated.

One consequence of the various options and the lack of a settled policy of making the national languages the compulsory media progressively year by year in respect of each higher standard for those who had been educated through them up to the preceding Standard was that at every stage at which a school decided to make use of the option the students were confronted with the problem of switching over from the national language medium to the English medium. One alleged reason for the option was a shortage of teachers capable of teaching through the national languages. The few students who had a knowledge of English, owed in the vast majority of cases not to the teaching done at school but to the students' home background, made the transition from the medium of a national language with ease, but others became educational and emotional casualties in the switch over. Martyrs to the self interest of teachers and administrators who, finding the thought of their acquiring a knowledge of the national languages exasperating to themselves in spite of their intellectual capacity, maturity and adulthood, evolved the bright solution of requiring the children to accommodate themselves to English somehow, the children had none to complain to about the sorry plight into which the official policy of making matters as comfortable as possible to teachers had driven them; a stray one, here and there, became the subject of a case study by a teacher in training, and what a tale of lost hope and frustration was unfolded then. Official reports recognised the existence of the problem, but instead of attacking the problem at its source, most of them engaged in various kinds of digressions. Dr. Ian Sandeman set the tone for this kind of thing. He recognised the fact that students who were weak in English "faced the prospect of a five-year connection with the junior school", but went on to say, "The defeatist proposal that some adjustment is urgently needed to

ensure an unbroken or unhindered study in the mother-tongue (which means dropping the English medium before text books in the mother-tongue are available).....cannot be accepted"¹. An additional Sixth Standard, called the Lower Sixth, was started in which special work was to be done in English, making the junior school a four year one for all students involved in the transition. A realistic note was struck by Mr. W. A. de Silva, who functioned as the Acting Director of Education for a few months. He said, "Experience has revealed that the soundest procedure is to continue to use the Sinhalese or Tamil medium until the pupil's attainment in English is adequate for the change. It has been found that progress is retarded by a premature change of medium",² but before he could get settled, he was replaced by Dr. H. W. Howes. Fantasy returned to the scene. Speaking platitudinously of new and better methods of teaching English to make the transition from the national language media in Standard V to the English medium in Standard VI a smooth one, his solution was a "satisfactory bilingual technique". The basic principles of this technique as laid down by him had nothing new to commend them. But he was quite against the kind of solution envisaged by his predecessor. "The alternative of extending the national language medium into the post-primary classes is not at present within the realm of practicability because there is a dearth of suitable text books in Sinhalese and Tamil for the Senior Forms. Steps are being taken to deal with this problem."³ Dr. Howes was here expressing his opposition to the compulsory extension of the national language media beyond the primary stage (that is, even to Standard VI). The fact that already the so-called vernacular schools were sending up students in the national language media for the S.S.C. examination (taken after a year in Standard X) appears to have escaped his notice, although according to a table⁴ in his Report no less than 18,852 entries had been received for the S.S.C. examinations in Sinhalese and Tamil that year. It is true that these students would have offered the usual Arts subjects only, but Dr. Howes' statement of exclusion from the realm of practicability applied to these subjects as well, and at as low a level as Standard VI. Books in these subjects were available up to the S.S.C. level at least, and any shortage of books would have been for Science and Mathematics. With some

1. A.R. 1945. (Dr. Ian Sandeman). p. A15.

2. A. R. 1948 (Mr. W. A. de Silva). p. A11.

3. A.R. 1949. (Dr. H. W. Howes), p. A9.

4. Ibid., p. A34.

effort, books could have been produced in a matter of months. The truth, however, is that there was no determination to pursue the national language media to a logical and successful conclusion.

While the government displayed chronic indecision in the matter of extending the use of the national languages in education, Members of Parliament were not insensitive to the anomalous nature of the situation that was created by the options given at various times and the practise of legislating that the national languages should be the media at certain levels without a definite declaration of policy in regard to the levels beyond them. In 1948, Mr. W. Dahanayake pointed out the absurdity of teaching children upto Standard V in the national languages and switching over to English after that¹. In reply to a question² asked in 1949 by Mr. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolle about the medium of instruction in post-primary classes, the Minister of Education replied that "in the absence of suitable text books and literature the time is not opportune for compelling instruction in the mother tongue in the post-primary classes of those schools which instruct in English",³ more or less echoing the words of Dr. Howes, in disregard of the fact that the national languages had for many years been in use at this level in the so-called vernacular schools. Mr. Iriyagolle followed up the Minister's reply with a further question, "Has the Minister taken steps to get these books ready even now?" and received the astounding reply "It is generally known that text books are wanted for post-primary classes. I have not taken any special steps", laying bare the chronic myopia of officialdom. In July 1949 Mr. V. T. Nanayakkara complained that, as a result of no decision having been made about the post-primary medium, children had begun to flock after the primary level to schools which used the English medium in post-primary classes⁴. Despite these complaints, the Minister was in no hurry. On 10th August 1951, he said that the Director would inform him when post-primary classes could switch over to the national language medium. Four days later, he said: "We hope to introduce the Swabhashas in the 6th Standard by the beginning of 1953, as soon as I am advised by the Director". On 18th August 1952, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike urged the new Minister of Education, Mr. M. D. Banda, to see that "the education

1. H (HR). 10 August 1948. col. 952.

2. H (HR). 15 February 1949. col. 1187.

3. Mr. E. A. Nugawela. 15 February 1949. col. 1188.

4. H (HR). 29 July 1949. col. 694.

at the top is imparted in the national languages” and added that he liked “to see some faculties in the University carried on in our own languages”.¹ No such initiative could be expected from the Minister as official thinking continued to be dominated by 654 English schools as against 4754 Sinhalese and Tamil schools. Showing tender concern for them, the Minister confessed that these English schools “have said that it is very difficult to shift from English to any other language”.² In respect of Standard VI they had, however, to change over to the national languages in 1953. In August 1953, the Minister was undecided as to what should be the medium in Standard VII in 1954, and said “I am now getting the problem examined by a Committee”.³ An eminently sensible suggestion was made by Mr. Wilmot A. Perera: “If it is the intention of the Hon. Minister to have the Swabhasha as the medium of instruction from the Seventh Standard upwards, not only must it be made applicable to schools, but the corresponding adjustment must be made in the University as well”.⁴ It, however, fell on deaf ears and the policy of vacillation and uncertainty continued. In August 1954, Mr. N. H. Keerthiratne drew attention to the stagnation that was caused when students who had been instructed in a national language up to the end of a particular Standard had to switch over to the English medium in the next higher Standard. Some pupils had to stagnate for three years mastering the new medium, and not long afterwards they were compelled to leave school having become overage. In order that this kind of situation might not be perpetuated, he said, “Let the Hon. Minister open the doors of the University now itself to those who have studied in the Sinhalese medium”, but no heed was paid to these words of wisdom.⁵

Vacillation continues

On 13th January 1955, the Minister of Education, tabled in Parliament a “Statement of Government Policy on Swabhasha as Media of Instruction and Administration”.⁶ Nothing had been learned from the confusions of the previous decade and the criticisms in Parliament, and it was again sought to follow a policy of vacil-

1. H (HR). 18 August 1952. col. 3738.
2. Mr. M. D. Banda. H (HR). 18 August 1952. col. 3748.
3. Mr. M. D. Banda. H (HR). 26 August 1953. col. 1665.
4. H (HR). 26 August 1953. col. 1667.
5. H (HR). 16 August 1954. col. 1769.
6. Mr. M. D. Banda. H (HR). 13 January 1955. col. 1409.

lation and indecision. "The government had accepted the principle that Sinhalese and Tamil should be the official languages, and that they should progressively become the media of instruction in schools". An implication of this declaration was that the medium of instruction in the University would be English. Moreover, the details set out showed that in regard to Standard IX (also known as the pre-S.S.C. class) and Standard X (also known as the S.S.C. class) it was proposed in terms of (c) below to give an option to use English for any subject for any length of time at the discretion of the Minister, while the next higher standards in the schools, namely Standard XI (pre-H.S.C. class) and Standard XII (H.S.C. class) did not figure in the declaration at all, and one was inevitably led to conclude that the use of the national languages in these Standards was not contemplated at all. The following were the details:

(a) Except in Science and Mathematics subjects, the medium of instruction for Sinhalese and Tamil pupils in English schools in the pre-S.S.C. class in 1956 and the S.S.C. class in 1957 shall be the medium for that subject applicable to the pupil in Standard VIII in 1955.

(b) In Science and Mathematics subjects the medium of instruction in English schools in the pre-S.S.C. class in 1956 and the S.S.C. class in 1957 shall be the medium convenient to the schools, viz., Sinhalese, Tamil or English;

(c) The Minister may, however, on representations made to him by any school aforesaid that the use of the appropriate national language is not practicable, having regard to all the circumstances, authorize or direct instruction in any subjects specified by him to be given in any such school through the medium of the English language.

Considering that nothing at all was said about the two next higher Standards at the school level, the policy declaration meant that Sinhalese and Tamil would be the media of instruction in schools at some future date; and, possibly, never at all in the university. The opposition parties in the House of Representatives were not slow to expose the patent hollowness of the declaration. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike moved "that this House disapproves of the policy of government as set out in the statement of the Minister of Education in the House of Representatives on 13th January 1955 in that this policy places students who are

being and will be taught in the Swabhasha media at a great disadvantage and is not in accord with the aspirations of the people".¹ Mr. Bandaranaike recounted the history of the Swabhasha policy and its vacillations, and argued that the present declaration "makes the problem a hundred times worse. It condemns the present generation of children to the gravest difficulties, confusion and uncertainty". He also pointed out that "unless the change-over in the university is planned out and that plan is correlated to the change-over in the schools below you will create a gulf". The policy declaration was made while the Wijeyewardene Commission, appointed on 28th October 1953, to report, *inter alia*, "when and how the Sinhalese and Tamil languages.....can, without impairing the quality of education, be introduced as the media of instruction"² in the university and senior secondary schools was sitting. Government spokesmen offered this as the explanation why no reference had been made to the use of the national languages in the university, but Mr. P. G. B. Keuneman pointed out³ that a policy decision was a matter for the government and that it need not await the report of a Commission. "Have you no policy.....?" he asked, and added "The government should immediately announce that it accepts that Sinhalese and Tamil should be and will be the media of instruction at university level and over and above the S.S.C. You should then fix a definite target date by which teaching in the Swabhasha will be introduced into the university and after that tell your Commission 'Go ahead and work out the details for implementing the policy'." Mr. Keuneman then proceeded to consider the consequences of the various postponements and options, and offered an analysis that was distinguished by its brilliance. It is worth quoting it at length. He said, "First of all, you make the question of introducing Swabhasha into higher education one which is capable of indefinite postponement. Secondly, you create in the minds of everybody in the educational field a tremendous uncertainty, and that is one of the worst things you can do for education. And thirdly, you allow room for the further continuation of obstructions and rearguard actions by vested interests who are seeking to protect the monopoly position of the English educated in the country". He argued that the government was shielding the forces of reaction. "When it is proposed to extend Swabhasha as the

1. H (HR). 21 January 1955. col. 1653.

2. Final Report of the Commission on Higher Education in the National Languages. S.P. X of 1956. p. 1.

3. H (HR). 3 February 1955. cols. 2043—2058.

medium of instruction from Standard VII to Standard VIII, they set up a special committee to examine the question. Then they have another committee to consider the extension of Swabhasha into university education. A series of battles are going on and on, each time the same people coming forward and saying, 'Hold on! Don't be hasty! There are no textbooks; there are no teachers; there isn't this, that and the other thing'. He was opposed to English being the compulsory second language. He said, "The government policy will mean, firstly that the only means of communication between different communities in this country will be the English language. . . . Secondly, the very fact of maintaining English as the common second language which is compulsory means that you are preparing for a position where the medium of higher education will always be the English language. If you have only one university to which Sinhalese and Tamil students come, the only language they have in common is the English language." Pointing out that the division of the country into two nations—those who speak English and those who do not—was being perpetuated, he said that the proposals of the government were in the nature of a sop to Cerberus. "There has been a tremendous outcry; a very justifiable outcry, against the government's discrimination against the Swabhasha-speaking people, and the government has now thrown them a sop with the hope of stopping this outcry. Apparently, what is now said is, 'We will give these educated people a few more concessions; we will allow them to be educated up to the S.S.C. Standard in Swabhasha and we will also allow them to fill the junior rungs of the clerical service, but we will keep higher education, professional education, scientific and technological education as the monopoly of those who have learned the English Language'." In regard to the excuse of the government that there was a shortage of textbooks in Swabhasha, Mr. Keuneman said: "You say that there are no books and background literature in Swabhasha today, but you are the gentlemen who scrapped the Translation Bureau. You got this House to vote money for the translation of textbooks and did not spend it. You allowed the racket in the Educational Publications Bureau to go on unchecked, so that even those who were producing books in Swabhasha could not get them published. All sorts of jugglery went on behind the scenes". Finally, he argued that "for generations there has been discrimination in favour of a minority and against the majority of the people". Mr. V. Nalliah, speaking next, added to the discomfiture of the government by pointing out that while the government spent an average of Rs. 40/-

per pupil in a government Swabhasha school, Rs. 200/- per pupil was spent on Royal College, the premier government school which provided instruction in English at the levels for which the use of English was permissible.¹ Mercifully for the government, the debate was adjourned soon afterwards and was never resumed.

With the change of government in 1956, the policy of giving options was not ended but continued as before. Mr. W. Dahanayake, the new Minister of Education, issued a directive on 18th December 1956 extending the use of the national languages to Standard XI (or the pre-H.S.C. class) from 1st January 1958, and to Standard XII (or the H.S.C. class) from 1st January 1959 for all subjects other than western languages, western music, science, mathematics, logic and economics. In the case of these subjects, the English medium could be used at the discretion of each school, and no time limit was imposed for ending the option in respect of Sinhalese and Tamil pupils. As a matter of fact, the option to use English for these same subjects even in Standard IX (the pre-S.S.C. class) and Standard X (the S.S.C. class) still existed, and its end was not within sight. Matters continued in this state of indecision in regard to these subjects until 1962, but in regard to Arts subjects the university itself had to provide courses in them in Sinhalese and Tamil as from 1960 when the first cohorts of students who had received their entire education in the national languages entered the University.

The Jayasuriya Commission in its Interim Report² recommended that for science, mathematics, economics and logic the option that existed for Sinhalese and Tamil students to use English should cease (i) by 31st December 1961 in respect of Standard IX (ii) by 31st December 1962 in respect of Standard X (iii) by 31st December 1963 in respect of Standard XI (iv) by 31st December 1964 in respect of Standard XII. The government showed its usual hesitancy to act, but finally ruled that the option should cease as follows: (i) by 31st December 1964 in respect of Standard IX (ii) by 31st December 1965 in respect of Standard X (iii) by 31st December 1966 in respect of Standard XI (iv) by 31st December 1967 in respect of Standard XII.

The position in regard to the universities remained uncertain in the absence of a firm declaration by the government or by the universities. In connection with His Excellency the Governor General's

1. H (HR). 3 February 1955. col. 2061.

2. Interim Report of the National Education Commission. S.P. I of 1962, p. 12.

Address of 8th July 1967 declaring open a new session of Parliament, Dr. N. M. Perera moved that the House of Representatives had no confidence in His Excellency's government, in as much as His Excellency's government, "while claiming that national education is being imparted in the mother tongue, is not taking any steps to employ the mother tongue in the sphere of higher education but is forsaking rural children and poor helpless urban children by continuing the English medium for medical, law, engineering and other professional studies in the universities".¹ This amendment was defeated, and the situation in regard to the universities remains uncertain.

1. H (HR). 15 July 1967. col. 128.

CHAPTER 5

THE DYNAMICS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

THE dynamics of educational change in Ceylon during the era 1939-1968 is best considered in relation to the three most significant educational developments of this period, namely

1. the introduction of the free education scheme,
2. the abolition of denominationalism in education,
3. the partial dethronement of English from its position of pre-eminence, and the substitution of the national languages in its place.

While the arguments for and against the changes and the details of the changes have been set out in the three preceding chapters of this book, the analysis offered here is intended to give an overview of the forces that lay behind the legislative changes, the opposition to them, and the implementation of the legislation.

The motive force behind every one of the above changes was derived from a predominantly egalitarian ideology that set its sights on the greatest good of the greatest number. The leadership for it came largely from that sector of the elite which, while it had received a high quality education through the English language assimilating thereby liberal ideas from wherever they came, had its roots planted firmly in the national ethos. Pre-eminent among them were certain political personalities of whom some espoused the cause of the common man through a nationalistic orientation and value system, while others espoused the cause of the common man through a socialist orientation and value system. In regard to all three significant educational developments listed above, there was a fortunate congruence of interest between politicians of a nationalist orientation and politicians of a socialist orientation, and when they combined forces they constituted very powerful agents of change. A handful of public men, including educationists, also supported the changes, and along with politicians shared the leadership at the elite level. The numerical strength of the leadership itself was never large, but it could count on two layers of support. One of them consisted of a second level elite, in as much as it consisted of those who had received an education in the Sinhalese and Tamil languages, the best available in

these languages and yet limited in scope in comparison with education in English. They shared the national ethos in its fullness and their academic and cultural background was such that they were well represented on the editorial staffs of the newspapers that came out in the national languages. Leadership at its topmost level was never theirs to claim, and in general they could not be initiators of change. But when there was congruence on some issue between the English educated elite and this second level Swabhasha educated elite, their united strength was a force to be reckoned with. The other layer of support for change consisted of the masses, and when they were activated on some significant issue by the two elite groups mentioned above using the public platform and the Swabhasha newspapers as their media of communication, the combined strength was overwhelming and politically decisive, for after universal adult franchise was introduced in 1931, the masses could very well call the tune by the power of the votes they held. In educational and social change, the thinking originated with the nationalist-socialist sector of the English educated elite, percolated thence to the Swabhasha educated elite being embraced by them with as much enthusiasm as if it were their own creation, and was finally taken up by the masses which embodied it generally in the form of a slogan which called for acceptance at the whip hand of the vote.

The free education scheme

Free education was born in the minds of a handful that comprised the nationalist-socialist sector of the English educated elite. Mr. A. Ratnayake and Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara were the pioneers from the nationalist sector; the two or three left wing political leaders of the time were the pioneers from the socialist sector, and the most prominent among them was Dr. N. M. Perera, whose book *The Case for Free Education* was characterized by intellectual capacity and social sensitivity of a very high order. The idea of free education that came from the nationalist-socialist sector of the English educated was taken up enthusiastically by the second level elite, namely the Buddhist monks, ayurvedic physicians, Swabhasha teachers, and the editors of the Swabhasha newspapers, who harnessed mass support for the campaign. Free education spelt danger to the smugly complacent, self interested sector of the English educated who were so alienated from the roots of their culture as well as from the bonds of humanity with the common man that neither nationalist aspirations

nor socialist aspirations formed any part of their thinking and living. It spelt disaster also to vested interests of all sorts—colonial or imperial, social, economic, and religious—entrenched in positions of privilege in the public life of the country. Free education had therefore to be resisted, but what had become a slogan with the masses could scarcely be warded off for any length of time, and victory had to be conceded. The masses thought that they had won a great victory, but the forces of reaction had conceded victory on the front only to dig themselves in for resistance and sabotage behind the lines. Subtleties of implementation by their very nature did not lend themselves to slogans with mass appeal, nor was the elite leadership of the campaign sufficiently vigilant or persistent in its efforts to ensure effective implementation of the victory that had been won. There was, first of all, unconscionable delay in embodying in legislation the decision regarding free education. But after the legislation finally came, other tactics were used. Education was already free in the mass of schools, certainly in most of the schools patronised by the masses. Education was not free in a minority of schools and these were by and large the schools patronised by the well-to-do. The immediate consequence of the principle of free education accepted in 1945 was to give a bonanza to the well-to-do by giving them without payment the good education that had hitherto been paid for by them. The masses continued to receive free the poor quality education that had all along been free to them. The Central school idea represented a genuine attempt to extend the benefits of a good quality education, but the establishment of Central schools could proceed only at snail's pace as the lion's share of the finances of the government was taken up by grants of great liberality to the few prestigious schools which had been earlier fee-levying but had now become free. The welfare of this small number of schools was uppermost in the minds of the educational bureaucrats, for they were the schools to which the middle and upper socio-economic groups sent their children. The bureaucrats themselves belonged to these groups and had a natural interest in furthering their welfare; moreover, the middle and upper socio-economic groups were articulate in canvassing government aid in increasing measure. A honey and nectar repast was enjoyed by the prestigious schools attended by the few, while the schools attended by the many had to be satisfied with the dregs. The Junior school came as a half way measure in the government sector between the old, bad, free school for the masses, and the new

and better Central school for a few of them, but even Junior schools were not established in sufficient number. Such small mercies as did come their way placated the masses, and they were too inarticulate to ask for full scale justice. Officialdom was content to programme changes at the minimum rate of disturbance to its own lethargy and complacency. The policy that had been accepted was free education from the Kindergarten to the University. Education was indeed free to all in theory, but in practice what was free was a good education for the few and a bad education for the many. In other words, from the point of view of quality, free education was more a mirage than a reality.

Even as at the year 1969, education involving science and mathematics whether at the school level or at the university level is denied to the mass of children, and is available only to a small minority. Moreover, there are astounding inequalities in the per capita pupil expenditure by the government on different schools. While comprehensive expenditure indices are difficult to work out, the teacher salary costs per pupil provide a sensitive index of differences. Information¹ tabled in the Senate on 21st December 1966 in reply to a question by a Senator, Mr. R. L. A. I. Karannagoda, regarding five schools mentioned by him shows that the teacher salary costs per pupil were as follows for the month of November 1966:

	Rs.	cts.
Maha Vidyalaya, Theripehe ..	4	74
Nawela Namunukula Vidyalaya	5	52
Ananda Sastralaya, Matugama	12	23
Royal College, Colombo ..	24	85
Girls' High School, Kandy ..	16	01

When such astounding inequalities stare us in the face, it is a hollow mockery to say that equality of educational opportunity is provided in the schools, and that whether a child is sent to school A or to school B makes no real difference to his education. Statistical data of a comprehensive nature on education is difficult to come by in official reports as they are threadbare. This may be done on purpose so as not to reveal the great chasm between the achievements claimed by the Education Department and the actual achievements. Fatuous reports are often brought out couched in high sounding phraseology

1. H (S). 21 December 1966. col. 3233.

to make an international impact concealing the nakedness of the educational scene. A recent report entitled *Financing and Costs of First and Second Level Education in Ceylon 1952—1964*¹ claims to be of “significance from several points of view, namely:

- (i) as source material for educational planning and development;
- (ii) as source material for the study of emerging conceptual frame-works in educational planning and educational finance in general;
- (iii)”

A host of numerical exercises entertaining in themselves but to no useful purpose are carried out, a great deal of jargon is used, and most important of all, the evidence of the significance of the work lies, as in many other official reports, in the claim which the report itself makes of its alleged significance. Surely, the starting point for educational planning and development must be an analysis of the present situation with its imperfections and inequalities, but that kind of soul searching is not attempted.

It was the undoubted intention of our legislators that a good education should be available as a matter of right to every child born in this country. It was not their intention that a good education should be given free to a minority of children, while a bad education should be given free to the large mass of children, but this is the reality of the situation even twenty five years after the introduction of the free education scheme.

It must be recognised that it is a characteristic of the existence of social classes that the middle and upper social classes which are entrenched in power regulate the pace of change, accelerating change up to the point at which these classes derive benefit from change, and thereafter engaging in a process of deceleration so that the benefits do not readily accrue to the masses. The only possible corrective to this situation is an alert public opinion that stands for justice and equality, and the elimination of injustice and inequality.

1. *Financing and Costs of First and Second Level Education in Ceylon 1952—1964*. Colombo, 1967.

The abolition of the denominational system

The motive force for the abolition of denominationalism, with its inequities, was also derived from the egalitarian ideology of the nationalist-socialist sector of the English educated elite. Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara, ably assisted in the early years by Mr. A. Ratnayake, spearheaded the movement against denominationalism from a nationalist viewpoint. Strong socialist support came from Mr. W. Dahanayake in the early years, and from Dr. S. A. Wickremesinghe. The supporters of denominationalism consisted of a number of powerful groups. There were the privileged Protestant Christian denominations whose position was threatened, and who could muster support at the official level not only in Ceylon but at Whitehall and Downing Street as well. There was the privileged Roman Catholic Church that had such good organisation within it as to hold out the threat of a block vote by its adherents against any political figure who acted in any way that was contrary to the interests of the Church. There were also certain managers and principals of Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim schools who found the denominational system much to their liking from a personal angle however disastrous it was to the mass of Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim children. There were also the old boys of Christian denominational schools who stood up in defence of their schools out of their personal loyalty. The combatants on the two sides were almost evenly divided during the 1939-1947 era. One or two mild victories against denominationalism were gained by the nationalist-socialist front, but if denominationalism took two steps back in retreat in 1945 it was to take one step forward in 1947. Dr. Kannangara was no longer in the saddle after 1947, the United National Party led by Mr. D. S. Senanayake who was a strong supporter of denominationalism was in power, and with the appointment of Mr. E. A. Nugawela as Minister of Education the threat to denominationalism ended. The appointment of Dr. H. W. Howes in 1949 as the Director of Education was a source of great strength to denominational schools, and the Nugawela—Howes era proved to be the golden era of denominationalism in education. The victories of these years were consolidated during the Banda regime, but ominous rumblings could be heard on the horizon in the form of the public investigations and complaints of the Buddhist Committee of Inquiry. Its report came out strongly against denominationalism in 1956, but an uneasy calm prevailed during the period 1956-60. A religio-nationalist group led

by Mr. L. H. Mettananda, Mr. T. U. de Silva and a number of Buddhist monks persistently asked for the abolition of denominationalism, but was deftly held at bay by Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike ably assisted by the Minister of Education, Mr. W. Dahanayake, who had by then become a strong defender of denominationalism. The year 1960 saw the religio-nationalist cry for the abolition of denominationalism grow to a crescendo, ably supported by the left wing political groups with their policy of egalitarianism. The Minister of Education was Mr. Badiuddin Mahmud, who in the triple role combined in one of educationist-nationalist-socialist was firmly convinced from each one of these viewpoints that denominationalism should be abolished in the interests of education, the nation, and egalitarianism. With a courage that matched his conviction, with the mass support activated by the religio-nationalist and the socialist groups, with the assurance of unwavering support from the Prime Minister, Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike, who was firm as a rock when she made up her mind, Mr. Mahmud went ahead with the necessary legislation in the teeth of fierce opposition from the Roman Catholic Church, which capitulated only when it saw the overwhelming odds against it.

The abolition of the denominational school system assured a fair deal for all religious groups in as much as the children of all religions became entitled to be taught their religion at school; it also cleared the way for eliminating inequalities in the financing of education, for under the dual system the government met such heavy commitments by way of teacher salaries, and equipment and maintenance grants in respect of denominational schools that it could spare only a measly pittance for the support of government schools; above all, the abolition of denominationalism removed the grave obstacle to educational reform that came from the competition and rivalries of the dual system which created an over supply of schools in some areas and a shortage in others.

Conditions were ideal for a rationalisation of the school system, but a rationalisation of the school system on sound lines was not on the cards, for it would call for changes that would disturb the status quo of the privileged schools. Officialdom with its middle class ideology has not tried to face the challenge before it, and has all along considered it more important to accommodate itself to the status needs of the classes, especially in the matter of the admission

of pupils to schools and the provision of facilities, rather than do justice to the masses. Time and money are spent misleading the masses with false propaganda claiming that equality in educational facilities has been achieved, but in fact nothing at all has been done in the way of planning an effective course of action to put education on an equitable and rational footing.

The use of the national languages in education

The motive force for the dethronement of English and the substitution of the national languages in its place came from the egalitarian ideologies of the handful of nationalists and socialists among the English educated elite. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara and Mr. W. Dahanayake were the leaders of the movement. Support also came from a few educationists especially from the Northern Province, Mr. K. Nesiah who wrote a book entitled *The Mother Tongue in Education* being prominent among them; sometime later, Dr. G. P. Malalasekera and Mr. L. H. Mettananda entered the fray and championed the cause of the national languages with grim determination. Ranged against the national language movement were large numbers of the English educated elite, especially those distinguished for their alienation from the roots of national culture and from the aspirations of the mass of people. Among them were a good number of principals of English schools who regarded the welfare of their petty little kingdoms as the paramount consideration in educational reform. They fought against the introduction of the national languages as the media of instruction at the primary school level, but when they had to yield, they said "Thus far, and no further" and halted progress for the next few years; then they yielded up to Standard VI, and said, "Halt" with some measure of success; then they yielded up to Standard VIII, and cried "Halt" with a great deal of success, stopping further change for some years; then they yielded up to Standard X, crying "Halt" again; finally they yielded up to Standard XII, but "Not in the university", they said. The national languages have, however, found their place in certain Faculties of the universities but the battle is still being waged in regard to the other Faculties. The arguments of the prophets of doom were always the same—"There are no books, there are no teachers, the languages are undeveloped, standards will fall" but time and again they were shown to be wrong.

The approach of the officials in the Ministry of Education and the Education Department was characterised by a complete lack of planning. In ideological sympathy with those who cried "Halt", assisting them in many ways and most of all by not drawing up effective plans to prepare books and teachers well in advance but waiting for the hour of change to strike, officials made the change over as difficult as possible. The production of books in the national languages was much less of a priority with them than launching so-called islandwide English teaching programmes which were themselves doomed to failure, ill-conceived as they were. Millions of rupees went down the drain in the English teaching programme with no ostensible achievement on the part of the students. In comparison with the money spent on English teaching, only a meagre sum of money was allocated for the production of books in the national languages, and even out of that money so much was taken up by a top heavy administrative structure that very little was left for encouraging in sufficient number and variety either translations into the national languages or original books in the national languages. If a fraction of the money spent to teach English compulsorily to all children had been set apart as payment to translators and writers, there would have been a surfeit of books in the national languages today. On account of the lack of purpose and drive in the production of books in the national languages, students in the institutions of higher education have very little reading material in the national languages; the English most of them have been taught for ten to twelve years or even longer has not given them an adequate knowledge of the language to enable them to read English books with speed and understanding; a few students can and do read English books with success, but they are drawn from the upper socio-economic classes in which there was so much English in their environment that it was not difficult for them to acquire an adequate knowledge of English.

Conclusion

The dominant motivation for the educational legislation of the years 1939-1962 was provided by the egalitarian ideology of removing the inequities and inequalities of the system which existed and of clearing the way for the establishment of a new system of education that would assure a genuine equality of educational opportunity to every child regardless of his social class, economic condition,

religion and ethnic origin. The leading proponents of this ideology came from the nationalist-socialist sector of the English educated elite, and it was their task to remove the obstructions placed before them at every turn by a variety of forces ranged against them. Among the staunchest opponents of change was the dominant sector of the English educated elite consisting of those who had not only lost their cultural bearings and become denationalised but had also acquired an ethic of self centred insensitivity to the problems of the common man. Vested interests of all sorts, notably religious, economic, and linguistic also obstructed the changes that were seen to threaten their position of pre-eminence in the public life of the country. Considerable opposition to change also came from the British officials of the colonial government of Ceylon. Victory for the agents of change was assured by the popular support which their policies commanded. It came from the masses largely through the intermediary of the Sinhalese and Tamil educated elite who, along with the editors of the national language newspapers, and the resurgent Buddhist clergy, succeeded in activating the masses, which had the whip hand of the vote after the introduction of adult franchise in 1931. Victory in the legislature made change possible, and it was the task of the administration to take steps to implement the intentions of the legislature. It was here that confusion and disaster followed, for the only philosophy of action discernible at the official level was that of accommodating individual interests and class interests. A great deal therefore remains to be done before the fruits of the victories could reach those for whom they were chiefly intended.

SECTION III

Other Aspects and Issues

CHAPTER 6

CURRICULAR DIVERSIFICATION AND STUDENT SELECTION

Developments up to the White Paper of 1950

A complex of factors gave rise to a school curriculum that was predominantly literary and academic. The products of the schools found their most remunerative employment opportunities in jobs of a clerical nature, and for efficient performance in them a literary and academic background was as good as any other. Financial rewards were at their highest, and the tenure of employment was most secure in white collar jobs. Agriculture was by and large carried out on traditional lines, and the concept of scientific agriculture in relation to the basic food crops was unheard of. The large plantations, especially tea and rubber and, to a small extent, coconut were on the alert for improved methods of production and processing, but the know-how was generally not needed in a big way even at the level of the local superintendent as there was a small class of expert advisers, called "visiting agents", who were paid to visit the plantations from time to time and give specific instructions as to what should be done. There was no industrial development at all as Ceylon, in common with other colonies, provided a ready and preferential market for industrial goods produced in England. A handful of schools had facilities for science largely of the textbook variety, and in any event the applications of science learnt were in relation to situations in England, from where the textbooks used by the students came. No attention was paid to the application of education and knowledge to the solution of local problems, for subservience to foreign rule for many decades had produced among the people a state of petrification and lethargy which made them lose all initiative and leave it to the imperial rulers to solve the problems that confronted the country. The best schools were geared to the preparation of students for the Cambridge Senior and the London Matriculation examinations conducted by examining bodies in England; all the other schools set their sights on watered down versions of the curriculum of the prestigious schools, and were geared to the preparation of students for the Senior School Certificate examination, which in turn was a watered down version, with some regard to the local situation, of the Cambridge Senior examination. Social mobility lay unmistakably along

the path of examination success, to the limited extent to which it was not controlled by the factor of birth in the right circles. Curricula and syllabuses were centrally controlled by the Department of Education and no local variation was permitted. Nor was the quality of teacher preparation such as to produce any initiative in professional matters. The operation of this network of factors resulted in the development and perpetuation of a school curriculum that was predominantly bookish and unrelated to life. In 1931, an attempt was made to diversify the curriculum by inaugurating a scheme of education, known as the rural scheme, in the post-primary classes of a few schools. Mr. R. Patrick, the Deputy Director of Education, was the moving spirit behind the scheme which was described by him in the following terms: "In this scheme for post-primary classes the usual subject-titles are omitted as far as possible, and tasks and lessons have been grouped under the following headings which together are considered to provide an ample field of instruction suitable for schools: (a) Health (b) Study of the locality leading up to the knowledge of the world (c) Occupations (d) Literature, art, and music etc.¹ A few schools started on the scheme at first but, by the year 1939, the number of schools working on a revised scheme which had by then been introduced was 253. In a description of the revised scheme it is stated that "approximately half of the school day is allotted to practical work out of doors, and the lessons which are given in school during the remaining periods are developed as far as possible from the practical work; the pupils assist in preparing whatever plans are required in connection with the tasks; the maintenance and repair of school buildings and furniture have to be undertaken as part of the work".² In his Administration Report for 1939, Mr. L. Mc. D. Robison made the following comment about the rural scheme schools: "There was some doubt whether the scheme interferes with the preparation of pupils for examinations. But a comparison of the figures at public examinations shows that the rural scheme schools have invariably fared better than others both at the Junior School Certificate and Senior School Certificate examinations Several of these schools have done splendid work not only in the schools but in surrounding villages, particularly in regard to health

1. R. Patrick: "An experiment in rural education". *Oversea Education*. Vol. 4, 1933. pp. 166-173.
2. R. Patrick: "Rural schools and rural welfare in Ceylon". *Oversea Education*. Vol. 11, 1940. pp. 186-188.

requirements. The excellent example set by the young farmers in paddy cultivation and in the systematic growth of fruit and vegetables according to modern methods has been followed with marked results even by the older generation of farmers".¹ Two rural training centres for the training of teachers for the rural scheme existed at Mirigama and Welitara, and in order to train more teachers, a new training centre was started near Kandy on 1st May 1941. "The curriculum included knowledge of dairy farming, poultry keeping, bee keeping, principles of agriculture, general rural scheme work, and rural reconstruction, literature, art, music, methods of co-operation and health work".² In June 1943, Mr. R. Patrick left Ceylon to become the Director of Education in Trinidad, and with his departure the rural scheme of education that held so much promise died an immediate death. The Administration Report of the Director of Education for 1943 referred to the "satisfactory progress" made by the rural scheme schools and "their record of good work" but this was in effect an obituary notice.³ No mention is made of the rural scheme in the Administration Report of the following year and thereafter, and the scheme was abandoned without a word of explanation.

The year 1940 saw the beginning of the new system of Central schools, a category of school which was destined to play a key role in the educational history of Ceylon. The aims of Central schools have been described in certain Administration Reports issued by the Director of Education and may be summarized as follows:

1. To collect together the pupils who have passed the primary stage from all schools within a certain radius and provide education for them in a Central school staffed with the best teachers obtainable. It was hoped that in course of time the work involved in having small post-primary classes in every or nearly every school would be eliminated.⁴

2. "A training, cultural as well as practical," was envisaged with provision in the curriculum for academic subjects, including art, music and experimental science, and for practical instruction in vocational subjects, such as Agriculture, Commerce, Housecraft and Handicrafts.⁴

1. A.R. 1939. (Mr. L. Mc. D. Robison). p. A12.

2. A.R. 1941. (Mr. L. Mc. D. Robison). p. A5.

3. A.R. 1943. (Mr. H. S. Perera). p. A5.

4. A.R. 1940. (Mr. L. Mc. D. Robison). p. A3.

3. "To correlate the education imparted to the needs of the locality; to prepare pupils for life and according to their ability and natural equipment; by creating a love for their village environment and by concentrating on occupations, traditional or otherwise, which could be developed nearer the pupils' home to counter as far as possible, the tendency of village lads to migrate to towns and semi urban areas in search of employment and thereby to swell the ranks of the unemployed and become useless to themselves and to the community".¹

The Central schools did play a significant role in the educational history of Ceylon, but it was not in the achievement of aims 2 and 3 listed above that their contribution lay. As a matter of fact, the hope that Central schools would pioneer a more practical bias to education was not fulfilled. "The better developed Central schools provided a wide variety of subjects—Arts (including languages), Science, Agriculture, Commerce, Handicrafts (Metal work, Wood work, Lacquer work, Weaving etc)—and yet they were unable to make children, most of all the good ones, interested in agriculture and handicrafts. In other words, agriculture and handicrafts were without exception the Cinderellas of the Central Schools".² However vital agriculture and crafts studies were to the economy of the country, they were overshadowed in Central schools "by the superior prestige of the pure Arts and Sciences". Agriculture and craft skills had to be "salvaged from their submergence in the sea of academic subjects" in Central schools. In terms of this analysis, therefore, in whatever else the Central school system succeeded, it did not succeed in achieving curricular diversification on any serious basis. The support from the economy to curricular diversification was limited, for while there was no doubt that the needs of the economy required persons with specialist skill in agriculture and handicrafts, a wage structure heavily weighted in favour of white collar employment offered no financial inducements or other social rewards for specialising in agriculture and handicrafts. By 1943, the Director of Education himself had come to appreciate the situation. No longer did he envisage the mission of Central schools as that of correlating "the education imparted to the needs of the locality" or "creating a love for their village

1. A.R. 1941. (Mr. L. Mc. D. Robison). p. A9.

2. J. E. Jayasuriya: *Some Issues in Ceylon Education*, 1964. Peradeniya, 1964. p. 40.

environment" as his predecessor had done in 1941. In 1943 he described the mission of Central schools as that "of bringing secondary education to the very doors of poor but deserving pupils"¹. In other words, in the limited number of areas in which Central schools had been established, they brought within easy reach of poor pupils and at no cost to them the kind of good secondary academic education that had hitherto been available in a few good urban schools to fee-paying pupils. But from the point of view of curricular diversification on any serious basis, the Central schools were a failure.

The Kannangara Report recognised "the excessive uniformity of our educational system, which is almost purely academic in character and bears little relation to the practical aspects of life" as one of the major defects of the educational system, and regretted that "all post-primary education should be of one type and should be almost completely divorced from the needs of the pupils after they leave school".² With a view to diversifying post-primary education, the Report recommended that, at the end of the primary stage (fifth Standard or Grade, age eleven or twelve years), children should be made to sit for a selection examination and assigned to "secondary schools leading to the university and professional colleges" or to "senior schools leading to polytechnics and technical schools", or to "practical schools leading to the agricultural and trade schools".³ It was envisaged that the percentages entering the three types of post-primary schools would be as follows:

Secondary schools	5%,
Senior schools	8%,
Practical schools	8%.

Each type of post-primary school was to be organized into a lower department giving a three year course and a higher department giving a two year course. The allocation of pupils to the three types of schools was not to be regarded as final, and it was said that if circumstances warranted transfer from one type of school to another would be possible at the end of any year in the post-primary school, and especially at the end of the third year on the results of the fitness

1. A.R. 1943. (Mr. H. S. Perera). p. A5.

2. Report of the Special Committee on Education, Ceylon. S.P. XXIV of 1943. p. 138.

3. Ibid., p. 140.

test which was to be taken at that stage. The speech of the Minister, Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara, in the State Council showed that there was a certain amount of confusion in the minds of the authorities regarding the nature of the curricular provision in the schools. On the one hand, each type of school was to have a distinctive objective; on the other hand, in trying to show that transfer from one type of school to another would be possible, the Minister pointed out that "in the case of the lower department of three years and the higher department of two years, it has been suggested that work should be practically the same"¹. There was also a basic contradiction in the social philosophy underlying the reforms proposals. On the one hand, it was the proud claim of the Minister that he and his Executive Committee found education "the patrimony of the rich and left it the inheritance of the poor"²; on the other hand, he was prepared to concede that if a parent was dissatisfied with the type of post-primary school for which a child had been selected he would not object to an arrangement by which the parent educated the child in a non grant-in-aid school; this was without doubt a clear concession to the upper social classes. The claim in the Kannangara Report that "all the three types shall be accorded parity of status"³ had scarcely any basis of fact to support it. The secondary school envisaged a seven year course, while the senior school and the practical school envisaged only a five year course.⁴ The equipment grant for practical schools was to be at half the rate as that for secondary and senior schools.⁵ The quota of pupils per teacher was less for secondary schools than for senior schools and practical schools.⁶ Teachers in practical schools were to get a lower pay than teachers with the same qualifications in secondary and senior schools.⁷ In his speech in the State Council, the Minister himself had to concede that parity of status was unachievable largely on account of the cost involved.⁸

1. Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 2 June 1944. p. 934.

2. Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 2 June 1944. p. 946.

3. Report of the Special Committee on Education, Ceylon. S.P. XXIV of 1943. p. 46.

4. Ibid., p. 186.

5. Ibid., p. 79.

6. Ibid., p. 78.

7. Ibid., pp. 185, 186.

8. Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 2 June 1944. p. 923.

The proposals of the Kannangara Committee regarding the selection of pupils at the age of 11+ and the provision of post-primary education in three types of schools were clearly based on the thinking and the recommendations contained in the report¹ on secondary education brought out in England by the Consultative Committee of which Mr. W. Spens was Chairman. The Spens report came in for heavy criticism in England. More or less the same arguments as had been urged in England against the recommendation regarding trifurcation at the age of 11+ were used in the State Council debate against the Kannangara Committee proposals for the selection of pupils and their allocation to three types of schools. The support for the proposal was feeble, and the opposition was vehement. In the end, in lieu of selection at the age of 11+ to three types of schools, a proposal for selection at 14+ to two types of schools was accepted, and the relevant recommendations were phrased as follows:

"1. Schools shall be divided into two grades: primary and post-primary; the primary grade being uniform in type and the post-primary consisting of a Junior School from Standard VI to Standard VIII bifurcating at Standard VIII (normally at 14+) into Senior Secondary and Senior Practical Schools; Junior Schools being of diverse types adapted to suit local requirements. Provided that such secondary education is imparted in Multilateral schools.

The system of Multilateral Central Schools conducted by the State and providing courses of instruction free of charge up to the standard of the Higher School Certificate Examination shall continue with necessary alterations and modifications.

2. Each type of post-primary school shall be organized into a lower department giving a three-year course and a higher department a two-year course, the secondary school giving a further two-year course.

Pupils may be transferred if the circumstances demand it with the approval of the Department from any type of post-primary school to another at the end of any year in the post-primary stage.

3. There shall be a fitness test at the end of the Junior School Course—the test being organized and administered by the Department of Education in collaboration with the schools provided, how-

1. Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education. London, 1938.

ever, that in the allocation of pupils to the two types of Senior Schools the wishes of parents and school records shall also be taken into consideration.”¹

While trifurcation at 11+ may have been indefensible, the phraseology used in the first of the above recommendations appears to contradict itself by speaking of bifurcation into two types of schools in order to give education in a multilateral school. Junior schools would be of “diverse types adapted to suit local requirements” but at no stage of the debate in the State Council was there any elaboration of this idea to indicate what was proposed.

In February 1947, the Minister placed before the State Council a draft Education (Amendment) Bill to give a basis in law to some of the decisions reached in the 1944-45 debate on the reform of the system of education. The decision regarding bifurcation at 14+ and the school system received no mention as such in the Bill, but provision was made in the Bill to expand the regulation making powers, vested in the Executive Committee of Education by the Ordinance No. 31 of 1939, to include the following matters—

- (a) The classification of pupils other than those attending unaided schools, and their assignment to classes or schools, according to their proficiency and aptitude;
- (b) The classification of schools into
 - (i) secondary schools,
 - (ii) senior schools,
 - (iii) practical schools, and,
 - (iv) other classes and types.²

As a result of the enactment of the Education (Amendment) Ordinance No. 26 of 1947 with these provisions, the Executive Committee was vested with power to make regulations carrying out any kind of classification of pupils and schools that it had in mind, subject to the condition that the regulations had to be approved by the State Council and then ratified by the Governor. In theory, regulations could be made even for trifurcation at 14+, subject to approval

1. H (SC). 5 June 1945. col. 2950.

2. Education (Amendment) Ordinance No. 26 of 1947. Section 7 (1) (e).

as stated above. This was patently an unsatisfactory state of affairs, mitigated only by the fact that no action was taken under the Ordinance to classify pupils or schools.

The White Paper of 1950 and developments up to 1955

In July 1950 a White Paper entitled "Government Proposals for Educational Reform in Ceylon" was tabled in the House of Representatives. Secondary schools were to be of two types: (a) Junior secondary, comprising Standards VI, VII and VIII and (b) Senior secondary, comprising either two Standards beyond Standard VIII or four Standards beyond Standard VIII. In the latter case, the schools were to be called colleges. The examination at the end of two Standards beyond Standard VIII was to be the Senior School Certificate examination; and the further two year course in colleges was to lead to the Higher School Certificate examination. On completion of a six year course in the primary schools, pupils were to be selected for Junior secondary education. The section entitled "Methods of Selection" in the White Paper is given below:

"(a) The selection of pupils for Junior secondary education shall be by examination of the cumulative records of the pupil's work to be maintained in the school, and simple tests in language and number. Those who fail to qualify shall continue their education free in post-primary practical classes to 14 years, unless exempted by the Minister.

(b) There shall be a test at the end of the Junior secondary school course, organised and administered by the Department of Education in collaboration with the schools. Those selected for Senior secondary education, and these include those likely to profit by academic and by technical studies, will go to Senior secondary schools. The unselected pupils will have the option of being transferred to a vocational school under another Department, or they will leave school.

(c) Pupils who pass the prescribed Senior secondary attainment test (now called the S.S.C. examination) may be promoted to a Higher secondary class, which, however, may or may not be held in the same school as that in which the pupil took his Senior Secondary attainment test. Further, the pupil will be eligible for admission for specialist training at a Polytechnic, or any higher course of specialist training which may be available under another Department."

In other words, at the end of the primary school stage (about the age of 11+) pupils were to be selected for education in either post-primary practical classes or Junior secondary schools. Pupils who succeed in gaining admission to the latter will have a test three years later and be selected for academic or technical studies in Senior secondary schools, those not selected having the option of leaving or following vocational studies in Vocational schools conducted by other government departments.

Selection at the age of 11+, so strongly rejected in the State Council debate of 1944-45, appeared in an even more dangerous form in these proposals. Whereas the proposal for trifurcation at 11+ debated in 1944-45 carried with it three weak safeguards, namely that (i) the wishes of parents would be taken into consideration in the allocation of pupils, (ii) more or less the same curricular content would be provided in each type of school during the first three years, (iii) transfer from one type of school to another would be possible at any stage of the course, the present proposal envisaged allocation of pupils at the age of 11+ to post-primary practical classes without any comparable safeguards.

The proposals in the White Paper came up for discussion in the House of Representatives in September 1950. The Minister, Mr. E. A. Nugawela, said in his opening speech: "We intend to give the fullest freedom to every child—boy or girl—in this country for full development as well as opportunities for it through its education to serve the society it lives in, and also in that democratic way we hope through these proposals to ensure to every child equality of opportunity and to every child that type of education from which it will profit".¹ The hollowness of the proposals could not be concealed by the liberal sprinkling of brave phrases, and soon he was to fall into confusion and contradictions. In regard to selection at 11+, he said: "The object of this is to eliminate the mentally backward, I might almost say, the mentally deficient and the Director does not expect more than 5 per cent to be affected by it."² Neither the Minister nor the Director could have known the basic facts about mental deficiency if they believed that by the age of 11 years mental defectives would be in the top class (fifth Standard) of a primary school. Regarding the nature of the test, he said, "It is more or less an attendance test",³

1. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 258.

2. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 262.

3. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 263.

although the White Paper described it as consisting of "simple tests in language and number".¹ The most egregious contradiction arose when, after having spoken of the elimination of 5 per cent, he later said, "I am told roughly 75 per cent will go to junior schools"² leaving no clue as to what was going to happen to the remaining 20 per cent. In regard to selection at 14+, no mention was made of the percentages to be selected and no contradictions followed. According to the Minister, the vocational schools available were only 14 for the entire country, but he expected sufficient to be ready. "I am confident that I shall have them",³ he said, but he could only have meant that he was confident that other Ministers would provide them for him, as vocational schools were to be run by different Ministers. In selection at the age of 14+, if a child did not agree with the decision, "he can no longer enjoy the privileges of free education, but if his parents feel that the child is fit for an academic course, then the parents will have to pay".⁴ This essential safety valve for the children of the rich and privileged was available also at the 11+ selection stage according to the White Paper, but the Minister made no specific mention of it. In any case, all acts of omission and commission both in the White Paper and in the Minister's elaboration of the proposals deserved to be forgiven because of the richness of the peroration: "This is a scheme for a democratic system of education, an education for a fuller life of freedom for every citizen, and for the fullest possible realization of his capacity and service to the community".⁵ This, however, was not to be. The Minister's proposals regarding the school system and selection were described by Mr. W. Dahanayake as "a calculated, cold-blooded, conspiracy against the poor man's child" which "would perpetuate existing class distinctions and prop up the tottering ruling class of today"⁶. He also provided a plausible explanation⁷ for the confusion in the percentages quoted by the Minister. Apparently, 5 per cent had been quoted at a conference with big schools as the likely failure rate from them. An admission rate of 75 per cent. to Junior schools could have arisen from an anticipated failure rate of 25 per cent when all schools were

1. Government Proposals for Educational Reform in Ceylon. Colombo, 1950. p. 8.
2. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 261.
3. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 267.
4. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 269.
5. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 276.
6. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 282.
7. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 279.

included, but the Minister continued to quote 5 per cent especially to show how little hardship was likely to be caused by a test at the age of 11+ if it eliminated only 5 per cent. He could not get away with it, however, and had no answer to give when asked¹ why there should be an elimination test at all, if only 5 per cent was to be eliminated. Opposing the selection scheme, Mr. Wilmot A. Perera quoted² the tell-tale admission in the White Paper: "The new plan is a piece of administrative machinery....", as the reason behind the proposal. The wide gap between the grant of Rs. 2/50 payable per pupil receiving instruction in a post-primary practical class and the grant of Rs. 29/- payable per pupil selected for a Junior secondary school was also urged as an argument for rejecting the proposal for selection at 11+.³

In moving the Education (Amendment) Bill in December 1950, the Minister announced that he was abandoning the selection test at the age of 11+. According to the provisions of the Bill, all children completing their primary education would be admitted to Junior secondary schools for a three year course. Thereafter, pupils would be selected for Senior secondary education after ascertaining their aptitude and ability by (i) a test, (ii) an examination of school records, and (iii) the consideration of any other information which the Director may consider relevant. Pupils not selected could proceed to a senior class on payment of fees. A scheme of continued education with a practical bias was to be provided for pupils who did not proceed to a senior class, after selection or on payment of fees. Such continued education was not compulsory. The proposals came in for criticism for their class bias, and it was pointed out that there was no reason why pupils who were considered unfit for a certain kind of education should be permitted to enrol for that kind of education on payment of fees.⁴ In spite of the opposition, the Bill was passed on 13th February 1951 and was titled the Education (Amendment) Act, No. 5 of 1951.

Although the Education (Amendment) Act required that pupils who are fit for secondary education should be selected at the end of Standard VIII, no formal selection test was held in 1951. A test was, however, held for experimental purposes, but schools were informed

1. Mr. W. A. de Silva. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 317.

2. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 285.

3. Mr. V. T. Nanayakkara, H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 299.

4. Mr. W. Dahanayake. H (HR). 12 December 1950. col. 989.

that promotions should be made on the basis of their usual tests.¹ A formal selective test was to be held in 1952 and during the second half of the year, before the test was held, concern was expressed in the Parliament as to whether facilities for vocational training would be available for failures. Questions were asked² as to whether there would be sufficient vocational schools. It was pointed out that in certain electoral areas not a single vocational school existed, and it was alleged with justification that the test sought "to cream off those students who are thought to be fit for secondary education while abandoning, not safeguarding, those who are thought to be fit for vocational education".³ Even where some minimum facilities existed for vocational training, they were alleged to be quite unrelated to the life of the community around. In the environment of the railway workshops and industrial concerns of Maradana, vocational training in school was restricted to subjects like mat weaving "which have no relation whatever to the life of the children in their homes or to the type of life they are going to lead outside"⁴. The proposed selection techniques themselves were suspect. Cumulative records were expected to play an important role in the selection process, and yet a circular issued to schools in June 1952, five months before the selection test was to be held, stated that specimen cumulative record forms "will be sent".⁵ It was urged in the Parliament that the test should be abandoned. A Mission from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development which visited Ceylon in 1952 and made a report on economic development also viewed the selective test with disfavour and expressed the hope that the test would be given up⁶. The Minister, however, went ahead with the holding of the test. He tried to allay the fears of the critics, by pointing out that four factors would be taken into consideration in the selection. They were: (1) a test in language, arithmetic, and intelligence (2) school records (3) assessment of the head teacher (4) report of the circuit inspector regarding the eighth standard students.⁷ The records, presumably, were those maintained on forms issued less than five months pre-

1. A.R. 1952. p. A4.

2. Mr. M. Samaraweera. H (HR). 23 July 1952. col. 1057.

3. Mrs. Doreen W. Wickremasinghe. H (HR). 18 July 1952. col. 3692.

4. Mr. P. G. B. Keuneman. H (HR). 18 July 1952. col. 3702.

5. Mrs. Doreen W. Wickremasinghe. H (HR). 18 July 1952. col. 3696.

6. The Economic Development of Ceylon. Report of a Mission organized by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Colombo, 1952. p. 45.

7. Mr. M. D. Banda. H (HR). 13 November 1952. col. 952.

viously. The reference to a report from the circuit inspector was quite perplexing as it was not at all clear how or what he could say about individual pupils in Standard VIII in fifty or more schools in his circuit. The test was, however, held and the Director made the following comment about it in his Administration Report: "Those certified as 'fit' were those who were considered able to profit by senior secondary education, whether academic or practical, or a combination of academic and practical. Only those who were not shown to be 'fit' for such further studies were considered as 'unfit' for such education".¹ So enlightening is this comment that a cynical reader might be tempted to ask, "What was the Director fit for?" The children who failed the test "were left high and dry"² with no provision at all for their education. The Minister confessed that the number of such children was about 5000.³ The test was again held in 1953, and this time there was a complaint that even some of the successful candidates were left high and dry on account of the lack of schools for them to attend.⁴ The plight of the failures was as before, but with this difference that the government instead of making false pretences about supplying vocational education was at last prepared to concede openly that it was not in a position to provide facilities for such education. In the words⁵ of the Minister: "... we find that it is not possible to establish all the practical schools that we thought should be established... for taking in all the children who were not able to get through the eighth standard test. As Hon. Members are aware a very large number is involved. It would mean running a parallel system of schools and I wonder whether the state would be in a position to provide all the buildings necessary and all the equipment that goes with it, in order to establish a parallel system of practical schools..."; and the aid of the law was called in to justify this stand. "According to the law today compulsory education is for children from 5 to 14 years of age", he said. Three months later, he again stated, "We are making education compulsory for those students who are in the age groups 5 to 14 and only those who pass the selective test are permitted to continue their studies under the free scheme of education of the government".⁶

1. A.R. 1952. (Dr. H. W. Howes). p. A4.

2. Mr. Wilmot A. Perera. H (HR). 26 August 1953. col. 1606.

3. Mr. M. D. Banda. H (HR). 26 August 1953. col. 1658.

4. Mr. Wilmot A. Perera. H (HR). 5 January 1954. col. 1756.

5. Mr. M. D. Banda. H (HR). 13 August 1954. col. 1748.

6. Mr. M. D. Banda. H (HR). 18 November 1954. col. 1123.

Curricular diversification was invariably associated in the official mind with a system of educational selection and rejection, and possibilities of developing interest in vocational studies through less formal means than the establishment of institutions were not explored, despite the suggestions that had been made from time to time in the Parliament. In August 1953, Mr. M. D. H. Jayawardane pointed out that nothing tangible had been done to give a practical bias to education, and suggested to the Minister that paddy lands in close proximity to schools should be acquired and given over to provide a practical education in paddy cultivation.¹ In February 1954, Mr. W. Dahanayake suggested that where Crown land was available close to a school preference in regard to the lease of the land should be given to the school. Neither suggestion appears to have been seriously pursued. In August 1954, Mr. C. P. de Silva complained, with special reference to the North Central province, that "in a predominantly agricultural district, where the children have to take to agriculture the moment they leave school, no facilities are provided for them to learn even the most elementary agricultural methods".³ Mr. Dahanayake appealed for protection for cottage industries to provide employment opportunities beyond the Standard VIII stage,⁴ and received the light hearted reply that the imported products were more beautiful.⁵

The plight of the students sent out of school on the results of the selective tests—5000 in 1952,⁶ 9000 in 1953,⁷ 9540 in 1954⁷ and 9876 in 1955⁷—seemed quite unimportant to the government. The majority of the students sent out were from Sinhalese medium and Tamil medium schools, and as far as these students were concerned their position had been worsened by the scheme of free education introduced in 1945. Under the old dispensation they enjoyed free education and there was no provision to throw them out of school at the age of 14 years or 15 years, but as a consequence of the inauguration of the new scheme, which really conferred a blessing on students in the English schools which had been fee levying, the govern-

-
1. Mr. M. D. H. Jayawardane. H (HR). 26 August 1953. col. 1654.
 2. Mr. W. Dahanayake. H (HR). 3 February 1954. col. 2300.
 3. Mr. C. P. de Silva. H (HR). 13 August 1954. col. 1667.
 4. Mr. W. Dahanayake. H (H.R.). 13 August 1954. col. 1610.
 5. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene. H (HR). 13 August 1954. col. 1613.
 6. Mr. M. D. Banda. H (H.R.) 26 August 1953. col. 1658.
 7. Mr. M. D. Banda, H (HR). 7 February 1956. col. 1949.

ment had decided to permit only those who passed the selective test "to continue their studies under the free scheme of education of the government".¹

Developments from 1956 to the present time

One of the first acts of Mr. W. Dahanayake, the Minister of Education in the new government that came into power in 1956, was to seek Cabinet approval to suspend the holding of the selective test, as facilities were not available for providing education to students unfit for academic education.² The approval was readily given, and what was patently a discriminatory measure against the mass of pupils (those who had the money could continue to receive an academic education on payment of fees in spite of their failure in the test) was abandoned.

The problem of curricular diversification received the active attention of the Jayasuriya Commission, which achieved unanimity among its twenty members on this vital issue. In regard to Grades VI to VIII (approximate age levels 12 years to 14 years), it was recommended³ that Woodwork or Metalwork should be provided for boys and Home Science for girls and that for all there should be Work Experience in the form of a forty to forty five minute period per day working in the school garden or paddy field or practising at school a cottage industry prevalent in that area. For education beyond Grade VIII, the Commission mindful of the fact that "the prime need of the country is for accelerating the pace of economic growth, and that pride of place must perforce be given to agriculture, commerce and technology"⁴, recommended that in every electoral area in the country there should be comprehensive educational provision consisting of four types of schools as follows: Type A for students with an interest in agricultural studies, type B for students with an interest in the field of technology, type C for students with an interest in pure science studies, and type D for students with an interest in the humanities or commercial studies. While the schools were functionally distinguished, they were envisaged as "enjoying genuine parity of status as determined by staffing, curricular offerings, vocational openings, and opportunities for further education" including university education.⁵ The Commission did not expect a rush of ad-

1. Mr. M. D. Banda. H (HR). 18 November 1954. col. 1123.

2. Mr. W. Dahanayake. H (HR). 26 July 1956. col. 771.

3. Interim Report of the National Education Commission. S.P. 1 of 1962. p. 18.

4. Ibid., pp. 19-21.

5. Ibid., p. 27.

missions to one or two of these schools to the exclusion of others. It was suggested that pupils finishing Grade VIII be aided in their choice of schools by making available to them and their parents full details regarding the courses of study provided in the different types of schools, the occupational opportunities to which they open the doors, and the facilities for more advanced studies at the university level for those who qualify in due course for such studies".¹ The Commission emphasised: ".....we contemplate no direction by any outside authority that an individual should follow a particular course of study or go in for a particular occupation. We believe that there is no fundamental difficulty in reconciling individual interests and social needs.....".²

While the Commission's proposals were welcomed by teachers' unions, which called for their implementation, officialdom enthroned in the offices of the Ministry of Education and the Education Department conspired to work against them. The lack of co-operation given by officials to the Commission in the course of its deliberations had been highlighted by the Commission³, and moreover the Commission had drawn attention to a great deal of maladministration on the part of the Department. Officialdom was determined to stand in the way of the implementation of the Commission's recommendations, especially where they differed from the points of view urged by the officials, and used one ruse after another to achieve this end. Mr. L. G. Hewage writing to the *Lankādīpa* in December 1962 pointed out that a certain amount of propaganda was necessary to drive home to politicians the full significance of the recommendations, and argued that as opposition from the Education Department could be expected, the public should be sufficiently alert to ensure that the recommendations contained in the Report are effectively implemented.⁴

According to the White Paper issued in 1964, education beyond Grade VIII was to be provided in Maha Vidyalayas. Such education was to "be provided in separate schools or in separate classes for boys and girls".⁵ It was envisaged that there would be "Maha Vidyalayas available to pupils within 5 miles of their homes",⁵ and

1. Ibid., p. 26.

2. Ibid., p. 19.

3. Final Report of the National Education Commission. S.P. XVII of 1962. p. 5.

4. 3 December 1962, "Dan kala yutte yojana kriyatmaka kirima. Jatika adhyapana komisam vartava".

5. Proposals for a National System of Education. Colombo, 1964. p. 15.

that Maha Vidyalayas would generally have all four curricular streams, namely 1. Agriculture 2. Engineering 3. Science and 4. Arts and Commerce, but that in certain cases "according to the environment and other circumstances, 1 or 2 or 3 of the curricular streams"¹ may be provided. In criticism of the proposals, the feasibility of making educational provision on such a liberal scale within available finances was questioned. "If these proposals are not rhetorical outbursts but intended to be taken seriously as promises to be honoured, they mean that within five miles of every home there would be at least one Maha Vidyalaya (or possibly two if the phrase 'separate schools' for the two sexes is to be taken seriously) and that every such Maha Vidyalaya will generally have all four streams"². The idea of having more than one curricular stream in a single school was also questioned. On the ground that agricultural and craft studies would never enjoy popularity at the school level as long as they were among other curricular streams, the Jayasuriya Commission had sought to give them a status in their own right by making provision for separate schools in which such studies would be in a position of prominence. The White Paper did not share this thinking, and what it proposed did not differ very much from the situation that existed in Central schools where agricultural and craft studies available alongside academic studies were elbowed out of prominence by the greater prestige of the latter. The most serious weakness of the White Paper was that it did not seem to think in terms of providing post-Grade VIII education to all who sought it. The White Paper had this sentence: "Where there are more pupils seeking admission to a Maha Vidyalaya than there are vacancies, admissions will be determined on the results of a competitive entrance examination", and it was silent as to what would happen to the pupils who were not selected.³ Presumably, they were to be left high and dry without a school. This went clearly against the recommendations of the Jayasuriya Commission, which worked on the assumption that school places would be found for all who sought education after Grade VIII, and it was a return to the thinking of the White Paper of 1950. Officialdom had been unable to extricate itself from its reactionary policy of providing further education for a few fourteen year olds and turn-

1. Ibid., p. 8.

2. J. E. Jayasuriya: *Some Issues in Ceylon Education*, 1964. Peradeniya, 1964. p. 38.

3. *Proposals for a National System of Education*. Colombo, 1964. p. 15.

ing out other fourteen year olds on the high roads of idleness and delinquency. The proposals contained in the White Paper did not come up for discussion in the Parliament, may be on account of the criticism levelled against them on this as well as on certain other issues.

With the appointment in April 1965 of Mr. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolle as the Minister of Education, reaction was to raise its head in a more insidious form than ever before. He was a firm believer in selection. In August 1953, he had expressed the view that there should be a selective test first between the age of 10 years and 11 years, and again at the end of the Standard VIII stage¹. The White Paper of September 1966 issued by him listed as one of the weaknesses of the present system of education the "lack of systematic channelling".² After eight years of elementary education, that is, at about the age of 14+, pupils were to be classified into the following categories:

- (i) pupils accepted for secondary education in a Local Practical school
- (ii) pupils accepted for secondary education in a Junior Technical school (Agriculture and Fisheries)
- (iii) pupils accepted for secondary education in a Junior Technical school (Trades & Crafts)
- (iv) pupils accepted for secondary education in a Jyestha Vidyalyaya.

The classification of pupils was to be on the basis of "an assessment of their individual aptitudes, abilities and attainments".³ The precise nature of the assessment was not set out. It was to be included in the regulations to be made under a new Act that was to follow. A pupil seeking classification for a particular type of school and not getting it the first year could remain for a second year in Grade VIII and seek classification again. This was a clear concession to the upper social classes, for the poorer ones could generally not afford to maintain their children for an additional year in the hope of getting a specific classification. It was stated that the first year course in each of the four types of schools proposed above would be so designed as "to enable a child to present himself at the end of the year for re-classification on the basis of his attainments."³ In point of

1. H (HR). 26 August 1953. col. 1567.

2. Proposals for Reforms in General and Technical Education. Colombo, 1966. p. 7.

3. Ibid., p. 11.

fact, it would not be within the realm of practicability to offer curricula and facilities of such uniformity as to enable those completing one year in each of the four types of schools to qualify for re-classification on an equitable basis. Classification was to apply to all pupils whether in government schools or private schools¹. This meant no more and no less than the fact that children completing Grade VIII in an elementary school, whether government or private, would go through the classification process. All existing private schools had to adopt the system of public education and classification set out by the Minister.² But there was no bar at all to establishing new private schools for children above the compulsory school age. It was not stated anywhere in the White Paper that any new private school started for children above the compulsory age range would come within the provisions of the Minister's scheme of education and classification. This was no doubt the avenue of escape for parents of the upper social classes who are dissatisfied with the classification earned by their children. They could send their children to the new schools that could be established and get them to follow any courses of study provided in them. Apart from the deficiencies in the concept of selection and the manner of selection, there was much that was confusing about the school system itself. The nomenclature 'Local Practical school' suggests provision on a local scale and there would have to be several hundreds of them. The kind of course envisaged for a Local Practical school seemed much more limited in scope than that for a Junior Technical school, and yet Senior Technical schools were to admit pupils "who have completed successfully the Local Practical school or the Junior Technical school courses with specified subjects".³ This was a smokescreen to cover the real function of the Local Practical school which was to prepare for such occupations as that of an agricultural labourer, fisherman, carpenter, barber, and weaver children of the poorer social classes who have no alternative but to submit if selected for education in Local Practical schools. It was unthinkable that the children of the higher social classes would ever submit to such selection, for they could avoid it by seeking admission to the new private schools that could be established. The compulsory allocation of children of 14+ to fisheries schools could hardly be condoned for the reason that the government

1. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

was claiming to uphold the Buddhist way of life which did not approve of the killing of any living being. There was, of course, no doubt that people ate fish and meat, and that some were voluntarily engaged in the occupations of fisherman and butcher, but it was one thing for an adult to take to these occupations voluntarily and quite another thing for the government to take children of the tender age of 14+ and insist that some of them should undergo training in fishing or animal slaughter on the basis of the compulsory selection process.

The above criticisms against the White Paper were made in an article published¹ in a popular Sinhalese daily and the Minister referred to one or two of them in the debate on the White Paper. In connection with the compulsory allocation of students of 14+ to fisheries schools, the Minister argued² that the Jayasuriya Commission had also recommended schools of fisheries. In point of fact, the Jayasuriya Commission had recommended the establishment of fisheries schools to serve the needs of any who were interested in such training after the age of 16+ in effect, as a variety of educational provision was in any case made available at the option of the student from 14+ to 16+. There could scarcely be any identity between that recommendation and the White Paper proposal whereby some pupils would be assigned at the age of 14+ to fisheries schools with the option of no other education save in newly established private schools which would be essentially fee-levying.

An attempt was made to justify the scheme of rigid selection at the age of 14+ on the ground that the Kothari Commission of India had also made such a proposal.³ In regard to Work Experience, the Minister tried to make out that the White Paper was pioneering an altogether novel idea.⁴ This is not so, in fact. The Jayasuriya Commission recommended Work Experience, and in doing so pointed out the progress made in other countries, notably the United States and Soviet Russia, in introducing Work Experience programmes in their schools.

The hollowness of the proposals in the White Paper was exposed in the Parliament not only by the members of the Opposition but also by the members of one of the constituent parties of the government.

1. J. E. Jayasuriya. "Asadharana nava adhyapana yojana". Lankadipa. 2 December 1966.
2. Mr. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolle. H (HR). 8 December 1966. col. 3211.
3. No comparable proposal is contained in the Kothari Commission Report.
4. Mr. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolle. H (HR). 8 December 1966. col. 3213.

In regard to the proposals in the White Paper for classification at 14+, Mr. A. Amirthalingam said, "What will happen is that richer children who are rejected can get into private schools such as St. Thomas' . . . only those who can afford to pay fabulous fees can seek admission to such schools and the poorer children will be willy nilly bundled into the practical schools".¹ Mr. M. Sivasithamparam commended the Jayasuriya Commission proposals for education beyond the age of 14+ and pointed out that the kind of classification of pupils envisaged in the White Paper was "weighted firstly in favour of the children from richer homes, and secondly, in favour of the better schooled areas", and agreed that the whole idea of classification was "meant to deprive a section of the students of the benefits of higher education" which they were enjoying.² Dr. E. M. V. Naganathan, in a hard hitting speech in which the Minister was subjected to a great deal of invective, described the White Paper proposals as follows: "These proposals, as they are, are tantamount to practical hypocrisy. It is only to fool the people". He went on to say with prophetic vision "What is going to be implemented immediately is the appointment of staff from the Director-General downwards",³ and subsequent events were to show that he was right. The classification proposals were opposed by several members, one of whom quoted⁴ with approval the words used in a similar context by Mr. W. Dahanayake, then a back-bencher and now a Minister. He had then said of classification: ". . . practically all the children of the working class and of the peasants would be compelled to leave school at the age of 14+".⁵ Although the Minister had argued that there were no rich-poor differences in the education proposals,⁶ their ill-conceived class bias was patent, and several members pointed it out. The debate lasted two days and the only person other than the Minister to speak in support of the proposals was his Parliamentary Secretary. The debacle no doubt had its lessons for the Minister, for although he stated that he would incorporate the proposals in legislation, it was not until almost a year later that he dared to introduce a Bill,⁷ and even then he let the Bill lapse without a debate.

1. Mr. A. Amirthalingam. H (HR). 8 December 1966. col. 3271.

2. Mr. M. Sivasithamparam. H (HR). 9 December 1966. cols. 3381, 3390, 3391.

3. Dr. E. M. V. Naganathan. H (HR). 9 December 1966. cols. 3448, 3463.

4. Mr. Bernard Soysa. H (HR). 8 December 1966. col. 3281.

5. Mr. W. Dahanayake. H (HR). 26 September 1950. col. 279.

6. Mr. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolle. H (HR). 8 December 1966. col. 3209.

7. General and Technical Education Bill, 1967.

According to the draft Bill presented by the Minister of Education in the Parliament on 20th November 1967, schools named Kanistha Vidyalayas were to provide education from Grades I to VIII, and Maha Vidyalayas from Grades VIII to X. Section 5 (1) of the Bill was as follows: "The course of studies in Grades VI and VII of the Kanistha Vidyalayas and in Grade VIII of the Maha Vidyalayas shall be so designed as to enable a pupil at the termination of the Grade VIII course to qualify for admission to one of the arts, science, technical, aesthetic or other approved curricular stream of the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) course". By section 5 (2) of the Bill, "the procedure for acceptance to any curricular stream and for transfer from one curricular stream to another" was to be laid down by regulations to be framed under the proposed Act. One is in the dark about two important issues. It is not clear whether every student completing Grade VII from a Kanistha Vidyalaya would be admitted to Grade VIII in a Maha Vidyalaya. It is also not clear whether every student completing Grade VIII would be admitted to one of the curricular streams at the Grade IX level, or whether some would be compelled to leave school. Section 14 of the Bill prohibits the establishment of private schools (other than Estate schools and schools for handicapped children) for children of compulsory school age. New private schools can therefore be established for children who have attained the age of 14 years, and presumably a child of 14 years not admitted to a Maha Vidyalaya after completing Grade VII or not admitted to a preferred curricular stream after passing Grade VIII could seek admission to one of these new private schools. They will undoubtedly be fee-levying and provide economically privileged classes with the opportunity of getting over any unwelcome decision made about them by the education authorities at the end of Grade VII or Grade VIII. Apart from this category of children, even those who qualify for admission to desired curricular streams can seek admission to new private schools which will be established for the rich as an entrepreneurial activity.

For education beyond Grade X, the Bill provides for the establishment of (i) Trades Schools (ii) Junior Technical Institutes (iii) Senior Technical Institutes (iv) Jyestha Vidyalayas and (v) Colleges of Arts, Crafts, Music and Dancing. According to section 6 (2) of the Bill, the Minister may make regulations prescribing "the qualification for admission" to each of these types of schools, and "the

total number of students who shall be admitted annually to each type of school", and "the apportionment of that number to different courses of study in accordance with the national manpower requirements". There are several dangerous assumptions involved in this. It is assumed that requirements of national manpower can be accurately forecast. Even in a highly developed technological society such forecasts are far from accurate. In a rapidly developing society such forecasts will be completely off the mark. Moreover, the basic statistical data required to attempt any kind of forecast is also lacking. Another assumption involved in the proposal is that the Minister has the right, by a simple numerical procedure, to decide to exclude from courses of study young people who may have every qualification for them.

The draft Bill was on the whole a very unsatisfactory piece of work. It did not say a great deal and chose to be silent on many issues, but the little it said was marred by the lack of an intelligent approach to educational problems. Although the draft Bill was presented on 20th November 1967, there has been no debate on the Bill yet. Meanwhile, a policy of drift and confusion goes on.

CHAPTER 7

RELIGION IN SCHOOL

The place of religious instruction in school has to be considered separately in relation to government schools and to denominational schools. The problems involved were different, and moreover the provisions in the law of education were also different.

Government schools

The government schools established by the British during the first four decades of their rule in Ceylon were not very different from the denominational schools established by Christian missionary organisations in that they provided a Christian environment and taught Christianity even to non-Christians, subject to the right of withdrawal from such instruction. As public opinion developed against this state of affairs, the Christian character of government schools was allowed to disappear. The Town Schools Ordinance of 1906 forbade the teaching of religion in schools established by local bodies. It is only on the assumption that the applicability of this principle to government schools had come to be generally accepted that the absence of any clause to that effect in the Rural Schools Ordinance of 1907 could be explained.

Section 14 of the Education Ordinance No. 1 of 1920 read as follows: "Religious teaching shall not form part of the instruction to be given at any government school, whether secondary or elementary, by any teacher; but any minister or teacher of religion authorized by the Director by writing under his hand may give religious instruction to the children of the religious denomination to which the minister belongs at such times and places as may be agreed upon between him and the Director". The principle of government neutrality in religion was not convincing in the face of the government's massive support of a denominational school system that was heavily weighted in favour of Christian denominations. The demand of the Buddhists, the Hindus and the Muslims was that every pupil in a government school should be given instruction in his or her religion.

Very few ministers or teachers of religion applied, under the terms of the 1920 Ordinance, to the Director of Education for the necessary authority to provide religious teaching on the conditions to be laid down by the Director, and a motion by Mr. A. Ratnayake:

"This Council is of opinion that teachers in government schools should be permitted to give religious instruction to children in their schools immediately before or after school sessions" came up for discussion in the State Council on 10th March 1938. In supporting the motion, Mr. A. E. Goonesinha submitted that not more than 5 or 6 per cent of the government schools were taking advantage of the provision in the 1920 Ordinance, and that "a class of man who has no character" was being turned out of government schools for want of religious instruction.¹ A few members opposed the motion, the main grounds of opposition being two, namely that the government should follow a principle of absolute neutrality in respect of religion, and that if religious instruction were to be provided in a government school too many religions would have to be taught. That the government should observe a policy of absolute neutrality in relation to religion was a piece of legal fiction, for the government was subsidising denominational schools by means of liberal grants to them, and the grants were not in proportion to the strength of the different denominations in the population. In spite of the opposition to the motion, it was passed by 17 votes to 6.

In the Education Bill that was placed before the State Council in 1938, a clause was included to give effect to the above decision. In commending the clause to the State Council, the Minister explained that parties opposed to the State Council decision of August 1938 had gone so far as to lodge protests with the Secretary of State for the Colonies.² The opposition in the State Council itself during the 1938 debate was relatively mild, and the provisions relating to religious instruction in government schools were passed with some amendments, and embodied in the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939. Instruction in religion was not to "be given in any government school as part of the ordinary course of studies at the school". Religious instruction could, however, be provided in any part of the school premises "at any time either before or after the hours appointed for the ordinary meeting or session of the school, or on any day on which such meeting or session is not held". Teachers authorized by the Director could give religious instruction to children of the same religious persuasion as the teacher, but parental consent expressly communicated in writing was required before a child could attend a class for religious instruction.

1. H (SC). 10 March 1938. p. 923.

2. Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 9 August 1938. p. 1973.

One of the recommendations placed before the State Council in 1944 by the Executive Committee for Education pertained to religious instruction. It read as follows: "Religious instruction (appropriate to the religion to which the parent of the child belongs) shall normally be provided in all State Schools including all State Training Colleges subject to the right of individual parents to withdraw their children from such instruction by written request addressed to the headmaster".¹ In so far as government schools were concerned, the intention of this recommendation was to remove the limitation imposed by the 1939 Ordinance, namely that "No instruction in religious subjects shall be given at any government school as part of the ordinary course of studies at the school", and to make it the responsibility of government schools to provide religious instruction. The recommendation was opposed by a few members of the State Council who argued that the government should observe neutrality in the matter of religion.² To be quite consistent, the abolition of the system of assisted denominational schools had also to be urged, for in the distribution of grants to such schools, especially in a proportion quite different from the strength of the various denominations in the general population, neutrality was not shown. In this respect, a consistent position was taken up only by one³ of the advocates of religious neutrality. On the whole, the opposition to the recommendation was feeble, and it was approved by the State Council on 5th June 1945.

Obstacles placed in the way of framing the necessary legislation prevented the Minister from giving effect to these decisions until he introduced the Education Ordinance of 1947. This Ordinance provided that "instruction in the religion of the parent of each pupil in a government school shall be given to that pupil, as part of his course of studies in the school, by a person who is an adherent of that religion and who has been approved by the Director". In other words, the ban on religious instruction in government schools as part of the course of studies was removed. A clause in the Ordinance exempted a government school from providing instruction in a particular religion if the number of pupils whose parents professed that religion

1. H (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 837.

2. Mr. J. Tyagaraja. H (SC). 14 July 1944. p. 1246; Mr. G. A. H. Wille. H (SC). 21 November 1944. p. 2608; Mr. W. Dahanayake. H (SC). 21 November 1944. p. 2617.

3. Mr. W. Dahanayake.

was less than 15. There was also a clause to the effect that a pupil was entitled to be exempted from attendance at religious instruction or worship in the religion of the parent on a written request from the parent.

Denominational Schools

In relation to denominational schools, everyone of which provided instruction in the religion of the managing body of the school, the question at issue was that of safeguarding pupils belonging to religions different from that of the proprietor. The following provisions were contained in the Ordinance of 1920:—

“It shall not be required as a condition of any child being admitted into or continuing in an assisted school that he shall attend or abstain from attending any Sunday school or any place of religious worship, or that he shall attend any religious observances or any instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere, from which observance or instruction he may be withdrawn by his parent or guardian, or that he shall attend the school on any day exclusively set apart for religious observances by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

The time during which any religious observance is practised or religious instruction is given at any meeting of an assisted school shall be either at the beginning or the end or at the beginning and the end of such meeting, and shall be inserted in a time table to be approved by the Director, and to be kept permanently and conspicuously affixed in every school room, and any scholar may be withdrawn by his parent or guardian from such observance or instruction without forfeiting any of the other benefits of the school”.

They placed on the parent the responsibility to request withdrawal in much the same way as the Town Schools Ordinance of 1906 and the Rural Schools Ordinance of 1907 had done in spite of the recommendation in the Wace Commission Report of 1905 that religious instruction should not be given to pupils of other denominations “except with the consent of the parents obtained for that purpose by the teacher”.¹ The right of withdrawal was illusory. Many parents did not know of it; even if they did, they dared not use it for fear of incurring the displeasure of the school. Over the years the

1. Report of the Commission on Elementary Education in Ceylon. S.P. XVII of 1905. p. 4.

Buddhists, the Hindus and the Muslims agitated for the inclusion of a conscience clause in a positive form as recommended by the Wace Commission, but their request fell on deaf ears. In 1929, the Macrae Commission urged the inclusion of such a clause¹ but no action was taken to implement the recommendation until 1938.

A conscience clause in a positive form was included in the Education Bill moved by the Minister of Education in 1938. Part of the opposition to the Bill arose from the inclusion of this clause, which read as follows:

“No child belonging to a religious denomination other than that to which the proprietor or manager of an assisted school belongs shall be permitted to attend any Sunday school or any place of religious worship or to attend any religious observance or any instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere unless the parent of the child has expressly stated in writing his consent that his child shall attend such place of religious worship or receive instruction in religious subjects in the school”.

Opposition was expressed in quite strong terms by certain Christian denominational groups, but the clause was not pressed to a division in the State Council and was embodied in the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939.

The issue of religious instruction in denominational schools came to the forefront again in the Education Debate of 1944-45. The Minister of Education pointed out that there were abuses in the operation of the conscience clause, and that the managers of certain schools were in the habit of printing forms, signifying consent to religious instruction being given to children, and sending them to parents for signature.² These forms were received by parents of religious denominations different from that of the management and signed either as a matter of course or through fear of incurring the displeasure of the school, and in this way the conscience clause was more or less circumvented. The Minister urged that an absolute ban be placed prohibiting instruction being given in the religion of the management of the school to children belonging to other religious persuasions. This did not cause much controversy, objections to it being quite faint hearted.

1. Report of the Commission to Inquire into and Report upon the Present System of Education in Ceylon. S.P. XXVII of 1929.
2. Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 2 June 1944. p. 920.

The only specific recommendation about religious instruction placed by the Executive Committee for decision by the State Council in the 1944-45 debate made no reference to assisted schools and related only to government schools. It read as follows: "Religious instruction (appropriate to the religion to which the parent of the child belongs) shall normally be provided in all State Schools including State Training Colleges subject to the right of the individual parents to withdraw their child from such instruction by a written request addressed to the headmaster".¹ Mr. U. B. Wanninayake moved an amendment to add after the word "all" the following words "Assisted denominational schools and in", and also to add at the very end the proviso: "provided that it shall not be compulsory to provide such religious instruction to such children if their number on the roll does not exceed fifteen".² The proviso caused no difficulty, but the effect of the five words to be added after the word "all" was to make it obligatory for assisted denominational schools to provide instruction appropriate to the religions to which the parents of the children belonged. In other words, it meant that an assisted denominational school should provide instruction not only in the religion of the management but in other religions as well if there were children belonging to them. The amendment was moved on 26th January 1945, but in moving it Mr. Wanninayake did not elaborate on it. Notice of the amendment had been given earlier, and opposition had been expressed by one speaker in July 1944 to "forcing denominational schools to teach religions other than their own".³ No other member had any comment on the amendment except the Minister who, in the concluding speech of the debate, explained that the mover of the amendment had taken a line indicated by the Minister, namely that "if denominational schools are to go on, then, in that case they must be fair-minded" in the matter of religious instruction by providing, for every child attending school, instruction in the child's religion.⁴ It is a matter for surprise that the amendment did not attract much attention and was, in fact, accepted by the State Council without a division on 5th June 1945.⁵ It was a day on which many recommendations were discussed and passed, amended and passed, or rejected, so much so that in the general

1. H (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 837.

2. H (SC). 5 June 1945. col. 2871.

3. Dr. M. C. M. Kaleel. H (SC). 14 July 1944. p. 1254.

4. Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 5 June 1945. col. 2890.

5. H (SC). 5 June 1945. col. 2929.

confusion which prevailed the full implications of this particular amendment may not have been appreciated. There is no doubt that Christian denominational bodies found the amendment quite unacceptable.

It was the Minister's complaint that until 1947 various forces were at work to prevent him from giving legal effect to the decisions of June 1945. Strangely, however, the above decision of 5th June 1945 was not embodied in the draft Ordinance that was placed before the State Council in February 1947. In relation to assisted schools, what the Ordinance did was to provide that any instruction in (or worship or observance connected with) religion should be at the beginning or at the end of the school day, and to prohibit attendance by any child for instruction in (or worship or observance connected with) a religion other than the religion of the parent. A definition was attempted of what was meant by the religion of the parents. Earlier it had been taken for granted that where the father and the mother of the child professed different faiths, the father's religion should be taken as the parental religion for the purpose of providing religious instruction for the child. The Roman Catholics asked for a more flexible interpretation, pointing out that very often a marriage between a non-Catholic male and a Catholic female was permitted by the Church on the distinct understanding that children of the union would be brought up as Catholics.¹ As a concession to Roman Catholics, the Ordinance left a loophole so that by the simple device of not getting a declaration regarding religion from the father but getting it from the mother, the objective of the church could be realised.

The failure to give legal effect to the decision of the State Council in June 1945 that every student in an assisted school should be provided instruction in the religion of his parent resulted in the continued denial of a religious education to thousands of children attending schools managed by religious denominations other than their own. The rationale for the denominational system was that a religious education was necessary, and yet the necessity was confined in respect of any particular denominational school to children of the same religious persuasion as the managing body of the school. The fact that government schools provided religious instruction for children of all religious faiths showed that such provision was both desirable and feasible. Attempts to evade the issue of religious instruction in denominational schools for children professing religious faiths

1. Mr. H. de Z. Siriwardene. H (SC). 7 March 1947. col. 1190.

different from those of the managing bodies were not successful, and pointed attention was drawn from time to time to the void that had to be filled. A Minister, who claimed glibly that a great deal was being done for religious education and expressed the view that no education worth the name was possible without religion¹, was summarily put on the mat by a Member of Parliament who asked what religious education was being provided for 47,362 Buddhist students in Roman Catholic schools, and 38,809 Buddhist students in Protestant schools². In fact, the complete neglect of the religious education of Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim children in Christian schools was one of the strongest arguments urged in the agitation for the government to take over denominational schools during the quarter century prior to 1960. Incontrovertible evidence was also adduced in the Buddhist Committee of Enquiry Report to cases of proselytisation in Roman Catholic schools, and to the declared intentions of the Protestants that obedience to God required the Christian teacher to engage in indirect evangelism.³ Non-Christians who thought that the conscience clause was an effective safeguard were completely disillusioned. The agitation for the take over of assisted denominational schools reached a climax in 1960, and the government, convinced of the soundness of the arguments urged for the take over, enacted the necessary legislation.⁴ With the incorporation of all but a handful of denominational schools in the government school system, nearly all school going children, whatever their religious persuasion, are provided instruction in their respective religious faiths. A few denominational schools stand outside the system, and are private schools. They are not legally obliged to provide religious instruction, but many of them are forced to do so, as religion is a compulsory examination subject at the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) Examination. On the whole, the issue of religious instruction may be considered to have been finally settled by the legislation of 1960 on a basis that offers absolute equality to all religions.

1. Mr. W. Dahanayake. H (HR). 22 July 1959. col. 1039.

2. Mr. Nimal Karunatileke. H (HR). 22 July 1959. col. 1060.

3. See pages 54 and 55.

4. Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (Special Provisions) Act. No. 5 of 1960.

CHAPTER 8

ESTATE SCHOOLS

Brief history up to 1939

From about the middle of the nineteenth century, British entrepreneurs opened up coffee and tea plantations in the central highlands of Ceylon, employing Indian Tamil labour recruited from South India. The immigration of Indian Tamil labour continued, with a few interruptions, up to the 1950's.

Living in estate enclaves, speaking a language different from that spoken by the indigenous population in the villages surrounding the estates, and professing a religion different from theirs, the estate labourers constituted a distinct community. As the labourers were imported to serve the needs of the owners of the estates, the responsibility of caring for the welfare of the labour force was placed on the owners of the estates.

The Rural Schools Ordinance No. 8 of 1907 imposed upon the superintendent of the estate the obligation to provide for the vernacular education of the children of the labourers employed on the estate between the ages of 6 and 10, and to set apart and keep in repair a suitable school room. If the superintendent failed to make provision, the Director of Public Instruction was empowered to require the superintendent to make such provision, and, in the event of failure to comply, the government was empowered to cause the necessary measures to be taken, the cost being recoverable from the estate. The superintendent was also required to make returns of the children of school-going age on the estate, and to cause an attendance register to be kept. The Director of Public Instruction was empowered to cause estate schools to be inspected with due notice to the superintendent. In accordance with the recommendations of the Wace Commission, there was no compulsion on children to attend school. Under the general scheme of government grants to schools, a results grant was payable by the government to the superintendent of an estate school.

Part V of the Education Ordinance No. 1 of 1920 dealt with estate schools. While it generally repeated the provisions of the earlier Ordinance, it also sought to make the law more comprehensive by

correcting defects that had come to light in the operation of the previous Ordinance.

The duty of the superintendent was enlarged to include that of providing "competent teachers", for it had been found that, in the absence of such a proviso, estates engaged as teachers persons who combined the duties of a teacher with those of the "head of a gang of labourers".¹ Other important provisions that were included in the new Ordinance were the prohibition against the employment of children between the ages of 6 and 10 years on any work upon any estate before the hour of ten in the morning, and a requirement that the parent of any child between the ages of 6 and 10 years should cause such child to attend school, failure to do so being punishable by a fine or, in default of payment, imprisonment.

From the Ordinance of 1939 to the end of the year 1946.

Part VI of the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 was closely modelled on the Ordinance of 1920, and generally repeated its provisions. Two changes may, however, be noted. While the Ordinances of 1907 and 1920 required the estate superintendent to make provision for the "vernacular education" of estate children, the word "vernacular" was omitted from the Ordinance of 1939. The superintendent is required "to make such provision as may be prescribed for the education of the children". This phraseology leaves it open for the Director of Education to prescribe, for example, that some English be taught, whereas under the previous Ordinances there would have been no legal basis to require compliance. In fact, however, the Director has done nothing to broaden the curriculum beyond vernacular education in reading, writing and arithmetic. A second important respect in which the Ordinance of 1939 differed from the Ordinance of 1920 is that it placed on the superintendent of the estate the duty to report to the Director of Education any parent failing to cause a child between the ages of six and ten to attend school. Although the Ordinance of 1920 had a requirement of compulsory attendance with penalties on parents, it provided no machinery by which the Director of Education could discover errant parents.

An issue of great importance in relation to the education of children attending estate schools was raised in the State Council in 1942 by Mr. B. H. Aluwihare. "The other day I raised the question

1. H (LC). 26 November 1919. p. 433.

of introducing Sinhalese in estate schools. We are faced with the position that in our area we have a percentage of foreign—Indian—labour which is permanently settled.....the sooner they are enabled to establish contact with the permanent population, at least in the matter of language, the better it would be for all concerned.... There is no contact in language; no contact by proximity, in the course of neighbourliness, because they have nothing to do with each other and they tend to become isolated blocks. I do not think it is in the interests of anybody that permanently settled labour should be an isolated block...if only we can take steps to establish contact, and if possible, absorb it into the general population it would be all the better for us in the long run".¹ Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara, Minister of Education, replied that the superintendent of the estate was made responsible for the education of the children on the estate and that a reasonable grant was paid to the superintendent. He, however, agreed to get in touch with the Agent of the government of India and the estate proprietors, and discuss this matter.² To this, Mr. Aluwihare made the pertinent and apt comment: "I do not know whether this is a matter for the estate superintendent to decide. This is a matter of policy to be accepted by the government and laid down as part of the curriculum of estate schools".³ It is not known whether the Minister and the government pursued this matter at all, but it is clear that nothing tangible followed.

Not a word was mentioned about estate schools in the Kannangara Report⁴. On 30th May 1944, in opening the debate on the recommendations based on this report, the Minister said that the question of education in estate schools has been "dropped for the present".⁵ However, in June 1945, during the concluding stages of the debate, Mr. I. X. Pereira moved, on behalf of Mr. S. Vytilingam, the following addition, in the form of an amendment, to the list of recommendations: "that all estate schools shall be converted into primary State Schools and shall form part of the system of National Education".⁶ Mr. B. H. Aluwihare seconded the amendment and, in doing so, expressed the hope "that in these schools Sinhalese will be

1. H (SC). 28 January 1942. p. 1964.

2. H (SC). 28 January 1942. p. 1973.

3. H (SC). 28 January 1942. p. 1973.

4. Report of the Special Committee on Education, Ceylon. S.P. XXIV of 1943.

5. Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara. H (SC). 30 May 1944. p. 841.

6. H (SC). 1 June 1945. col. 2847.

made compulsory, and Sinhalese of such a standard will be taught that these boys can take the fullest part in the life of the community".¹ On 5th June 1945, the amendment was accepted without a division by the State Council.²

From the Ordinance of 1947 to the present day.

Section 8 of the Education (Amendment) Ordinance No. 26 of 1947 repeated the sections in the Ordinance No. 31. of 1939 dealing with estate schools. While some of the provisions of the 1939 Ordinance were repeated, others were changed. The principal changes introduced by the new Ordinance are given below, and in addition, certain further changes introduced by the Education (Amendment) Act, No. 5 of 1951 are also indicated.

1. The compulsory school-going age was from 6 years to 10 years. The age limits were changed to 5 years and 16 years respectively. By the Act of 1951, the upper limit for compulsory schooling was reduced to 14 years.

2. By the 1939 Ordinance the estate superintendent was required to set apart and keep in repair a suitable school room.

The new Ordinance requires the estate owner to set apart on the estate premises consisting of:

- (a) a building which conformed to certain prescribed standards.
- (b) a habitable house for a married teacher.
- (c) uncultivated land of a prescribed extent to serve partly as a playground and partly as a school garden.

The 1947 Ordinance reiterated the proviso of the 1939 Ordinance that if an estate owner failed to provide the above facilities in spite of due notice by the Director, the latter could take all such measures as were necessary to provide facilities, the expenses being recoverable from the estate as a debt to the Crown. The Education (Amendment) Act No. 5 of 1951 added a sub-section authorising legal action for failure to provide the above facilities in spite of notice by the Director, the penalty on conviction being a fine not exceeding Rs. 500/- along with a further fine not exceeding Rs. 50/- for each day on which the failure is continued after conviction.

1. H (SC). 1 June 1945. col. 2855.

2. H (SC). 5 June 1945. col. 2923.

3. The duty cast on the estate superintendent by the 1939 Ordinance "to make such provision as may be prescribed for the education of the children" was removed. Instead, the owner or the person for the time being in charge of an estate is required to permit the Director to establish and maintain a government school on the premises set apart as above.

The implications of the above provisions have not been sufficiently realised. It is no longer necessary for the management of an estate to engage a teacher and provide education. By law, it has only to provide the physical facilities and leave it to the Director to establish and maintain a government school using the facilities provided by the estate.

Successive Ministers of Education have chosen to turn a blind eye to the provisions of the 1947 Ordinance in so far as they relate to the education of estate children. Mr. E. A. Nugawela, Minister of Education, stated in the House of Representatives on 1st March 1949: "Steps are being taken under this Ordinance to take over estate schools which comply with the conditions"¹. The same Minister stated on 10th August 1951: "We have made provision to take over 150 schools in 1951-1952"². Fulfilment, however, was to fall far short of promise.³ On 16th August 1954, the Minister of Education, Mr. M. D. Banda, remarked, "I shall gradually take over the estate schools"⁴. Mr. W. Dahanayake, who complained⁵ in 1948 that nothing had been done to implement the State Council resolution of 1945 that estate schools should be taken over by the government, did nothing himself during his tenure of office as Minister of Education from 1956 to 1960. Nor did any of his successors in the office of Minister of Education take any effective action. A touch of humour inspired one of them, Mr. P. B. G. Kalugalle, Minister of Education from 1963 to 1965, to ask his successor on 4th May 1965 whether he would "take over the estate schools and incorporate them in the state system of schools,"⁶ to which the Minister's Parliamentary Secretary replied: "It is proposed to include a suitable scheme in regard to

1. H (HR). 1 March 1949. col. 1423.

2. H (HR), 10 August 1951. col. 2864.

3. From 1947 to 1961 only 24 estate schools were taken over. Final Report of the National Education Commission, 1961. S.P. XVII of 1962. p. 17.

4. H (HR). 16 August 1954. col. 1769.

5. H (HR). 21 May 1948. col. 292.

6. H (HR). 4 May 1965. col. 1205.

estate schools in the proposals for a National Education Scheme which is now being prepared".¹ The scheme itself was still born. The proposals it contained will be considered elsewhere, but here ends the melancholy tale of how one government after another toyed unbecomingly with the problem of the education of a sizeable population of children, about 80,000 in number in 1965, the last year for which statistics are available.

Opinion in the Jayasuriya Commission was sharply divided on the issue of estate schools, and apparently the recommendation² in the body of the Report was that of only seven members, though the Commission consisted of twenty. The chief consideration that appears to have guided these Commissioners is that of "integrating the estate population with the indigenous population surrounding them", and they argue that neither racist considerations nor a naive acceptance of the formula of "instruction through the mother tongue" regardless of socio-cultural factors should be allowed to stand in the way of the acculturation of the immigrant population. The role of the Sinhalese language in the acculturation process is regarded as analogous to the role of the English Language in the acculturation of immigrants to Britain, Australia and the U.S.A., for example. It is stressed that the children of the immigrant estate workers and the children of the indigenous population in the villages surrounding the estates must be educated as one in the same schools, if they are to develop into a cohesive community. Children already in estate schools were to be allowed to complete their education through Tamil in the estate school if they so desired, but all estate children entering school for the first time were to be admitted to local schools and educated through the Sinhalese medium alongside the children of the local population.³ Estate owners were to make a contribution of Rs. 100/- per acre, spreading the payment over 5 years if necessary, and be relieved of all responsibility for the education of estate children, which thereafter was to be the function of the government.

The White Paper of 1964 issued by the Ministry of Education contained the following proposal: "All estate schools will be taken over to the state and will be run as Basic schools and the medium of

1. Mr. Gamini Jayasuriya. H (HR). 4 May 1965. col. 1205.

2. Final Report of the National Education Commission. S.P. XVII of 1962. p. 20

3. Mr. B. H. Aluwihare's thinking in 1942 and 1945 had been more or less on the same lines. See pages 128 and 129.

instruction therein will be the official language".¹ The reference to the official language has the effect of diverting attention from the rationale which made the Jayasuriya Commission recommend instruction in Sinhalese. The recommendation in the White Paper is also open to the objection that it does not recognise the importance of allowing those already receiving education in Tamil to complete their course of study within the present system of estate schools. The White paper was, however, not discussed in the Parliament. Nor was a Bill embodying any of the proposals tabled in Parliament.

The new government which came into power in March 1965 issued a White Paper dated 26th September 1966. In relation to estate schools, as indeed in relation to many other issues, the outstanding characteristic of the document was its lack of sense. It began by re-stating the obligation placed on proprietors of estates to provide physical facilities, but made them somewhat more extensive in nature than those required by the 1947 Ordinance. The piece de resistance was in relation to what should follow after the facilities were provided. The relevant section in the White Paper read thus: "A school provided in an estate under the above provisions may be run either by the proprietor or any person or body of persons authorized in that behalf by the proprietor as a private school with the approval of the Minister"². In other words, the provision in the 1947 Ordinance for the Director "to establish and maintain a government school" using the physical facilities provided is to be removed and replaced by a permissive provision that any interested party *may* use the physical facilities to conduct a school. If there is no interested person, the buildings stand idle and the education of estate children comes to a halt. Mysterious indeed are the workings of the official minds that could commit such monumental folly. No notice was taken of the criticism that was offered of the White Paper proposal, and the General and Technical Education Bill tabled in November 1967 merely reiterated it. The Bill was, however, not proceeded with.

1. Proposals for a National System of Education. Colombo, 1964, p. 20.

2. Proposals for Reforms in General and Technical Education. Colombo, 1966, p. 18.

CHAPTER 9

EXAMINATIONS

In relation to Ceylon, one of the beneficial effects of the Second World War was that it initiated the process of weaning the country away from its dependence on examinations conducted in Ceylon at the school leaving level by examining bodies in England. The London Matriculation examination occupied a position of prestige in Ceylon, and the best known schools preferred to prepare their students for the London Matriculation examination rather than for the Senior School Certificate examination which was conducted by the Education Department of Ceylon. With the outbreak of the war, the despatch of examination papers to Ceylon from England as well as the despatch of answer scripts from Ceylon to England became uncertain and difficult. As a result of negotiations conducted between the Education Department and the University of London, it was agreed that with effect from December 1941, a special Senior School Certificate examination (English) should be held on the same syllabus as that for the London Matriculation examination. The examination papers were to be prepared by a local panel of examiners, and the answer scripts of the students were to be assessed by local examiners. Students who pass the examination fulfilling certain conditions were to be allowed to obtain exemption from the London Matriculation examination.¹ This was essentially a war-time emergency measure, but it did serve to make the prestigious schools reconciled to having their students prepared for local examinations. Along with the special Senior School Certificate examination on the London Matriculation syllabus, the usual Senior School Certificate examination (English medium) continued to be held based on its usual syllabus which was perhaps a shade lower in standard than the London Matriculation examination syllabus. In 1942, a committee consisting of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon, and representatives of heads of schools and of assistant teachers was appointed to frame a new syllabus that would do away with the need to hold two examinations based on two syllabuses. A syllabus that received wide acceptance not only from local educationists but also from the London University authorities was drawn up to come into effect for examinations to be held in and after December 1944. The University of London

1. A.R. 1941. p. A4.

agreed to grant exemption from the London Matriculation to students attaining a certain standard in the Senior School Certificate examination based on the new agreed syllabus. Until December 1944, however, the Special Senior examination was to continue, along with the usual Senior examination, but thereafter only one examination based on the agreed syllabus was to be held.¹ The agreed syllabus applied only to the examination in the English medium, but the Senior School Certificate examination was held in the Sinhalese and the Tamil media based on a different syllabus. This situation was rectified in 1948 by making the agreed syllabus applicable to these two media as well, and the questions set in the different media were the same except, of course, for the language and literature papers as such. Candidates were also given the option of answering the papers of the examination in any language medium preferred by them.² After June 1943, the London Matriculation examination was not held in Ceylon during the next three years; it was again held in 1947 and finally abandoned thereafter.³

The introduction of an Advanced School Certificate (Bilingual) examination with effect from 1943 was a step in the right direction, but very few appreciated its significance. This examination was open only to those who had already passed the Senior School Certificate examination in English, Sinhalese or Tamil, and it gave an opportunity to students to offer the usual school subjects at a more advanced level than the Senior and also certain other subjects, such as Government and Psychology, which were not available for the Senior. Besides, the subjects of the examination could be taken in any language medium preferred by the student.⁴ This examination thus paved the way for the study through the Sinhalese and the Tamil media of certain subjects which had never been available at all, or at a comparable level, through these media. In fact, the Advanced School Certificate examination could have cleared the ground for university studies through the national language media many years before the universities were forced to use them for Arts subjects. In spite of the potential usefulness of the Advanced School Certificate examination, the examination received very little support from the schools and it was abandoned after a few years. A declaration that it would serve

1. A.R. 1942. p. A3.

2. A.R. 1947. p. A7.

3. A.R. 1947. p. A8.

4. A.R. 1943. p. A3.

as an entrance examination for admission to teacher training colleges in due course was never translated into action and remained a pious hope.¹

The University of London abolished its Matriculation examination in 1951 and decided that Matriculation requirements of the University could be fulfilled by passing in a certain number of subjects at a new examination, the General Certificate of Education examination, which was to be held at two levels, known as the Ordinary level and the Advanced level.² The Ordinary level examination was more or less of the same standard as the Matriculation examination, and the Advanced level examination was more or less of the same standard as the Intermediate examination. An important feature of the thinking underlying the G.C.E. examination (as this examination was called) was that it was essentially an examination in individual subjects rather than in a group of subjects. A candidate could offer one or more subjects, and he would be awarded a certificate for each subject in which he satisfied the examiners. The Matriculation examination was of a different sort in that a candidate had to pass in five subjects, including certain compulsory subjects, in order to get a pass. The Intermediate examination also required passes in four subjects, chosen within certain restrictions, in order to get a pass. The University of London agreed to hold in Ceylon its G.C.E. examination at Advanced level only. It also agreed to accept a credit pass in a subject at the Ceylon Senior School Certificate (English medium) examination as equivalent to a pass in the corresponding subject at the Ordinary level of the London G.C.E. examination.³ It became possible therefore for Ceylonese who wished to sit for the final degree examinations of the University of London to fulfil Matriculation requirements by combining the Ceylon Senior School Certificate (English medium) with the G.C.E. Advanced level examination of the University of London. Before long, Ceylon tried the innovation of replacing the Ceylon Senior School Certificate examination with a Ceylon G.C.E. examination (Ordinary level), accepting the principle of an examination in which passes could be obtained for individual subjects, and at the same time awarding the Senior School Certificate to those who passed in a certain combination of subjects. "The main provisions of this examination in and after December 1957 are (i) Within the provisions of the regulations a

1. A.R. 1944. p. A4.

2. Commissioner of Examinations. Administration Report, 1952. p. P7.

3. A.R. 1951. p. A20.

candidate may take all his subjects in one medium or some subjects in one medium and some subjects in one or both of the other media (ii) The Ceylon Senior School Certificate will be awarded to those who pass in Sinhalese language or Tamil language, in Arithmetic or Mathematics and in four other subjects on one and the same occasion;or having passed in five of the required subjects on one and the same occasion passes the sixth required subject within a period of two years will be entitled to a Senior School Certificate".¹ Two years later, in 1959, the Cabinet decided that the award of the Senior School Certificate at the G.C.E. Ordinary level examination should be abolished.² This decision was put into effect as from the examination held in December 1960. The holding of the London G.C.E. Advanced level examination in Ceylon was discontinued in 1963, and a Ceylon G.C.E. Advanced level examination was held in its place as from 1964. A few institutions in Britain have agreed to recognize the Ceylon G.C.E. Advanced level examination in lieu of the London G.C.E. Advanced level examination.³

Certain final degree and diploma examinations of the University of London are still held in Ceylon to enable old registrants to sit for these examinations, but no new registrations are permitted. All four universities in Ceylon permit external students to sit as external students for certain of their degree examinations, and these examinations now serve more or less the same purposes which the London University examination had served for many decades in Ceylon.

1. Commissioner of Examinations. Administration Report, 1957. p. P6.
2. Commissioner of Examinations. Administration Report, 1959. p. P40.
3. Commissioner of Examinations. Administration Report, 1965-66. p. P27.

CHAPTER 10

TEACHER EDUCATION

The provision for teacher education as at 1939 has been described elsewhere. The institutions for the training of teachers for rural scheme schools did not last long. In 1940, the rural teacher training centre at Weeraketiya was closed, and in its place one was started at Welisara.¹ Interest was waning in the rural scheme of education, and in 1942 the centre at Giragama for training teachers under the rural scheme was converted into a training college of the conventional pattern for the training of teachers for ordinary schools.² In 1944, the rural training centre at Welisara ceased to train teachers for rural scheme schools and instead provided teachers in training from the general training colleges with short residential courses in gardening, building construction, dairy farming, poultry farming and bee keeping.³

The Kannangara Committee recognised that “the key to educational reform” was “the proper training of teachers”, and expressed the opinion that “almost all the teachers of the future should be trained”.⁴ Noting that only a handful of the graduates employed in schools had received any kind of professional training, the Committee recommended that the University should be provided with the necessary funds for starting a Department that could take charge of the training of graduate teachers. For the training of non-graduate teachers to teach general subjects in schools, the Committee recommended a single type of training college. “A training college cannot exist by itself. It should be conducted in connection with an educational centre. An educational centre should consist of a training college and schools in which the art of teaching can be practised. The Principal of the college will be the Controller of these schools. There should be attached to every training college a primary school, a practical school, and a senior or secondary school. The centre should have playing fields, a gymnasium, a workshop, suitable laboratories and agricultural gardens in close proximity for the use of the

1. A.R. 1940. p. A6.

2. A.R. 1942. p. A11.

3. A.R. 1944. p. A11.

4. Report of the Special Committee on Education in Ceylon. S.P. XXIV of 1943. p. 70.

component institutions".¹ The Committee was of the view that "training colleges conducted and controlled by denominational bodies should continue to be assisted from public funds",² provided that within three years they organized themselves as educational centres in accordance with the above recommendation.

In the 1944-45 debate on the reform of the system of education, the Executive Committee for Education placed before the State Council a recommendation to the effect that "the system of state training colleges and denominational training colleges shall continue" subject to the fulfilment of the condition that they should be organized as educational centres. Amendments were moved by Mr. G. C. S. Corea and Mr. A. Ratnayake, and the recommendation finally accepted was as follows: "The system of state training colleges and denominational training colleges shall continue subject to the fulfilment of the conditions recommended in paragraph 347 of Sessional Paper XXIV and to the further conditions that assisted denominational training colleges shall admit only students of like denomination, and the number of students admitted into any training college shall be restricted only to the number assigned to the management by the Director after taking into consideration the number of unemployed teachers and teachers required for employment by the management in their schools. Provided that a minimum of 100 students be considered adequate and that practising schools need not necessarily be attached to the training college but should however be within easy reach of it".³ No attempt was, however, made to enforce the above provisions. In terms of numbers, the number of teachers under training in general training colleges rose from 1300 in 1948 to 2000 in 1951.

In regard to teachers of practical subjects, the Kannangara Committee was of the view that the Ceylon Technical College would be the proper institution to organize courses in technical subjects. For teachers of agriculture, a diploma awarded by an approved Agricultural College was suggested. It was not until 1948 that arrangements were made to train teachers of vocational subjects. A two year course in vocational training for 60 men and women teachers was started at the Ceylon Technical College. The course was divided

1. Ibid., p. 71.

2. Ibid., p. 139.

3. H (SC). 6 June 1945. col. 2927.

into two sections: Commerce and Workshop Practice, and teachers specialised in one or the other of the sections. A two year course of training in arts and crafts was also started at the Government School of Arts and Crafts. In 1950, a course for the training of agricultural teachers was started at the Peradeniya and the Kundasale Schools of Agriculture. "The students.....follow the two-year Senior courses in agriculture and also lectures in Botany, Zoology, and principles and methods of teaching. The training that they receive will enable them to give their pupils a practical knowledge and experience of agriculture".¹ In 1953, the training of vocational teachers was transferred from the Ceylon Technical College and the Government School of Arts and Crafts to the Government Training College at Maharagama.² In order to train more teachers for science, a two year course for teachers of science was started at the Government Training College at Maharagama. The teachers selected for the course were required to specialise in two of the three subjects Physics, Chemistry and Biology. In 1954, the two training Colleges at Mirigama and Palaly were re-named 'National Training Colleges' and re-organised to provide "a six months' course of practical training for male trainees under four main heads, viz:

Occupations (mainly agriculture, handicrafts and building construction)

Health,

Study of the locality, and Cultural activities, e.g. Music, Dancing and Arts".

The course was described as being "specially designed to give the teacher a training in practical subjects and in methods of correlating practical work with the normal subjects in the school curriculum"³. The training of teachers of agriculture at Peradeniya and Kundasale was abandoned in 1953⁴, and as from 1954 students who had completed the usual agricultural course at the School of Agriculture at Peradeniya and the Farm School at Kundasale were given a special course in Pedagogy at the Government Training College, Maharagama⁵. A course for training teachers of Mathematics was

1. A.R. 1950. (Dr. H. W. Howes). p. A12.

2. A.R. 1953. p. A21.

3. A.R. 1954. (Mr. T. D. Jayasuriya). p. A14.

4. A.R. 1953. p. A22.

5. A.R. 1954. p. A14.

started at the Government Training College, Maharagama in 1955,¹ and this was followed in 1957 with a course for training specialist teachers of English.² The 'National Training Colleges' gave up their specialisations in 1957, and while Mirigama became a general training college, Palaly began to concentrate on the training of specialist teachers in science and mathematics through the Tamil medium. In 1958, a special course was started at the Ceylon Technical College to step up the academic background of secondary trained science teachers with a view to putting them in charge of science teaching at the Higher School Certificate level.³

The situation as at 1958⁴ was that:

- (i) post-graduate training leading to the Diploma in Education was provided at the University of Ceylon.
- (ii) non-graduate teacher training was provided in 22 teacher training colleges, of which two training colleges concentrated on the training of specialist teachers of English, Science, Mathematics and Handicrafts, while the remaining training colleges trained teachers for general subjects.

The number of teachers in training was as follows:

University of Ceylon 67, specialist courses 597 and general subjects 3490.

In 1959, a two year course for teachers of agriculture was organized at the School of Agriculture in Kundasale⁵. In other words what had been started in 1950 and abandoned in 1953 was again started in 1959. A course of training for teachers of commerce was started at Maharagama and at Palaly in 1960.

With the enactment in November 1960 of the Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (Special Provisions) Act No. 5 of 1960, the ten assisted training colleges which were under the management of various religious denominations came under the control of the Director of Education.

1. A.R. 1955. p. A4.

2. A.R. 1957. p. A15.

3. A.R. 1958. p. A95.

4. Ibid., pp. A108, 119.

5. A.R. 1959. p. A157.

The Jayasuriya Commission, noting firstly that teacher training in Ceylon had not proceeded on an adequately planned basis judging from the way in which projects had been launched and abandoned, secondly that the curriculum in the training colleges was overloaded with accretions made from time to time and needed to be carefully thought out and rationalised, and thirdly that the percentage of trained teachers in the Sinhala medium was only 35¹, made a number of recommendations to place teacher training on a sound footing. In regard to non-graduate teachers, the Commission recommended as a transitional measure the provision of a training course of one year's duration for mature untrained teachers, defining a mature untrained teacher as one with (i) at least two years' teaching experience and (ii) relatively high academic qualifications such as passes in two subjects at the G.C.E. Advanced level (or the Higher School Certificate or the University Preliminary) examination.² For other non-graduate teachers, the course was to be of two years' duration, but considering that the backlog of several thousands of untrained teachers could not be trained in institutions in a hurry it was urged that as an interim measure a category of 'preliminary trained teacher' be recognised, and that as from 1965 admission to the two year course should be open only to those who have gained this status, as one who has

- “(i) at least one year's teaching experience, and
- (ii) obtained credit passes in four of the following subjects at one or more G.C.E. Ordinary level examinations or at a higher examination: Religion, Sinhala, English, Tamil, History, Geography, Civics, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Biology (Biology not being counted separately if either Botany or Zoology is counted), Art, Music, Woodwork and Metalwork, and
- (iii) thereafter followed in-service training courses of at least 50 hours' duration each in methods of teaching three of these subjects (provided that in the case of a teacher with two or more science subjects, a 50 hour course on methods of teaching General Science in Grade VI will count as a subject, and similarly for courses of like duration in respect of Grades VII and VIII),

1. The percentage of trained teachers in the Tamil medium was 62.
 2. Final Report of the National Education Commission, 1961. S.P. XVII of 1962. p. 76.

and has obtained passes in written examinations on methods of teaching. The courses should be based on the Junior School curriculum, and

- (iv) thereafter satisfied a panel of examiners in a practical test in teaching two of the above subjects (or in the case of science teachers, in teaching general science in two different grades).

It should be possible to collect (ii) and (iii) over a period of time, provided that a prior condition for following an in-service training course in a subject is that a credit pass in it has been already obtained".¹ The two year training courses were to be of two kinds, specialist and general. The specialist teachers were to be for English, Mathematics, Science, Technical subjects, Commerce and Agriculture. The teachers of general subjects were to have certain areas of concentration and were to be trained with a view to taking charge of Grades I to V or Grades III to VIII of Junior schools. The subjects of study for the two years included professional and academic studies, but care was taken to prevent both an over loading of the curriculum and superficiality. Suggestions were also made for making supplementary certificate courses available to those who had already undergone courses of training and were desirous of improving their academic and professional knowledge. The Ministry of Education and the Education Department took no action to implement any of the recommendations.

A one year course of professional training for graduate teachers was started at the Government Training College in 1945. It was intended to be a temporary measure until the University of Ceylon made arrangements to take over the training of graduate teachers. In 1949, the University of Ceylon established a Department of Education to provide professional training for graduate teachers. The course of study was of one academic year's duration and successful candidates were awarded the Diploma in Education of the University. The structure of the course underwent certain changes during the first few years, but the pattern introduced in 1960 has remained more or less unchanged to this day. The written examination consists of five papers as follows:

1. Ibid., p. 88.

- Principles of Education;
- Educational Psychology;
- Comparative Education;
- Methodology or English Methodology (The latter is for a group specialising in the teaching of English);
- One of the following: Educational Administration;
Curriculum and Guidance;
Social Education.

The course work also consists of essays and teaching practice. For the award of the Diploma, a satisfactory standard has to be attained in (i) the written examination (ii) essays and (iii) teaching practice. In keeping with the general practice of the University of Ceylon two examiners from foreign universities are associated with the written examination. The two examiners who have been associated with the University Department of Education in this way during the past ten or twelve years both hold Professorial appointments in the University of London Institute of Education. The University of Ceylon Department of Education has also had the good fortune to have associated with it in its work every year from 1960 to 1968 Fulbright Professors of Education from the United States. Apart from these academic contacts, all the members of the teaching staff of the Department spend periods of study and travel abroad, and continually attempt to bring new insights to bear on their work. Conceiving of their highest duty as being owed to reason and truth to the best of their knowledge and understanding, the staff of the Department of Education of the University of Ceylon have on more than one occasion refused to lend their support to hair brained schemes emanating from the offices of the Ministry and Education Department, and have thereby earned the wrath of the demi-gods installed in these places. Adverse criticism of the White Paper of 1966 and the Education Bill of 1967 has been regarded as a heinous crime. It was also a tragic error not to speak in ecstatic terms of documents of such world shaking import, at least in their profuse use of jargon, as the working paper entitled "Action Research Pilot Project for Improvement of School Practices through Supervision and Assessment of School Performances". For these acts of commission and omission, officialdom in the Ministry appears to have firmly set its mind on obstructing and discouraging the study of education in the University of Ceylon as well as in the other universities. The Education Mission of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development,

however, took a quite different view of the situation in its report on a preliminary survey of education in Ceylon. The report said, "The Department of Education of the University of Ceylon could play a much more important role in raising educational standards than its limited resources now allow. In times of rapid change, the Department should be the source of new ideas to give vitality to the system. There is a constant need for experiment and evaluation in many fields, e.g. in aptitude testing and guidance, in curriculum and syllabus development, in the design of examinations and in methods of teaching. Though it is reasonably well staffed, the Department lacks accommodation, equipment, and other facilities, e.g., an attached experimental school and a language laboratory. If it is accepted that efforts should be concentrated on raising the quality of education then investment in the Department of Education should be given a higher priority. In all its work, there should of course be the closest co-operation with the Ministry of Education."¹ The request of the Department of Education of the University of Ceylon to be allowed to utilise a neighbouring school as an experimental school so that it can carry out experimentation on

(a) curriculum development, especially in English, mathematics and science;

(b) teaching aids, e.g., film strips and programmed instruction material;

(c) modes of teaching e.g., team teaching; and

(d) evaluation procedures, e.g., for student guidance,

has not been heeded by the Ministry. The lack of such a school has greatly handicapped the work of the Department and reduced its potential for making an effective contribution to educational development in Ceylon. As long ago as 1943, the Kannangara Committee pointed out that a "training college cannot exist by itself" and suggested that there should be "attached to every training college a primary school, a practical school, and a senior or secondary school"². It stressed that the training of graduates should be "undertaken by the University",³ and there is no doubt that had the Report gone into details it would have suggested school and other facilities on a liberal scale

1. International Development Association of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Ceylon-Preliminary Survey of Education, 1966. p. iii.
2. Report of the Special Committee on Education, Ceylon. S.P. XXIV of 1943. p. 70.
3. Ibid., p. 71.

for the effective functioning of a University Department of Education. In 1962, the Jayasuriya Commission recommended that every teacher training college and every University Department of Education engaged in the training of teachers should have both a Junior school and a Senior school".¹ The Education Mission from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development which visited Ceylon in 1966 strongly supported the request by the University Department of Education at Peradeniya for an experimental school.² Officialdom was, however, hostile to the idea, for such a project portended danger to itself. It was not prepared to risk a situation in which experimental evidence might be forthcoming that some new syllabus issued at the official level was not succeeding. That would have been intolerable and too serious an occupational risk. Therefore, let there be no school for the University Department of Education. The logic was reprehensible, yet simple.

The Jayasuriya Commission, noting that there were only about 825 trained graduate teachers in the schools while the number of untrained graduate teachers was 3300, recommended that the Vidyalaya and the Vidyalankara universities should also undertake the training of graduate teachers. The starting of part-time courses was also recommended.³

The Jayasuriya Commission also strongly recommended the institution at each university of a four year course of academic and professional study leading to the degree of Bachelor of Education. "This will ensure that (i) just as school candidates seek admission to the University to prepare themselves for certain specific professions like medicine, engineering, veterinary science, agriculture, & c. they will seek admission to prepare themselves for the teaching profession and be committed to the profession (ii) there will pass out of the University every year a number of professionally qualified graduate teachers able to take their place in schools. Candidates may be provisionally selected on the basis of their performance in the Entrance Examination and school reports regarding their suitability

1. Interim Report of the National Education Commission, 1961. S.P. 1 of 1962. p. 26.
2. International Development Association of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Ceylon—Preliminary Survey of Education, 1966. p. 78.
3. Final Report of the National Education Commission, 1961. S.P. XVII of 1962. p. 90.

for the teaching profession, and the four year course may be arranged as follows:—

First Year—Three academic subjects at University first year level—July to March. Examination in April. One month's teaching practice in May. Acceptance for course leading to B.Ed. degree to be confirmed at this stage.

Second Year—Three academic subjects at University second year level and one professional subject—July to March. Examination in April in professional subject only. One month's teaching practice in May.

Third year—Continued study of the three academic subjects at University third year level and the study of another professional subject—July to March. Examination in April in two of the academic subjects and in the professional subject. One month's teaching practice in May.

Fourth year—Three professional subjects and two months' teaching practice. Examination in April in remaining academic subject (studied during the third year) and in professional subjects.¹

It is of interest to note that in 1963, the Robbins Report came out strongly in favour of a Bachelor of Education degree.²

The universities were reluctant to start courses for the Bachelor of Education degree without the blessings of the Ministry of Education as the graduates turned out had to be found employment in schools. The Ministry did in fact give its blessings, largely on the initiative of Mr. E. H. de Alwis, Director of Education, who was quite enthusiastic about the degree. Two universities then started the course, each with some variations from what was outlined by the Jayasuriya Commission. Before the first group of students could pass out, Mr. de Alwis had retired from the office of Director of Education, and those in power showed more hostility than favour to the Bachelor of Education graduates. It was the great fault of these graduates that they had studied education in the free atmosphere of the universities, in which ideas and practices could be assessed at their

1. Ibid., p. 92.

2. Higher Education. Report of Committee appointed under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins. London, 1963.

worth, instead of undergoing the experience of being brain washed to endorse every action of the Ministry and the Education Department.

The Bachelor of Education degree commends itself strongly for three reasons at least. In the first place, it ensures to the educational service a supply of graduates who have made teaching their first vocational choice and are therefore specially committed to it. This is in marked contrast to the all too common situation in which teaching is chosen as a career only as a last resort when other avenues of employment have failed. Secondly, the Bachelor of Education degree ensures the availability of professionally prepared persons to take on appointments as teachers, instead of making it necessary to recruit raw graduates with no professional preparation at all and whose efforts in the class room can at best be matters of trial and error until such time as they acquire a firm base of professional knowledge. Thirdly, considering that when untrained graduates are employed in the teaching service they have to be released some years later for a one year course of professional training, paying each of them a salary and allowance amounting to about Rs. 5000/- during the year, the Bachelor of Education degree saves the government this expenditure. In fact, the advantages of the course are so considerable that if the education authorities had open minds they would have absorbed the B.Ed. graduates in employment no sooner than they passed out and also persuaded the universities to turn them out in increasing numbers. There is no doubt that the present Minister's well known aversion to university graduates¹ and the education bureaucrats' fear of those who have the germ of independence in them have together resulted in a denial of justice to the B.Ed. graduates. It is hoped that the present dark clouds would disperse and that in the interests of the future of education in Ceylon the recruitment of professionally qualified graduate teachers would become a matter of priority.

The Thistlethwaite Report was quite appreciative of the courses in Education given in the University of Ceylon at Peradeniya. While the Report was generally opposed to the duplication of the same courses in Colombo and at Peradeniya, it thought differently of courses in Education. Speaking of the courses to be provided in Colombo, it said, ".....there is a prima facie case for a Faculty of Education and in this case the argument against duplication with

1. See page 168.

Peradeniya does not hold. A Faculty of Education should, therefore, be established. This should be on the accepted pattern which is already in operation at Peradeniya, i.e. a three-year course leading to the Bachelor of Education degree with students recruited from the 'academic' faculties at the end of their first year and with education courses combined with continuing courses in two academic subjects. There should also be a post-graduate diploma in education either for those who choose to become teachers only on graduation or for untrained graduate teachers on an in-service basis"¹. The Report also paid a further compliment to the University Department of Education at Peradeniya when it said, "The technique of the Seminar appears to have already been imaginatively developed in the Department of Education at Peradeniya and the example could be studied with profit"².

It was hoped that the investigation into teacher education in Ceylon conducted by Professor Brian Stanley of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Professor J. W. Tibble of the University of Leicester would be productive of good. These two Professors spent the month of April 1967 in Ceylon visiting the teacher training colleges and the University Department of Education at Peradeniya and prepared a report on teacher education in Ceylon. Their report was not made available to the teacher training colleges or to the University Department of Education. An attempt was made by a Member of Parliament to have the report released but it failed. On 9th September 1968, Mr. S. M. Rasamanickam³ asked the following questions in the House of Representatives "(a) Did two Professors from the Universities of Leicester and Newcastle-upon-Tyne visit Ceylon in April 1967 in the capacity of experts to report on the reorganization of teacher training in Ceylon? (b) Did they submit a report and has this report been published? If not, why? (c) How much did their visit cost the government of Ceylon?" The answers given by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education were as follows: "(a) Yes. (b) Yes. But the report was not published as it was a matter which purely concerned the administration of teacher training colleges. It is not the practice to publish such reports which are of purely departmental interest. (c) Rs. 5097.80". In other

1. Frank Thistlethwaite: Report on the Establishment of the University of Colombo. S.P. XVI of 1967. p. 13.

2. Ibid., p. 20.

3. H (HR). 9 September 1968. col. 1602.

words, the labours of Stanley and Tibble, and the expenditure of money on their visit by the government of Ceylon and by the British Council are solely for the benefit of a few bureaucrats sitting in their offices, and any words of wisdom in the report are to be a closely guarded secret from the professional personnel, in the teacher training colleges and the University Department of Education, actively concerned with teacher education.

CHAPTER 11

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The training of technologists (engineering and industry)

On 13th March 1942, the State Council accepted a number of proposals for the reorganisation of the Ceylon Technical College¹. One of the most important of the proposals was that the College should offer courses leading to the London University degree in engineering and the Associate Membership of the Chartered Institute of Engineers in England. The College was previously provisionally recognised in 1942 by the University of London for preparing students for the external degree examinations in engineering, and courses extending over four years were inaugurated for this purpose.² In 1944, a four year course in Chemical Engineering leading to the College Diploma in Chemical Engineering was instituted³. Consequent on the creation of the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Ceylon in 1952, the engineering degree course at the Ceylon Technical College was abandoned, and the University of Ceylon provided a four year course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Engineering. Specialisation was provided in three fields, namely civil engineering, mechanical engineering and electrical engineering. In 1959, the government appointed a Committee, with Professor E. O. E. Pereira as Chairman, to investigate and report on:

1. the existing facilities for the training of engineers and technicians;
2. the reasons for the shortage of such personnel;
3. measures necessary to attract the best talent to the engineering profession;
4. provision necessary for the training of sufficient persons to execute the Ten-Year Plan for the economic development of the island;
5. the number of technical personnel that would be required, both in the government and the private sectors, for carrying out the Ten-Year Plan.⁴

1. H (SC). 13 March 1942.

2. Director of the Ceylon Technical College. Administration Report, 1944-48. p. K 3.

3. Ibid., p. K 4.

4. Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Technical Education. S.P. X of 1963. p. 58.

Although the terms of reference included the level of technologist as well as the level of technician, the Pereira Committee dealt with the former category only. The Committee was of opinion that there was a grave shortage of engineers, and that mainly because of physical limitations it was not possible to increase the intake of students to the Engineering Faculty of the University. The Committee recommended that the Ceylon Technical College should start courses to prepare students for the professional examinations of the Institutes of Civil, Mechanical and Electrical Engineers in England. It was also suggested that courses leading to Technical College Diplomas in Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Chemical Engineering be provided for engineering apprentices, and that these courses should consist of periods of six months' study at the Technical College alternating with periods of six months' practical training in recognised government departments¹. The Cabinet accepted the second of the above recommendations in principle in March 1961, and appointed an Implementation Committee to work out the details. This Committee suggested that an institution, to be called the College of Advanced Technology, be established, and the Committee worked out the requirements in staff, equipment and buildings for the new institution.² The Committee also suggested that aid from Unesco be sought for providing the equipment and the staff for the project. The Munasinghe Commission, appointed in 1961, also dealt with this recommendation. It was of the view that the institution should be called a College of Technology rather than a College of Advanced Technology; that the courses of training be of the 'sandwich' type with periods of academic study at the College alternating with periods of approved apprenticeship training; that the duration of the course should be five years; and that to begin with courses should be provided in four branches, namely:

Civil engineering,

Mechanical engineering,

Electrical engineering, with provision for specialisation in either

Electric power or Communications and Electronics, and

Chemical engineering.³

The government has succeeded in obtaining aid from the United Nations for the project, and courses of study have already been started

1. Ibid., p. 59.

2. Ibid., pp. 329-331.

3. Ibid., pp. 61-62.

in temporary premises. It is expected that when the College is in full operation in two or three years' time, the combined output of technologists from the College and from the Faculty of Engineering would be about 200 and adequate for the estimated needs of the country.¹

A professional course in architecture was started at the Institute of Practical Technology, Katubedde, to prepare students for the examinations of the Royal Institute of British Architects. The Munasinghe Commission recommended that this course should be transferred to the University of Ceylon, and action was taken to establish a Department of Architecture in the new University of Ceylon in Colombo with effect from October 1968.²

The training of technicians (engineering and industry)

The proposals accepted by the State Council in March 1942 for the reorganisation of the Ceylon Technical College envisaged an expansion of the day and the evening courses for the training of sub-professional grades. In addition to the three year evening courses in Surveying and Levelling, Structural Engineering, Building Construction, Architecture, Municipal Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering which were conducted "roughly up to the standard of the Final examination of the City and Guilds"³ Institute of London, the following day courses were started: Minor Supervisors' course, Draughtsmen's course, Surveyors' and Levellers' course⁴. In 1948, the designation of the Minor Supervisors' course was changed to Junior Technical Officers' course. In 1960, all the engineering courses at the Ceylon Technical College were transferred to the Institute of Practical Technology at Katubedde.⁵ The provision in this institution as at 1963 is summarised as follows by the Munasinghe Commission: "At the technician level, there are two-year full-time courses in civil, mechanical, electrical and chemical engineering. These courses lead to the Junior Technical Officers' Certificate, which is recognised by the Government for appointment

1. International Development Association of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Ceylon—Preliminary Survey of Education, 1966. p. 42.
2. Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Technical Education. S.P. X of 1963. p. 66.
3. Director of the Ceylon Technical College. Administration Report, 1944-48. p. K 4.
4. Ibid., p. K 4.
5. Director of the Ceylon Technical College. Administration Report, 1948-49. p. H 3.

to technician (supervisory) grades in the public services. There are also one-year full-time courses in draughtsmanship, surveying and levelling. The Institute provides part-time (day release and evening) courses for apprentices in building construction, surveying and levelling, mechanical, electrical, municipal and structural engineering. Courses are also available for laboratory technicians in physics, chemistry, and geology".¹

The Technical Training Institute at Amparai was established in 1956 under the Colombo Plan as a regional training institute for South and South-east Asian countries, and it provided a two-year course leading to a Diploma in Engineering or a Diploma in Agricultural Science and Engineering. The latter course was intended "to have a strong engineering bias and to provide an intensive course on the operation and maintenance of farm machinery together with introductory lectures in irrigation, engineering, surveying and building construction".² The Institute, in fact, attracted very few trainees from other Asian countries, presumably because facilities for training at this level were already available in these countries.

The Munasinghe Commission was of the view³ that even when the Institute of Practical Technology at Katubedde and the Technical Training Institute at Amparai were functioning at their full capacity, the output of technicians would still be "grossly inadequate to meet the needs of the country". It recommended that the above institutions be named "Polytechnics" and that ten more Polytechnics be established, by up-grading the existing Junior Technical schools and establishing new institutions in other areas, to train technicians. The Commission was also of the view that although the Institute of Practical Technology and the Technical Training Institute had been "set up to train technical personnel for the same levels of employment, there is a wide disparity in the courses provided by them, both in respect of curricula, and also in the relative emphasis between theory and practical work". It therefore recommended that "the technician courses, both full-time and part-time provided by the

1. Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Technical Education. S.P.X. of 1963. p. 67.
2. International Development Association of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Ceylon—Preliminary Survey of Education, 1966. p. 43.
3. Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Technical Education. S.P.X. of 1963. pp. 68-71.

Polytechnics, should be of uniform standard, and that they should be designed to satisfy the requirements of a common certificate awarded by a national body", and that this certificate be termed the National Certificate for Technicians. It was suggested that every Polytechnic should provide two year full-time or three year part-time courses leading to the National Certificate for Technicians in the following seven branches in the first instance:

- Civil engineering
- Mechanical engineering
- Electrical engineering
- Municipal engineering
- Architectural draughtsmanship
- Surveying and Levelling
- Laboratory services (Physics and Chemistry)

and that in course of time the following additional branches be provided

- Chemical engineering
- Production engineering
- Communications and Electronics
- Geology.

The training of craftsmen (engineering and industry)

For school leavers seeking training as craftsmen, full-time courses are available at

1. the Ceylon Technical College,
2. the Junior Technical Schools,
3. the Basic Technical Training Institute,
4. the Ceylon-German Training School of the Ceylon Transport Board.

The courses generally provided are in metal work, wood work, motor mechanism and electrical wiring, but small numbers learn several other crafts as well. The training generally consists of elementary theory basic to the chosen craft and practical work.

Facilities for the training of apprentice craftsmen are provided by certain government departments, notably the Public Works Department, the Irrigation Department, the Ceylon Government

Railway, the Department of Government Electrical Undertakings, the Department of Posts and Telegraphs, the Harbour Engineer's Department, and by certain private engineering and industrial establishments.

Rapid, short-term training courses largely for unemployed adults are conducted by the Department of Labour. Masons, carpenters, hairdressers, cooks, electricians and radio mechanics are turned out through courses of about six months' duration, and fitters, welders, sheet-metal workers, machinists and motor mechanics through courses of about eighteen months' duration. The Department of Rural Development and Cottage Industries provides facilities for training in textile weaving, mat weaving, coir work, rattan work, toy making and certain other crafts.

In a survey of the training of craftsmen, the Munasinghe Commission concluded as follows: "It is essential...that the technical education and training of new generations of craftsmen should be carefully planned. Whatever scheme of training is adopted, it should include a period of formal instruction at a properly equipped technical institute, manned by trained instructors. It is most desirable that the various courses of training should lead to a common national certificate which will be universally recognised as guaranteeing competence. With the present facilities scattered as they are among several different departments and controlled by different ministries, these conditions cannot be fulfilled"¹. The Commission recommended that the training programmes now operated by various agencies should be brought into a unified scheme and administered by a Department of Technical Education and Training. The Commission suggested the establishment of 25 new Junior Technical schools and was of opinion that these Technical schools along with the twelve Polytechnics recommended by the Commission and the Maradana Trade school, the Basic Technical Training Institute and the Ceylon-German Training school should be able to provide all craftsmen needed by the country. The Commission also recommended that the courses should lead to the National Certificate for Craftsmen, to be issued in two parts. "Part A will be awarded on the results of an examination designed to test the trainee's basic knowledge, and Part B on the successful completion of his apprenticeship training".²

1. Ibid., p. 74.

2. Ibid., p. 75.

The course for Part A was to be of two years' duration for the full-time student and of three years' duration for the part-time student who is already apprenticed. In order to qualify for Part B, the former should serve a three year period of apprenticeship, and the latter a further two year period of apprenticeship.

Agricultural education and training

At the level of the technologist, agricultural education is provided at the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Science of the University of Ceylon; at the level of the technician, agricultural education is provided at the school of agriculture at Kundasale; and at the level of the craftsman, agricultural education is provided in 19 practical farm schools. The Education Mission from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development was in favour of strengthening the programmes at the University and at Kundasale, but it considered the practical farm schools to be too expensive a system for training young farmers. The Mission was of the view that the vocational farm training scheme already tried out at Hingurakgoda by the Ministry of Agriculture offered a productive approach to the training of young farmers and that its wider use should be considered in preference to the practical farm schools for training young farmers.¹

Commerce education and training

As at 1967, facilities were available in 270 schools for instruction in four commercial subjects, namely 1. Commerce 2. Commercial Arithmetic 3. Accounts 4. Shorthand and Typewriting for the General Certificate of Education at the Ordinary level, and in a very small number of schools for instruction in 1. Commerce and Finance 2. Accounting for the General Certificate of Education at the Advanced level.

Four Junior Technical schools provided courses leading to a Commercial Certificate for Book-keepers and Shorthand Typists, and a Higher Commercial Certificate for Book-keepers and Shorthand Typists. The Ceylon Technical College also provided these courses, and in addition courses for 1. a Stenographers' Certificate 2. a Certificate in Advanced Stenography 3. a Typists' Certificate 4. a Certificate in Salesmanship and Sales Management. Courses

1. International Development Association of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Ceylon—Preliminary Survey of Education, 1966. p. 59.

leading to a Diploma in Commerce, a Diploma in Valuation and a Diploma in Accountancy were also available at the Ceylon Technical College. The Munasinghe Commission was of opinion that the Commerce Department of the Ceylon Technical College should form the nucleus of a separate College of Commerce undertaking courses at professional and diploma level, and that the other certificate courses at the Ceylon Technical College should be abolished. In place of these courses, the Commission envisaged a course for the National Certificate in Business Studies to be provided in the Polytechnics (to which the Junior Technical schools were to be up graded).¹

Courses leading to the examinations of the professional bodies in the United Kingdom, namely 1. the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and the Corporation of Certified Secretaries 2. The Institute of Bankers 3. the Institute of Transport were also provided at the Ceylon Technical College. The Munasinghe Commission was of opinion that the government should encourage and help the setting up locally of professional bodies such as an Institute of Bankers, an Institute of Transport, and an Institute of Management which should award professional qualifications for which the College of Commerce, recommended by the Commission, could provide courses. Until these bodies are set up, the College of Commerce should prepare students for the external examinations of the British institutions.²

In the University of Ceylon, a course was available for the degree of Bachelor of Commerce, and in the Vidyodaya University students could read for the B.A. degree in Public Administration and Business Administration. The Munasinghe Commission was of opinion that "these courses should be so arranged as to give the student a practical outlook in the field of business".³

1. Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Technical Education. S.P.X. of 1963. p. 113.
2. Ibid., p. 116
3. Ibid., p. 114.

CHAPTER 12

HIGHER EDUCATION—THE UNIVERSITIES

The establishment of the University of Ceylon

Within a few months of the establishment, in January 1921, of the Ceylon University College to prepare candidates for the Intermediate and Final examinations leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science of the University of London, action was taken to appoint an Academic Committee to draw up proposals for setting up a full-fledged University that granted its own degrees. The Academic Committee took about three years to draw up plans for the academic side of the new University, and when its work was completed a set back took place in the form of an acrimonious controversy as to the site on which the University should be located. In June 1926, the Governor appointed a committee to report on the question of a site, and after a protracted discussion on the report of the committee, the Legislative Council resolved in March 1927 as follows:

- “(a) That the proposed University should be unitary and residential;
- (b) That it should be established in Kandy on the Aruppola site in Dumbara valley;
- (c) That the Government should appoint a Commission to work out the details.”

In terms of decision (c), a Commission was appointed with Sir Walter Buchanan-Riddell as the Chairman. The Riddell Commission issued a comprehensive report¹ in January 1929 including in it a draft Ordinance for setting up the University. While the principle of establishing the University on the lines indicated by the Riddell Commission was readily accepted by the government, the draft Ordinance was considered to be in need of modification in matters of detail. The modifications were made and the draft University Bill passed its second reading in the Legislative Council in 1930. The country was in the grip of an acute economic depression at about this time, and moreover the controversy regarding the siting of the University again raised its head. These two factors contributed largely to create a

1. Report of the Commission on the University of Ceylon. S.P. IV of 1929.

stalemate in the situation for the next eight years. In 1938, a decision was made to abandon the Aruppola site and to establish the University at Peradeniya.

One of the immediate consequences of the outbreak of World War II was that it dislocated the arrangements for holding the London University examinations in Ceylon, and the Ceylon University College was faced with certain problems in this connection. Delays in receiving the examination papers and the results of the Intermediate examinations upset the time table for the preparation of students for the Degree examinations. There was also the inevitable risk of the loss of the answer scripts of the candidates on their way from Ceylon to London. The only available alternative was to convert the Ceylon University College into a degree granting institution operating in its buildings in Colombo without waiting for buildings to come up at Peradeniya which was to be the real location of the University. The factor which clinched issues and made the University of Ceylon an immediate reality was the dynamic personality of Dr. W. I. Jennings, the Principal of the Ceylon University College. A constitutional lawyer of great repute, he carried out what he thought were necessary modifications in the earlier Bill, and persuaded the Minister to place his draft before the legislature. Priority was given to the passage of the Bill, and it became law with effect from 1st July 1942 as the Ceylon University Ordinance No. 20 of 1942. The Riddell Commission had recommended that the University of Ceylon should be unitary, residential and autonomous. These principles were embodied in the Ordinance, and on 1st July 1942 the Ceylon University College and the Ceylon Medical College lost their separate identities and became the University of Ceylon. Four Faculties comprising eighteen Departments of study constituted the University, along with the Senate, the Council, the teachers, the officers and the students. The Faculties, and the Departments of study included in them, were as follows in 1942:

Faculty of Oriental Studies: Departments of Indo-Aryan, and Tamil.

Faculty of Arts: Departments of English, Western Classics, History, Geography, Economics, Philosophy, Indo-Aryan and Tamil.

Faculty of Science: Departments of Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Botany and Zoology.

Faculty of Medicine: Medicine, Surgery, Anatomy, Physiology (including Pharmacology and Biochemistry), and Pathology (including Parasitology, Bacteriology and Forensic Medicine).

The degrees to be awarded were the degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.

University of Ceylon—academic developments

By the year 1967, when the University of Ceylon was twenty five years old, its expansion had been such that the University functioned in two locations, Peradeniya and Colombo, with a population of 10,280 students. At Peradeniya, the Faculties and the Departments within them were as follows:

Faculty of Oriental Studies: Departments of Arabic, Buddhist Philosophy, Pali and Buddhist Civilisation, Sanskrit, Sinhalese and Tamil.

Faculty of Arts: The Departments of the Faculty of Oriental Studies and the Departments of Archaeology, Economics, Education, English, Geography, History, Modern Languages, Philosophy, Sociology and Western Classics.

Faculty of Science: Departments of Botany, Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics, Physics and Zoology.

Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Science: Departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Science.

Faculty of Engineering: Departments of Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering.

Faculty of Medicine: Departments of Anatomy, Biochemistry, Forensic Medicine, Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Parasitology, Pathology, Pharmacology, Physiology, Pediatrics, Public Health, Surgery and Dental Surgery.

At the Colombo location, the Faculty of Medicine was as at Peradeniya except for the fact that no courses in dental surgery were provided; the Faculty of Science was as at Peradeniya except that no Geology was available; there was no Faculty of Engineering and no

Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Science; the Faculties of Arts and Oriental studies offered a more restricted range of subjects than at Peradeniya, the Departments available being Economics, Geography, Pali and Buddhist Civilisation, Sanskrit and Tamil. There was also a Department of Law.

Considering both locations together the percentage enrolment of students by Faculties was as follows:

Faculty	Percentage
Arts and Oriental Studies	68.9
Medicine	16.2
Science	7.9
Engineering	5.6
Agriculture and Veterinary Science	1.4

From the point of view of man power needs there is a clear imbalance arising from the excessively high percentage of students in the Faculties of Arts and Oriental Studies, and the low percentage in the other Faculties.

Another distressing feature of university education is that the increase in student enrolment in recent years has not been accompanied by a proportionate increase in the grant from the government to the University. For example, in 1960 with a student population of 3,181 the grant per student was Rs. 3,000; in 1966 with a student population of 10,725 the grant worked out to Rs. 1,396 per student. As a matter of fact, one of the unsatisfactory features of educational financing in Ceylon is that too little of the expenditure on education is devoted to higher education. For example, while countries such as Britain and New Zealand devote 15 per cent or more of their total educational expenditure to higher education, Ceylon devotes only 5 per cent. The low level of expenditure on higher education is likely to affect adversely the quality of higher education in Ceylon and possibly retard national development.

The Needham Commission, 1958.

A Commission, consisting of Professor Joseph Needham of the University of Cambridge as Chairman and two other members, was appointed on 25th February 1958 to make a report on the functioning

of the University of Ceylon. The Chairman and one of the members submitted a report¹ making 143 recommendations, pertaining to the following matters (a) the administrative structure of the University, relations with the government, finances, (b) standards of teaching and examination in the University, (c) the academic structure of the University, (d) the organization of research in the University, (e) correlation of university education with that of pre-university stages, (f) the medium of instruction in the university, (g) the expansion of university education, (h) student life and campus facilities, (i) conditions of service of teachers in the University, (j) conditions of service of non-teaching staff in the University. The third member of the Commission contended that the report submitted by the other two was a 'private report' in that it had not been discussed at meetings of the Commission. He, however, set out his view on some of the recommendations made in the so-called 'private report'. The report did contain a number of useful suggestions, but both the government and the University did not take much notice of them.

The University of Ceylon and the government

In June 1945, the State Council passed by 31 votes to 10 the following motion moved by Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike: "The University shall confer external degrees".² No action was taken by the University to implement this resolution. In July 1948, Mr. P. G. B. Keuneman pointed out that "with the cancellation of the London Matriculation examination, the agitation has developed for the granting of external degrees by the Ceylon University, or for the creation of external colleges attached to the University"³ and urged that action should be taken. The Minister replied that the Vice-Chancellor was "against the granting of external degrees" but "quite prepared to consider the question of affiliated colleges"⁴. The University took no initiative regarding either question, and it was an annual feature for Parliamentarians, at the debate on the annual Appropriation Bill, to draw the attention of the Minister of Education to the absence of any positive response from the University. The question of granting external degrees was one of the matters referred to the Needham Commission for report, and the Commission made

1. Report of the Ceylon University Commission. S.P. XXIII of 1959.

2. H (HR). 6 June 1945. col. 2986.

3. H (HR). July 1948. col. 957.

4. Mr. E. A. Nugawela. H (HR). July 1948. col. 963.

the following recommendation: "That while the Commission is conscious of all the benefits obtained by internal courses of study, it nevertheless recommends that external degrees be awarded by the University of Ceylon. It is considered that the external degree should be exactly the same standard as the internal degree".¹ As a sequel to this recommendation, the Ceylon University Ordinance No. 20 of 1942 was amended, by the Ceylon University (Amendment) Act. No. 12 of 1961, and the University was empowered "to take such steps as may be necessary for the conduct of external examinations for enabling those who are not students of the University to obtain degrees, diplomas and other academic distinctions of the University". The necessary regulations were framed, and external degrees were awarded for the first time in 1965.

In August 1949, Dr. N. M. Perera raised the question of starting a degree course in Commerce at the University. He said, ".....there is no attempt being made to start a department to confer a degree of Commerce at the University. I was wondering, Sir, whether if the Minister or the Cabinet got in touch with the University authorities on the matter they would not be able to see that something of the kind could be devised".² The Minister agreed to "take the matter up with the University".³ It is not known whether the Minister took the matter up or not, but in any case nothing happened for many years, until in 1962, pursuant to a motion accepted by the University Court, a course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Commerce was instituted.

In 1954, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike drew the attention of the Parliament to the fact that the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Ivor Jennings, had refused to include in the agenda of the University Court a motion framed in Sinhalese and sent to the Vice-Chancellor by Mr. K. M. P. Rajaratna, a member of the University Court.⁴ In a letter refusing to include the motion in the Agenda, the Vice-Chancellor had stated: "While the Regulations relating to the Procedure of the Court do not specify the language in which such motions shall be framed, you will notice from Regulation 6 that the Court has imposed upon me the duty of expressing an opinion whether a motion deals with a

1. Report of the Ceylon University Commission. S.P. XXIII of 1959. p. 161.

2. H (HR). 9 August 1949. col. 1879.

3. Mr. E. A. Nugawela. H (HR). 9 August 1949. col. 1883.

4. H (HR). 4 March 1954. col. 3077.

matter which is outside the powers and duties of the Court or contains unbecoming expressions, or is otherwise irregular. Since I cannot exercise this function if a motion is framed in a language which I do not understand, it was evidently the intention of the Court that motions should be framed in English. I therefore rule under Section 12 (3) of the Ceylon University Ordinance No. 20 of 1942 that this document is not in order". This was Colonel Blimp at his worst. Six years after Independence, the language spoken by 80 per cent of the population of Ceylon could not get as little as a foothold in the University. The Minister undertook to take up the matter with the Vice-Chancellor but there is no doubt as to whose view would have prevailed.

Over the years, concern continued to be expressed about the insensitivity of the University to criticism, both within the Parliament and outside. The general feeling, however, was that the University should be allowed to enjoy full autonomy, and that although the government supplied the finances for almost the entire expenditure of the University, it was unwise for the government to attempt to exercise any kind of control over the University. In 1966, however, the cause of university education received a severe set back as a result of the new legislation that was passed in the form of the Higher Education Act No. 20 of 1966. As this Act applied not only to the University of Ceylon but also to the so-called pirivena universities that were established in 1959, the provisions of the Act are perhaps most appropriately discussed after a brief account of these universities, and also of the Gunawardena Commission Report of 1963.¹

The establishment of the Vidyodaya University and the Vidyalandara University

The Vidyodaya Pirivena established in 1873 and the Vidyalandara Pirivena established in 1873 were the two premier institutions of oriental and Buddhist learning in Ceylon. They had acquired a reputation both in Ceylon and abroad for their scholarship, which, however, was traditional rather than modern in conception. They were patronised by Bhikkus as well as by the male members of the lay public. On the eve of the general election of 1956, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, the leader of one of the political parties, gave an undertaking that if his party came into power due recognition would be given to pirivena education. There were, of course, several hundred piri-

1. Report of the Universities Commission. S.P. XVI of 1963. p. 30.

venas in Ceylon and the precise nature of the recognition that was to be given was not explained. Mr. Bandaranaike's party came into power, and there arose a demand that the Vidyodaya and the Vidyā-lankara Pirivenas, being the oldest and the best known of the pirivenas, should be raised to the status of universities. The Minister of Education, Mr. W. Dahanayake, was in favour of conceding this demand and in 1958 he introduced a Bill to confer university status on the Vidyodaya and the Vidyā-lankara Pirivenas. Conservative Buddhist opinion was against this move, but hardly got an opportunity to be heard in the face of the vociferous demands of those who wanted university status conferred on the pirivenas. In moving the Bill, Mr. Dahanayake pointed out that the following objectives would be achieved by the legislation:

- (a) giving the Sinhalese language its due place in the system of higher education,
- (b) ensuring a supply of teachers capable of teaching pupils through the medium of Sinhalese,
- (c) opening the doors of higher education to deserving pupils who were shut out of the University of Ceylon for lack of accommodation.

The Bill itself had been hastily drafted by Ministry officials in consultation with the two institutions that were to be raised to university status. Many of the provisions of the Bill were copied directly from the Ceylon University Ordinance in disregard of the fact that the authorities of the University of Ceylon were themselves quite critical of the Ordinance as its shortcomings had been clearly seen in the operation of the Ordinance for about fifteen years. In fact, Dr. N. M. Perera was led to remark ".....he has imposed all the defects of that institution on these two pirivenas also...."¹ The Bill, with all its defects, was approved by the Parliament and was intitled the Vidyodaya and Vidyā-lankara University Act No. 45 of 1958. The Act came into operation on 1st January 1959, and the Vidyodaya University and the Vidyā-lankara University were established with effect from the same date.

The Gunawardena Commission

A Commission consisting of Mr. D. C. R. Gunawardena as Chairman and two other members was appointed on 25th August

1. H (HR). 16 September 1958. col. 39.

1962 for the purpose of inquiring into and reporting on the working and the administration of the University of Ceylon, the Vidyodaya University, and the Vidyalankara University. In regard to the legislation which created the Vidyodaya and the Vidyalankara Universities, the Commission concludes: "Our analysis of the Pirivena Universities Act has given us the impression that practically every person associated with the framing of that Act and its working has shown a somewhat regrettable lack of responsibility".¹ This was in fact an indictment of the officials of the Ministry and the Education Department, for not only was the Act their handiwork, but over and above that connection many of them were actively engaged on a part-time basis in the administrative and teaching work of these two Universities during the early years. The remedies proposed by the Commission were quite drastic. They were that 1. "the two Pirivena Universities should cease to exist at the earliest possible moment" 2. "the Pirivena Universities Act No. 45 of 1958 should be repealed".² The Commission was quite critical of the University of Ceylon, too. "Our review of the working and administration of the University has shown evidence not merely of relaxation but of steady deterioration which, unless promptly and decisively checked, will soon reduce this great institution of which so much was expected to a mere semblance of what a true University should be".³ The Commission believed that the reins of the administration should be taken away from the hands of the Vice-Chancellor, the Court and the Council "for some time during which the atmosphere could be cleansed, a new spirit infused and the University re-vitalised to play its part fully and efficiently in the higher education of our youth" and for that purpose, the Commission recommended that "the Court, the Council and the Vice-Chancellor should cease to function for a period of about 18 months....and that the powers and functions of these authorities be vested during that period in an independent body such as the Grants Commission" suggested elsewhere in the Report of the Commission. The chief weakness of the Commission's recommendations was that they lacked finesse and an appreciation of the human problems involved in doing away altogether with two Universities and with the administrative structure of the third.

1. Report of the Universities Commission. S.P. XVI of 1963. p. 30.

2. Ibid., p. 168.

3. Ibid., p. 134.

The Higher Education Act No. 20 of 1966.

With the change of government in March 1965, Mr. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolle became the Minister of Education. He was no friend of university graduates. In August 1949, he had remarked that "Shakespeare was not a degreed man".¹ On 26th August 1953, he said "Krishna....and so-called other great leaders were not university men",² and went on to make the startling pronouncement: "At present professors and graduates of universities are the cause of many ills particularly in regard to war. All wars were started by university men".³ When Mr. Iriyagolle mooted legislation to control the universities, it did not cause much surprise in knowledgeable circles.⁴ With the help of his officials, to whom the freedom which the universities enjoyed from their bureaucratic control was anathema, he proposed legislation, the distinguishing features of which were firstly the attempt to foist Ministerial nominees on the two highest academic and non-academic posts in the universities and secondly the attempt to destroy the autonomy of the universities and bring them under Ministerial control.

In August 1966, the Minister introduced in the Parliament a Bill "to provide for the establishment of a National Council of Higher Education, for the establishment, maintenance and administration of Higher Educational Institutes, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto". A preliminary version of the Bill provided that the Vice-Chancellors and the Registrars "shall cease to hold their respective posts". The version of the Bill that was debated in the Parliament omitted the part of this proviso relating to the Vice-Chancellors and provided that only the Registrars shall cease to hold their posts. At the Standing Committee stage after the Second Reading of the Bill, the Minister of Education ensured the removal of the Vice-Chancellors through an amendment introduced in a roundabout fashion. One clause in the Bill read that employees in the universities continued to "hold their offices". This was amended to apply only to employees who had not "completed their sixty fifth year". The Vice-Chancellors of the three universities were over sixty five years of

1. H (HR). 9 August 1949. col. 1918.

2. H (HR). 26 August 1953. col. 1679.

3. H (HR). 26 August 1953. col. 1696.

4. Even as recently as August 1968, he asked whether Christ had a degree, and pointed out that Buddha and Mohamet did not go to universities. H (HR). 17 August 1968. cols. 1406, 1407.

age and therefore ceased to hold office. A further clause inserted in the Bill at the Standing Committee stage provided that "where a vacancy occurs in the post of Vice-Chancellor" by virtue of the preceding provisions, "the Minister shall appoint a person of eminence to fill such vacancy". In regard to the post of Registrar, the holders were to cease to hold office, and in place of the office of Registrar, the office of Secretary was created to be filled by a nominee of the Minister. Thus, the heads of the three universities, namely the Vice-Chancellors, ceased to hold office and were replaced by Ministerial nominees; the chief non-academic officers of the three universities, namely the Registrars, ceased to hold office and were replaced by Ministerial nominees with a change of designation from Registrar to Secretary. It was an atrocious piece of legislation, and yet the opposition from the academic community to these measures which dealt a death-blow to the concept of university autonomy was feeble. For personal reasons, some among them were not averse to seeing the Vice-Chancellors and the Registrars removed, and the larger issues involved were subordinated to momentary advantage.

The planting of Ministerial nominees as the Secretaries for such periods "as may be determined by the Minister" not only created lack of continuity in the office of Secretary but also brought in to two of the three universities (and, as from the year 1968 to three of the four universities) officers from the Ministry of Education and Department of Education whose substantive posts were junior to those of several others in the Ministry and the Department. These latter officers and the Minister himself could at any time request information at an informal level from these Secretaries, and to refuse such information would be an act of discourtesy to their superiors. At the will and pleasure of the Minister, more than one Secretary has been transferred from the University to his substantive post in the Ministry, and officers from the Ministry have been brought in as Secretaries. No university knows for how long its Secretary would remain in office, or when a new person would be found occupying the post of Secretary.

While the immediate appointees to Vice-Chancellorships after the new legislation were to consist of Ministerial nominees with no intervening step in the selection process, the Bill provided that in respect of vacancies to occur later the National Council would re-

commend to the Minister of Education at least three names out of which the Minister would select one for appointment. The National Council has not shown much independence in making its recommendations, and has tried to accommodate the Minister. Moreover, in terms of a general power that appointing authorities have for the removal from office of those whom they have appointed, the Minister, being the authority who appoints Vice-Chancellors, is entitled to remove from office the Vice-Chancellors he has appointed. Recently, one of the Vice-Chancellors was removed from office by the Minister. It is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs that Vice-Chancellors should hold office at the will and pleasure of the Minister. Unfortunately, the academic community seems so dispirited that its voice is scarcely to be heard. Even at this late stage, the academic community should bestir itself to positive action. When a vacancy for a Vice-Chancellorship occurs, the academic community should dissuade candidates from sending their names for nomination except on the condition that the Higher Education Act would be amended so as to ensure that a Vice-Chancellor could be removed only by a majority vote in some properly constituted statutory body such as the National Council of Higher Education or the Board of Regents.

The opposition parties in the Parliament succeeded in introducing certain amendments to the Bill during the Standing Committee stage. Most of the amendments were intended to reduce the powers of the Minister, and among the more important of these amendments were the following :

- (a) According to the Bill, the Minister was to "be responsible for the general direction and control of higher education". The words "and control" were removed during the Standing Committee stage.
- (b) According to the Bill, the Minister had the power to issue general instructions to the National Council of Higher Education. During the Standing Committee stage, the words "general written instructions" were substituted for "general instructions." This was a safeguard to ensure that instructions would not be given hastily, and would in any event be available on record. When the House of Representatives met to consider the report of the Standing Committee, Mr. Bernard Soysa moved to insert after the

word "directions" the following words "which shall be tabled before the House of Representatives at the earliest opportunity". He argued that such a procedure would have two great advantages. In the first place, it would ensure that the general written directions issued by the Minister would "have also got the concurrence of the Cabinet"; secondly, it would give an opportunity to members of the House of Representatives to seek to rescind the instructions if they thought them unsuitable¹. The Minister was, however, not prepared to accept the amendment and it was defeated.

- (c) According to the Bill, the members of the National Council were to be appointed by the Minister. During the Standing Committee stage, it was decided to replace 'Minister' by 'Governor-General'. While it is true that as a matter of formality the Governor-General acts on the advice of the Minister, it is also true that, more often than not, Ministers take the precaution of discussing with the Prime Minister the nature of the advice they tender to the Governor General. In this sense, when the power to appoint members of the National Council is vested in the Governor-General, it is likely that the names sent up to the Governor-General by the Minister would have had the approval of the Prime Minister.

The Bill had a proviso requiring both the academic and the non-academic staff to furnish the Board of Regents "with such information as it may require". This was a most dangerous proviso, as no restriction was placed on the kind of information which could be sought. Dr. N. M. Perera succeeded in moving an amendment to add after the word "require" the words "in regard to his official duties and functions", thereby limiting the scope of the information that could be sought.

Certain amendments moved by the opposition parties to reduce the powers of the Minister were defeated. In regard to every one of them, the attitude of the Minister was quite uncompromising. Among the more important of the defeated amendments were the following:

1. H (HR). 27 August 1966. cols. 1839, 1842.

- (a) The Governor-General, and not the Minister, should appoint the Vice-Chancellor from the panel of names recommended by the National Council.
- (b) In case of the temporary incapacity of the Vice-Chancellor to perform the duties of his office, the Board of Regents, and not the Minister, should make acting arrangements.
- (c) A University with the concurrence of the National Council may establish Faculties and Departments of study. The need to obtain the approval of the Minister to be removed.
- (d) The power of the Minister, acting on the advice of the National Council, to establish a Faculty, or to "transfer a Faculty or a department of study comprised in a Faculty, or any particular course of study" from one university to another university to be removed.
- (e) The power of the Minister, acting on the recommendation of the National Council, to issue a Campus Order to "(i) establish a Campus of the university (ii) assign a suitable name or designation to such Campus (iii) specify the site or location of such Campus....(iv) assign a Faculty or Faculties to such Campus (v) specify the department or departments of study comprised in such Faculty or Faculties" to be removed and vested in the Board of Regents to be carried out with the approval of the National Council.

The opposition parties also made an attempt to ensure that education in institutions of higher education would be free. According to the Bill, universities were empowered "to demand and receive such fees as may from time to time be prescribed by Regulation", and the National Council was empowered to regulate in respect of every institution of higher education "the fees to be charged for courses of study". Dr. N. M. Perera moved amendments to delete these provisions, but they were defeated. He also moved the addition of the following new clause: "Nothing in this Act shall authorise or be deemed to authorise the charging or levying of fees for any course of study in any higher educational institute under this Act" with a view to ensuring that the principle of free education would be entrenched by being embodied in the legislation, but the govern-

ment opposed the inclusion of the new clause.¹ The situation, then, is that although education in the universities is at present free, fees may well be levied at some future date in the absence of any specific proviso in the Act forbidding the levy of fees.

The report of the Standing Committee was presented in the House of Representatives on 27th August 1966, and although the opposition parties made a valiant attempt to press for the acceptance of some of the amendments that had been rejected during the Standing Committee stage, the Minister and the government party took an *uncompromising stand and refused to yield even on a single issue.*

Footnote owes its thanks to the opposition parties for having reduced some of the threats to the principles of university autonomy and academic freedom, for having curbed some of the powers sought by the Minister, and for having attempted, though without success, to safeguard the principle of free education. It is altogether a hastily conceived and disgraceful piece of legislation that has been thrust on the country, and its removal from the statute book at an early date is greatly to be hoped for.

1. See pages 33 and 34.

CHAPTER 13

ADULT EDUCATION

The history of adult education in Ceylon is quite unimpressive. Adult education has all along been a low priority with the government, and while some periods of activity are on record they were generally few and far between.

In 1939, there were 22 night schools and 271 adult classes, but in most of them the interest was in the study of a little English with a view to improving prospects of employment.¹ In 1940, certain unemployed persons (males) who had passed the Teachers' Certificate examination were given a short term training course in adult education and rural development. After training they were attached to schools to assist the schools with the war-time food production drive and also to organise adult classes.² In 1941, a few unemployed women who had passed the Teachers' Certificate examination were also trained and attached to schools.³ The number of adult classes rose to 329 in 1941 but came down to 141 by 1943. The Kannangara Committee stated that except for a few experiments by voluntary bodies and by the Education Department "there is hardly any adult education provided in Ceylon".⁴ Without going into any details it recommended programmes at three different levels. It was suggested that the Education Department and religious bodies should provide adult education for the illiterate and the semi-literate. The provision of vocational training using peripatetic teachers was suggested to improve the vocational efficiency of workers. Finally, the Committee suggested University extension classes for adult education at the highest plane. As a sequel to the Report, the Education Department took the initiative to provide adult education at the most elementary level by expanding the number of adult classes. From 181 classes in 1943, the number rose to 469 in 1944 and to 895 in 1945, but by 1948 the number had dwindled down to 75. It was clear that classes were being opened largely for purposes of record, and that programmes to hold the people were not being developed. There

1. A.R. 1939. p. A 14.

2. A.R. 1940. p. A 3.

3. A.R. 1941. p. A 3.

4. Report of the Special Committee on Education, Ceylon. S.P. XXIV of 1943. p. 70.

was a revival of interest in adult education in 1949 with the establishment in the Education Department of an Adult and Audio-Visual Education Branch with an Education Officer at its head. Some of the older centres were revived and new centres started. Increasing use was also made of audio-visual aids, including the radio, the film-strip and the film.

In 1950 a conference was convened of the Heads of government Departments engaging in various aspects of adult education, and "the possibility of carrying out a co-ordinated programme which includes the four main aspects of adult education—economic development, training in literacy skills, health and home life problems, social and citizenship aspects—was carefully considered", and it was claimed that during the year the work at the adult education centres was "conducted in close co-operation with the local officers of all other Departments interested in rural uplift and the personnel of non-governmental agencies".¹ Another interesting development during the year was the opening of new adult education centres in new colonization schemes. A team from Unesco, under the leadership of Dr. Spencer Hatch, took charge in 1951 of some of the centres in the Minneriya colonization scheme.² These centres were used to provide short training courses in community development for teachers in the area. During the year, a Central Council of Adult Education was set up consisting of representatives of government departments and voluntary organisations engaging in adult education. By the year 1952, the number of adult education centres and classes had risen to 318, and residential courses in adult education were organised that year for the benefit of 600 teachers conducting adult education centres or classes.³ By 1953 the number of centres and classes rose to 353,⁴ but there was a fall the following year, the number of centres and classes being 277. The Director described the year as "one of consolidation",⁵ and one may have taken this description seriously but for the fact that, the following year, when the number had come down still further to 154, the year is described as "one of expansion".⁶ Certainly, there was some expansion the following

1. A.R. 1950. (Dr. H. W. Howes). p. A 9.

2. A.R. 1951. p. A 15.

3. A.R. 1952. pp. A13, 14.

4. A.R. 1953. p. A19.

5. A.R. 1954. (Mr. T. D. Jayasuriya). p. A13.

6. A.R. 1955. (Mr. T. D. Jayasuriya). p. A16.

year, when the number rose to 222,¹ and increased the next two years, too, reaching 283 in 1958,² but declined in 1959 to 207.³ During the next three years no mention of adult education occurs in the Administration Reports. The centres and classes were clearly on the decline, and by 1965 the number had come down to 85⁴.

Meanwhile, in 1962, the Jayasuriya Commission reported that the entire scheme of adult education was "in a moribund state" and emphasised the importance of developing an imaginatively conceived plan of adult education. "While at its most rudimentary level adult education has to concern itself, in our society, with the combating of illiteracy and the prevention of a relapse into illiteracy of neo-literates, adult education should extend to the provision of a variety of opportunities for consolidating old knowledge and skills, acquiring new knowledge and skills, developing new interests and attitudes, and in short, promoting individual growth and excellence in all worthwhile directions. The ideal we should aim at is one in which every township or village in the country has a programme of adult education with a variety of offerings, some of which appeal to the illiterate and the neo-literate, some to the recent school leaver, some to the businessman, agriculturist or professional man, and some even to those who in their own specialities have reached the highest levels of education or training."⁵ The Commission believed that adult education was essentially a field in which stimulus was best generated at the local level, and went on to say "we regard the Local Government body of each area (Municipality, Urban or Town Council, or Village Committee as the case may be) as being in the best position to sponsor adult education activities in the community it serves in close co-operation with such voluntary organisations as are ready to initiate such activities". The Commission recommended that every local body should have a committee for adult education, in the same way as it had committees for health and sanitation etc. It was suggested that the central government should set up a Central Committee for Adult Education, and that at the regional level there should be regional committees. "These committees should sponsor conferences from

1. A.R. 1956. p. A18.

2. A.R. 1958. p. A105.

3. A.R. 1959. p. A170.

4. A.R. 1964-65. pp. A 116-136.

5. Final Report of the National Education Commission, 1961. S.P. XVII of 1962. p. 130.

time to time, and give new leads for the development of adult education. It should also be the function of these committees to sponsor from time to time residential courses of long or short duration, using school, training college and University hostels during vacations for providing residential accommodation. These courses may be designed to give a liberal education or to give new technical knowledge or a combination of more than one of these"¹. The fact that the University of Ceylon had shown no interest in extension and adult education activities was regretted, and it was suggested that at least 0.1 per cent of the annual grant should be utilised for such activities. Opportunity for the participation of school teachers in adult education activities was contained in the recommendation in relation to school teachers that over and above the 20 hour per week requirement of class teaching "every teacher be required to spend a minimum of 5 extra hours a week on such activities as helping in extra curricular work, helping in youth education or adult programmes...".² The Commission also placed on the Education Department the responsibility for organising "conferences of adult educators and audiences at which problems of the methodology of adult education would receive attention"³.

The characteristic lethargy of the Education Department could not be shaken off by the recommendations of the Jayasuriya Commission, and what it did about the parlous state of adult education was to try to transfer the responsibility elsewhere. The White Paper of 1964 was in favour of adult education programmes, but went on to state that such programmes "will be the responsibility of the Department of Rural Development. Arrangements will be made to release the necessary school buildings and to loan the services of teachers on a voluntary basis".⁴ This was a barren and unhelpful attitude. Voluntary release of teachers would be quite different from what was envisaged by the Jayasuriya Commission, according to which the possibility of counting up to five hours a week on adult education would have been an inducement to teachers to participate in such work.

The White Paper of 1966 showed even greater bankruptcy of thought. There is no mention of adult education in it, and it has to be assumed that it is subsumed under "Further Education", about

1. Ibid., p. 131.

2. Ibid., p. 96.

3. Ibid., p. 131.

4. Proposals for a National System of Education. Colombo, 1964.

which it is stated that "the system of Further Education will provide opportunities for children who have sought employment after their Elementary Education, to develop their personality and improve their vocational efficiency", and also that the following schools will provide Further Education:

- (i) Local Practical Schools.
- (ii) Evening and Night Schools.¹

A more myopic attitude towards the whole concept of adult education could hardly be imagined.

The Education Bill presented in November 1967 says nothing about adult education but has the following section regarding Further Education.

"Local Practical Schools, Evening Schools and Night Schools may be established, conducted and maintained by any local authority or any society registered under the Societies Ordinance. Every such school shall provide full-time or part-time vocational or cultural education for persons above the age of fourteen who are able and willing to profit by such education.

Regulations may be made under this Act for the establishment, approval, conduct and inspection of Local Practical Schools, Evening Schools and Night Schools.

In this section, Local authority means any Municipal Council, Urban Council, Town Council or Village Council."²

In other words, the only function of the Minister of Education in regard to adult education is to be engaged with his bureaucracy in the delectable game of regulation making, and presumably controlling both thought and activity.³

The Unesco National Commission for Ceylon broke new ground in 1966 when it sponsored three pilot projects by the universities in the field of youth and adult education. The University of Ceylon at Peradeniya operated programmes with villagers at two centres close

-
1. *Proposals for Reforms in General and Technical Education*. Colombo, 1966. p. 8.
 2. *General and Technical Education Bill*. Colombo, 1967. p. 10.
 3. It may be noted that the Bill was not proceeded with.

to the University. The programmes had three main foci of interest, namely 1. physical and mental health 2. culture 3. agriculture. For the agricultural programme, selected villagers were brought to the University Department of Agriculture for lecture demonstrations, and later university students of agriculture participated in some of the agricultural activities of the villagers. The Vidyodaya and the Vidyalandara Universities also developed programmes designed to improve the cultural and the economic life of the villagers in certain locations. The response from the villagers in all the locations was most enthusiastic, and the lesson from the pilot project was that there was an urgent need to establish full fledged Extension Departments in the universities to enable them to operate programmes on a sufficiently wide scale to make an impact on the community.

CHAPTER 14

POLITICS, BUREAUCRACY AND TOTALITARIANISM IN EDUCATION

It is quite fashionable in certain circles in Ceylon, especially in the circles which were unsympathetic to the extension of the franchise and the grant of political independence, to decry the entry of politics into education, and to lay the blame on the politician for all the ills, real or imagined, of education in the country. In this connection, it is necessary to recognise that the very concept of politics 'entering' into education is an outgrowth of colonialism. For it is only in a colonial territory that educational and other social policies are the result of decisions made at the level of the colonial ruler without the active participation of the political representatives of the people; and, in that context, when the representatives of the people begin to participate, with the growth of political freedom, in the decision making processes in relation to education there is talk of politics 'entering' into education. In a sovereign state, to the extent that the representatives of the people participate in the decision making processes in relation to education, it is necessarily and naturally taken for granted that education is an integral part of the business of politics. To attempt to exclude politics from education would be to make education the preserve of those who have enjoyed its benefits in a closed social system that confined education to a privileged minority. In an erstwhile colony, to exclude politics from education would be to let education continue in the service of both imperial and feudal interests, and it is clearly in the maintenance of the supremacy of imperial and feudal interests that those who decry the entry of politics into education are actively engaged.

While the politician is perhaps more sensitive than anyone else to the problems of the common man, he is not usually equipped with the informational background and knowledge necessary for working out successful solutions to these problems. He is not, however, incapable of acquiring the necessary information and knowledge, given a reasonable time for reading and thinking and discussion. But in Ceylon, as in many other newly independent countries, the demands on the politicians' time are most exacting. Every member of Parliament has to spend the greater part of his waking

hours nursing his constituency with a view to being returned at the next elections. In the case of those who hold office as Ministers, not only do they have to nurse their constituencies, they also have to accept the most trivial official and social engagements in all parts of the country, and engage in long hours of travel every day in the week. Over the weeks and months, the round of tiresome travel and the mouthing of platitudes lead them to a kind of mental stupor in which they become attuned to entrusting all their thinking to the officials surrounding them. The Minister becomes the prisoner of the bureaucrat, and thus it comes to pass that he who had vowed to serve the masses ignores that responsibility and becomes the servant of the bureaucrat and of the vested interests dear to the bureaucratic tribe. The bureaucrat in education has had some typical predilections and it is of interest to examine a few of them.

Be it in relation to the free education scheme, the place of the national languages in education or the rationalisation of the school system, the bureaucrat regulated the pace of change to cause the minimum disturbance to vested interests, and to hold back the intended benefits of the changes from the masses for whom they had been principally intended by the legislators. Free education has meant a good free education in the schools attended by the privileged social classes and a bad free education in the schools attended by the masses. The teacher salary per pupil in a free school attended by the privileged costs the government five times as much as in a free school attended by the children of the masses.¹ The government has supplied palatial buildings to some of its schools, while in its other schools "children frequently attend classes in the open air seated on the ground" for want of buildings and furniture.² The government gives some of its schools teacher-pupil ratios as low as 1 to 20, and other schools ratios as high as 1 to 54.³ In some areas, there is one graduate teacher to 198 pupils and in others one graduate teacher to 697 pupils.⁴ There are coeducational schools in which there is not a single female teacher although over a hundred of the pupils are girls;⁵ in other schools, there are as many as nine or ten female teachers to

1. H (S). 21 December 1966. col. 3223.
2. Ceylon Daily News. 3 November 1968.
3. H (HR). 7 September 1968. col. 1838.
4. H (HR). 7 April 1968. cols. 2707-2715.
5. A.R. 1965-66.

every male teacher¹. Less than one tenth of the secondary schools attended by the less privileged have laboratories, but even among the schools which have laboratories there are some in which science has not been taught for over a year for want of teachers.² Rationalisation of the school system has meant no more than the imposition of more and more disabilities on the poor. The alleged division of schools into two types—Kanishta Vidyalayas from Grade I to Grade VII, and Maha Vidyalayas from Grade VIII upwards—has meant that in privileged areas the two types of schools are found in the same premises, while in less privileged areas the children passing from Grade VII to Grade VIII are required to walk ten to twelve miles to be admitted to Grade VIII, the Grade VIII in their own schools having been abolished in the alleged reorganisation.³ Many children give up schooling, and so there is great economy in the reorganisation. As a measure of economy and with a view to increasing employment opportunities, so-called pupil teachers were recruited in thousands paying them a wage lower than that of an unskilled labourer, and these sub-standard teachers were dumped without the slightest compunction on the schools to which the masses sent their children. The politician looked on very much in the manner of a lotus eater, while the bureaucrat reduced equality of educational opportunity to a myth. A torrent of well designed verbiage and high sounding jargon served to astound and confuse the unwary politician rather than inform and enlighten him. The document entitled *Action Research Pilot Project for Improvement of School Practices through Supervision and Assessment of School Performance* is a classic example of such verbiage and jargon. The percentage of passes from each school in the different subjects of the General Certificate of Education examination is to be averaged to yield an Achievement Index. In one school, the curricular provision may only be for such subjects as Art, Hygiene, Religion and Pali (in addition to the mother tongue and History), none of which hold a promising vocational future for the pupils; in another school, the sciences may be available, with all the opportunities and openings they provide. But such vital differences will not be revealed by the Achievement Index, which will only lull the public into a false complacency. It is proposed also to obtain a

1. H (HR). 12 August 1968. col. 3198.

2. H (HR). 26 March 1968. col. 2575.

3. H (HR). 10 September 1968. col. 2758.

General Achievement Index by pooling assessments on a miscellaneous assortment of activities such as

1. The main curricular programme (the teaching and instructional programme).
2. The programme of evaluation of the teaching programme (school tests, public examinations, etc.).
3. Organisation and administration of the time and the personnel (design of school calendar, school time tables, etc.).
4. Programmes relating to the professional growth of staff (professional group meetings, study circles and in-service training programmes etc.).
5. The principal co-curricular programme (work experience).
6. The assessment of the performances in other co-curricular programmes.
7. Welfare activities for pupils, teachers etc. (including aspects relating to discipline and morale).
8. Liaison with parents, past pupils and other community organisations.
9. Organisation and administration of the physical plant and other material resources (financial administration, inventory maintenance, boards of survey, etc.).
10. Other basic miscellaneous activities associated with the school.

In relation to 1, the following are among the guide lines given to assist in the assessment:

1. Many teachers consider teaching a tormenting activity.
2. Teaching not a satisfying activity to many teachers. Pupils do not show interest.
3. Many teachers gain satisfaction from teaching. Consider supervision essential.
4. Teachers enjoy teaching. Feel encouraged by pupil progress and helpful supervision.
5. Both teachers and pupils consider class-room work highly satisfying. Teachers welcome supervision of their work.

Guide lines for the other variables are equally profound, and the entire document is a masterpiece of banality.

Action to give a teacher-pupil ratio more reasonable than 1 to 54, action to make safe school buildings which in their hundreds are "on the verge of collapse"¹, action to give an additional toilet when 267 boys and 191 girls share one toilet,² or when 508 boys and 494 girls share two toilets³ must await the results of this grandiose programme of Action Research based on a "highly significant conceptual analysis" using "objective criteria with a high degree of validity", the data collected being finally fed into a computer not only to keep abreast of the new technology but also because it is fondly believed that even when a heap of refuse is fed into a computer the quintessence of wisdom gets distilled out of it.

While the politician has been reduced to a cipher by the bureaucrat in that the politician is made to acquiesce while the intentions of the legislature are distorted to serve the class interests of the bureaucrat, the bureaucrat is only too ready to pander to the vanity of the politician by giving him an undue and undeserved place in relation to the appointment, transfer and disciplinary control of teachers. Every whim and fancy of the politician in this regard is welcomed and respected by the bureaucrat, and the teacher has been reduced to a pawn in the game of parochial politics. Hence, there is in Ceylon the curious situation that all the energies of the politician in the field of education are concentrated not on seeing that legislative policy is implemented in the manner intended by the legislators but on exercising a surveillance over individual teachers and dispensing rewards and punishments, through the intermediary of an obliging bureaucracy.

A bait that the careerist bureaucrat offers to the political party in power is the sabotage of any measure that might conceivably bring some advantage to the ranks of the opposition parties or redound to their credit. The measure concerned may be the most desirable from a national point of view, but if it is anticipated that some temporary advantage however slight might accrue to the opposition, the careerist bureaucrat seeks to negate it as a means of ingratiating himself with the party in power. There is an acute shortage of science teachers, and yet the project for establishing a Science Training College has been starved to a lingering death by the bureaucrats. It

1. Times of Ceylon. 22 November 1968.

2. Baptist Government School, Kandy.

3. Ampitiya Dharmapala Junior School, Kandy.

was reported in the 1961-62 Administration Report of the Director of Education that the Public Works Department "commenced the construction of the buildings for the proposed Science Training College"¹. Lecturers were recruited and sent abroad for training. Lakhs of rupees have been subsequently spent on various hair brained projects, but the latest available Administration Report (1965-66) is silent about the Science Training College. Moreover, in order to divert attention from the project and to make it a low priority, groups of recruits with General Certificate in Education Advanced level passes in two science subjects have been placed in the university departments of science for so-called courses of training. The great need to sabotage the Science Training College project arose from the fact that it was started by the last government and the buildings were to be sited in the constituency of the last Prime Minister. The same mentality and capacity to sacrifice larger objectives for some temporary advantage conspired to strangle the Bachelor of Education course partly for the fault that it was started under the auspices of the previous government, and partly for other reasons.²

Belief in his own genius has made the bureaucrat prescribe in the minutest detail, by means of so-called course guides, what every teacher should say and do in the classroom, the questions he should ask and the answers that he should receive. Absolute conformity is insisted upon and no deviation is permitted. Moreover, it is proudly claimed that to repeat the same words in every classroom is the surest means of ensuring equality of educational opportunity in all the schools in the island. Teachers with a good academic background and professional preparation are no longer necessary; fewer graduates have been recruited to the teaching profession during the triennium 1965 to 1968 than were recruited during any single year in the preceding triennium. All that is required of the teacher is a basic literacy so that he could read out to the children what has been so cleverly laid down in the course guide. Teachers revolt in despair at the new despotism. Young graduates find it so destructive of their personalities to be reduced to the level of mere tape recorders that they run away from teaching to accept any other kind of employment that comes their way. The confusions and the absurdities in some of the science course guides mystify the young science graduate, and

1. A.R. 1961-62. p. A144.

2. See page 147.

confronted with the kind of thing given below he wonders whether it is science or necromancy which he is compulsorily retailing to the poor, hapless pupils:

1. Recall the case with which some of the male and female parents of animals could be identified by external appearances and the difficulty in others.
2. In the female rat, the entry of the spermatazoa releases the ova into the fallopian tube, within about eight hours.
3. Describe the occurrence of caste biased marriage and the eventualities of a mutation occurred among them which makes them different from the others.
4. A group of organisms of similar origin, living in similar circumstances and provide fertile young through interbreeding is considered a species.
5. Meanwhile further mutations occur in the isolated populations, selection entails and the fittest survive.
6. Some species would have had a course of success throughout the process of evolution; some species would have had successful courses of evolution for sometime and met failures; some would have had less successful courses of evolution but yet persisted.
7. Using illustrations bring forward the presence on earth of unicellular and small and multicellular and large animals and plants during the past. Discuss how the order of being buried gives an indication to their succession.
8. Some organisms have taken an adaptive radiation towards internal parasitism. In the process of further evolution the successive organisms have less developed organs which are required for free living existence.

All these occur in a single term's course guide of 56 pages. It is often claimed that Ceylon is ahead of the rest of Asia in its science programme. No doubt she is, in certain aspects of the science programme.

Thought control of the pupils is attempted also through the government textbook monopoly. The idea that the government should produce a series of school textbooks came from Dr. N. M.

Perera when he was the Minister of Finance. He was greatly concerned about the prices of books produced by the private sector and the great burden they imposed on the parents. He commended to the government the suggestion that it should produce a series of school books and price them low. A government monopoly was not envisaged by him, but it suited the minds of the bureaucrats. Many who had never published any work at all, not even an article in a school magazine, were crowned as authors overnight and the entire school population of the country had to use the books written by these authors. Rank careerism made the authors try to advance political ideologies and personalities through the books. A particularly stupid example of it was the attempt to present a visual image of the words NIMAL MARY PERERA in the first Reader in English. Dr. N. M. Perera himself would have had nothing but contempt for this naivete. On the whole, the books produced by the official writers compared very unfavourably with those that were already in existence, but compulsion to use them was rigidly enforced. The deficiencies in the government textbooks are so many that an entire book would be needed to list them. For the present purpose, however, it would suffice to look at a few of the deficiencies in two or three of the books. The Grade I Reader in Sinhala has an inordinately heavy vocabulary load. The beginning child is confronted with over 500 word forms, some of them occurring not more than once or twice in the entire book. The effect of such a heavy vocabulary load is to prevent adequate word mastery and to retard reading progress. Moreover, many of the words introduced are limited in their range of meaning and are not functionally useful words. The material in the Reader is in the nature of an adult prescription for child consumption, and very little acquaintance is shown with the speech habits, real experiences and interests of five year olds. No effort is made to establish correct eye-movement habits by line divisions that reflect thought units, and the only considerations that appear to prevail are the physical limits of space. It is axiomatic that purveyors of third rate products should regard it as a great threat to their existence if anything first rate were allowed to exist within sight. A first rate reading series, the Nava Maga Readers by H. Don Sugathapala, which had been approved and used as text books for over twenty years previously, were denied approval even as books for the library. Of course, educated and well-to-do parents who have seen the limitations of the official Readers buy the Nava Maga series and other

previously approved Readers for supplementary reading at home by their children, but in so far as the teacher in the classroom is concerned, he or she has to endure in silence the frustration of having to use a textbook the limitations of which thunder in the ears. The compulsory, official Readers for the higher grades have also come in for severe criticism. A well-known Sinhalese scholar and University Don has written about them as follows: "Forms advocated by those who wish to revive the usage of Polonnaruwa period—12th century A.D.—are extensively used in the Sinhala readers issued by the Commissioner of Educational Publications and which are compulsory for all pupils in all our schools. The latest, the book for Grade X, is riddled with such archaic and unrealistic forms. No pupil who uses this book can hope to escape their baneful effects, and be intelligible to those who use the language forms of today".¹ The official English textbooks offer the following models of usage and logic:

1. "Their attention does not wander from the main story because of scenes that are not really necessary".²
2. "There are many stars larger and brighter than the sun in the Milky Way".³
3. "Plants usually prepare their own food from the water and salt dissolved in the soil."⁴
4. "When it was light we got ready to go to our car".⁵
5. "When Kumar kept his ear on the door.....".⁶
6. "She put the two pots on her head and went to a rich house."⁷
7. "Punchi Singho and his wife have packed up their wares too. They are going home by cart. They have sold all their vegetables. The cart is empty".⁸
8. "Yesterday was Sunday. Tomorrow will be Monday".⁹

1. Dr. P. B. Sannasgala. Ceylon Daily News. 6 February 1969.

2. Revision Material for English Reading Comprehension, G.C.E. Advanced Level. p. 85.

3. Ibid., p. 32.

4. Ibid., p. 21.

5. English Course. Grade VIII. p. 115.

6. English Course. Grade VII. p. 69.

7. English Course. Book 4. p. 110.

8. Ibid., p. 58.

9. English Course. Book 3. p. 104.

In the mathematics books, the study of geometry and algebra has been reduced to utter confusion. Angles are discussed as if they are primarily elements of space; acute angles and obtuse angles have to be identified before the idea of an angle measure is considered. Congruency is confused by talk of a common angle instead of an included angle; common sides add to the confusion. Algebra is introduced through an involved generalisation based on equivalent fractions. None would cavil at idiosyncratic approaches if there were no compulsion to use them, but here in Ceylon a few individuals in their wisdom and omniscience thrust their errors and idiosyncracies compulsorily down the throats of the teachers and into the heads of all children unfortunate enough to be in school at the present time. If a teacher dares to criticise a government textbook, he is given short shrift. Very recently, the Venerable Dr. Walpola Rahula Thero, Vice Chancellor of Vidyodaya University, was constrained to remark that though the Sinhalese Readers were deplorable school teachers were unable to express their views freely about the books because they would be victimised.¹ To criticise a government textbook or a government scheme of studies is an act of imbecility and moral turpitude, and the sinner soon gets his deserts by being black listed; but any teacher who bestows lavish praise is credited with intellectual excellence of a rare order and selected for reward by promotion or at least by the award of a scholarship. The fact that the several dozen scholarships awarded by foreign governments are all routed through the Ministry of Education makes it possible for the Ministry to reward stooges readily, attractively and at no cost to itself. "The brisk, fond lackeys who fetch and carry have inherited the earth."² Alas!

An area in which the activities of the educational bureaucrats can hardly be equalled for their superb planning and masterly execution is in the creation of opportunities for self-advancement. A comparison of the cadre of top posts during the financial years 1962-63 and 1968-69 is very revealing.

Salary scale		No. of posts 1962-63	No. of posts 1968-69
Rs. 22800	— Rs. 25800	1	1
Rs. 19200	— Rs. 21000	1	3

1. Report in Ceylon Daily News. 19 April 1969.

2. Attributed to the late Ven. Canon Lucien Jansz as having been used in another context.

Rs. 15600	—	Rs. 16800	3	10
Rs. 11760	—	Rs. 14400	14	15
Rs. 8400	—	Rs. 13200	21	44

It may be noted in passing that the lowest paid of the above categories of bureaucrats draws at the initial of his scale more than five times and at the maximum of his scale more than eight times the non-incremental salary on which the largest numbers of teachers had been recruited to the profession during the decennium 1959 to 1968. As a result of the multiplication of high level posts for the bureaucratic fraternity, many of the bureaucrats drew in 1968-69 salaries 30 per cent. to 50 per cent. higher than what they had drawn in 1962-63, while several thousand teachers continued to toil on a wage lower than that of an unskilled labourer. Bureaucracy also took on impressive designations. There was no Director General of Education in 1962; there was one in 1968. There were no Deputy Directors General of Education in 1962; there were three in 1968. There was only one Director of Education in 1962; there were twenty five Directors of Education in 1968. There were twenty one Education Officers in 1962; there were forty four in 1968. Who can say that there has been no progress in education? A self centred and status hungry bureaucracy has served itself very well indeed, while teachers languish in penury and seven hundred and fifty school buildings are "on the verge of collapse".¹

Membership in the international jet set with breakfast in Colombo, lunch in Tokyo or Manila, and dinner in New York or Moscow is one of the most recent accomplishments of the educational bureaucracy, and the country pays a heavy price for it in several ways. The realities of the local situation are unimportant as long as the rest of the world can be impressed by conspicuous claims. On paper many of our new syllabuses are ahead of the rest of the world, but as for what is done in the classroom the teachers are gagged and made to keep mum. Teachers lacking the necessary academic background are induced to teach the new science and mathematics relying on pupils' textbooks and schemes of work prepared in voluminous detail, for they have been designed to teach the teacher. Certain teachers have been known to refuse to answer any question for which the answer is not found in the book and to say, "Do not ask me anything which is not in the book". For his part, the knowledgeable

1. Times of Ceylon. 15 November 1968.

teacher revolts at the tell-tale howlers and idiosyncracies in the books and schemes, and is resentful that that he has to prostitute himself by being a purveyor of such material. These and other shameful realities of the local situation are unimportant as long as Ceylon can impress the rest of the world on paper and hold membership in the international jet set. A deliberate attempt is made to prevent visiting academicians from meeting local personnel who might give the truth away. When a team of visiting mathematicians and a team of visiting chemists spent some days in a local university setting, a local Don with a well known interest in mathematics teaching and completely ignorant of chemistry was warmly invited by the educational bureaucracy to be an active participant in the chemistry group; chemistry Dons on the other hand were invited only for ceremonial and social meetings with the chemistry group and not for any serious participation in the work. Whatever else the educational bureaucrat lacks, he certainly does not lack humour. While membership in the international jet set is no doubt educative, it must also be recognised that there has been an increasing tendency to seek aid for travel rather than aid of any other sort. Aid to equip a couple of laboratories may be of permanent benefit to generations of students whereas aid for travel may benefit only a handful. Membership in the international jet set unfortunately makes one concentrate on travel aid rather than on a more abiding kind of aid. Moreover, it often leaves the bureaucracy with no time to attend to urgent tasks at home.

Conspicuous pageantry and tamashas are second nature to the educational bureaucrats. Any excuse is good enough for them to organise a tamasha, the bill for which is ultimately paid by the children in the schools and their parents. Work experience was intended to be an educational activity, but in practice it has been made an excuse for great pomp and revelry. "In particular, the mass paddy weeding program, though pursued with vigour, seems designed to defeat the aims it hopes to achieve"¹ is the assessment made by the Education Mission of the International Bank about the most publicised aspect of the work experience programme. The most elaborate arrangements conceivable have been made for celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the Education Department. Funds

1. International Development Association of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. *Ceylon—Preliminary Survey of Education*, 1966. p. 15.

for the siyawasa¹ revelry are being raised by the sale of sweep tickets in schools. At a mass meeting of parents held to protest against the siyawasa lottery, it was stated that "there were instances of poor parents being victimised and forced to pawn their belongings to find the money to buy siyawasa tickets and of teachers in the smaller schools having to pocket out their own money to satisfy the officers of the Department", and the following resolution was unanimously passed:

"The public and parents of Jaffna assembled here strongly protest against the compulsory sale of the series of lottery tickets through the schools and the coercive measures being adopted by the officers of the Department to force the tickets on the teachers and through them on their pupils. This meeting condemns the Education Minister's scheme of lottery and its current methods of implementation as unethical and tending to undermine the moral standards of the school children and appeals to all parents and teachers in all parts of Ceylon to non-cooperate with the education authorities and organise protests all over the country and demand the withdrawal of the siyawasa lottery."²

One newspaper reported that a ten year old girl had been asked to leave school for failing to purchase two sweep tickets³. Another newspaper commented that parents invariably buy up the tickets themselves "spending on this numbshell project precious rupees that might have been put to better use."⁴ Certain schools are to remain closed for several weeks to enable a siyawasa carnival and exhibition to be staged in their premises; later the schools are to work six days in the week to make up for the days that would be lost. While money is extorted from children and parents for the siyawasa revelries, school buildings continue to collapse. 750 schools were reported to be "on the verge of collapse" in November 1968⁵; several have collapsed since then, and even as the Minister of Education in all his splendour was presiding at the second Siyawasa Sweep Draw in a school hall, the orchestra performing at the Draw "had a narrow shave when a square section of the ceiling crashed to the stage, just missing some of

-
1. Hundredth anniversary.
 2. Ceylon Daily News. 5 March 1969.
 3. Davasa. 22 March 1969.
 4. Ceylon Daily News. 25 March 1969.
 5. Times of Ceylon. 15 November 1968.

the musicians".¹ Few would have quarreled with the Minister if the money realised from the sale of sweep tickets to children was to be used for giving them a safe roof over their heads: some libraries are to be provided, but higher in the scale of priority comes "the provision of ample toilets for those who come to enjoy themselves at the Education Department's centenary tamasha" so that "the revellers need not go home till morning".² In 1962, the Jayasuriya Commission had stressed the need to repair or replace school buildings that constituted a threat to the safety of children,³ but the situation now is no better than it was then. The day is not far distant when a great tragedy would befall the children in some school, and perhaps not until then would pomp and revelry give place to more serious tasks.

It is only in an atmosphere in which criticism is stifled that bureaucracy can thrive and prosper hiding all its weaknesses and faults. The freedom of speech of teachers in the government schools had all along been quite limited by the operation of the Public Service Regulations. But there existed alongside these teachers, the teachers from denominational schools who were quite free to express their views on political as well as educational issues, as long as they did not come into strong conflict with their employers. With the government take over of the denominational schools, the teachers in these schools became government teachers and subject to the provisions in the Public Service Regulations. Government teachers do not enjoy certain political rights. For example, they cannot seek election to the Parliament or to a local government body. Lacking full political rights, the teacher has become ineffectual in national, including educational, affairs. The teacher has lost his academic freedom, for it is being increasingly interpreted that any attempt to criticise educational policy or practice is tantamount to criticism of the government and a breach of Public Service Regulations. The educational bureaucrat revels in this situation, for his security and advancement depend on the stifling of criticism. He would go any length to argue that full political rights should not be extended to teachers. A newspaper report that the Jayasuriya Commission may recommend full political rights for teachers set bureaucracy to work

1. Ceylon Daily News. 6 May 1969.

2. Sun. 5 May 1969.

3. Final Report of the National Education Commission, 1961. S.P. XVII of 1962. p. 10.

at an unparalleled speed, and the Commission was forthwith informed by the Governor General "that it is not considered that the terms of reference of the Commission entitle the Commission to make any recommendation on this subject".¹ The issue of political rights for teachers has been raised several times in the Houses of Parliament, and in so far as the 1960-65 era is concerned it was a measure of the stranglehold exercised by the bureaucrat on the politician that the issue was not resolved in favour of the teacher. In the post 1965 era in education, the politician seems to be one with the bureaucrat in wanting to muzzle the teacher. In February 1968, Mr. Prins Gunasekera drew the attention of the House of Representatives to a letter sent by a Cabinet Minister. The letter was said to be as follows:

Regional Director of Education
G/Ethiligoda M. V.

Please appoint the new Principal named to G/Ethiligoda M. V. The present man is bringing the school to ruin. He should be sent out at once.

W. DAHANAYAKE
*Minister of Home Affairs.*²

In September 1968, Mr. Bernard Soysa charged the Minister of Education with having established a Draconian dictatorship "where even a peon who is supposed to have transgressed against the powers that be might be suddenly be transferred or kicked out of service".³ The Ceylon Observer of 10 January 1969 had the following news item about a teacher who had been transferred on a report made by the Criminal Investigation Department: "According to Education Department sources, they had received a C.I.D. report stating that the teacher was 'supposed' to be doing political work in Galle against the government but that there was no proof. On this report the Ministry had transferred the teacher to a remote area....". The news item went on to say that that the transfer was later cancelled on the intervention of a Cabinet Minister who thought that the report was false. Apart from the accuracy or the inaccuracy of the reports themselves the practice of setting the Criminal Investigation Depart-

1. Ibid., p. 225.

2. H (HR). 25 February 1968. col. 1337.

3. H (HR). 10 September 1968. col. 2805.

ment on critics of the government is a complete subversion of the democratic process. "The freedom of self expression is a liberty that we must not lose", said the Prime Minister, Mr. Dudley Senanayake, in his broadcast speech on Independence Day, 1969¹. If he is really serious about what he says, his first task should be to eliminate the threats to freedom emanating from within his own government. It is not without reason that there is grave concern in academic circles about the threats to freedom and learning. The Vice Chancellor of Vidyodaya University, referring specifically to the activities of the Ministry of Education, has recently remarked that there seemed to be a clear indication "that the country is heading towards a dictatorship".² The totalitarianism that bedevils education at all levels at the present time constitutes a graver threat to learning and living than has been the case since the benighted rule of the Portuguese and the Dutch in Ceylon during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the exercise of great vigilance on the part of all thinking men is necessary to ward off the even more serious threats that appear to be lurking round the corner.

1. Ceylon Daily News. 5 February 1969.

2. Ven. Dr. Walpola Rahula Thero. Ceylon Daily News. 19 April 1969.

SECTION IV

Epilogue

SECTION IV

Page 100

CHAPTER 15

ACHIEVEMENT AND FAILURE

The review of education contained in this book encompassed a ten year period before Independence and a twenty year period after Independence. Among the most significant features of the colonial heritage in education were:

1. the existence of a poor quality free education in the national languages for the many, and of a high quality education in English available for purchase by the few, and
2. the existence of a system of denominational schools liberally supported by the government alongside a government school system which was in the nature of a poor relation.

The struggle against the inequities caused by these dualities had started long before the year 1939, but it was really during the period 1939 to 1948 that the first victories were recorded. Colonialism itself was on its last legs and too feeble and unconcerned to put up any real defence of the status quo except by dilatory tactics which served to halt progress for a brief while. The other forces for the perpetuation of the status quo and the obstruction of change were associated almost inevitably with social and economic class and with religious privilege. They have been altogether pervasive and only a shade less powerful in the post-Independence era than in the pre-Independence era. Above all, they derived their main strength from the fact that the educational bureaucracy had an identity of interest with them.

The struggle against privilege recorded many victories in the legislature. The acceptance by the legislature of the principle of free education from the kindergarten to the university was indeed a far reaching and glorious victory. But snags remain. In the first place, the principle has not been rendered inviolable by being embodied in legislation, and reactionary elements lurking in the shadows may yet make onslaughts on it. In the second place, the free education that is available is quite variable in quality, and while a minority receives the essence the vast majority has to be satisfied with the dregs. If the scheme of zoning recommended by the Jayasuriya Commission had been implemented with sincerity of purpose without recourse

to the admission into privileged schools of certain pupils on the basis of lists dubiously prepared behind the headmasters' backs by certain highly placed officials, a great step forward would have been taken in the direction of doing justice to all children. It must be recognised that the failure to provide equal access to a good education detracts strongly from the claim that free education is an achievement. The present unsatisfactory state of affairs need not continue, however. With sincerity of purpose, imaginative planning, and the proper deployment of financial resources, it should be possible within a very short space of time to ensure to every child in the country equal access to a good education.

The victories on the national languages front have very much been in the nature of Pyrrhic victories for the masses. The national languages have been enthroned partially in theory, and almost not at all in practice, if the fields of higher education and employment are considered. Compulsory English for all is a great myth and will always be so. One hundred and fifty years of British rule in Ceylon with all the pressures, social and economic, to promote a knowledge of English failed to make more than 7 per cent of the population literate in English. Possibly not more than half this percentage acquired a reasonable mastery over English. Where mastery was acquired it was because the individual concerned came from a home with a strong background of English and/or attended one of the few schools which taught English well. What was achievable with a minority of children in a minority of places is certainly not achievable with every child throughout the length and the breadth of the country, or even with the majority of children. When there is sufficient appreciation of this reality, a solution to the language issue can be sought in the direction of honestly giving the national languages pride of place in the public life of the country and in education at all levels, stimulating by every means possible the production of literature in the national languages, and giving good English to students in the university entrance classes and in the universities to equip them to read with understanding books written in English. Arguments of great cogency were urged in the Senate recently by Mr. Doric de Souza in moving a motion to the effect that a Commission should be appointed to enquire into and make recommendations regarding the teaching of English in Ceylon schools, but the government used its majority in

the Senate to defeat the motion.¹ The achievement as well as the failure of the past thirty years is that a half hearted place was given to the national languages and an indifferent English was taught to most of those who sought English.

The abolition of denominationalism in education was an achievement, but it was scarcely an end to be sought for itself. At best, it cleared the ground for a rationalisation of the school system, and it is a sad failure that no headway has been made in the achievement of this aim. The truth is that no rationalisation of the school system is possible without making certain decisions that are likely to be unacceptable to privileged groups. Reluctance to make such decisions has spelled failure in the essential tasks of reorganisation. It must, however, be recognised that while power groups have been left untouched, there has been a mischievous tendency to attempt a so-called rationalisation to the detriment of sectors of the population that are too down trodden to be articulate.

As yet, there is no uniform law of compulsory school attendance. One out of every four children of the age range five years to fourteen years is not in school; of those who enrol in school when they are five or six years of age, about one in four would leave school before the age of fourteen years is reached. When all the efforts of the education authorities should be directed towards inducing better attendance, ill-conceived attempts are being made to erect barriers against schooling by means of selection processes, and by closing down the upper Grades in certain schools and giving children the option of travelling long distances (ten to twelve miles on foot, in certain cases) to continue attendance or of giving up schooling altogether.

School curricula are outmoded. A fundamental rethinking of the curriculum is not attempted. Curricular reforms recently introduced have been in the nature of a scissors and paste activity, with conspicuous consumption of paper. Half understood ideas picked up during international travel are introduced in uncoordinated and piecemeal fashion. The sole justification offered for certain changes is that some advanced country is proceeding on those lines.

While increases have been generally recorded in the numbers receiving education at all levels, hardly any qualitative improvements are discernible. Above all, the urgent task of communicating modern

1. H (S). 6 December 1968. col. 1706

knowledge through the national languages has received a severe set back from the government textbook monopoly which has well nigh crippled the publishing activities of the private sector.¹

Very little improvement has taken place in either the academic background or the professional preparation of the teaching profession. Less than 8 per cent of all teachers are university graduates, and of them only about 1 in 4 has had professional training. Of the non-graduate teachers, about 40 per cent have undergone a two year course of professional training, and the others have had no professional preparation at all. The better qualified teachers are less amenable than the others to an arbitrary and iron discipline, and to be used as chattels by the bureaucracy. There is therefore hostility against them, and a tendency to prefer less qualified teachers to more qualified ones has become evident. There is also the added attraction of economy in engaging recruits with a low academic standing, but this is a false economy in the sense that the quality of education would be adversely affected in the long run.

The morale of the teaching profession has perhaps never before been at as low a level as now. Punitive dismissals and transfers for alleged political activity have broken the back of the profession, and there is great despondency all round. To add to his discomfiture, the teacher has been reduced to the level of a mechanical communication system for converting into sound in the classroom all that has been laid out for him in course guides which are an insult to his learning and intelligence. There is no place for individuality or initiative, and the bureaucrats' stupid boast that identical lessons are delivered in all the schools in the island in order to equalise educational opportunity spells education's doom and the stunting of children's minds. The onslaught on all that even remotely breathes of the free spirit or the intellect has extended from the schools to the university. The Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs of the present government can hardly make a speech on education or culture without making derogatory references to school teachers and university Dons. Fear stalks the corridors of all places of learning. A senior Don summarised the present situation neatly when he said, "A frenzied bureaucracy of the worst type was holding the slender and beautiful figure of learning in its lethal grip. A nation that allowed that to happen could not be much of a nation".²

1. Speech by Dr. G. P. Malalasekera reported in the Ceylon Daily News. 23 March 1969.

2. Professor Hilary Cruz. Times of Ceylon. 29 January 1969.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION

Royal Commissions on Education (1900 - 1968)

Commission on Elementary Education in Ceylon. (Chairman : Mr. H. Wace). Report : S.P. XVII of 1905.

Commission on the University of Ceylon. (Chairman : Sir Walter Buchanan Riddel). Report: S.P. IV of 1929.

Commission to Inquire into and Report upon the Present System of Education in Ceylon. (Chairman: Mr. L. Macrae). Report: S.P. XXVII of 1929.

Commission on Higher Education in the National Languages. (Chairman: Sir Arthur Wijeyewardene). Interim Report: S.P. XXI of 1954. Final Report: S.P. X of 1956.

Ceylon University Commission. (Chairman: Professor Joseph Needham). Report: S.P. XXIII of 1959.

National Education Commission. (Chairman: Professor J. E. Jayasuriya). Interim Report: S.P. I of 1962. Final Report S.P. XVII of 1962.

Commission of Inquiry on Technical Education. (Chairman: Mr. T. P. de S. Munasinghe). Report: S.P. X of 1963.

Universities Commission. (Chairman: Mr. D. C. R. Gunawardena). Report: S.P. XVI of 1963.

Commission of Inquiry on Peradeniya Students' Strike. (Mr. N. A. de S. Wijesekera). Report: S.P. III of 1966.

Commission of Inquiry into the Vidyalkara University of Ceylon. (Chairman: Mr. V. C. Jayasuriya). Report: S.P. XXIII of 1968.

Committees on Education (1939 - 1968)

Special Committee on Education, Ceylon. (Chairman: Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara). Report: S. P. XXIV of 1943.

Committee appointed to examine the working of the National Languages as Media of Instruction in Standard VI etc. (Chairman: Mr. T. D. Jayasuriya). Report: S.P. I of 1954.

Committee on Non-School-Going Children. (Chairman: Mr. E. H. de Alwis). Report: S.P. III of 1960.

Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English in Ceylon Schools. (Chairman: Mr. S. F. de Silva). Report: S.P. V of 1960.

Committee of Investigation into the working of Teacher Training Colleges. (Chairman: Mr. Dudley K. G. de Silva). Report: S.P. XI of 1966.

On the Establishment of the University of Colombo. (Professor Frank Thistlethwaite). S.P. XXVI of 1967.

Committee of Inquiry into the University of Colombo. (Chairman: Mr. S. F. Amerasinghe). Report: S.P. VIII of 1968.

APPENDIX 2

EDUCATIONAL LEGISLATION

(1939 - 1968)

Ordinances

- Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939.
- Education (Amendment) Ordinance No. 61 of 1939.
- Ceylon University Ordinance No. 20 of 1942.
- Ceylon University (Amendment) Ordinance No. 26 of 1943.
- Education (Amendment) Ordinance No. 12 of 1945.
- Education (Amendment) Ordinance No. 3 of 1946.
- Education (Amendment) Ordinance No. 26 of 1947.

Acts

- Education (Amendment) Act No. 5 of 1951.
- Education (Amendment) Act No. 43 of 1953.
- Education (Amendment) Act No. 37 of 1958.
- Vidyodaya and Vidyalandara Universities Act No. 45 of 1958.
- Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (Special Provisions) Act No. 5 of 1960.
- Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (Supplementary Provisions) Act No. 8 of 1961.
- Ceylon University (Amendment) Act No. 12 of 1961.
- Higher Education Act No. 20 of 1966.
- Buddha Sravaka Dharmapeetaya Act No. 16 of 1968.

APPENDIX 3

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ayurveda: Eastern system of medicine.

Bhikkus: Buddhist monks.

Bilingual schools: Bilingual schools generally used Sinhalese or Tamil as the medium of instruction in the lower Grades and switched over to the English medium progressively in the higher Grades. The category of schools known by this name had ceased to exist by 1952.

Board of Ministers: The Chairmen of the Executive Committees of the State Council along with the three Officers of State (the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Legal Secretary) formed the Board of Ministers during the Donoughmore era (1931-1947).

Denominational schools: Schools managed by religious denominations. With the exception of a few schools, denominational schools received financial assistance from the government until 1961. For this reason, the terms 'denominational schools' and 'assisted schools' are often used interchangeably.

Estate schools: Schools situated in the tea and rubber plantations and intended for the children of the workers.

Executive Committee for Education: A committee of the State Council with responsibility for the management of education during the Donoughmore era (1931-1947).

House of Representatives: One of the two constituent bodies of the Ceylon Parliament which came into existence in 1948 with the gaining of Independence. The other is the Senate.

Legislative Council: In the pre-1931 era, legislative functions were exercised by the Legislative Council. It consisted of certain officials of the government, some members of the public nominated by the Governor, and a certain number of elected representatives of the people.

Pirivenas: Institutions of Buddhist and oriental learning connected with Buddhist temples.

Senate: One of the two constituent bodies of the Ceylon Parliament which came into existence in 1948 with the gaining of Independence. The other is the House of Representatives.

State Council: Under the Donoughmore Constitution which was in force from 1931 to 1947, the State Council, consisting very largely of elected representatives of the people, exercised both executive and legislative functions.

Swabhasha: The national languages, Sinhalese and Tamil.

Vernaculars: The national languages. Schools which provided education entirely through the medium of Sinhalese and Tamil were called vernacular schools in the early years.

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

- Adult education, 14, 174-179
- Assisted schools, 1-4, 11, 18, 19, 23, 24, 26-32, 35-63, 207 *see also* denominational schools
- Bhikkus, 50, 53, 86, 92, 165, 208
- Bilingual schools, 3-6, 10, 12, 23, 41, 52, 208
- Board of Education, 15, 16, 18, 37, 40
- Britain, British, 1, 4-9, 11, 12, 14, 20, 24, 27, 36, 39, 44, 60, 95, 119, 127, 132, 134-137, 144, 147, 149-153, 158-160, 163
- Buddhist Committee of Enquiry, 53-55, 88, 126
- Buddhists, Buddhist schools, 1, 2, 16, 35, 36, 38, 41, 44, 45, 50, 53-57, 59, 86, 88, 92, 115, 119, 123, 126, 165-167, 208
- Burghers, 66, 67, 72
- Central schools, 42, 85, 86, 97-99, 101, 112
- Ceylon Technical College, 12, 139, 140, 151-153, 155, 157, 158
- Ceylon University College, 12, 14, 159, 160
- Ceylon University Commission, *see* Needham Commission
- Christians, Christian schools, 1-3, 7, 16, 38, 41, 43-45, 51, 54-57, 59, 88, 119, 125, 126
- Commission of Inquiry into the Vidyalankara University of Ceylon, 205
- Commission of Inquiry on Peradeniya Students' Strike, 205
- Commission of Inquiry on Technical Education, *see* Munasinghe Commission
- Commission on Elementary Education in Ceylon, *see* Wace Commission
- Commission on Higher Education in the National Languages, *see* Wijeyewardene Commission
- Commission on the University of Ceylon, *see* Riddell Commission
- Commission to Inquire into and Report upon the Present System of Education in Ceylon, *see* Macrae Commission
- Committee appointed to examine the working of the National Languages as Media of Instruction in Standard VI etc., 205
- Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English in Ceylon Schools, *see* S. F. de Silva Committee

- Committee of Inquiry into the University of Colombo, 206
- Committee of Investigation into the working of Teacher Training Colleges, 206
- Committee on Non-School-Going-Children, 206
- Compulsory attendance, compulsory education, 19, 30, 32, 35, 43, 51, 108, 127, 128, 130, 201
- Conscience clause, 35, 36, 38, 119-123
- Curriculum, curricular diversification, 6-9, 95-118, 128, 145, 183, 201
- Denominational schools, 1-4, 17, 29, 35-63, 83, 88, 89, 119-126, 199, 201, 208 *see also* assisted schools
- Director General of Education, 116, 190
- Director of Education, 13, 14, 17, 18, 28-32, 40, 51-53, 58-60, 69, 75, 88, 97, 98, 104, 108, 119-122, 128, 130, 131, 147, 175, 185, 190
- Donoughmore Commission, Donoughmore Constitution, Donoughmore era, 15, 16
- Educational legislation, 15-19, 27-29, 31-33, 36-39, 46, 48, 51, 52, 58-63, 102, 106, 116-123, 125-128, 130, 131, 133, 141, 159, 160, 164-173, 178, 207
- Education Department 6, 13, 14, 17, 86, 91, 96, 101, 103, 110, 134, 143, 144, 167, 169, 174, 175, 177, 191-194
- English language, 1, 4, 5, 7, 14, 25, 65-84, 90, 91, 128, 132, 134, 137, 177, 199-201
- English schools, 1, 3-6, 7, 10, 12, 23, 31, 36, 38, 39, 41, 64
- Estate Schools, 17, 19, 117, 127-133, 208
- Examinations, 4-9, 11, 14, 64, 70, 72, 75, 95, 96, 101, 103, 106-108, 112, 113, 126, 134-137, 142, 144-146, 151-153, 159, 160, 163, 182, 183
- Executive Committee of Education, 15-19, 24, 37-41, 66, 68, 100, 102, 121, 124, 139, 208
- Finance (including government grants), 1-3, 5, 11, 12, 14, 18, 23, 24, 26-28, 30-32, 36, 42, 43, 45-48, 50-53, 55-57, 86, 87, 89, 120, 121, 127, 162, 189, 190 *see also* free education, salaries, school fees
- Free Education, 5, 23-24, 47, 48, 51, 83-87, 108-110, 172, 173, 181, 199, 200

Government schools, 2-4, 7, 12, 23, 24, 38, 45, 46, 52, 53, 59, 61, 119-121

Gunawardena Commission, 165-167, 205

Hindus, Hindu schools, 1-3, 35, 36, 38, 41, 43, 51, 56, 57, 59, 88, 119, 123, 126

Jayasuriya Commission, 62, 81, 110, 111, 112, 115, 131-133, 142, 146, 176, 193, 194, 199, 205

Kannangara Committee, 23, 42, 65, 66, 99-101, 129, 138, 139, 145, 174, 205

Kothari Commission, 115

Language, 1, 2, 4-7, 14, 16, 23, 25, 32, 56, 57, 64-84, 90-92, 128-130, 132-135, 137, 142, 164, 174, 181, 199-201, 205, 208, 209

Macrae, Commission, 36, 38, 123, 205

Managers (school), 17, 19, 27, 39, 40, 41, 43, 48, 53, 58, 59, 123

Medium of instruction, 1, 2, 4-7, 23, 32, 64-82, 90, 91, 142

Minister of Education, 15-17, 24-30, 32, 33, 37-43, 45, 47, 48, 50-52, 55, 56, 58, 59, 61, 62, 69-72, 76-78, 81, 89, 100, 101, 103-110, 113-118, 120, 121, 123-126, 129, 131, 132, 143-145, 147-149, 163-173, 178, 192, 194, 202

Munasinghe Commission, 151-156, 158, 205

Muslims, 3, 35, 38, 41, 56, 57, 88, 119, 123, 126

National Council of Higher Education, 33, 168-172

National Education Commission, *see* Jayasuriya Commission

National languages, *see* Sinhalese language, Tamil language

Needham Commission, 162-164, 205

On the Establishment of the University of Colombo, *see* Thistlethwaite Report

Pereira Committee, 151, 152

Pirivena Education, pirivenas, pirivena universities, 16, 44, 165-167, 208

Private schools, 31, 60-62, 115-117

Proselytisation, *see* religious conversion

Protestants, Protestant schools, 1-3, 35, 38, 39, 54

- Religion, 1-4, 7, 16, 17, 19, 35-39, 41-45, 47, 50, 51, 53-63, 86, 88, 89, 92, 115, 119-126, 165-167, 208
- Religious conversion, 1, 35, 52, 44, 45, 54, 55, 58
- Religious instruction, 4, 17, 19, 38, 47, 57, 89, 119-126
- Riddel Commission, 159, 160, 205
- Robbins Report, 147
- Roman Catholics, Roman Catholic schools, 2, 3, 16, 35, 36, 38, 47, 54, 56, 59-63, 88, 89, 125, 126
- Salaries (teachers'), 3, 23, 24, 39, 43, 53, 54, 190
- School fees (including games and facilities fees), 5, 23, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 51, 58, 62, 105, 106, 115-117
- School system, 1-6, 97-100, 112-117, 181, 182, 201
- Selection of students, 30, 99-109, 112-118, 201
- S. F. de Silva Committee, 69, 206
- Sinhalese language, 1, 4-6, 16, 32, 56, 57, 64-84, 90-92, 129, 130, 132, 133, 135, 137, 142, 164, 181, 199-202, 205, 208, 209
- Sinhalese schools, 6, 10, 23, 64
- Special Committee on Education, *see* Kannangara Committee
- Spens Report, 69
- Swabhasha, 76, 77, 79-81, 209 *see also* Sinhalese language, Tamil language
- Tamil language, 1, 4-6, 32, 64-84, 90-92, 132, 133, 135, 137, 142, 181, 199-202, 205, 208, 209
- Tamil schools, 6, 10, 23, 64
- Teacher education, teacher training institutions. 9-11, 24, 60, 61, 97, 121, 124, 136, 138-150, 184, 185, 207
- Teacher-pupil ratio, 3, 5, 52, 57, 100, 181, 184
- Teachers, 3, 8-10, 39, 42-45, 52-54, 58, 61, 69, 70, 74, 80, 84, 86, 90, 91, 128, 138-150, 181-185, 188-190, 192-194, 202
- Technical and vocational education, 12, 24, 30, 31, 72, 82, 104, 151-158
- Textbooks, 186-189, 202
- Thistlethwaite Report, 148, 149, 206
- Unesco, 175
- Universities, 11, 12, 14, 23-25, 27, 31, 33, 77-82, 90, 134-138, 141, 143-153, 157-174, 177-179, 189, 191, 195, 199, 200, 202, 205, 207

Universities Commission, *see* Gunawardena Commission

Vernacular schools, 3-5, 10, 12, 25, 36, 41, 52, 65, 75, 209 *see also*
Sinhalese schools and Tamil schools

Wace Commission, 35, 36, 38, 122, 127, 205

White Papers, 29-31, 33, 52, 103-106, 111-116, 132, 133, 177

Wijeyewardene Commission, 79, 205

Work experience, 115, 183, 191

INDEX OF NAMES

- Abeywickreme, Simon, 43
 Adikaram, E. W., 49
 Aluwihare, B. H., 16, 26, 65, 128, 129, 132
 Amarasuriya, H. W., 46, 49
 Amerasinghe, S. F., 206
 Amirthalingam, A., 116

 Banda, M. D., 72, 76, 77, 88, 107-110, 131
 Bandaranaike, Mrs. Sirimavo, 56, 89
 Bandaranaike, S. W. R. D., 44-47, 49, 54, 55, 71, 76, 77, 79, 89,
 163-166
 Bridge, J. J. R., 8, 9, 36.

 Chelvanayagam, S. J. V., 29
 Cooray, Rt. Rev. Fr. Thomas, 60, 62, 63
 Corea, G. C. S., 26, 45, 139
 Crusz, Hilary, 201

 Dahanayake, W., 26, 28, 32, 40, 41, 44, 49, 50, 53, 55, 59, 67, 68,
 76, 81, 88-90, 105, 106, 109, 116, 121, 126, 166, 194
 De Alwis, E. H., 147, 205
 De Silva, C. P., 60, 109
 De Silva, Colvin R., 28
 De Silva, Dudley K. G., 206
 De Silva, S. F., 205
 De Silva, T. U., 56, 89
 De Silva, W. Arthur, 41
 De Silva, Walwin A., 30, 70, 71, 75, 106
 De Souza, Doric, 199
 De Zoysa, A. P., 40
 Dissanayake, Rev. Fr. Philip, 56
 Donoughmore, Earl of, 15

 Fernando, H. M., 37

 Goonesinha, A. E., 120
 Goonetilleke, O. E., 47

Gracias, His Eminence Cardinal Valerian, 60, 61

Gunasekera, Prins, 194

Gunawardena, D. C. R., 166, 205

Gunawardena, Mrs. Vivienne, 57

Gunawardene, D. B. R., 53

Gunewardena, R. S. S., 16

Hatch, Spencer, 175

Herath, T. B. M., 57

Hewage, L. G., 111

Howes, H. W., 29, 30, 52, 54, 75, 76, 88, 108, 140, 175

Hunter, L. L., 72

Huxham, H. J., 24

Iriyagolle, I. M. R. A., 33, 69, 70, 76, 113, 115, 116, 168

Jackson, Rev. G. B., 54

Jansz, Rev. Canon Lucien, 189

Jayasuriya, Gamini, 132

Jayasuriya, J. E., 98, 112, 115, 205

Jayasuriya, T. D., 140, 175, 205

Jayasuriya, V. C., 205

Jayawardane, M. D. H., 109

Jayewardene, J. R., 26, 45, 46, 49, 62, 64, 67-69, 90, 109

Jennings, W. I., 27, 28, 160, 164

Kaleel, M. C. M., 124

Kalugalle, P. B. G., 131

Kannangara, C. W. W., 15, 17, 25-27, 37-43, 47, 48, 50, 68, 85, 88,
90, 100, 120, 123, 124, 129, 205

Karannagoda, R. L. A. I., 86

Karunananda, M. W., 56

Karunaratna, V. T. G., 56, 57

Karunatileke, Nimal, 126

Keerthiratne, N. H., 77

Keuneman, P. B. G., 28, 59, 72, 79, 80, 107, 163

Kilpatrick, W. H., 36

- Kularatne, P. de S., 48, 49
 Kumaraswamy, V., 53
 Ludowyk, E. F. C., 60
 Macrae, L., 205
 Mahmud, Badiuddin, 56, 59, 61, 89
 Malalasekera, G. P., 49, 90, 201
 Mettananda, L. H., 56, 89, 90
 Mivanapalana, A., 49
 Munasinghe, T. P. de S., 205
 Naganathan, E. M. V., 116
 Nalliah, V., 43, 50, 65, 71, 80
 Nanayakkara, Rev. Fr. Leo, 56
 Nanayakkara, V. T., 76, 106
 Needham, Joseph, 162, 205
 Nehru, Jawaharlal, 60
 Nesiah, K., 90
 Nihill, J. H. B., 46
 Nugawela, E. A., 28-30, 32, 51, 52, 76, 88, 104-106, 131, 163, 164
 Ormsby Gore, Rt. Hon. W. G. A., 8, 9.
 Pannakitti Thero, Ven. Kotahena, 56
 Pannaseeha Thero, Ven. Madihe, 56
 Patrick, R., 96, 97
 Pereira, E. O. E., 151
 Pereira, I. X., 129
 Perera, H. S., 97, 99
 Perera, N. M., 28, 33, 38, 39, 57, 81, 84, 164, 166, 171, 172, 187
 Perera, Wilmot A., 71, 77, 106, 108
 Pieris, Rt. Rev. Fr. Edmund, 56
 Pillai, Rev. Fr. Peter, 49, 50
 Ponnambalam, G. G., 43, 48
 Rahula Thero, Ven. Walpola, 189, 195
 Rajaratna, K. M. P., 61, 164
 Rasamanickam, S. M., 149

- Ratnayake, A., 46, 48, 50, 65, 85, 88, 119, 139
 Riddell, Sir Walter Buchanan, 159, 205
 Robinson, L. Mc. D., 14, 96-98
 Samaraweera, M., 107
 Sandeman, Ian, 74, 75
 Sannasgala, P. B., 188
 Senanayake, D. S., 25, 27, 30, 31, 33, 47, 48, 50, 88
 Senanayake, Dudley, 33, 62, 65, 195
 Siriwardene, H. de Z., 125
 Sivasithamparam, M., 116
 Somalokatissa Thero, Ven. Walagedara, 56
 Soysa, Bernard, 116, 170, 194
 Spencer, E. E., 48
 Spens, W., 101
 Stanley, Brian, 149, 150
 Sugathapala, H. Don, 187
 Sumathipala, K. H. M., 27, 48, 49
 Suntharalingam, C., 29, 52, 71
 Thistlethwaite, Frank, 140, 206
 Tibble, J. W., 149, 150
 Tillekeratne, Stanley, 57
 Tyagaraja, J., 121
 Veerasingam, V., 53
 Vytilingam, S., 129
 Wace, H., 205
 Wanninayake, U. B., 44, 65, 124
 Weerasekera, J. D., 57
 Wickremasinghe, Mrs. Doreen W., 107
 Wickremasinghe, S. A., 50, 88
 Wijeratne Banda, K. Y. M., 69
 Wijesekera, N. A. de S., 205
 Wijeyewardene, Sir Arthur, 205
 Wille, G. A. H., 26, 38, 39, 45, 121

